Radiation Disaster Medicine Course

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Radioactivity Environmental Protection Course

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Radioactivity Social Recovery Course

Kiko SAKATA
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Phoenix Adviser

Ryutaro K. CHIHAGI
Professor, Research Institute for Radiation Biology and Medicine

There was snow on Higashi Hiroshima Campus, but the temperature is gradually rising and trees have started blooming.

To promote recovery from radiation disaster with international viewpoint

Unique program which helps students obtain practical skills

Chika MATSUMOTO
Radioactivity Social Recovery Course (2nd year student)

Five years have passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake. When the disaster occurred, I was working in a Hiroshima-based humanitarian aid organization. While seeing many people around me going to Tohoku to support the local people, I didn’t have the opportunity to participate in such activities because of my lack of ability to work for local people on the spot, and I felt frustrated every day. Then came this program. One of the program’s most prominent features is its inter-disciplinary curriculum and global nature. This program offers many practical courses and events, including frequent fieldwork trips to Fukushima Prefecture. Another feature of this program is the fact that it often provides us with opportunities to learn from many disaster and radiation experts from both Japan and abroad, as well as from Hiroshima University. I am now conducting studies on animal rescue in case of disaster from a social psychological perspective. I hope to make practical contributions not only from the standpoint of my specialization but also from diverse perspectives, in the case of disasters in the future.

Program Member

Program Director: Kenji KAMIYA Research Institute for Radiation Biology and Medicine

Program Coordinator: Masao KOBAYASHI Graduate School of Biomedical & Health Sciences


Hiroshima University has established interdisciplinary PhD program s for “Phoenix Leader Education Program (Hiroshima Initiative) for Renaissance from Radiation Disaster.” This broad educational program was accepted as one of the “Programs for Leading Graduate Schools” by Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan (MEXT) in 2011. The Radiation Disaster Recovery Studies is a study field that has become a main focus of the world. Hiroshima University is taking the initiative in this field.

What kind of leader is needed to support recovery from radiation disasters?

For example, teaching members of the Radiactivity Environmental Protection Course, which I’m taking part in, are from diverse academic backgrounds such as physics, chemistry, engineering or biology. They each bring their respective expertise into their approaches to support recovery from radiation disasters. As to environmental protection, there are many approaches. In addition, experts from medical and social scientific backgrounds apply different kinds of approaches to support recovery from radiation disasters.

Professor Satoru Nakashima
Radiactivity Environmental Protection Course

Could you explain the relationship between your research focus and recovery from radiation disasters?

I specialize in chemistry, particularly in radiochemistry. To be more specific, since my student days I have pursued research on electronic states and spin states of chemical substances using resonance absorption of gamma radiation. Since I joined Hiroshima University’s Radioisotope Center, I have engaged in radiation management as well as chemical research. I began interacting with researchers in physics and biology, and started doing research on environmental radioactivity. With these backgrounds, I became involved in the Phoenix Leader Education Program.

Currently, I supervise four Program students. My students and I are performing research on transfer of radioactive materials in the ocean, transfer of radioactive cesium from soil into rice plants, and decontamination.

Would you give a message to students studying in the Program and those who wish to enroll in the Program?

Students in our Program attend classes of all courses, it is extremely valuable for them that they will be able to understand social scientific approaches to recovery from disasters. I myself am learning too.

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The Phoenix Leader Education Program held its 6th retreat at the Hiroshima International Youth House (Aster Plaza) on January 8 to 9, 2016. The purpose of the retreat was to bring together program members and guest speakers to review the achievements of the program’s students’ studies and research thus far, and to discuss their expected future developments. Thirty-eight people attended, including the program students and teaching staff.

