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UC San Diego Signs MOU with Foundation for Biomedical Research and Innovation at Kobe

The 5-year agreement seeks to promote cooperation and joint discovery in biomedical research

The University of California San Diego and the Foundation for Biomedical Research and Innovation at Kobe (FBRI) have entered into a five-year memo of understanding (MOU). The MOU was announced on October 19, 2018 in Japan at the 20th anniversary celebration of the Kobe Biomedical Innovation Cluster, of which FBRI is the core research institute.

The MOU affirms a shared interest between UC San Diego and FBRI in cooperative biomedical research that will include joint research projects and publications, co-hosting seminars and workshops, and site visits. The primary contacts for the MOU are Dr. Shu Chien for UC San Diego and Dr. Ryuji Hiramatsu for FBRI.

FBRI President Tasuku Honjo stated, “I am very pleased that we have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of California San Diego concerning our future collaborations in the field of biomedical sciences.”

Dr. Honjo, who recently won the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his work on cancer therapy, further stated, “San Diego continues to grow as one of the world’s largest biotechnology clusters. I expect this MOU will promote collaboration between our institutions and researchers based in San Diego and Kobe, as well as leading to the future growth of UC San Diego and the Foundation of Biomedical Research and Innovation at Kobe.”



FBRI President Tasuku Honjo and Distinguished Professor of Pathology Napoleone Ferrara hold signed copies of the MOU. (Photo courtesy of FBRI)

This sentiment was echoed by UC San Diego Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla: “In the spirit of international collaboration, we believe this partnership will bring together the strengths of UC San Diego and the Foundation for Biomedical Research and Innovation at Kobe to advance and spark biomedical research discoveries that will have a real-world impact on the lives of people around the world.”

FBRI was established in March 2000 through funding from Kobe City and Hyogo Prefecture. They are charged with promoting and facilitating collaboration and integration among industrial, governmental, academic and medical sectors; supporting R&D leading to advances in healthcare and their clinical applications; and working toward the construction of next-generation healthcare systems. FBRI’s ultimate goals are to revitalize Kobe’s economy, enhance local residents’ wellbeing, and contribute to the international community.

Dr. Chien, professor of bioengineering at the Jacobs School of Engineering, believes the MOU will lead to an exciting and fruitful collaboration, “energizing the outstanding talents and expertise of the two institutions and resulting in innovative discoveries and valuable translational research.”

For several years, UC San Diego has worked cooperatively with FBRI and the City of Kobe. In 2016, Dr. Honjo received the Kyoto Prize in Basic Sciences, and subsequently spoke at UC San Diego as part of the Kyoto Prize Symposium. Many UC San Diego faculty have also spoken in Kobe at the request of FBRI including most recently Distinguished Professor of Pathology Napoleone Ferrera, who was present at the 20th anniversary celebration. In turn UC San Diego has hosted the Kobe BIO International Delegation, led by members of FBRI.

UC San Diego Vice Chancellor for Research Sandra A. Brown believes that “these types of collaborations can foster breakthroughs that may remain elusive otherwise. Bringing together the most talented researchers from San Diego and Kobe will help speed discovery and innovation in biomedicine, leading to advances in public health that will benefit communities worldwide.”

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