

Foreword

In September this year, the University of Tsukuba organized The Tenth Tsukuba Global Science Week (TGSW). TGSW is a biennial research showcase of Tsukuba Science City, the largest science and technology hub in Japan. It brings together prominent researchers across borders and disciplines, and provides a platform to deepen understanding of global and regional issues and constructively discuss goals and strategies for the future.

This year, TGSW was held online for the first time as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic reminded us more than ever that we live in ‘VUCA’, volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. Many things that used to be taken for granted up until a year ago crumbled abruptly and globally. The pandemic struck many aspects of our societies such as public health, economy and social bonds, thereby uncovering the vulnerability of the modern society.

Universities are no exception to this. Face-to-face education and research, studying abroad, international conferences, fieldwork, extracurricular activities, and so forth, all came to a halt abruptly and globally. We have coped with this crisis by means of digital transformation (DX). Online courses, meetings and conferences abounded overnight, and we have realized that we can do virtually everything without emitting much carbon dioxide by traveling, which is wonderful for the global environment. But the flip side of the coin is that DX is not ubiquitous and inclusive enough, thus causing digital, economic and social divide, not only between developed and developing countries, but also among individuals within a single community. It also raised the vital question about the *raison d'être* of universities in the DX era: what would be the essential value for physical universities, were it not for face-to-face embodied interaction? Students may also ask a more pragmatic question: what would be the essential value for tuition, were it not for something that we cannot obtain online? This might be the final nail to the coffin of the modern university.

One nation by itself cannot tackle these global challenges nor can these challenges be solved by a single discipline. Triple helix collaboration across academia, industry and government beyond all borders is imperative to achieve a sustainable

new normal. That is precisely why we organized a symposium entitled ‘Creating a Post-Corona Society: Cities and Universities in Collaboration’ as a part of the opening plenary of TGSW 2020. Huey-Jen Jenny Su (President of the National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan), Devi Sridhar (Professor of Global Public Health, the University of Edinburgh, UK), Thomas Eiskirch (Mayor of Bochum City, Germany), Sebastian Kopietz (Deputy Mayor of Bochum City, Germany), Igarashi Tatsuo (Mayor of Tsukuba City, Japan) and Nagata Kyosuke (President of the University of Tsukuba, Japan) engaged in lively discussion moderated by Kijima Joji (Professor of International Politics, the University of Tsukuba – also the author of one of the articles of this volume) on how academia and local government can work together against the COVID-19 pandemic.

The bottom line of the discussion resonates with the Tsukuba Declaration 2019, which was adopted by the participants of the Tsukuba Conference held alternately with TGSW:

1. We believe that solving our major societal challenges requires us to transcend boundaries and come together.
2. We are committed to speaking truth to power and to giving voice to younger generations.
3. We believe that solutions to global challenges must be human-centered and inclusive.

These articles were articulated before the pandemic broke out, but the declaration contained a few pieces of insight which are still valid today.

Resonance, the tenth volume of *Inter Faculty*, provides yet another platform for transborder collaboration on the issues raised by the COVID-19 pandemic.



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Resources

The Tenth Tsukuba Global Science Week. See: <tgs.w.tsukuba.ac.jp/>

Tsukuba Conference - For Future Shapers. See: <tsukuba-conference.com/>