

AIST International Symposium 2002 “Bioinformatics in the Post-Genomic Era”

The AIST International Symposium 2002 “Bioinformatics on the Post-Genomic Era” was held at the Tokyo International Exchange Center on November 8th, 2002. The symposium received nearly 400 participants, and a lively exchange of views took place during the discussion sessions. The exhibitions and the reception party were also well attended.

Currently, post-genomic research draws a great deal of attention given its contribution to the elucidation of the gene carrying information, so-called mechanism of life. Post-genomic research can directly benefit a wide-range of spin-off effects for health promotion and the creation of a new industry that includes the identification of causal agents of diseases and countermeasures against them resulting in development of new drugs.

The main topic of the symposium was bioinformatics utilized in post genomic research. The leading researchers in each field attending from overseas spoke on its current situation and future prospects.

The program was divided into three sections. Firstly, Dr. Cameron, Joint Acting Head of European Bioinformatics Institute, lectured on the complex process from a data base construction to its application to the commercial services for the end users. He also pointed out the increasing importance of technology in the future. In the afternoon session, Dr. Cantor from SEQUENOM, Inc. introduced a high throughput “time of flight” SNP analyser using the mass spectrometry technique that helps to determine the medical relevance of single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP). Following that, Dr. Wright of Scripps Research Institute discussed proteins which have no



specific structure and are coordinated only by interactions with other proteins. Finally, Dr. Ress of the California Institute of Technology gave a lecture on the possibility of predicting the ultimate gene product, that is a three-dimensional protein structure taken from primary gene sequences. He furthered his discussion on the relationship between the 3-D structure and its functions, and the possible application of such information to the development of new drugs.

The symposium has provided an opportunity to grasp the current situation and issues of bioinformatics in the post genomic era researches, and serves as a guideline for future basic research and R&D that leads to the creation of a new industry.

The 4th Japan-Korea Joint Forum on Science and Technology



From Monday, November 18th to Wednesday, November 20th, the 4th Japan-Korea Science and Technology Forum was held with about forty participants from both countries at the Tokyo International Exchange Center. The forum was based on the Korea-Japan Agreement on Cooperation in Science and Technology.

On the 18th, two keynote presentations were made by Mr. Naotaka Oki, Vice-President of Japan Science and Technology Corporation (JST), and by Dr. Choi Soo Hyun, President of the Korea Institute of Science and Technology, Evaluation and Planning (KISTEP), followed by two separate sessions where lecturers were given by specialists of life science and nanotechnology. The subsequent discussion focused on the future scheme of research cooperation. During the general meeting held on the following day, the proposal for the scheme was presented and adopted. Dr. T. Sakamoto, Deputy Director of International Affairs Department of AIST, and Mr. K. Yase, Deputy Director of Photonics Research Institute (PRI),

attended the nanotechnology session as a coordinator and a lecturer, respectively. On the 20th, a lab tour was organized for the participants at the National Institute for Material Science (MIMS) and AIST.

Japan and Korea essentially reached an agreement on proceeding with plans for cooperation in the above two scientific fields.

http://www.aist.go.jp/aist_j/event/ev2002/ev20021118/old_ev20021118.html

International Symposium on Technologies and Applications of Photoelectron Micro-Spectroscopy with Laser-based VUV (Vacuum Ultra Violet) Sources



From Monday, December 2nd to Wednesday, December 4th, 2002, the above symposium was organized by the research group “Research on Analyzing Technology of Materials and Devices by Photoelectron Micro-Spectroscopy” lead by AIST. The number of the attendees was more than 130 including fifteen overseas participants.

The symposium covered the topics of photoelectron spectroscopy technology, plasma light source and extreme ultraviolet optics technology, all of which are the key technologies for making photoelectron micro-spectroscopy a powerful tool. The invited speakers were the distinguished scientists in their respective fields, and the contributed papers were of the highest quality. The participants listened intently to the talks in the different fields and keen questions were deluged. There were enthusiastic discussions at each poster exhibition booth. We believe that the symposium offered an excellent opportunity to exchange information on the latest

achievements in the different research fields, and that it will accelerate research and the development of “born-in-Japan” technology.

