

Newsletter

International Graduate Program on Civil & Environmental Engineering

The Role of International Alumni

The role of international alumni is very important not only for the development of the university from which they have graduated but also for the development of alumni's home country. A strong connection between alumni and the university contributes to finding brilliant prospective students, international academic collaborations, advancement in new technologies and also helps to improve society. Their feedback on curriculum and research trends enhance the educational experience of current as well as future students. In order to have all these benefits, it is essential to showcase the importance of a strong university to student connection to current as well as graduated students.

More than 500 international students have been graduated from The International Graduate Program on Civil and Environmental Engineering under the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Saitama University since 1992. One of the main goals of this program is to support international students from developing countries in terms of education, research, and training. Our program's alumni contribute to the development of their country, and also maintained a strong connection with their institution, which resulted in various academic international collaborations. The joint master program between Graduate School of Science and Engineering, Saitama University and the National University of Civil Engineering, Hanoi-Vietnam and SATREPS project on "Establishment of Environmentally Sound Management of Construction and Demolition Waste and its Wise Utilization for the Environmental Pollution and for New Recycled Construction Material in Vietnam" are some of the recent examples of international academic collaborations. The programs like JASSO student exchange, JST Sakura Science, and education and research seminars and symposiums with our partner universities not only strengthen the connection with the alumni but also transfer advanced research methodologies to improve the education system of developing countries. International alumni are an assist to the university, and they can play a vital role in the economic growth and development of the country.



Figure1: Opening ceremony for SATREPS Laboratory at the National University of Civil Engineering-Vietnam, 2019



Figure2: Alumni member, Prof. A.F.M Saiful Amin (Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology) gave lecture in the 9th home coming day event at Saitama University, 2019



Figure3: JASSO Student Exchange Program between Thammasat University-Thailand and Saitama University- Japan, 2019

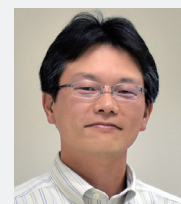
Greetings from the Head of the Foreign Student Office

First of all, I do hope that you have not been seriously affected by this COVID-19 pandemic. We are fortunate enough to have only a couple of infected individuals from Saitama University so far.

I am ashamed to say that I have not imagined that such a pandemic occurs in my life: it may have been thought as a world in Hollywood movie. You may know that some had given a warning about the vulnerability of our society to potential hazards of epidemic. Those include Mr Bill Gates who gave a TED talk about the preparedness for next epidemic back in 2015: https://www.ted.com/talks/bill_gates_the_next_outbreak_we_re_not_ready. Such a talk may have been made by virtue of his extraordinary keen insight into the current and future world. However, there should be something you can learn from his talk, which can be applied to your work in many fields, such as disaster mitigation.

The pandemic seems to be going for a while. There are lots of challenges to come for international education programs like ours in a situation that international travels are restricted. However, we may be able to take advantage of those challenges. For example, we were forced to begin online lectures, which could be used as a platform to create a joint education program with your universities. Handy online communication tools can eliminate physical distance and enhance collaboration between us. Let's work together to create new normal.

With best regards,



Yasunao Matsumoto

Head of the Foreign Student Office

International Graduate Program on Civil and Environmental Engineering Saitama University

Preventive measures taken for the continuity of teaching and learning activities during the COVID-19 pandemic

