



Hokkaido University Nitobe College Alumni Network Magazine

# ACROSS

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## Introduction



**Junji Yamaguchi**

Vice-Principal, Hokkaido University Nitobe College

I'd like to say a few words on the occasion of the first publication of Across, the Hokkaido University Nitobe College Alumni Network magazine.

Do you know where the name Across comes from? It comes from a famous remark made by Dr. Inazo Nitobe at age 21: "I wish to be a bridge across the Pacific." The name was chosen thanks to the suggestion from Professor Kazuyori Yuhazu, the assistant-principal of Nitobe College.

Let me briefly outline the history of Nitobe College. Hokkaido University launched Nitobe College, an undergraduate education course, in April 2013 and Nitobe School, a graduate education course, in April 2015. From their inception, both institutions offered pioneering interdisciplinary programs that cut "across" undergraduate and graduate studies: Nitobe College required students to study abroad and provided in-person classes taught by Nitobe College Fellows selected from Hokkaido University alumni, and Nitobe School offered leading-edge education centered on group work. Both institutions, which were named after Dr. Nitobe, had developed steadily until their merger in April 2019 as the new Nitobe College, a comprehensive educational program that integrates undergraduate and graduate levels. The merger eliminated the name "Nitobe School," so we apologize to the alumni who are proud of their alma mater program and feel a sense of "school spirit" to it. I hope they'll renew their pride and "school spirit" as Nitobe College alumni.

2020 marks Nitobe College's eighth year. During this time, various reforms have been implemented, including the merger of Nitobe School and Nitobe College, the establishment of many courses and a shift to a two-stage educational system consisting of the Foundation Program and the Honors Program. The current Nitobe College has been making steady progress, and in recognition of the college's contribution, Hokkaido University was ranked first in the 2020 Nihon Keizai Shimbun's University Image Ranking survey of corporate HR managers (<https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXMZO59906530T00C20A6TCN000>; Scan the QR code at the lower right to access the page). I'm most grateful to the Nitobe College alumni who've helped us achieve this honor. Having said that, we're far from perfect. I believe drawing closer to perfection is possible only if we develop a network with the alumni of Nitobe College and with those of Hokkaido University in addition to current students, faculty, and administrative members, Nitobe College Fellows and Mentors. This type of network was named the "Nitobe Network" in the statement on the Nitobe College concept that was prepared at the inception of the program eight years ago. The publication of this alumni network magazine is intended to spark lively alumni communication so that we can go forward together "across" the horizon.



The Nihon Keizai Shimbun website

The Hokkaido University campus will once again be surrounded by lush greenery. I have no doubt that those who've studied on this verdant campus will find themselves transported to their university years the moment they see the cover photo of this magazine. It's my hope that this magazine will help rekindle happy memories.



Nitobe Memorial Garden at the University of British Columbia (Canada)

## Maintaining a good work-life balance

### Mai Kimura

Nitobe College's 2013 inaugural class



I'm Mai Kimura, a member of the inaugural class of Nitobe College. I've been a local government employee since 2019. Recently, my workplace has embraced various workstyles, such as staggered and flexible working hours. In my first year at university, I stayed in Finland on a short-term study program. Back then, I felt that it was inconvenient when all the shops closed in the late afternoon. I was unfamiliar with the concept of "work-life balance." Once I joined the workforce, however, I came to realize the need for a society that explores sustainable workstyles that suit individuals' needs. My experience in Finland taught me how important it is to ask myself whether the things we take for granted are actually the best for us. This struggle experienced during my student days even helps me now in my life. Given the increasing likelihood that the Covid-19 pandemic will make 2020 a tumultuous year, I hope to make steady strides forward without losing sight of what I should do. Lastly, I wish everyone continued success.

