

## **Tsukuba International Academy for Sport Studies Tri-university Showcase Conference on SFT Sport Academy Formation Project**

**Representatives of University of Tsukuba, Nippon Sport Science University, National Institute of Sports and Fitness in Kanoya  
share hands-on knowledge in lively debate**

**The Japan Sports Agency Commissioner Daichi Suzuki speaks on the importance of developing international sports human resources**

**The International Gymnastics Federation President Morinari Watanabe expresses hopes for SFT Sport Academy**

Thursday, December 14, 2017 / University of Tsukuba, Tokyo Campus



Tsukuba International Academy for Sport Studies (TIAS), a part of the Sport for Tomorrow programme by which the Japanese government is promoting the sports and Olympic/Paralympic movement, hosted a Tri-university Showcase Conference on Thursday, December 14 at University of Tsukuba Tokyo Campus. The conference to support SFT sport academy development was a joint effort by sports-related programmes of three universities, including TIAS, NSSU Coach Developer Academy (NCSA) of Nippon Sport Science University and NIFS International Sport Academy (NIFISA) of National Institute of Fitness and Sports in Kanoya.

Japan's first international sport academy, TIAS accepts students from countries around the world to develop the next generation of international leadership. NCSA is engaged in training coach educators who develop coaching talent, while NIFISA accepts young coaches and researchers from overseas to provide a broad range of high-level support to the sports world. The conference featured appearances by professors from each academy, programme participants and alumni. A total of 100 people joined in the conference, including attendees from companies and organizations with a strong interest in sports, students and personnel from each of the participating academies. The event included a review of the activities of each participating academy since the programme was initiated in 2014 with the goal of fostering an international sports human resources development movement. Participants shared the knowledge and experience they have gained from their activities and engaged in lively discussions of future issues concerning sports human resources development.

At the outset of the conference, The Japan Sports Agency Commissioner Dr. Daichi Suzuki took the podium to explain the Sport for Tomorrow programme. He noted the crucial nature of creating a center for the development of international sports human resources, adding that, "I

pray that all of the alumni of the academy programmes at these three universities will be able to put to use the things that they have learned at TIAS and that as current students and graduates strengthen their mutual networks, they will lead world sports in a positive direction."

Keynote speaker The International Gymnastics Federation (FIG) President Morinari Watanabe spoke powerfully of the potential for sports to enrich people's lives. He drew a comparison between the current situation and the British Industrial Revolution: "I want all of you to do your best to become the kind of innovators who will make it possible for people to say 100 or 200 years from now that it was sports that saved our society from the ongoing aging of the population."

Each of the participating academy leaders gave a panel discussion titled "Efforts and challenges of international sport academies" Commissioner Dr. Suzuki had high praise for the efforts announced by each university and expressed his hopes for further mutual interaction in the form of programme exchanges among the three. "The area in which Japan lags behind most severely is mobility of sports-related professionals. I hope that the academies' efforts will become central to resolving that."

The ensuing panel discussion included the topic of how education programmes should be run in the future in order for the programmes to be handed down as a legacy. "We hope to achieve further evolutionary advances with the experience from our research and educational activities up to now, and collaborate with NCDCA on coaching while strengthening our ties with TIAS regarding Olympic and Paralympic studies so that we can continue to make an international contribution," said Prof. Shunichi Takeshita of NIFISA.

"Up to now, it has been all that any given university could do to fully apply its own strengths. But by strengthening ties with each academy in order to advance future efforts, we will be able to create a major movement," said Prof. Masamitsu Ito of NCDCA. "My hope is that this will result in advancements in human resources development."

Prof. Hisashi Sanada of TIAS quoted Jigoro Kano, chairman of Tokyo Higher Normal School, the forerunner of University of Tsukuba: "Like warp and woof, both letters and sports will be crucial to future developments. Ties between Japan and international sports organisations can be likened to the warp, while ties between domestic Japanese sports organisations and universities form the woof. And it takes a needle to weave this fabric, which is comprised by the students who participate in these programmes. By being active in international sports organisations and thereby contributing to society, I think they will be able to build up the greatest network possible."

On the event day, participants and alumni from the three academy programmes joined in a panel discussion and the personnel of the programmes gave poster presentations among other activities that deepened ties and interaction among the academies. In his closing address, Prof. Sanada expressed his hopes for the upcoming Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020, and his determination that international sports academies will hand down an important future educational legacy beyond 2020: "In Japan, where education has always been a value of the highest order, I think that the ongoing development of human resources is a crucial mission for us with respect to the rest of the world."



#### ◆ About TIAS

As part of the Sport for Tomorrow programme put forward by Japan's central government to further the sport and Olympic/Paralympic movement, TIAS has full government support. The University of Tsukuba, the parent organization of TIAS, has been the driving force behind the Olympic movement in Japan, which dates back more than a century to Jigoro Kano, the first Asian member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and chairman of the school that was the forerunner of the University of Tsukuba. In anticipation of the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, TIAS is offering wide-ranging studies, encompassing Olympic and Paralympic education including the state of the art in sport management, teaching and coaching, as well as interaction with select scholars from around the world. For details please visit us at:

<http://tias.tsukuba.ac.jp/>.

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