In the wake of global spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), the whole world is taking precautionary measures to cope with the pandemic and Saitama University is not an exception. In Japan, the first case of coronavirus was reported in January 2020 and since then over 19,000 people (as of July 5, 2020) have been infected while 977 have died throughout the country (Figure 1). To prevent the spread of the virus without compromising the continuity of teaching and learning activities, Saitama University shifted to online-based teaching for the spring semester. The university also launched a 'COVID-19 Infection Countermeasure Manual' for students, faculty, and staff (<http://en.saitama-u.ac.jp/news/university-response-to-covid-19/>) that includes a five-risk level index (0 ~ 5; "0" refers to 'no cases' while "5" refers to the 'pandemic stage'). Following the declaration of a state of emergency by the Government of Japan on April 7, 2020, Saitama University restricted (risk level 3) the students from entering the campus. The restriction to enter the university was eased on June 8, 2020 after the Government of Japan and the Governor of Saitama Prefecture ended the state of emergency on May 25, 2020 due to the decline of the COVID-19 cases. To protect the health and safety of students, faculty, and staff members from COVID-19 infection, Saitama University implements standard operation procedure that needs to be followed within the campus.

The International Graduate Program on Civil and Environmental Engineering (IGPCEE) at Saitama University has taken measures to eliminate disruption in education for international students due to COVID-19 pandemic. Fourteen international students from various countries (11: Asian Development Bank Scholarship, 3: self-funded) were enrolled in April 2020 intake of IGPCEE. As most of the countries around the globe have suspended international flights to prevent the spread of coronavirus, consequently, the enrolled students were not able to enter Japan in April. To facilitate the continuity of education, IGPCEE provided two options to the international students (April 2020 intake) – (a) join in April 2020 through remote-learning, or (b) start the program in October 2020 intake. Real-time online classes as well as recorded lectures were arranged for the students who chose to join in April 2020. To understand the various aspects of the IGPCEE program and remote-learning, Foreign Student Office (FSO) arranged an online orientation for the international students. Moreover, FSO has provided continuous support to the international students stranded in Japan after their graduation in March 2020 until their safe return to the home country.

Last but not the least, whichever part of the world you live in, protect yourself and others from the coronavirus by avoiding the three "C's", i.e. closed spaced, crowded places, and close-contact (Figure 2).

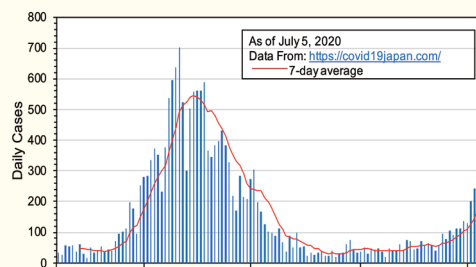


Figure 1 Daily cases of COVID-19 in Japan

(Source: <https://covid19japan.com/>)



Figure 2 Three "C's" to avoid (Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare)

(Source: <https://www.mhlw.go.jp/content/10900000/000615287.pdf>)

Ms. Mursheda Rahman (Bangladesh) "Speed mechanism in the urban residential areas with the presence of speed hump" Prof. H. Kubota

(Master's degree)

Mr. Zhang Lei (China) "Fresh properties and strength of high fluidity concrete mixed with fly ash and limestone powder" Assistant Prof. Y. Luan

Ms. Yu Nywe Aye (Myanmar) "Effect of separated signalized system for pedestrians at crosswalks in Yangon City, Myanmar" Prof. H. Kubota

Ms. Ei Ei Khaing (Myanmar) "An evaluation study of the effects of traffic congestion pricing by traffic simulation method" Prof. H. Kubota

Ms. Tsalmeg Aldarjav (Mongolia) "Waste amount and composition survey at Construction and Demolition Waste (CDW) landfill in Vietnam" Prof. K. Kawamoto

Mr. Zuo Rongzhi (China) "Development and experimental verification of IoT sensing based structural seismic monitoring system" Assistant Prof. J. Dang

Mr. Yahya Ndoeye (Senegal) "Screw and straight driven pile installation effect on bearing resistance in dense sand" Prof. J. Kuwano

Mr. Ahmad Waheed Sahil (Afghanistan) "Laboratory evaluation of geogrid confinement to improve road pavement structure" Prof. J. Kuwano

Mr. Mohammad Reza Mohammadi (Afghanistan) "Study of flood hydrograph at extreme large flood where inundation occurs using GIS and a storage function method" Prof. N. Tanaka

