



Global Rochester: Japan

Koichi Tadenuma '89 (PhD) leads a unique Japanese university.

As the new president at Hitotsubashi University in Tokyo, Koichi Tadenuma '89 (PhD) is focusing on the global impact of the school, which specializes in the social sciences—the leading university in the country to do so—and has campuses in three areas of the Japanese capital city.

Elected last year, Tadenuma aims to “increase the number of research fields at our university that are ranked within the top 100 in world university rankings,” adding that it’s a goal held by university presidents across Japan. The school has about 6,400 students, of whom 700 are international students.

Established in 1875 as a commercial training school, the school became Tokyo University of Commerce in 1920. Just three years later, an earthquake destroyed all of its build-

ings except for the library. It moved to its present location, Kunitachi—about 15 miles west of central Tokyo—in 1930 and took the name Hitotsubashi in 1949, from an education district near the Imperial Palace where it was located in its early days. One of the first Japanese schools to adopt the American education system introduced after World War II, the school is made up of 12 main units: four faculties, seven graduate schools, and one institute, the Institute of Economic Research.

Tadenuma earned his doctorate in economics at Rochester, and says that his economics training serves him well in the presidency. “Economics seeks an optimal system or mechanism that achieves the best consequence under given budget constraints. I believe that this way of thinking that I learned in economics is also useful for

managing a university.”

Tadenuma returned to Japan from Rochester, becoming an assistant professor at Hitotsubashi in 1990 and receiving promotion to full rank eleven years later. In 2011, he became dean of the Graduate School of Economics.

He credits his Rochester doctoral advisor, William Thompson, the Elmer B. Milliman Professor of Economics—with whom he is now a coauthor—with teaching him “all the ‘musts’ for researchers: being curious, finding a problem, building a model, thinking logically, and interpreting results. The wealth of invaluable advice and support he gave me is my treasure for life.”

While research is dear to Tadenuma’s heart, leading the university turns out to be something of a family tradition: his father, legal scholar Kenichi Tadenuma, was president from 1977 to 1980.

“I saw my father take on the job of president at the sacrifice of the research that he loved. I was put in the same position when I was nominated for president. Having seen my father’s situation, I needed some time to consider before deciding, but a sense of responsibility eventually made me accept the nomination.”

—Kathleen McGarvey

ROCHESTER AND JAPAN

People

- 476** alumni living in Japan
- 28** students from Japan in fall 2014
- 4** Fulbright Scholars have gone to Japan since 1993
- 172** students have studied abroad in Japan since 1979

In 1995, **Lionel McKenzie**, then the Wilson Professor Emeritus of Economics, was inducted into the Order of the Rising Sun and met with Emperor Akihito in recognition of his influence on the teaching of economics in Japan. Fifty of McKenzie’s former graduate students from Japan urged their government to extend the honor. McKenzie died in 2010.



PRESIDENTIAL PERFORMANCE: Tadenuma, an economist, is the new president of Hitotsubashi University, Japan’s leading university to specialize in the social sciences.