



【NEWS RELEASE】

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University of Tsukuba

Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group

University of Tsukuba and Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group Announce
Comprehensive Partnership Agreement

University of Tsukuba (President: Kyosuke Nagata) and Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group, Inc. (President and Group CEO: Toru Nakashima, hereinafter collectively referred to as the “SMBC Group”) have concluded a Comprehensive Partnership Agreement (hereinafter referred to as the “Agreement”). This agreement, a new model of collaboration between universities and financial institutions, has been concluded to contribute to social transformation by promoting the science/technology advancement and human resource development by expanding this model across Japan.

Also, through this agreement, the University of Tsukuba, located in Tsukuba Science City which was established more than half a century ago, will undertake management reforms to develop sustainable and competitive operational foundation. The SMBC Group, will develop various collaborative initiatives as a transformation partner of the University of Tsukuba. We aim to become a model that foster regional revitalization and the collaboration between universities and financial institutions.

1. Background

The advancement of science and technology that drives society and industry, and the development of human resources that promotes the progress are of the utmost importance in Japan, which is poor in natural resources. University institutions have been responsible for both advanced and cutting-edge research and development for human resources that will create future. National universities have been in charge of world-class education and research, the inheritance and development of important academic fields, ensuring equal opportunities of higher education in all prefectures, and fostering global talent. However, the financial situation surrounding national universities is reaching its limits, with reductions in basic expenses as Management Expense Grant, and other financial constraints.

Under such circumstances, the University of Tsukuba has been striving to be a university that transform entrenched social systems and values. To solidify the foundations of university management, University of Tsukuba has promoted various educational and research initiatives with a focus on social implementation and contribution. While conventional industry-academia collaboration generally involves setting individual themes and dividing responsibilities between researchers and businesses, diverse initiatives from this agreement aims to not only solve the University of Tsukuba's issues in the short term, but also expand and connect with the society and other universities. This is the beginning of a “new adventure” that will open up new horizons for the University of Tsukuba.

Meanwhile, the SMBC Group has placed “Creation of Social Value” as a pillar of its management policies in its current Mid-term management plan, and works to contribute to “Japan’s Regrowth”, which is listed as a key issue to be addressed.

By supporting universities -an organization that brings together a wealth of knowledge and a connection to society- to improve their environment, enhance their competitiveness, and promote regional revitalization that stem from these actions, it will lead to “Japan's Regrowth”, which must become increasingly important in the future. With these in mind, the SMBC Group resonates the ideals of the University of Tsukuba, and as a transformation partner, the SMBC Group and the University of Tsukuba will work together to implement various initiatives towards social transformation.

2. Overview of the Agreement

The University of Tsukuba and the SMBC Group will create the future with “Finance and Knowledge”, and jointly work primarily in the following five areas:

- (1) Enhancing University Management, including more robust financial foundation - Towards a university supported by the community
 - Strengthening the university's financial foundation and improving asset management through the acquisition of external funding and the effective use of assets, which are necessary for university management
 - Enhancing and streamlining university management through digital transformation of university operations
 - Improving the wellness of university members through the introduction of a university-wide cashless system and the effective use of information
- (2) Developing a new joint research and commercialization system – Addressing the social needs

- Optimal matching of university research and technological seeds with the needs of companies and other organizations to drive social transformation
 - Supporting the realization of society where start-ups and university-based ventures are born and grow continuously.
- (3) Fostering talents who can drive education, research and business together - Connecting with society
- Developing professionals who can take on university management, finance, and other roles, and facilitating human resource exchange
 - Jointly developing talents who understand the education and research fields of universities with a business mindset, and who can develop the research and technological seeds of universities, which are the foundation of social transformation, into business.
- (4) Promoting sports and related fields - Leading a brighter future society
- Developing support programs for athletes' second careers
 - Developing support initiatives for university and corporate sports
 - Researching and utilizing sports science and technology, one of the strengths at the University of Tsukuba
- (5) Promoting inclusive education - Contributing to a society that thrives on diversity
- Enhancing the integrated management model of regular schools and special needs schools, conducted by the University of Tsukuba
 - Developing inclusive education programs that cater to various types of schools
 - Implementing financial literacy and education covering elementary to higher education, and fostering talent demanded in future society
 - Supporting international students in collaboration with overseas universities

The University of Tsukuba and the SMBC Group will expand these on-campus initiatives to the community, leveraging the location of the Tsukuba City, designated as a Super City initiative to provide a place for joint research and proof-of-concept projects with startups and global companies.

Furthermore, through the development of a community based around sports, we will support the creation of a well-being city where students and researchers can fully develop their abilities and contribute to the vibrant lives of residents.

Moreover, we will also work to expand this model across Japan as a leading collaboration model between universities and financial institutions.

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