

International Symposium for the Establishment of Sustainable Campuses
Combining “hard” and “soft” networks to establish sustainable environmentally-conscious campuses (The integration of “hard” and “soft”)

The realization of a sustainable society has long been sought after. In a rapidly changing world, higher education institutions are also increasingly being required to establish environmentally-conscious campuses.

In western countries in particular, higher education institutions are increasingly making efforts toward campus sustainability through forming inter-university networks, introducing assessment systems, and other measures.

Japanese universities have also engaged in various efforts, such as the energy efficient renovation of buildings, the enhancement of environmental education for students or reorganization to enhance campus sustainability. However, the “hard” and “soft” elements of those efforts have not been integrated. The hard efforts include energy-saving, carbon reduction, transportation, and waste disposal, whereas the soft efforts include aspects such as environmental education, regional partnership, food issues, and management methods.

Furthermore, Sapporo Sustainability Declaration, adopted in the G8 University Summit in September of 2008, the presidents of the universities attending the G8 University Summit declared their commitment to be “a driving force for policy, society and academia to evolve together toward global sustainability,” and to work “to develop social models for sustainability, with our campuses serving as experimental venues.” The declaration also asserts that “by serving as test models for society at large, universities help foster in their students the attitudes and skills necessary to achieve a sustainable society in the future. Thus the sustainable campus can serve as both an experiment in progress and an ideal tool for educating future generations.” In consideration of current social conditions, therefore, it is the responsibility of universities, which play an important role in the cultivation of human resources, to promote the establishment of sustainable campuses, and to accelerate those efforts has now become increasingly imperative.

This symposium aims to bridge the “hard” and “soft” networks concerned with the establishment of sustainable campuses, being held at the same time with General meeting and Work Sessions of CAS-net Japan (Campus Sustainability Network in Japan) to be launched with the goal to accelerate establishment of sustainable campus of Japanese universities and to contribute to establishment of the environmentally sustainable society. In addition, the symposium intends to introduce the best practices of universities inside and outside Japan, discuss their methods, and develop the knowledge, expertise, and orientation of campus sustainability efforts.