



Weekly Wire
News from East Asia and Pacific
National Science Foundation
Tokyo Regional Office
November 3, 2015

AUSTRALIA: To transform Australia School Mathematics

The Australian Academy of Science will partner with the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers (AAMT) to establish a bold new Australian government-supported program to transform how mathematics is taught in Australian schools. The Education and Training Ministry has awarded A\$6.4 million (\$4.6 million) to develop and promote new math resources for school students and teachers. The Australian Academy President said, “The program’s curriculum resources and teaching materials will incorporate the best available mathematics teaching approaches to enhance students’ engagement by demonstrating the relevance of mathematics to virtually every aspect of their everyday lives. “

Source: <https://www.science.org.au/node/476638#.VinKsMtdGUI>

JAPAN: New York Office of the University of Tokyo

The University of Tokyo will, for the first time in history, establish an office in New York to explore global industrial collaborations. Through the joint efforts of the University’s Institute of Industrial Science (IIS) and Medical Institute, a new office will open near Central Park of New York City in early November. The IIS Director, Dr. Teruo Fujii, says that the office is expected to be the window for the University to globally develop. As a first step, the New York Office will begin establishing and expanding relationships with US industries and foundations in the medical and engineering fields.

Source: Brief summary translation of an article in Nikkei – 10/19/2015

JAPAN: National Universities’ Six-year Plans

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) recently released the six-year plans (2016-2021) of all 86 Japanese national universities. Thirty-three national universities will reorganize their human literature and social science departments and 9 universities will abolish education programs that do not require obtaining teacher’s certificate. A few examples of the reorganizations are: Yokohama National University will merge 2 divisions in economics into one and 4 divisions under business management into one; Fukui University will establish a new department that will train students to contribute to local vitalization; Shiga University will establish a Data Science Department at the intersection of science and social and human science; Kobe University will establish a new department by merging their current International Culture Department and Science Development Department; Oita University will reorganize its Economic Department based on their survey on the societal needs for the graduates from the university.

Source: NHK news – 10-20/2015

[Background for the above article: Earlier this year, MEXT asked all national universities to review their academic divisions and departments, especially those in human literature, education, and social science fields, and abolish or merge some of them, in advance of submitting their future plans. The way MEXT announced this message was interpreted to suggest that non-S&E departments or divisions are no longer necessary (See: http://www.nsf.gov/od/oise/tokyo/articles/WeeklyWire_150811.pdf). As a result, the Science Council of Japan petitioned MEXT to withdraw the announcement; and overseas media outlets like the Wall Street Journal wrote that Japan is neglecting the importance of non-S&E fields. MEXT has tried to extinguish the fire,

saying that their intent was to review divisions that had not been reviewed at all for years and to merge some to meet the needs of the current era. In light of the decline in the school-age population, MEXT specifically expected education divisions be reviewed, if they do not require students to obtain a teacher's certificate.]

New Zealand: State of the Environment report

Statistics New Zealand and the Ministry for the Environment have jointly published a comprehensive report on the state of the environment in New Zealand, "Environment Aotearoa 2015" (obtained at: <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/environmental-reporting/environment-aotearoa-2015>). The report focuses on five areas: air, atmosphere and climate, fresh water, land, and marine. The highlights are increased greenhouse gas emissions and the impact of farming on water and soil quality. It also reports areas of improvement such as decreased carbon monoxide emissions from transport and a decline in overfishing and bycatch of protected species.