

Message from WPI program director, Kuroki

Crisis of Science in Japan

Toshio Kuroki, MD

When his cabinet launched in the early September, Prime Minister Hatoyama, promised to promote education and science. First time in our history, Dr. Hatoyama was educated in science (mathematics) at University of Tokyo and at Stanford University for PhD degree; three other cabinet members were also educated in engineering. We trust his words naturally.

During this two weeks, the government has been conducting public hearing on more than a hundred government-funded programs including science, where committees made up mostly by non-experts have judged the effectiveness of each science program and recommended termination, reduction in funding by a half or a third. Minister of Finance publicly announced that the Ministry will take these recommendations by the committees seriously.

Nature reported on line 17 November the crisis of Japanese science. Yes, it is really crisis. If this goes on, science budget will be deeply cut and Japanese science will die.

Along with super-computer, funding to basic/applied research, and employing scientists, the WPI (World Premier International Research Center Initiative) program also faced deep cut of budget. This WPI program aims to establish a globally visible and internationally opened research center in Japan. Five WPI research centers were launched on October 1, 2007, in which 30-50% of scientists are non-Japanese, English is used as their official language and interdisciplinary research is promoted.

<http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-toplevel/index.html>

I, as Program Director of WPI, would appreciate it if you understand the situation of WPI and send an e-mail, before December 15, to the Ministry of Education, which fortunately understands the importance of science.

To: nak-got@mext.go.jp

Subject: No. 14, WPI or any comment on science in general
which will reach Senior Vice Minister and Vice Minister of Education .

Thank you for your cooperation.

November 22, 2009

Toshio Kuroki, MD
Deputy Director of Science Research Center, Japan Society
for the Promotion of Science
WPI Program Director
Professor Emeritus, University of Tokyo and Gifu University