



OIST Press Release

OKINAWA INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GRADUATE UNIVERSITY

December 15, 2016

Dr. Peter Gruss Appointed Next President of OIST Graduate University

Okinawa, Japan -- The Board of Governors of the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology has selected Dr. Peter Gruss as the next CEO of the OIST School Corporation and President of the Graduate University. Dr. Gruss, an internationally recognized researcher in gene regulation and embryonic development, served as President of the Max Planck Society, in Germany from 2002-2014. Previously, Dr. Gruss was Director of the Department of Molecular Cell Biology at the Max Planck Institute for Biophysical Chemistry in Göttingen for 16 years. Dr. Gruss, who is 67 years old, will take office on January 1, 2017, succeeding Dr. Jonathan Dorfan who has served as the inaugural CEO and President since November 2011. Dr. Gruss met today in Tokyo with Mr. Yosuke Tsuruho, Minister of State for Okinawa and Northern Territories Affairs and other prominent government officials.

“OIST is probably the most interesting initiative in world scientific research and education. It has very high ambitions to become established as one of the great research universities. The Japanese Government has a clear vision for setting up an international, interdisciplinary university that will produce the future leaders for rapidly changing research and business,” said Dr. Gruss. “I am honored to be given the opportunity to lead OIST and look forward to the future with great excitement.”

The Max Planck Society has a world-leading reputation as a science and technology research organization, with 33 Nobel Prizes awarded to its scientists, and is regarded as one of the foremost basic research organizations in Europe. It includes 80 Max Planck Institutes, with a total staff of approximately 17,000 permanent employees, including 5,470 scientists, and around 4,600 non-tenured scientists and guests. Under the leadership of Dr. Gruss, the Max Planck Society expanded into new scientific fields, enhanced the international composition of the Max Planck Institutes, and strengthened the support and training for graduate students and young scientists. By working closely with the national and regional governments, Dr. Gruss achieved major success in stabilizing the funding for the Max Planck network.

INQUIRIES: OKINAWA INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GRADUATE UNIVERSITY

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Dr. Gruss is a leader in technology transfer and innovation. He co-founded a biopharmaceutical company and serves as Chair of the Siemens Technology and Innovation Council. His extensive experience in leading a complex research enterprise, his vision, and his broad international network will be critically important to continuing the recruitment of outstanding faculty and students from around the globe, the development of OIST's collaboration with academia and industry worldwide, and the enhancement of OIST's role in the future development of Okinawa.

The appointment culminates an extensive international search. The OIST Board of Governors announced the start of the search for a new President/CEO at their meeting in October 2015. The Presidential Search Committee (PSC), which was appointed in November 2015, included eight OIST Board members and four faculty members and was chaired by Dr. Albrecht Wagner. The position was advertised in major research and educational publications in early January 2016. Over 140 applications and nominations were received, and after careful review and evaluation and a preliminary round of video interviews, five finalists, including two female candidates, were selected and interviewed by the PSC and the Steering Committee of the Board. Dr. Gruss stood out as the outstanding candidate and was unanimously approved by the Board of Governors as the new President/CEO as of January 1, 2017. The formal arrangements and protocols for the appointment have just been completed.

About OIST

Established in November 2011, Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University (OIST) is an interdisciplinary graduate school offering a 5-year PhD program in Science. Its mission is to provide internationally outstanding education and research in science and technology, thus contributing to the sustainable development of Okinawa. More than 400 researchers from over 50 countries are conducting their research in Neuroscience, Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology, Environmental and Ecological Science, Mathematical and Computational Science, Physics and Chemistry. Since OIST's foundation, 1,118 research papers have been published* including those in major scientific journals such as *Nature*. OIST has made 170 patent applications and obtained 17 patents. ** In June 2014, OIST's first startup company was established with the OIST Office for Technology Development and Innovation playing a central role in technology transfer and industry collaboration.

* As of March 31, 2016

** As of August 31, 2016

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Peter Gruss

1977 Ph.D. (molecular biology), University of Heidelberg

1974 diploma, Institute of Microbiology, Darmstadt

Professor Peter Gruss, an internationally recognized scientist, was formerly President of the Max Planck Society for two consecutive terms until 2014. Under his leadership, the Max Planck Society not only expanded into new scientific fields as well as established new structures, but also developed into a truly international and scientifically renowned organization. Peter Gruss also served on the Supervisory Boards of companies Siemens, Munich Re, Actelion Pharmaceuticals as well as the Advisory Board of Deloitte and he is currently Chairman of the Siemens Technology and Innovation Council. His extensive experience to lead a complex enterprise administratively, his vision as well as his international network will be key to lead and inspire a great institute: recruiting outstanding faculty and students from around the globe, developing OIST's collaboration with academia and industry worldwide, and enhancing OIST's role in the future development of Okinawa.