Mr. Usama Zafar (Pakistan) "Static and dynamic response characterization of pile groups under vertical loading" Assistant Prof. C.S. Goit

Ms. Ha Thanh Ngo (Vietnam) "Environmental assessment of CDW disposal sites in Vietnam: Characterization of internal gas, water and fine residues" Prof. K. Kawamoto

Ms. Wang Luyao (China) "Waveform-based fracture identification of steel beam ends using convolutional neural networks" Assistant Prof. J. Dang

Ms. Lkhagvasuren Tserenkhram (Mongolia) "Characterizing geotechnical properties of drinking water sludge blended with graded crushed clay brick for road subgrade: Effects of gradation and mixing proportion of crushed clay brick on compaction property" Prof. K. Kawamoto

Mr. Sachin Rijal Sharma (Nepal) "Analytical investigation on differences in the dynamic response of twin I-girder bridges considering bridge-vehicle interaction" Prof. Y. Matsumoto

Mr. Kien Trung Nguyen (Vietnam) "Inspection of deteriorated structures in Vietnam and assessment of structural performance of RC structures with corrosion based on numerical study" Prof. S. Asamoto

Mr. Tran Viet Cuong (Vietnam) "Assessing the ability to recycle and utilization of construction demolition waste (CDW) masonry for unbound road subbase in Vietnam" Prof. K. Kawamoto

Mr. Huy Van Vu (Vietnam) "Analysis of picking up behavior and its influence on surrounding streets of primary school in Hanoi" Prof. H. Kubota

Graduation Time Congratulations

(Name-Country-Title-Supervisor)

September 2019

(Ph. D degree)

Mr. Md. Hasan Imam (Bangladesh) "Climatic influences on weathering degree of soil layer in the soil-slip scar on granitic and granodioritic slopes in Japan" Associate Prof. C. Oguchi

Mr. Md. Shajib Ullah (Bangladesh) "Dynamic

behavior of steel pipe sheet pile foundations" Prof. M. Saitoh

Mr. A.H.M. Rashedunnabi (Bangladesh) "Experimental study on energy reduction of a tsunami current through a hybrid defense system comprising a sea embankment followed by a coastal forest" Prof. N. Tanaka

Mr. Gajanayaka Mudalige Pradeep Kumara (Sri Lanka) "Utilization of Construction and Demolition Waste (CDW) and Industrial By-Products (IBPs) as low-cost adsorbents for simultaneous removal of heavy metals in wastewater" Prof. K. Kawamoto

March 2020

(Ph. D degree)

Ms. Sandhya Nepal (Nepal) "Base isolation system with negative stiffness for displacement mitigation under long-period and near-fault ground motions" Prof. M. Saitoh

Mr. Shangning Tao (China) "The changes of elastic wave propagation in the process of rainfall induced slope surface failure" Associate Prof. T. Uchimura

(Master's degree)

Mr. Reheman Nijati (China) "Experimental study on scour phenomena of a defense system consisting a sea embankment followed by a horizontally double layer vegetation" Prof. N. Tanaka

Ms. So Hyun Ahn (Korea) "Study of groundwater quality inside of the Taya Cave" Associate Prof. C. Oguchi

Ms. Navoda Tharunduni Abeygunawardana (Sri Lanka) "Investigation the effect of joint hoops on deformation and strength of interior beam column joints" Prof. T. Maki

Mr. Mohammad Saiful Islam (Bangladesh) "Probabilistic distribution of buckling strength of wide stiffened steel plates considering large flexural rigidity of stiffener" Prof. Y. Okui

Mr. Ibrar Ahmed (Pakistan) "Effect of suction and degree of compaction on the strength and deformation characteristics of unsaturated soil" Prof. J. Kuwano

Ms. Mallika Achchillage Kanchana Kumari (Sri Lanka) "Landslide catchment analysis of granitic areas in Japan: Case study of disaster areas in Hiroshima prefecture" Associate Prof. C. Oguchi