## Exploring animal welfare

### Shen Dan

Master of Animal Sciences,  
Wageningen University &  
Research (Netherlands)  
Nitobe College's 2013 inaugural class



Hello. I'm Shen Dan, a member of the inaugural class of Nitobe College. I completed the Master's Programme of Animal Sciences at Wageningen University & Research in the Netherlands last December. I majored in livestock ethology and animal welfare. Animal welfare is the field of study that aims to reduce the stress experienced by domestic animals and to create a comfortable environment for them based on ethological, physiological, and other approaches. In the first year of my master's programme, I took various specialized courses, and in my second year I engaged in research on two different topics for my master's thesis: One focused on the ear postures of dairy cows as an indicator of their feelings, and the other compared perceptions of livestock welfare among university students in Japan to those in the Netherlands. I've led a fulfilling campus life in my graduate years, engaging in study and research, visiting farms and interacting with students of various cultural backgrounds. I hope to continue my research on animal welfare in a doctoral program.

## Seeing from a bird's-eye view

### Yuriko Saheki

Researcher at Shiseido Co., Ltd.

Nitobe School's 2015 inaugural class



I work as a researcher at Shiseido. Since the official language here is English, it's essential to be able to communicate in English. I believe that active learning and output-based learning, which I experienced in English at Nitobe School, are of great value. I feel they've proved useful and beneficial to me in my work in the workforce. Other features of Nitobe School which I've found helpful include its emphasis on the importance of developing one's capacity for knowledge sharing and applications for social benefit by recognizing one's role in society. The ability to have an accurate and objective understanding of your own position and the position of your research in society affects your ability to communicate logically and persuasively. The opportunities I was given to train and develop this ability at Nitobe School have helped me formulate research plans and offer suggestions to my supervisors. In fact, they're a tremendous help to me as I work toward my goals. Several years after completing the Nitobe School program, I still have opportunities to meet my classmates. It's truly inspiring to see how hard they've been working. In fact, they motivate me to aim higher.

## Utilizing your expertise, unleashing your potential

### Miku Maeda

Store Operations Department, Nitori Co., Ltd.

Nitobe School, Class of 2017



I remember having inspiring discussions at Nitobe School. One topic was "What is globalism?" Our five-member team discussed the emergence of a lingua franca, an increase in multinational companies, the expansion of free trade, and genome editing. What interested me was that nobody had the same ideas. In fact, this was one reason I chose Nitobe School. It is a place where students who are from different graduate schools and who have different nationalities, cultures and values work together to solve problems using English as a common language. In graduate school, I majored in interpretation and translation studies. To serve as an interpreter or translator, you have to accept and understand the emotions of the speaker or writer you're working with and speak or write from the viewpoint of that speaker or writer. At Nitobe School, as I worked with people of diverse backgrounds, I developed the ability to think from their viewpoints while maximizing my expertise. Hoping to develop an area of expertise other than interpretation and translation, I went into a career in business after completing my graduate studies. While honing my interpretation and translation skills for use in business settings, I'm also embarking on tasks in totally different fields. My experience at Nitobe School in thinking from the viewpoints of others and respecting one another's differences has laid a solid foundation for my professional performance in an environment where teamwork is a given.





## Undergraduate Education Course

### ■ Global Foundation Course

This is a compulsory course in the Foundation Program. In the spring term, the “Global Foundation Course: International Understanding and Study Abroad” is offered, where instructors talk about current situations and issues of the international community in omnibus-style classes to prepare students for overseas study. In the summer term, the “Global Foundation Course: Leadership and Teamwork” is offered, where students chiefly engage in group work, learn about leadership, and strive to exercise it.



### ■ Dialog Program

This program offers the opportunity for students to have one-on-one dialogs with Nitobe College Fellows who have worked on the front lines in their fields in a rapidly changing society. This program helps students develop the ability to think and act independently and offers clues for the future based on the new perspectives they gain about society and career design.



### ■ Short-Term Overseas Special Program

This program provides a great opportunity for students to grow personally and academically through various lectures and practical training offered by Hokkaido University's overseas partner institutions to develop the knowledge and skills required to address global issues. Photo A shows an outdoor lecture at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, where students learned about the characteristics and development of forests in cold regions. Photo B shows fieldwork on the biodiversity of coastal ecosystems at the University of Washington Friday Harbor Laboratories.



### ■ Fellow Seminar

Fellow Seminar courses are designed for students to learn in small groups from Nitobe College Fellows who play active roles in society. The courses provide students with an opportunity for in-depth learning regarding real-life issues facing the world. They also help students develop leadership and teamwork skills while considering, through on-site inspections and group work, the roles of academia and society as well as the role of sustainability in society.



