

Draft Outcomes of the IARU Presidents' Meeting 2021

The IARU Online Presidents' Meeting took place on January 27th, February 5th and 10th. Considering the time difference, the meeting was carried out in three separate groups. The Presidents shared the current focuses and challenges regarding the management of respective universities, including the responses to the spread of COVID-19 and their strategies for after the COVID-19. The Presidents also discussed the nomination of the next IARU Chair.

Group 1

ETH Zürich
Peking University
University of Cape Town
University of Oxford

Group 2

National University of Singapore
University of Cambridge
University of Copenhagen

Group 3

Australian National University
University of California, Berkeley
Yale University

Opening and Welcome

Chair Makoto Gonokami opened the 16th IARU Presidents' Meeting by welcoming all attendees. He shared his opening remarks reflecting on what IARU has achieved during his chairmanship, such as follows:

- 1) Discussion on Future of IARU and improvement of the mechanism of Presidents' Meeting and Senior Officers' Meeting
 - In an effort to maximize the attendance of the Presidents in the Presidents Meeting, ETH kindly agreed to host Presidents' Meeting every other year, back to back with Davos
 - Differentiating the roles of President's Meeting and Senior Officers' Meeting, with the Senior Officers meeting as a governing body of working groups, playing the central role of examining and approving the status report and budget request of the working groups, while the Presidents' Meeting focusing more on setting future agendas and visions.
 - Implementing the new guideline for budget request for IARU Working Groups and Initiatives
- 2) Collaboration under COVID-19
 - Launch of the Epidemiology Research Initiative lead by PKU
 - Introduction of online format of the Presidents' Hotline and Senior Officers' Meetings

- Cultivation of new joint activities, such as Joint Education Programs and Virtual Museum Tour

He stressed that the multi-lateral cooperation is vital in this challenging time and that IARU can become the driver of change building on the strong network based on trust, and thanked all Presidents and Senior Officers for their commitment during his tenure.

Session 1. Regional Round-up

Presidents shared institutional focuses and challenges, including responses to COVID-19. Many Presidents pointed out that especially in this trying times of COVID-19, the international network of universities becomes more important than ever, and would look forward to discussing new opportunities for collaborations. The following shows the list of some of the topics touched upon by the presidents. While recognizing the efficiency of online meetings, many presidents expressed the anticipation to hold in-person meetings in the near future as a way to share ideas informally, which is one of the central merits of being part of the IARU community. Since this is a closed session, details will not be described in the outcomes

ETH Zürich

- research focus in the coming years
- relationship with companies and startups
- student support
- future strategy of ETH

Peking University

- institutional efforts made to tackle COVID-19 after its outbreak
- education under COVID-19
- international collaboration (17th Beijing Forum)
- new initiatives on research on pandemics

University of Cape Town

- financial consequences of COVID-19
- student life under COVID-19
- various contributions made by UCT students and scholars to tackle COVID-19
- Vision 2030

University of Oxford

- UK higher education and BREXIT
- new research focuses
- education and research under COVID-19
- various contributions made by Oxford scholars including the development of a vaccine and giving advice to the government

National University of Singapore

- national status of COVID-19 response
- education under COVID-19
- research focus in the coming years
- increasing focus on broad-based and interdisciplinary education and lifelong learning

University of Cambridge

- impact of COVID-19 on UK higher education
- various measures taken to contain and control the virus
- new educational initiatives

University of Copenhagen

- student life under COVID-19
- universities' contribution to tackle COVID-19 in collaboration with the government
- new educational and research initiatives within sustainability

Australian National University

- impact of COVID-19 on finance and education
- various contributions made by ANU members on tackling COVID-19 including advising the government
- new initiatives (ANU Below Zero Initiative)

UC Berkeley

- impact of COVID-19 on education, finance and university management
- various creative efforts made to improve education
- pandemic has brought about increased awareness of inequality

Yale University

- new US Presidential administration and higher education
- student life under COVID-19
- various measures taken to contain and control COVID-19
- new research initiatives

The University of Tokyo

- COVID-19 and climate change as important national agenda
- new research initiatives (Center for Global Commons, Global Commons Stewardship Index)
- issuance of 40-year bonds for the first time in the history of Japanese national universities

Session 2. Business Matters

6.1 Report on IARU Working Groups and Initiatives

Makiko Toyoki (IARU Secretariat) reported on the current activities of each IARU Working Groups and Initiatives, and their budgets for FY2021 approved by the Senior Officers'. She stated that many of these activities were not the exception to be affected by COVID-19 and had to switch their activities to online. Kiichi Fujiwara (UTokyo) added that the Senior Officers had requested each group and initiative to further explore ways to stimulate their activities under COVID-19 and this resulted in some groups to revise their activity plan and budget request. Chair Gonokami showed full support to the budget plan, commenting that he appreciates the IARU Working Groups and Initiatives' for their effort to enhance their activities despite of not being able to pursue in-person activities, and the Senior Officers for encouraging these efforts. There were no objections from the Presidents.

6.2 2020 Financial Report and 2021 Outlook

Makiko Toyoki (IARU Secretariat) reported that IARU's budget at the end of 2020 was USD 348,545, though there is one remaining commitment for 2020. This is about USD 100,000 higher than the average carryforward for the past three years, as some of the activities switched to online activities instead of meeting face-to-face due to COVID-19. She also shared the outlook for FY2021, and the estimated carryforward for 2022 after all approved expenses subtracted is USD 304,045. The current Secretariat plans on wiring the IARU budget and the balance of Alumni Associations Network (USD 7,500) to the next Secretariat in March, after clearing the said remaining commitment. There were no objections from the Presidents.

Session 3. Next IARU Chair

Group 1, Group 2, Group 3 unanimously agreed to nominate Vice-Chancellor Stephen Toope (Cambridge) as the next IARU Chair. Vice-Chancellor Toope commented that he was delighted to be nominated and looks forward to working with the IARU member universities.

Session 4. IARU Presidents' Meeting 2022

Kiichi Fujiwara (UTokyo) suggested that it is still premature to decide the dates and venue for the IARU Presidents' Meeting 2021 at this moment as the situation surrounding COVID-19 still remains to be volatile, and that current and incoming secretariat would continue work together to determine it before the Senior Officers' Meeting 2021. Presidents agreed to this suggestion.