Mr. Alok Kumer Saha (Bangladesh) "Rate-dependent and frequency-dependent characteristics of laterally loaded piles" Prof. M. Saitoh

Mr. Ghimire Surendra (Nepal) "An investigation of vibration characteristics of RC deck slabs in existing bridges with different condition ratings by visual inspection" Prof. Y. Matsumoto

Ms. Isiri Upeksha Nagasinghe (Sri Lanka) "Utilization of Construction and Demolition Waste (CDW) and Industrial By-Products (IBPs) as low-cost liming agents for neutralization of soil acidity" Assistant Prof. T. Saito

Mr. Pathiraja Arachchillage Sajith Udayanga (Sri Lanka) "Analysis of crowdsourced traffic data in transportation engineering applications" Prof. H. Kubota

Ms. Navila Tabassum (Bangladesh) "Numerical analysis of dip slip fault displacement affected by railway structure foundation" Associate Prof. H. Taniyama

Ms. Asiya Nurhasanah Habirun (Indonesia) "Study of hydration and chloride binding properties of slag-blended cement with different blending ratios" Assistant Prof. Y. Luan

Mr. Kabul Fadilah (Indonesia) "Effect of humic acid on zinc accumulation in aquatic plant" Prof. T. Fujino

News

New Appointments

Dr. Yoshiya Igarashi, a 2020 doctoral graduate of Saitama Univ., was appointed as an assistant

Welcome New Students

October 2019



Usama Zafar
Pakistan, Doctor



Khola Iqbal
Pakistan, Doctor



Syed Arif Hussain Shah
Pakistan, Doctor



Fakhar Muhammad Abbas
Pakistan, Doctor



Mazhar Nazir
Pakistan, Doctor



Sania Gohar
Pakistan, Doctor



Amina
Pakistan, Doctor



Thai Hong Nam
Vietnam, Doctor



Shi Dixin
China, Master



Nguyen Thi Phuong Thao
Vietnam, Master



Lai Quoc Huy
Vietnam, Master



Theint Han Su Kyaw
Myanmar, Master



Tin Nay Zar Win
Myanmar, Master



Paulo Adriano Fernandes
Guinea-Bissau, Master



Esmatullah Sultani
Afghanistan, Master



Pham Van Nam
Vietnam, Master



Phan Ngoc Hiep
Vietnam, Master



Ngo Trung Phuong
Vietnam, Master



Binod Bhattarai
Nepal, Master

April 2020



Bao Zeping
China, Master



Md Illias Chowdhury
Bangladesh, Master



Wang Xiaoyu
China, Master



Sumith Karunathilaka Jayakody Arachchilage
Sri Lanka, Master



A.K.M. Maminul Islam
Bangladesh, Master



Prasanthan Thiagaraja
Sri Lanka, Master



Md Kamrul Hasan
Bangladesh, Master



Sal Saad Al Deen Taher
Bangladesh, Master



Muhammad Alamgeer Shams
Pakistan, Master



Shekh Istiaq Ahmed
Bangladesh, Master

professor of Hydraulic and Environmental Engineering group in April 2020. His research interest is river engineering.

Prof. Emeritus Hiroshi Mutsuyoshi, also a Visiting Prof. at Saitama University, was appointed as Technical Advisor of ITST (Institute of Transport Science and Technology), equivalent to the NILIM (Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism in Japan), an affiliate of the Ministry of Transport in Vietnam. The main roles of the support are technical consulting support for bridges, support for the formulation of standards, support for research and development, and human resource development. His term of office will be three years from March this year.

Alumni Information

Associate Prof. Nguyen Hoang Giang, a 2010 doctoral graduate of Saitama University and

former Director of International Cooperation Department (ICD) of National University of Civil Engineering (NUCE) has been newly elected as a Vice Rector of National University of Civil Engineering (NUCE) on Jan 30, 2020.

