



Press Release – Universitas 21

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U21 Awards Recognises Outstanding Contributions to Internationalisation of Higher Education

The U21 Awards for 2019 have been given to Professor John Spinks from the University of Hong Kong and Professor Kazuo Kuroda, from Waseda University, Japan.

The U21 Awards recognise individual or team efforts in a U21 university, particularly the development of innovative or extraordinary projects within international Higher Education. The Awards celebrate the work of individuals who demonstrate a true global vision in higher education, who have furthered effective international opportunities for students and staff and improved collaboration within the university and with external partners.

Professor Bairbre Redmond, Professor of Universitas 21, congratulated the winners:

‘The 2019 U21 Awards are fine examples of the calibre of the work being undertaken to foster a real spirit of internationalisation and global vision in U21 member universities. Both of this year’s winners, Professor Spinks and Professor Kuroda, demonstrated impressive track records in increasing international links within and outside of the University of Hong Kong and Waseda University, respectively. Among other accomplishments, Professor Spinks has a long and distinguished record in driving very significant increases both in the recruitment of international students to Hong Kong and in leading the development of successful, globally-facing undergraduate programmes. Professor Kuroda’s research work in the area of regional Integration and cooperation in Asian higher education, and his commitment to the sustainable development goals, underpins his leadership in the development of new collaborative international degree programmes. I congratulate both of our U21 colleagues; they are both very worthy winners of this year’s U21 Award.’

Professor Spinks is the Director of Undergraduate Admissions and Senior Advisor to the President at the University of Hong Kong. He has initiated and developed the non-local (international) recruitment of students to HKU over a period of almost twenty years. Beginning with just 30 students and 2 members of staff, the current intake is the maximum 750 undergraduates allowed within the sector in Hong Kong, as well as over 2,000 exchange or visiting students, requiring the support of 75 members of staff. The University of Hong Kong has been ranked by the Times Higher Education as the 3rd most international university in the world for the last three years.

Professor Spinks introduced the first undergraduate dual degree programme in HKU with Sciences Po, and subsequent collaborative arrangements with Cambridge and Berkeley. He has recently set up the HeForShe Impact Champion Scholarship scheme based on the UN movement of that name, providing students from the most disadvantaged countries around the world with a full scholarship to HKU. He also led the development of the first two completely online undergraduate courses at HKU as part of a U21 initiative.

Professor Spinks said, 'It is a great honour, and an even greater surprise, to be nominated for the Universitas 21 Award for contributions to internationalisation. Setting up partnerships with other universities around the world, and liaising with governments, educational bodies, foundations and schools, not to mention prospective students, across Asia and beyond, must be one of the most rewarding jobs in academia. I am continually reminded of the communality of motives and goals among these stakeholders - of which the most significant is to help move talented students along their educational careers. It is the entire team of committed and talented individuals here working to set up and run all these international activities, with the same dedicated sense of purpose, who really deserve this U21 award.'

Professor Kuroda is a Professor in the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies and former Dean of the International Affairs Division, the largest of any Japanese University. He is currently pursuing research on International Cooperation and Global Governance in Education from the viewpoint of the Sustainable Development Goals. He introduced double degree programmes to Waseda including cross-border collaborative degree programmes in East Asia, notably between China and Japan.

Professor Kuroda has secured significant funding from the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport, Science and Technology, which has allowed Waseda to develop a cutting-edge student mobility project with Korea University and Peking University. Professor Kuroda is also active in producing research and policy papers as a Visiting Research Fellow at the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and he is a member of several advisory committees at the Japanese Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Professor Kuroda said, 'It is a wonderful surprise for me to receive such an honorable award from U21! As a practitioner and researcher in the field Internationalisation of Higher Education (IHE), I have believed for many years that the primary purpose of IHE is to contribute to the global world. I attended a workshop on the Millennium Development Goals organized by U21 at University College Dublin in 2008, then the 2009 U21 symposium on higher education and global public policy at Korea University. Now 10 years on we are in the Sustainable Development Goals era. As we recognize ever growing demand for us, universities, to contribute to such global efforts, I firmly believe that U21 and its member universities are making and can continue to make significant contributions toward realising the goal of a peaceful and sustainable world.'

Professor Spinks and Professor Kuroda will be presented with their awards at the U21 AGM hosted at the University of Maryland in May 2019.

Note for Editors:

Universitas 21 (U21) is a leading global network of research-intensive universities that empowers its members to share excellence, collaborate across borders and nurture global knowledge exchange.

We value cultural difference, connect perspectives from around the world and harness the collective expertise of our exceptional members to deliver programmes, activities and initiatives, which could not be delivered through a single university or via bi-lateral agreements.

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