Work Experience

2002-2014 President, Max Planck Society

1997-1998 Managing Director, Max Planck Institute for Biophysical Chemistry

1986-2014 Director, Max Planck Institute for Biophysical Chemistry, Department of Molecular Cell Biology

Since 1990 Honorary Professor, University of Göttingen

1983-1986 Member of the Directorate of the Center for Molecular Biology, University of Heidelberg

1982-1986 Associate Professor of Microbiology, University of Heidelberg

1980-1982 Visiting Scientist/Expert Consultant NIH, Bethesda

Service (selected)

Since 2015 Chairman of the Siemens Technology and Innovation Council

Since 2011 Member of the Board of Directors of Actelion Pharmaceuticals

2008-2015 Member of the Supervisory Board of Siemens AG

2009-2016 Member of the Supervisory Board of the Munich Re Group

2006-2014 Member of the "Innovation Dialogue" of the Federal Chancellery by Angela Merkel

2002-2014 Member of the Alliance of Scientific Organizations in Germany

2002-2014 Member of the Senate of the German Research Foundation

2002-2014 Member of the Senate of acatech, the Council for Technical Sciences of the Union of German Academies of Sciences and Humanities

2015- Member of the Board of Trustees of acatech

1992-2002 German Delegate of the EMBL Council

Awards (selected)

2012 Bavarian Maximilian Order for Science and Art

2012 Ellis Island Medal of Honor

2009 Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany – Cross of Merit, First Class

2007 National Award for International Science and Technology of the People's Republic of China

2004 State Prize of Lower Saxony

1999 German Future Prize – The German President's Prize for Technology and Innovation

1995 The Louis-Jeantet-Prize for Medicine

1994 Leibniz Prize awarded by the German Research Foundation

Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology School Corporation Board of Governors

The OIST Board of Governors, which consists of world-renowned scientists including Nobel Laureates, oversees the implementation of business conducted by the corporation.

Chair: Dr. Torsten Wiesel

1981 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine
President Emeritus, the Rockefeller University
Chairperson, Board of Governors, OIST SC

Vice-Chair: Dr. Akito Arima

President, Shizuoka University of Art and Culture
Chancellor, Musashi Education Institution, Nezu Education Foundation
Director, Science Museum
Former Minister, Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture
Former President, University of Tokyo
Former President, RIKEN
Order of Culture “Bunkakunsho” from the Emperor of Japan, 2010

Members:

Dr. Yoko Aniya
Professor Emeritus, University of the Ryukyus

Dr. Robert Baughman
Executive Vice President for Technology Development and Innovation/Vice-CEO/Professor, Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University

Dr. Curtis Callan
James S. McDonnell Distinguished University Professor, Princeton University

Dr. Rita Colwell
Distinguished Professor, Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health
Distinguished Professor, University of Maryland, College Park
Former Director, US National Science Foundation

Dr. Jonathan Dorfman
President/CEO, Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University

Dr. Jerome Friedman
1990 Nobel Prize in Physics
Professor, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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Dr. Serge Haroche
2012 Nobel Prize in Physics
President, Collège de France

Dr. Kazuhito Hashimoto
President, National Institute for Materials Science

Dr. Motoko Kotani
Director, WPI-AIMR, Tohoku University

Dr. VijayRaghavan Krishnaswamy
Distinguished Professor, National Centre for Biological Sciences, Tata Institute for
Fundamental Research, Bangalore, India
Secretary, Department of Biotechnology, Government of India

Dr. Kiyoshi Kurokawa
Visiting Professor, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies
Former President, the Science Council of Japan

Dr. Yuan T. Lee
1986 Nobel Prize in Chemistry
President Emeritus, Academia Sinica

Mr. Koji Omi
Chairman of Science and Technology Society Forum
Former Minister of Finance
Former Minister of State for Okinawa and Northern Territory Affairs, and Science and
Technology Policies
Former Minister of State for Economic Planning

Dr. Hiroko Sho
Member, University of the Ryukyus Management Council
Board of Councilor, Okinawa Science and Technology Promotion Center

Dr. Albrecht Wagner
Chairman Emeritus, Board of Directors, DESY

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