Todai Policy Alternatives Research Institute

In order to resolve the various social problems arising in the contemporary world, policy formulation utilizing the results of advanced research is required. Up to now, faculty members of the University of Tokyo have contributed to the process of policy making on an individual basis. But today, when universities are increasingly called upon to contribute to society at large, the University of Tokyo believes that making available the intellectual resources needed for policy formulation and articulating policy alternatives is one of the roles it should play. Thus, on July 8, 2008, the Todai Policy Alternatives Research Institute was established under the Office of the President. The institute is a small organization comprising just seven members, but as the hub for policy research on campus, it will act as an organization for disseminating policy alternatives to society, based on its own policy proposals as well as the ideas it gleans from the research results of a variety of other departments and institutions within the university. It also hopes to establish networks with government agencies, corporations, mass media, and other organizations outside the university, seeking a mutual exchange of ideas and the invigoration of policy studies. This academic year it will inaugurate policy research units on security in Northeast Asia, intellectual property and innovation, technology governance, and healthcare policy. As its research progresses, it will share the results with society at large through a broad spectrum of media from published materials and its website to public symposiums and other events.

G8 University Summit

As Japan prepared to host the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit in the summer of 2008, the leaders of thirty-five major universities from the G8 countries and six other nations came together for the G8 University Summit, convened in Sapporo, Hokkaido, from June 29 to July 1, 2008. They came to engage in scholarly and nonpartisan debate regarding the universities' responsibility to contribute to the achievement of global sustainability and the specific measures they need to undertake to fulfill that responsibility. It signaled a historic attempt by the academic world to promote and contribute to an international undertaking. The G8 University Summit was organized around the theme of "global sustainability and the role of universities." Its outcome was an affirmation of the universities' role in achieving sustainability through research and educational efforts, including the creation of a global "network of networks" (NINs) linking the existing research networks, such as IR3S. Participants also pledged to work toward sustainability at the campus level. In addition to the foregoing, the Sapporo Sustainability Declaration adopted by the G8 University Summit called on leaders participating in the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit to adopt scientifically appropriate policies to tackle climate change and other global problems. The declaration was submitted to then-Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda by the University of Tokyo's President Komiyama, chairman of the G8 University Summit. Agreement has been reached to convene a second G8 University Summit in Italy, where the G8 Summit is scheduled to be held in 2009. At the University of Tokyo, we will be following up on the achievements of the G8 University Summit in our capacity as provisional secretariat for the aforementioned network of networks, as well as by pursuing our own sustainable campus initiative and other efforts consistent with the Sapporo Sustainability Declaration.