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UC San Diego's New Tokyo Office Advances Key Research Goals

Sandra Brown, UC San Diego's Vice Chancellor for Research, explained during her visit there why the university's new office in Tokyo, Japan — and its first overseas — was a good match of interests and resources.

Celebrating UC San Diego's new office in Tokyo are (from left) Takashi Ueda, LINK-J Director and Mitsui Fudosan Executive Managing Officer; Albert Pisano, Dean of the Jacobs School of Engineering; Sandra Brown, Vice Chancellor for Research; Robert Sullivan, Dean of the Rady School of Management; and Akihiko Soyama, LINK-J Secretary-General.

"We are very pleased the office is located at the heart of the life-science hub in Tokyo," Brown said during the July 26 opening, "It's a perfect fit for UC San Diego, as our two cities are seen as world leaders in life sciences and biotechnology."

Brown traveled to Tokyo with Albert P. Pisano, Dean of the Jacobs School of Engineering, and Robert Sullivan, Dean of the Rady School of Management, highlighting the importance that UC San Diego assigns to the collaboration.

UC San Diego Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla supported their visit with a message to the international team in Tokyo.

"The challenges we face as a global society are increasingly complex and need to be addressed collectively through the collaboration of nations, industries, and disciplines," Khosla said.

"By opening this new office in Tokyo's life-science hub, UC San Diego is demonstrating our commitment to strengthen our global partnerships and advance the frontiers of knowledge in order to benefit our planet and humankind."

The California visitors were hosted by Takashi Ueda, Director of Life Science Innovation Network Japan (LINK-J) and Akihiko Soyama, Secretary General of LINK-J, who welcomed them to the new office in the Nihonbashi Life Science Building.

LINK-J is collaborating with Mitsui Fudosan Co. Ltd to promote the project, hoping to spark "open innovation" in the life sciences through industry-government-academic cooperation in the Nihonbashi area – home to many pharmaceutical and other companies.

Director Ueda, who also serves as Executive Managing Officer of Mitsui Fudosan, said the area's focus on pharmaceuticals goes back to the Edo Period in Japan's history.

"By leveraging this traditional advantage," he said, "Mitsui Fudosan and LINK-J have launched a project to promote life-science innovation. The city of San Diego is known for being one of the largest life-science clusters in the United States and a role model for us. We are excited to collaborate and together accelerate open innovation."

Dean of Engineering Pisano detailed what he sees as the benefits of the new office: The university wants to step up cooperation with Japanese companies and develop business; the collaborations will help drive innovation and entrepreneurship; and international networking.

"The Tokyo office will serve as the venue for research symposiums, networking events or alumni associations, as well as the base for our faculty members who visit Japan for research," Pisano said. "Addressing impending issues associated with the life-science area – located at the crossing of medicine, science, and engineering – is a challenge that both Japan and the U.S. face."

Vice Chancellor Brown, noting that UC San Diego has already forged an alliance with Chugai Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd. in Japan, emphasized the strategic vision inherent in international and industry-university collaborations.

"We are focused," she said, "on long-term research, education, and innovation, with global stakes."

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