London Office Gives Program Briefings in Holland

On 3-4 December, the staff of the JSPS London Office traveled to Holland where they gave program briefings at Radboud University and VU Amsterdam. Founded in 1923, Radboud University has a student body of more than 18,000 undergraduates and postgraduates. Established some 40 years earlier in 1880, VU Amsterdam’s student body exceeds 30,000. The two institutions fall within the top 200 in the Times Higher Education World University Ranking. Both also boast full-fledged research programs spanning a spectrum of fields from organic chemistry, astrophysics and human genetics to linguistics, business and law. Tapping into their expertise in such fields, the universities have recent years been carrying out a number of joint research projects with Japanese universities, marked by achievements in such areas as coauthored publications, joint seminars, and patent applications.

Some 30 researchers from various departments of the universities attended the office’s briefings, in which JSPS programs were introduced that can be used in promoting even closer scientific exchange with Japanese colleagues. The staff’s visit to Holland was also very meaningful in that it provided an opportunity for them to engage Dutch researchers and university research-funding managers in a discussion on ways to build more effective partnerships with Japanese universities and research institutes and how to take advantage of JSPS programs in that process.

JSPS-Japanese University Briefing Held at University of Freiburg

On 15 November, the JSPS Bonn Office held an event to introduce Japanese universities and Japan visitation programs at the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies of the University of Freiburg. The office holds this event every year at various universities around Germany with an aim to kindle student interest in studying and doing research in Japan. Representatives of Japanese universities and research institutions with bases in Europe are invited to participate as information providers in these events. This time, some 40 students and faculty members attended the briefing.

It was kicked off with welcoming remarks by JSPS Bonn Office director Prof. Dr. Keiichi Kodaika, followed by an introductory message from Prof. Dr. Gunther Neuhaus, vice rector for research at the university. Then, Mr. Noriyoshi Masuko, counselor, Embassy of Japan in Germany, used a video to illustrate his presentation on the scholarship and international student-support programs offered by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan Student Services Organization, and other institutions. Expanding upon Mr. Masuko’s remarks, Ms. Harumi Okawa, deputy director of JSPS Bonn Office, introduced JSPS’s fellowship offerings. Complementing these presentations, the Japanese university representatives gave short talks on their respective education and research programs.

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The symposium addressed the issue of “accessibility,” that is, the ability of everybody, including the aged and handicapped, to use products, buildings and services without difficulty. Besides presentations from individual researchers, the event featured group discussions, workshops and fieldwork including test driving motor-driven wheelchairs and measuring the slope angles most appropriate for them. An observation tour of the Pedestrian Accessibility and Movement Environment Laboratory (PAMELA) was also held.

New Anglo-Japanese research projects are scheduled to be launched as an offshoot of this symposium. More vigorous research exchange in this field between the two countries is expected to realize ever-better accessibility for all.

UCL Symposium Held on Accessibility

On 9-11 December, the University College London (UCL) held “The Accessibility Symposium” on its campus. The event was selected for support under JSPS London’s “Symposium Scheme for Japanese Researchers Based in the UK.” Organized by Dr. Catherine Holloway, lecturer in UCL’s Department of Civil, Environmental & Geomatic Engineering, the symposium drew the participation of 168 researchers over the three days of its implementation. They hailed from such diverse fields as electronic engineering, civil engineering, computer science, and social engineering.

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