Weekly Wire
News from East Asia and Pacific
National Science Foundation
Tokyo Regional Office
December 16, 2014

AUSTRALIA: STEM Performance Mediocre

A landmark report by the Office of the Chief Scientist has highlighted Australia's lackluster position in such areas as internal patents, student performance in global science tests and collaboration between business and research, when compared with the EU, U.S., U.K. and Canada. While the report showed some areas of Australian research to be among the best in the world, the average performance of all measurements fell below most of the European countries surveyed. "We're not bad, but not as good as we could be; we've got to do something about that; it's a national imperative," said Australia's Chief Scientist Ian Chubb. The report additionally found that Australia's performance is better in most fields than other Asian countries such as South Korea, Singapore, and China, but the gap is closing at a rapid pace. Dr. Chubb said, "We have to be world leading at some things."

Source: http://www.smh.com.au/technology/sci-tech/australias-stem-performance-mediocre-economy-will-suffer-20141130-11wzgx.html

JAPAN: Heavy Ion Beam Cancer Treatment

The National Institute of Radiological Sciences (NIRS) held the 20th anniversary meeting for its Heavy Ion Beam Cancer Treatment. Based on Japan's 10-year Comprehensive Strategy on Cancer Research that began in 1984, NIRS established the Heavy Ion Medical Accelerator in Chiba (HIMAC). It is a unique-to-Japan technology that uses carbon ion for radiotherapy of various types of malignant tumors, while the research institutions in the U.S. use proton. NIRS showed some successful examples, saying that they had almost 9,000 cases of treatment in the past 20 years and also saying that they have done their best to minimize the side effects. NIRS has been having Open Laboratory International Training Program since 2008 where a few researchers from the U.S. South Western and Colorado State universities have participated. Research cooperation with the University of Texas is being discussed under NIRS' "Cooperative Basic Research using HIMAC." Also under discussion is how to try to minimize the size and the cost of the facilities that currently require huge space for the accelerator and as much as Yen 32.6 billion ($326 million).

Source: Notes taken at the anniversary meeting & http://www.nirs.go.jp/ENG/core/cpt/cpt.shtml

JAPAN: "Open Science" Discussions Have Begun

The Japanese Government has formed a "Panel for Discussing Open Science in the Context of the World Trend" and held its first meeting on December 9, 2014. Five sessions will be held until the Japanese Government makes its decision on "Open Science" in March 2015. The first meeting was for all concerned to understand what "Open Science" is and the activities in other countries. According to the OECD, "Open Science" refers to an approach to research based on greater access to public research data, enabled by ICT tools and platforms, and broader collaboration in science, including the participation of non-scientists, and finally, the use of alternative copyright tools for diffusing research results. Open science has the potential to enhance the efficiency and quality of research by reducing the costs of data collection, by facilitating the exploitation of dormant or inaccessible data at low cost and by increasing

the opportunities for collaboration in research as well as in innovation. Presented in the first panel meeting were the OECD guidelines, the announcement by the G8 S&T Ministers' Meeting, the topic of Open Access at the Global Research Council (GRC), the activities of the Research Data Alliance (RDA) Colloquium which NSF computer scientists introduced to the members of the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) in 2013, and the relevant activities in the U.S., U.K., EU, and India. Based on this world trend, the meetings in January 2015 and on will discuss what Japan should do.
Source: notes taken at the "Open Science" meeting at the Cabinet Office on December 9, 2014, & http://www.oecd.org/sti/outlook/e-outlook/stipolicyprofiles/interactionsforinnovation/openscience.htm

KOREA: Private Company Supports Student Gamers

SmileGate, a Korea-based video game developer, has been supporting the students of the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) who are interested in video game design and development since 2010 when the company established a studio on the KAIST campus. The company has recently launched a scholarship program, "SmileGate Membership" to provide 12 students with research funding, equipment and tools for game design and development, and mentoring services for eight months. The students will receive free space for R&D, legal services for business development, investment advice, and assistance in networking with the global community when the scholarship ends.

Source:
http://www.kaist.ac.kr/_prog/_board/?code=ed_news&mode=V&no=26521&upr_ntt_no=26521&site_dvs_cd=en&menu_dvs_cd=0601

NEW ZEALAND: Survey Reveals Greater Interest in Public Engagement in Science

A nationwide survey on how the public views science and technology shows that 83% of the 3,000 respondents consider science important for the nation's international competitiveness; 59% important to their daily lives; and 42% believe they are getting too little information about science. Eighty-seven percent said that the media is the primary channel to be engaged in science; and 81% said they are very or fairly interested in science. Dr. Alison Campbell of the University of Waikato comments, "The survey shows there's a real desire for engagement and having a say in science. There's a real case here for being more forward-thinking about how we do citizen science, and getting people involved in actually doing the science, rather than being passive recipients of information about it."
Source: http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/SC1412/S00020/what-do-kiwis-think-of-science-experts-respond.htm

SINGAPORE: Government Research Agency Collaborates with GE Healthcare

The Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR) and GE Healthcare signed a five-year R&D collaboration agreement to co-innovate technologies in patient monitoring, computed tomography and magnetic resonance imaging. Michael Barber, VP and Chief Engineer for GE Healthcare said, "We're thrilled to collaborate with A*STAR, one of the world's finest research organizations, combining the engineering strength of both of our teams to build the future of healthcare together."
Source: http://www.a-star.edu.sg/Media/News/Press-Releases/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/3732.aspx