### ■ Career Development Seminar

Career Development Seminar courses, which include an overnight training session, help students create a vision for their career and find clues that can help them achieve their goals. Nitobe College Fellows and Mentors are there as consultants and partners to encourage students to grow and thrive.



## Major Nitobe College Programs and Events

### Graduate Education Course

#### ■ Foundation I: Basics of Team-based Learning

This program helps students develop the basic knowledge and skills necessary for those of different nationalities and areas of expertise to collaborate in delivering results: creative and critical thinking and leadership skills, as well as professional ethics.

Themes: AI Ethics for Developers, Users and Legislators; War and Ethics: Research Development and Dual Use; Human Remains of Ainu People and Research Ethics



#### ■ Foundation II: Practice of Team-based Learning

This program encourages students to develop project management techniques for the effective and efficient implementation of project-based teamwork. In the final session, students conduct an in-depth examination of their project's feasibility through Q&A with their Mentors.

Themes: Sustainable & Resilient City Sapporo; Refugee Response Plan in Sapporo; Snow Removal Project in Sapporo; Tourism Management in Hokudai



#### ■ Advanced I & II: Problem Solving & Problem Finding

In this program, students work to identify and solve various problems related to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from local and global perspectives. They develop the ability to view things from multiple angles by getting down to the nitty-gritty of problems through discussions about solutions and through field surveys.

Themes: Problem Solving: Migration in Japan; Problem Finding: Sapporo & Hakodate in 50 Years



#### ■ Nitobe College Special Seminar for Graduate Students: Demola (Issue-solving exercise for real business) & Hult Prize Challenge

These programs help students gain an in-depth understanding of entrepreneurship and plan projects to address corporate challenges (Demola) and social issues (Hult Prize). Hokkaido University is the first university in Japan to introduce the Demola program. In the Hult Prize Challenge, a team including Nitobe College students became the first team from Japan to win at a Regional Summit and to join a training event in the UK.



<https://nitobe-college.academic.hokudai.ac.jp/g/wp-content/uploads/fd77a582b9e646095da458bfe4785be6.pdf>



#### ■ Mentor Forum

The Mentor Forum 2019 was held under the theme of “Considering Career Paths and Career Changes.” At the event, Nitobe College Mentors who work globally in various fields gave lectures in English and interacted with students. Learning from Mentors how studies at Nitobe College are beneficial when graduates enter the workforce, students reaffirmed their confidence in their academic pursuits and widened their perspectives on their career options, including proceeding to doctoral programs or seeking to become entrepreneurs.





# Fellow/Mentor Updates

## Pursuing a path of noblesse oblige toward Hokkaido's 200th anniversary



**Ryoko Sasaki**  
Fellow

Hokkaido University School of Law, Class of 1972  
President, R's Seminar Inc.  
Former vice-governor of Hokkaido

The “noblesse oblige” in the title is a term that expresses the Western ideal that people with advantages are responsible and obligated to help those without them. Dr. Inazo Nitobe equated this ideal to the spirit of Japan in his well-known book *Bushido*.

Having failed my bar exam, I found a job much later than my classmates. In 1995, I founded an educational consultancy at age 49 and worked for decades in the employee training field. In 2002, when I was age 55, I became a vice governor of Hokkaido under Governor Tatsuya Hori, who graduated from the Hokkaido University School of Agriculture (Forestry Course). I believe that my experience in the government sector changed me forever. Acclimatization to changing circumstances has widened my perspectives and provided me with various opportunities to advance into various leadership positions.

I suggest that Nitobe College students make a conscious effort to do three things: listen to others, do something helpful for others, and act on their own, rather than just gathering information from books and online sources. By so doing and through real-life experience, you'll hone your leadership skills and find yourself infused with the spirit of noblesse oblige.

In my role as a Nitobe College Fellow, I look forward to working with you as you unlock the future toward Hokkaido's 200th anniversary.

