

Message from the Dean

Prof. Tetsuo Nagano

Pharmaceutical sciences is an interdisciplinary field that begins with basic sciences such as organic chemistry, biochemistry, pharmacology, genetics, physical chemistry, analytical chemistry, and pharmacokinetics but also extends beyond these aspects of drug discovery to encompass the proper use of the drug products that are generated by research and development. Since the Meiji period (1868 - 1912), the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Graduate School of Pharmaceutical Sciences, The University of Tokyo, has been conducting research at the highest level of international standard, and the educational activities supported by findings in these major areas of inquiry have cultivated the human resources that emerge as leaders in the myriad branches of pharmaceutical sciences. Our graduates have not only promoted the basic life sciences but also assumed positions in drug discovery research and development at pharmaceutical companies, as well as in medical administration.

Particularly in the past 10 years or so, the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Graduate School of Pharmaceutical Sciences, has expanded the horizons of science at an extremely high level, and the numerous academic awards (Japan Academy Prize, Shijyuhousho (Purple Ribbon Medal), Uehara Prize, Takamine Memorial Sankyo Prize, etc.) won by our faculty members have attracted attention both in Japan and abroad. As a result, many students from the College of Liberal Arts have set their sights on pursuing senior division studies with us, giving our Faculty a student body of exceptionally high caliber. The deciphering of the human genome has set in motion an ongoing qualitative transformation in pharmaceutical sciences research. Top-level research in drug discovery is just one aspect of this transformation.

While great strides forward are being made in basic pharmaceutical research, there is simultaneously an urgent need to train high-quality pharmacists to shoulder the care of the Japanese populace as medicine becomes ever more complex and specialized. Graduates of the University of Tokyo are expected to play active roles as medical practitioners and pharmacists who occupy positions of leadership at medical institutions. Under these circumstances, a new system of education in the pharmaceutical sciences

was instituted in fiscal 2006. Under the new system, we have both a 4-year program in Pharmaceutical Sciences and a 6-year program in Pharmacy. On the basis of the patterns of activities pursued by our graduates when they enter the workforce, we have established enrollment limits of 72 students for the 4-year program in Pharmaceutical Sciences and 8 students for the 6-year program in Pharmacy. The 8 Pharmacy students in the program's first graduating class are now 5th-year students taking part in the first long-term practicum of its kind held by our Faculty.

Today, research trends in the pharmaceutical sciences are entering an era of major change at the same time that educational systems are undergoing sweeping reforms. Amidst these tempestuous transformations, the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Graduate School of Pharmaceutical Sciences, The University of Tokyo, remains a steady leader in the pharmaceutical sciences, continually generating good proposals and voicing views that have impact in the academic world and beyond.