

## Dreams Come True

Director of IPMU

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IPMU is an ambitious project of its own. We are trying to build a first-rate research institution from scratch in a very short time. We need scientists from different disciplines –astronomy, physics, and mathematics– to work together towards the common goal of solving cosmic mysteries. We want to make the place truly international in a way not happened before in Japan. All of these ambitions need one important common ingredient: an attractive and carefully designed place to work.

Now IPMU research building is complete and we have our home. Not only that, we believe that this building will help us greatly in achieving our ambitions. As Prof. Ohno, the architect of the building, describes in his article, it has many unique aspects for this purpose.

First, all the offices are lined up in a spiral from the 3rd to 5th floor, making the three floors effectively a single floor. This arrangement avoids the traditional problem that people on different floors rarely see each other. We intentionally mix people from different disciplines in the office allocation. It also makes everybody *equal* along the same spiral. This flat organization is important for us because we'd like to promote young minds to solve big mysteries.

Second, there is a big interaction area inside the spiral covered with skylight. It is filled with natural light that feels surprisingly soft and warm. This is where scientists from different disciplines, cultures, languages, and expertise share problems and solutions. It is

furnished in a very casual and informal fashion for spontaneous discussions. And this is where *everybody* gets together for daily teas at 3pm. It of course has Espresso machines, making this place like a plaza in a European city with cafés. It even has an *obelisk!* The only missing piece may be a fountain.

Third, we paid careful attention to make sure people coming from different cultures, languages, and of different physical sizes feel comfortable. All the signage comes with English first. The ceilings are much higher than most buildings in Japan to make tall people feel comfortable. The lighting is partially indirect not to distract people sensitive to light. Air conditioning can be controlled in each office.

Finally, despite the bare concrete look from the outside to match other buildings on the campus, it uses light-color wood everywhere to give the interior very cozy, warm, and comfortable atmosphere. It has many places for small gatherings, seminars, and a big lecture hall. People can work *everywhere* in this building.

Dreams have come true. With such an attractive place to work, I believe people from around the world would want to come to IPMU. We are one big step closer to become one of the leading research centers in the world.

