

Committee Chair on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Dr. Noriko Osumi
Vice President (Public Relations and Promoting Diversity)
Director, Tohoku University Library
Professor, Tohoku University Graduate School of Medicine

The Center for Gender Equality Promotion (aka. TUMUG) was established in 2014, and I took over the Director's position from President Toshiya Ueki in 2018. In 2022, I handed it over to Vice President Mami Tanaka (Gender Equality Promotion, a faculty member of Medical Engineering). In July 2023, the name of the center was changed to the Center for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI Center), and the center is working with more diverse community members at Tohoku University. I will continue to serve as Chair of the DEI Committee, and together with the DEI Center, I will work as two wheels of the cart to promote diversity and co-participation in the University.

Tohoku University was established as the third national university in 1907 and accepted the first female students in 1913. However, since the university had mainly focused on the natural sciences, the number of female students had not significantly increased.

Then, we established a committee for gender equality promotion in 2001 and announced the declaration for gender equality promotion to support female researchers and develop awareness of gender equality. For example, we had the Tohoku Women's Hurdling Project for three years (from 2006) and the Tohoku Leading Women's Jump Up Project for five years (from 2009) that were supported by the MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology). Moreover, we had self-supported projects to promote and support female researchers, such as the Science Ambassador Project (which used to be called "Science Angels"), starting in 2006.

In 2013, we distributed the action guidelines for gender equality promotion as the 100th anniversary of the first female students, which are based on seven principles:

- 1) providing work-life balance support and improving conditions;
- 2) nurturing female leaders;
- 3) nurturing the next generation;
- 4) honoring achievements;
- 5) facilitating local collaboration;
- 6) promoting internationalization; and
- 7) creating a support organization.

Since then, our center, run by the gender equality promotion committee, has become the core of gender equality promotion at the university.

In 2016, we promoted “Tohoku Women’s Empowerment Project”, as the MEXT Science Technology Diverse Project, opened “Aobayama Midori Daycare” as our third daycare center, expanded “Hoshinoko Daycare” in Seiryu campus, and added “Kawauchi Keyaki Daycare”. We can now accommodate 258 children on campus, which is the largest facility in universities in Japan. These facilities are available for faculty, staff, and students.

Additionally, we provided seminars for developing leadership skills and continued supporting the research, including providing funds, etc. Since 2017, we’ve given the “Murasaki Sendai Hagi Awards” to female researchers who have prominent achievements in social science, engineering science, bioscience, and medical science.

Our activities were mainly targeted at women as a minority group; however, our original “Open Door Policy” is not only for women. Our goal is to open a door for many kinds of people, besides high school graduates, who wish to study in higher education. In 2017, Tohoku University was chosen to be one of the national university corporations in order to promote globalization and achieve international standards. As well, we understand that we still have issues with how to include the international faculty and staff, students, and those who have disabilities.

On April 5, 2022, we announced “the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Promotion Declaration”. Within international academia, Tohoku University will work on creating a truly inclusive campus in consideration of diversity and equity.

In order to enforce the promotion, the committee and the center have started working as one entity this year. The DEI center will move forward with Director Tanaka’s leadership, promoting the supporting programs, including the SA program, and at the same time, the committee will collect all the voices from each department and discuss how to make the DEI principles apply to the university, aiming for a 3% increase in female researchers, which was an objective for the 4th-period midterm plan.

We will continue working on the DEI at the university.

We appreciate your continuous support and your generous donation toward the Tohoku University DEI Promotion Fund.

September 29, 2023
Vice President for DEI Division
Chair of DEI Committee
Noriko Osumi