Dr. Deguchi Hiromatsu, chairperson of the student life committee, gave the opening address. The attendants were divided into five groups and they discussed the themes and the panel discussion of the upcoming international symposium in February. On the second day, each group made their presentations based on the previous day’s discussion. It was a very significant learning opportunity for the program students who share various research disciplines. Following these presentations the 5th students’ and faculty opinion exchange meeting took place with active participation from the floor. Lastly Dr. Kenji Kaniya, the Program Director, gave the closing address. This retreat ended successfully having provided the students with a good opportunity to improve their presentation and discussion skills as global leaders.

The Phoenix Leader Education Program organizes yearly leadership seminars in order to allow program students the opportunity to consider future career possibilities following graduation. The seminars provide the students with a wide range of information, as well as hear the ideas and opinions of fellow participants.

The Opening Ceremony of Hiroshima University Graduate School Leader Education Program was held on October 1st, 2015. 4 students from Phoenix leader Education Program (Hiroshima Initiative) for Renaissance from Radiation Disaster and Hiroshima University have registered for the program. The president of Hiroshima University, Dr. Motoe Shichinohe, gave the opening address to congratulate and encourage the newly-enrolled students. “You will be working on various issues and learning together not only with students from Hiroshima University but also leading graduate schools from other universities. I hope that the global leaders from two programs will successfully complete the courses and play an active role in the international arena, to stand up against adversity and lead the way toward safer future.”

At the guidance meeting after the opening ceremony, the encouraging remarks of the person in charge of the program and new students’ self-introduction were followed by guidance on class registration and attendance.

The Phoenix Leader Education Program provides opportunities for its graduate students to attend training sessions such as Interdisciplinary Integrated Seminars in order to gain a range of knowledge beyond their major discipline. As part of this, with the support of KEK, Hiroshima University and the LBJ School of Public Affairs, University of Texas at Austin, one Phoenix student together with three other students has contributed to the IAEA program participated in the 2015 summer program: Public Management & leadership & politics & public policy. Participants attended lectures at both of the University of Texas at Austin and in Washington D.C. During the four and a half weeks program, they also visited a variety of state and federal institutions as well as various other public agencies.

On October 30th 2015, a seminar was jointly organized by the Phoenix program and the IAEA/IAEA program for students to share their experiences and knowledge from the Austin summer program with those students who were not able to attend. In the seminar Dr. Luni Pela, one of the program participants, gave a lecture on Macro-Leadership: Creating Organizational Future and Culture. Three other participants, two students and one staff member, gave presentations about what they learned and how they benefited.

This seminar was televised to both Higashihiroshima and Kasumi campus. Forty people including eight Phoenix program students, fourteen IAEA program students, eight other students and ten teaching staff attended. Those who attended stated that it was a very informative and useful discussion and suggested they would like to participate in a future summer program if the opportunity presented itself.

The short field visit is aimed at providing students during their early days of studies at this program with opportunities to deepen their knowledge about radioactive disasters and experience the importance of an inter-disciplinary approach. The 10th short field visit started when all participants came together in Fukushima on October 16, 2015 for advance orientation for preliminary learning.

On October 17, participants visited places where decontamination was being conducted and temporary storage sites for resulting materials in Izuda Village, and then visited Soma Port to learn about recovery from tsunami damage caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake and projects to further develop local society. In the afternoon, they visited Minamisoma City General Hospital and learned about conditions and challenges in medical services during the period from the earthquake’s aftermath to the present, and observed an internal exposure examination using a whole-body counter. After that they went to the mouth of the Ota River to see the tsunami damage with their own eyes.

At the review meeting after the entire process of the visit, students expressed their views as follows: “Although I had been to Fukushima before, I had such a valuable opportunity to observe the current conditions of remaining damage caused by the tsunami and measures against radioactivity doses with my own eyes for the first time.” “Seeing photos taken one or two years ago at the advance orientation on the day before the visit helped me to compare the current situation I saw with the past one.”

The two-day visit provided new students at the program with a very significant opportunity to reenew and deepen their understanding about the importance of inter-disciplinary studies for them to become global leaders in reconstruction from radioactive disasters.