## Helping students realize their dreams based on their real-life experiences and Fellows' experiences



**Toshihiko Ohtomo**

Hokkaido University School of Veterinary Medicine, Class of 1992  
Manager, Early Clinical Development Department  
Translational Research Division  
Chugai Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd.  
Veterinarian and Doctor of Veterinary Medicine

When I learned about Nitobe College, I thought, “If only there'd been a similar program in my college years, I'd have had broader interests and experiences.”

In my college years, I never looked overseas. It wasn't until I'd changed my career goal from becoming a veterinarian to engaging in the discovery of new drugs and I'd joined a pharmaceutical company that I realized I'd need a global perspective to make my dream come true—I'd need to look at what's going on in the world, not just around myself.

Today, we have easy access to various information and we can readily learn something new, which is a far cry from my student days. But there are many lessons that can only be learned through experience—through failure, in particular.

Nitobe College provides opportunities for real-life experience through various programs. Further, students can relive their Fellows' experiences through dialogs and interactions with them. Students can also learn what it is to play an active role on the global stage as if through first-hand experience. This means they can learn about the failures and hardships that Fellows have encountered. In fact, experience at Nitobe College helps students who are on the cusp of entering the real world to achieve their dreams.

## Rediscovering the frontier spirit of Hokkaido University in the era of uncertainty



**Taku Nakahara**

Hokkaido University School of Agriculture, Class of 2001  
Earned a doctorate from the Hokkaido University  
Graduate School of Science in 2007  
President & CEO, Metagen Therapeutics, Inc.  
Director, ENU Pharma, Inc.  
Venture Partner, Fast Track Initiative, Inc.

I spent years at Hokkaido University: four undergraduate years at the School of Agriculture, three doctoral years at the Graduate School of Science, and one and a half years as an assistant professor. Then I launched a biotech startup with technologies from Hokkaido University in the United States and worked there for roughly six years. I've had a direct relationship with Hokkaido University for a total of approximately 15 years. It's also been about five years since I became a Nitobe College Mentor.

The greatest academic asset that Hokkaido University offered me was the ability to build and test hypotheses. The academic basics of developing and testing sound hypotheses amidst great uncertainty should help us cultivate a zest for living in a time of uncertainty.

I was born a scientist who inherently loves pure science, believing that universities should never engage in so-called “practical researches.” On the other hand, I also acknowledge that to protect academia, universities have no choice but to make positive impacts on society. Regardless of my will and preference, I guess my mission is the latter: to make positive impacts on society by leveraging the power of science.

Since the 2010s, many top researchers and students became entrepreneurs in Japan. I've also been working as a venture capitalist and an entrepreneur in the deep tech startup world with them. However, Hokkaido University has created only a limited number of startups. The ambitious spirits that Hokkaido University was once famous for appear weakened, while our academic achievements are outstanding. Hokkaido University deserves more startups because the academic ability to develop and test hypotheses is also essential for startups. I hope to contribute to the community through Nitobe College to foster entrepreneurship among students and young researchers for the era of uncertainty.

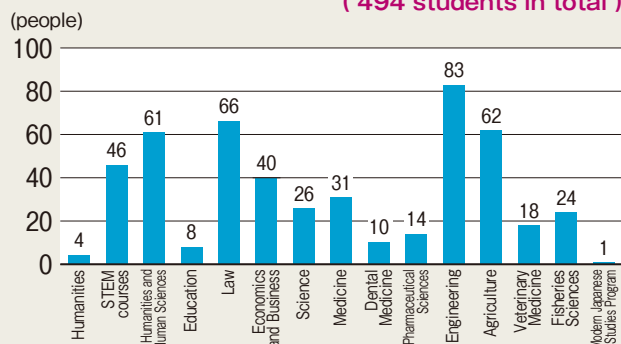
### ■ Fellow and Mentor System for Undergraduate Education Course Students

The Nitobe College Fellow and Mentor System aims to provide students with opportunities for self-reflection, inspiring them to consider the meaning of life and the significance of college education. Discussions with Fellows and Mentors who have ample experience in the real world motivate students to broaden their horizons and keep their ears to the ground on global issues, enabling them to identify what they can do to help address and act on these issues.

