

## Announcing UTokyo Compass

Teruo Fujii, President, The University of Tokyo

UTokyo Compass is a statement of the guiding principles of the University of Tokyo, of the ideals to which our university should aspire and the direction it should take, under the title “Into a Sea of Diversity: Creating the Future through Dialogue.”

I am announcing UTokyo Compass not only as a mission statement like those issued by every new president of the university. I intend for UTokyo Compass also to be a call to everyone at UTokyo to build a common vision for our university and to ensure that we make steady progress along a shared course over the coming decades, all the while earning the understanding of the entire university community and of our stakeholders in society.

*The University of Tokyo Charter*, adopted in March 2003, marked a historical turning point for Japanese higher education, for it clarified UTokyo’s principles and goals in response to a major change in our role in society, when the national universities were incorporated as autonomous entities. In line with the principles of the *Charter*, successive presidents of the university have released mission statements in the *Action Plan* (July 2005), *Action Scenario* (April 2010), and *The University of Tokyo: Vision 2020* (October 2015). Each of these documents was an attempt to chart the ongoing transformation of UTokyo in conjunction with the changing times and through specific goals and action plans.

The time has now come for us to think deeply about the university’s autonomy and creativity, for these are essential qualities for a national university in this new age. This autonomy and creativity are not based on any existing model; rather, they are ideals we seek to follow and strengthen as we work to overcome the challenges facing us. When previous presidents talked about reforming the operation and management of the university, they meant much more than merely improvements to our financial, personnel, and administrative systems. Now, by taking a multifaceted view from the three perspectives of “knowledge,” “people,” and “place” and by creating a virtuous circle among these three perspectives, UTokyo is working, as a university that serves the global public, to nurture diverse and talented individuals and to discover solutions to the global issues facing humanity. It is this kind of management that the university must develop for itself to expand its scope as an academic institution. UTokyo Compass thus charts a new course for UTokyo as an organization willing to question the possibilities of the university and to radically reimagine itself even as it tackles contemporary global issues. It is also a challenge both to the university to put its extensive creative powers to the test and to the larger society to which we belong.

Both in the management process and as a creative methodology, I place great importance on dialogue. Dialogue is more than just a discussion or exchange of information. By dialogue, I mean the act of trying to understand. To understand, we need to question. The ability to formulate questions is fostered at the university and is

essential for starting dialogue. But just asking questions is insufficient. For in-depth dialogue, we must share our questions with others and develop the ability to question together. Engaging with each other through dialogue as we face problems together builds mutual understanding and confidence through the process of seeing, feeling, and thinking together. Dialogue also fosters harmony among diverse voices. To create a future founded in diversity, we need to be keenly sensitive to unfairness and discrimination and to the existence of vulnerable groups in society, and we must actively confront relevant challenges with sincerity.

UTokyo Compass itself has been created through dialogue to the fullest extent possible. We organized working groups of faculty and administrative staff not only on the basic themes of research, education, and cocreation with society but also in the areas of digital transformation (DX), green transformation (GX), internationalization, diversity and inclusion, public relations and communication, work styles, and management strategies. The working groups were formed in close cooperation with the President's Vision Task Force. With the support of communications staff, we also held eighteen "Dialogue with the President" sessions with faculty, administrative staff, and students in Japanese and English, and we listened to outside opinions through the university's Administrative Council and other forums. But these mark just the first steps in what will be an ongoing effort to value and engage in dialogue. This UTokyo Compass is thus not a fixed set of rules to follow but rather a framework of principles that will guide the efforts of each university unit and every member of the university community and that can be applied, improved, and enriched as we seek to create a better university.

In addressing the complex global issues confronting today's world, I believe that the cycle of dialogue and mutual confidence, born from research, education, and cocreation with society and fostered by UTokyo, will open up a bright new future. Pursuing our ideals together will create new connections. It is such dialogue and such connections that, I believe, form the foundation of the university's principles of promoting cocreation with industry and our aspiration to excellence in service of society. Creating a uniquely autonomous university is like setting sail across a mighty sea of complex challenges. Nevertheless, I look forward to voyaging ahead in dialogue with all of you along the course set by UTokyo Compass.