<http://staff.aist.go.jp/t-tomie/eups-sympo/photos.htm>

Paro Debuts at Council for Science and Technology Policy



On January 28th, during the 24th Council for Science and Technology Policy held at the Prime Minister’s Official Residence, “Paro”, a seal-type robot developed by the Intelligent Systems Institute of AIST, made its debut.

The current status and future prospects of robot technology in Japan were reported and discussed at the meeting as part of recent trends in science and technology research. Paro of AIST was exhibited as one of the tangible achievements of robotic research. Paro has recently captured public attention as the world’s most “therapeutic (healing)” companion robot.

(Photo: Cabinet Public Information Office)

http://www.aist.go.jp/aist_j/topics/to2003/to20030218/to20030218.html

KOCI-AIST Joint Workshop

On November 19th - 20th, 2002, Korea Research Council for Industrial Science and Technology (KOCI) and AIST held a joint workshop at Cheju, Korea.

This workshop was based on the “Memorandum of Understanding on Industrial Science and Technology Cooperation” signed between the two institutions in February 2002.

From the Korean side, about 50 people attended the workshop including Mr. Won-Hoon Park (President of KOCI)



and Directors of KOCI's seven subordinated organizations.

The AIST delegation of 12 people was headed by Dr. Yoshikawa (President), including Dr. Yoshikai (Trustee) and Dr. Soga (Trustee). The workshop consisted of five sessions where lectures and discussions focused on issues such as research management, evaluation and collaboration.

On November 20th, Dr. Yoshikawa, Dr. Yoshikai, Dr. Miyamoto (Director of International Affairs Department) and Mr. Taniguchi (Senior Planning Officer) had a meeting with Mr. Young-Bok Chae, Korean Minister of Science and Technology, in order to exchange ideas and opinions on research and development in industrial technology.

Australian Minister of Science Visits AIST



On December 18th, 2002, Mr. Peter McGauran, the Australian Minister of Science, visited AIST Tsukuba.

During the meeting with Vice-President Dr. Hiraishi and other AIST executives, the Minister eagerly asked many questions about our new organization and management policy, comparing AIST to similar organizations in Australia.

Afterwards, Mr. McGauran was shown the laboratories of the Institute for Environmental Management Technology,

where he had a briefing on their research of the flocculants for treatment of wastewater containing heavy metals.

“Innovation Center for Start-Ups” Kickoff Symposium



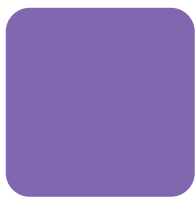
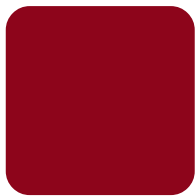
On January 27th, 2003, a kick-off symposium for the Innovation Center for Start-ups of AIST was held under the theme of “Looking Forward Return of Research System which enable Technical Resources on the Development of Business Creation.

The opening address by Dr. Hiroyuki Yoshikawa, Director of the Innovation Center for Start-ups (president of AIST), was followed by speeches delivered by several experts: “Expectation and Demand to Innovation Center for Start-ups” by Dr. Kiyonori Sakakibara, professor of Policy Management, Keio University; “The Public Financing for Business Start-ups in Finland”, by Dr. Hannu Hanhijarvi, director of Life Science, Finnish National Fund for Research and Development (SITRA); “New Venture Business Models in the 21st Century - A Message from Silicon Valley” by Mr. Yuuji Ide, president and CEO of PIXERA Corporation; and “What are needed for Start-up Businesses in Japan ?” by Mr. Yoshihiro Ohtaki, president of Bio-frontier Partners, Inc.

Additionally, Dr. Masanori Yoshikai, Deputy Director of the Center gave a full description of the basic concept of the organization as his closing remarks of the symposium.

The symposium provided a valuable opportunity to exchange views on the necessities to set up a Japanese-type “Venture (Business) Creation System” with more than 200 participants outside AIST. It assured us that we might be able to be one firm step closer towards building a “future of partnership” for this purpose.

http://www.aist.go.jp/aist_j/topics/to2003/to20030203/to20030203.html



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AIST Tsukuba Central 3, 1-1-1 Umezono, Tsukuba, Ibaraki 305-8563, Japan
TEL: +81-29-861-4128 FAX: +81-29-861-4129 Email: prpub@m.aist.go.jp URL: <http://www.aist.go.jp/>

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