### ■ Mentor System for Graduate Education Course Students

Mentors for graduate students are selected from among alumni of the Nitobe College for Graduate Students (formerly known as Nitobe School) and Hokkaido University graduate schools, as well as from other people who play active roles in Hokkaido. Using their experience and personal contacts in the real world, they help students in their studies and career planning. Through exchanges, mentors help students become more conscious of their careers, broaden their perspectives, and build networks of personal contacts.

## Nitobe College Updates

Undergraduate  
Education CourseEnrollment by department in 2019  
(494 students in total)

## Scholarships Awarded in 2019

The chart on the right includes scholarships awarded to Nitobe College students via the Hokkaido University Elm Alumni Association and the Hokkaido University Frontier Foundation in 2019. Those scholarships were awarded to students studying abroad to cover their travel and living expenses and to students with outstanding academic achievement. The scholarship recipients have expressed their gratitude for the financial support and have shared their experiences abroad on the Elm Alumni Association website in addition to Homecoming Day and other events. Going forward, their words of appreciation will also be published in this magazine on a regular basis. On behalf of the students who've been awarded scholarships, I'd like to express my sincere gratitude to those who've contributed to the scholarships.

(Junji Yamaguchi, Vice-principal, Nitobe College)

Career Choices of Undergraduate  
Education Course Students

## [ Private enterprises ]

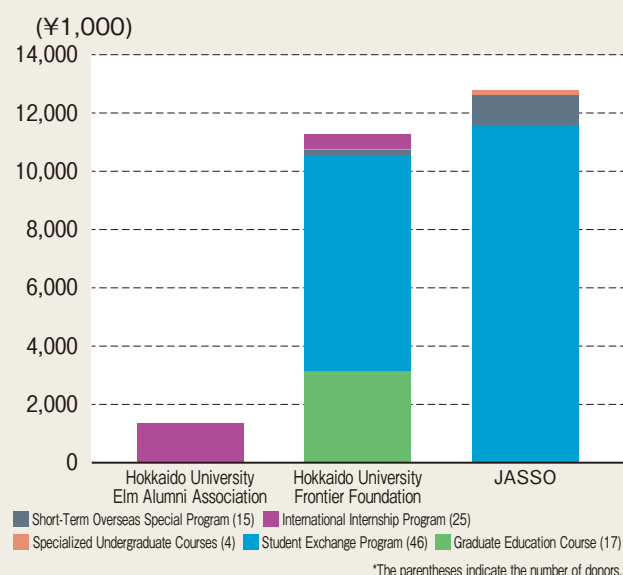
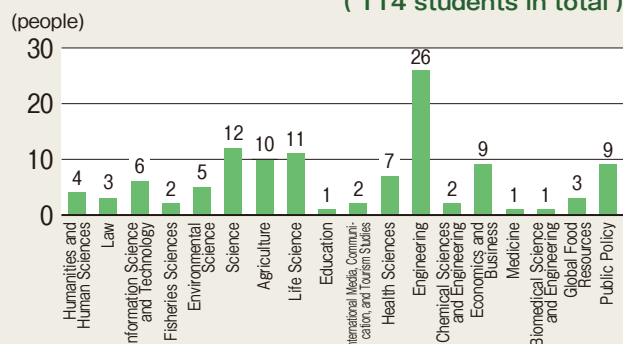
IBM Japan Ltd., Panasonic Corp., Shimizu Corp., Takenaka Corp., Hitachi Zosen Corp., Mitsubishi Electric Corp., Honda Motor Co., Ltd., DIC Corp., Nitori Co., Ltd., Benesse Corp., Chugai Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd., Jiji Press Ltd., The Asahi Shimbun Company, Accenture Japan Ltd., and others.

## [ Government organizations ]

Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry; Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare; Ministry of the Environment; Tokyo Metropolitan Government; City of Sapporo; City of Nagoya; and others.

## [ Master's programs ]

Hokkaido University, The University of Tokyo, Kyoto University, Texas A&M University (USA), Wageningen University & Research (Netherlands), Swedish University for Agricultural Sciences (Sweden), and others.

