Change!

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These days we often hear people talk about feeling "confined." I suppose they are using the word literally, meaning they feel like they have been locked up somewhere with no way out, but are we really stuck? A prisoner surrounded by iron bars is certainly in a state of confinement, but I do not believe we are surrounded by bars that are physically impossible to pass through. I think this feeling is an effect produced by forces that would prefer to let us get caught in our own trap, convincing ourselves that we are surrounded by iron bars. It is up to the political scientists and the sociologists to identify those forces. At RCAST, our job as an organization is to see through those imaginary bars and distinguish between the "possible" and the "impossible," strategically allocating resources to projects that can be achieved. To be precise, RCAST is a small organization, and everyone here should agree this is how to distribute the extremely limited resources that we can use at our own discretion.

Four or five years ago, RCAST ranked work on energy and the environment as one of its key tasks and started investing resources in that field. Recently the field has become "trendy," and we have been fortunate enough to gain many supporters and sympathizers outside the organization. In a relatively short period of time a research group came together that has a real presence. It is still too soon to talk about the results of their research, but the group is establishing a firm commitment to cooperation that bodes well for their future activities. Here I should explain that by "firm commitment to cooperation," I do not mean that a system of top-down control has taken hold. I am talking about a system where everyone in the group can hammer out arguments eye-to-eye, regardless of differences in age and experience. What it takes to create a system like that is simply for the members to understand their own position, within the context of shared goals. It may seem like a paradox, but this seems to me like the only option for a small organization hoping to do work that is larger than itself. This is both a strength and a weakness of RCAST.

Anticipating our next mid-term plan, RCAST has chosen not to become a Joint Usage-Research Center. That decision is already starting to have an impact on outward appearances, in areas like budgetary allocations and official documents. But we are going to have to change if we do not want those institutional arrangements to start feeling like iron bars. It is not becoming of RCAST to say that we are going to break out of our confinement. Rather, we should feel that we will find ourselves standing on the other side of the bars before we even realized it.

History of RCAST

1877 APR	The Tokyo Imperial University was established
1918 APR	Aeronautical Research Institute, the Tokyo Imperial University, was established
1946 MAR	Institute of Science and Technology, the University of Tokyo, was established
1958 APR	Aeronautical Research Institute, the University of Tokyo, was established
1964 APR	Institute of Space and Aeronautical Science, the University of Tokyo was estabblished
1987 MAY	Research Center for Advanced Science and Technology (RCAST) was inaugurated with 7 Regular Chairs and 12 Faculty Members (May 21st)
1987 OCT	An Endowed Chair was opened as the first one in Japanese National Universities
1988 APR	Expansion of RCAST to have 19 Regular Chairs, 4 Guest Chairs and 4 Endowed Chairs, with 48 Faculty Members
1992 APR	Inauguration of the Department of Advanced Interdisciplinary Studies, Division of Engineering, Graduate School, the University of Tokyo
1996 MAY	Authorized as Center of Excellence (COE) Center for Collaborative Research (CCR), the University of Tokyo was established
1997 APR	Department of Intellectual Property was established
1998 APR	Komaba Open Laboratory (KOL), the University of Tokyo was established
1998 AUG	Center for Advanced Science and Technology Incubation (CASTI) was established (present TOUDAI TLO)
1999 APR	Research Center for Advanced Economic Engineering (AEE) was established Reorganization of RCAST to have 22 Regular Courses, 6 Guest Chairs and 4 Endowed Chairs, with 52 Faculty Members
2001 APR	Advanced Science and Technology Enterprise Corporation (ASTEC) was established
2001 AUG	Special Coordination Fund for Science and Technology, Strategic Research Center "Open Laboratory of Advanced Science and Technology for Human and Society" Plan started
2001 NOV	Advanced Technology Business Center (AcTeB) was established
2002 APR	Open Laboratory Project with Specially Appointed Faculty and Researcher started
2004 APR	National University Corporation, the University of Tokyo, was established Formally acknowledged as 11th Research Institute of the University of Tokyo Previous Divisional System was abolished and more flexible Cluster System was introduced (4 Clusters) Both the Management Strategy Council and the RCAST Board was established
2004 MAY	A new endowed chair was established and an Endowment Professor was recruited
2006 APR	Strategic Planning Office was established (to merge the function of AcTeB)
2008 APR	CCR was abolished and RCAST incorporated a part of its function
2008 SEP	SOLAR QUEST, an International Research Center for Global Energy and Environmental Technologies was initiated
2009 FEB	New establishment of ENEOS LABO
2009 APR	Advanced Science and Technology Innovator Development Course (Doctoral Program) for matured students has started

Successive Director / Administrative Director

Successive Director

OHKOSHI, Takanori	1987.5.21-1989.3.31	Optical Devices
YANAGIDA, Hiroaki	1989.4.1-1991.3.31	Intelligent Material
OHSUGA, Setsuo	1991.4.1-1993.3.31	Artificial Intelligence
MURAKAMI, Yoichiro	1993.4.1-1995.3.31	Science Technology and Social Value
KISHI, Teruo	1995.4.1-1997.3.31	Advanced Highly Reliable Materials
NIKI, Etsuo	1997.4.1-1999.3.31	Functional Materials for Molecular Information
OKABE, Yoichi	1999.4.1-2001.3.31	Information Devices
NANYA, Takashi	2001.4.1-2004.3.31	Dependable and High-performance Computing
HASHIMOTO, Kazuhito	2004.4.1-2007.3.31	Intelligent Materials Science
MIYANO, Kenjiro	2007.4.1-	Photonics Materials

Successive Administrative Director

WATANABE, Yoshikazu	1987.5.21-1990.3.31
TSUCHIDA, Takashi	1990.4.1-1992.3.31
NISHIGUCHI, Hitonori	1992.4.1-1994.3.31
IDENOUE, Masami	1994.4.1-1996.3.31
IZUMIDA, Chiaki	1996.4.1-1998.3.31
TANAKA, Yoshikuni	1998.4.1-2000.3.31
MAEDA, Takashi	2000.4.1-2002.3.31
SASAKI, Tsutomu	2002.4.1-2005.3.31
INOUE, Kohtaro	2005.4.1-2007.3.31
SUZUKI, Hideo	2007.4.1-