Graduate  
Education CourseEnrollment by department in 2019  
(114 students in total)Career Choices of Graduate  
Education Course Students

## [ Private enterprises ]

Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corp., DENSO Corp., Nitori Co., Ltd., Panasonic Corp., IHI Corp., KDDI Corp., AEON Co., Ltd., Komatsu Ltd., Johnson & Johnson K.K., Sony Corp., The Hokkaido Shimbun Press, Mizuho Financial Group, Inc., Mitsubishi Corp., Santen Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd., Shiseido Co., Ltd., Sojitz Corp., Dentsu Inc., Fujitsu Ltd., Nissan Motor Corp., Japan Tobacco Inc., and others.

## [ Government organizations ]

Ministry of Justice, National Police Agency, Japan Meteorological Agency, Hokkaido Government, Hokkaido Research Organization, and others.

## [ Universities ]

Hokkaido University (Research Faculty of Agriculture, Faculty of Health Sciences, Hokkaido University Hospital), Jahangirnagar University (Bangladesh)

## [ Doctoral programs ]

Hokkaido University

Nitobe College  
Alumni Association  
and registration  
for membership

The Hokkaido University Nitobe College Alumni Network provides a venue for exchanges among past and current Nitobe College students (including graduates of Nitobe School), Fellows, Mentors, faculty, and administrative members. Access the website or scan the QR code below for membership registration for fellowship, mutual support, and enlightenment.

Registration for Membership in  
Hokkaido University Nitobe College Alumni Network  
**Hokkaido University Nitobe College Alumni Network  
Membership Registration Form**

**Nitobe College Students  
and Alumni**

(Nitobe College Alumni)

<https://ws.formzu.net/fgen/S23755582/>



**Fellows, Mentors, Faculty,  
and Administrative Members**

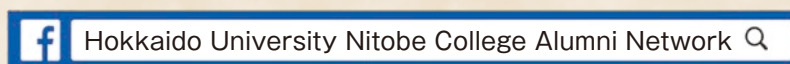
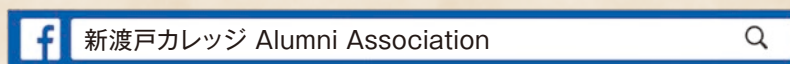
(Fellows, Mentors, Instructors)

<https://ws.formzu.net/fgen/S31898088/>



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Communication via Facebook



**Hokkaido University Elm Alumni Association, Tokyo Alumni Association,  
Kansai Alumni Association and Hokkaido Alumni Association**

**Hokkaido University Elm Alumni Association**

<https://www.alumni-hokudai.jp/>

The large number of alumni and extensive networks that Hokkaido University has developed over the course of its long history have become great assets of the university. For alumni, who studied on the same campus, it must be a great joy to foster fellowship among themselves, support one another, and enlighten themselves.

The Hokkaido University Elm Alumni Association was founded in June 2016 with the objective of using those assets to help the university fulfill its goals and missions. It consists of sub-associations, including those organized by undergraduate or graduate school and those founded by region in Japan and beyond.

**Hokkaido University Kansai Alumni Association**

<http://hokudai-kansai.com/>

The Kansai Alumni Association was founded to promote exchanges and fellowship among alumni. Today, it has more than 1,000 members, primarily in the Kinki region of Western Japan, and is engaged in active efforts in cooperation with Hokkaido University and other sub-associations (including those organized by undergraduate school and by region).

**Hokkaido University Tokyo Alumni Association**

<http://www.hokudai-tokyo.org/>

The Tokyo Alumni Association is open to alumni either living or working in the Kanto and Koshinetsu regions, which consist of one metropolis (Tokyo) and 10 prefectures (Kanagawa, Saitama, Chiba, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Gunma, Yamanashi, Nagano, Niigata and Shizuoka). Today, it has approximately 2,000 members.

**Hokkaido University Hokkaido Alumni Association**

<https://www.hokudai-hc.com/>

The Hokkaido Alumni Association represents a community of alumni, faculty and administrative members living or working in Hokkaido. It is also open to alumni living outside Hokkaido.

Members of this network-oriented association exchange information over the internet (e.g., by e-mail) via the Hokkaido Alumni Association Office. It was founded on April 18, 2014 and is now accepting membership applications.