Dr. K. B. Shameen Nishantha Jinadasa, a 2006 doctoral graduate of Saitama University and Senior Lecturer in Civil Engineering, Department of Civil Engineering, at University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka was promoted to Professor with effect from April 2019.

Awards

Assistant Prof. Takeshi Saito received the Young Scientist's Award in the 2nd fiscal year of the science and technology field on April 7, 2020, from the Ministry of Education, Culture,

Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), Japan for the achievement title, "Study on the impact assessment of subsurface warming on the groundwater environment".

Assistant Prof. Yota Togashi received the Saitama University President's Award on Nov. 18, 2020. This award was established in 2017 with the aim of honoring faculty and staff who had outstanding achievements in their duties and those who had social achievements.

Dr. Nguyen Duc Nghiem, Dr. Nguyen Hoang Tung, Associate Prof. Aya Kojima and Prof. Hisashi Kubota received the Best Paper Award of the IATSS (International Association of Traffic and Safety Science) Award, for the paper "Modeling cyclists facility choice and its application in bike lane usage forecasting" published in IATSS Research, Vol. 42, Issue 2, 2018 on April 10, 2020.

Dr. G.H.M.J. Subashi De Silva, a 2005 doctoral

graduate of Saitama University and Senior Lecturer at the department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka received the award for the paper "President's Award for Scientific Research 2017" by National Research Council, Sri Lanka in Nov. 2019.

Associate Prof. Nguyen Hoang Giang, a 2010 doctoral graduate Vice Rector of National University of Civil Engineering (NUCE), Director of Vietnam - Japan Institute for Advanced Technology (VJIAT), Associate Professor in Inspection and Maintenance Division, was awarded the International Activity Cooperation Award by the Japan Society of Civil Engineers (JSCE) to honour his long and continuous contribution to international activity with Japan. Assoc. in May 2020.

Ms. Sushmita Hossain received the "JpGU 2019 Outstanding Student Presentation Award"

in Atmospheric and Hydrospheric Sciences Section from Japan Geoscience Union (JpGU) meeting 2019, held from May 26 to 30, 2019 at Makuhari Messe, Chiba, Japan for the title, "Leaching behavior of As, Pb, Cd and Se in subsurface marine and non-marine sedimentary environment in central Kanto plain, Japan".

Ms. Sushmita Hossain received the best paper award from Clay Science Society of Japan in September 2019, for the title, "Mechanisms of leaching behavior of some metals in sediments of Kanto lowlands, Japan."

Mr. Saleem Muhammad Azhar received a certificate of achievement which certifies that he has earned extremely high marks on the test among the international students participating the summer seminar entitled "Underground Space Supporting Mega Cities", held from August 20 to 21, 2019, organized by National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS).

Message from Alumni

I am one of the luckiest participants of the International Graduate Program of Saitama University since I had the privilege of getting selected twice for both my Master's and PhD studies.

I first arrived in Japan in 1997, as a fresh Civil Engineering graduate after completing my bachelor's degree from University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka in 1996, fulfilling my childhood dream to visit and study in Japan. I joined the Geosphere Research Institute (GRIS) and there was a warm welcome from the research group consisting of a friendly group of Japanese students who were always there to offer help and our other colleagues. When I left Japan in 1999 after completing my Master's with this fruitful experience, I was determined that if I was ever going to pursue postgraduate studies leading to a PhD, my destination should certainly be Japan and Saitama University once again.

After a 3-year field exposure in Singapore, I joined the Department of Environmental Science in 2002 again as a recipient of Mobukagakusho scholarship. My PhD study was indeed an enjoyable experience, with repeated field visits to nearby Akigase Park full of Sakura blooms, picturesque Teganuma Lake, and other sampling sites Tsukuba and Australia. I completed the collaborative PhD study with Canberra and Newcastle Universities, Australia in 2005. My stay in Saitama University was extended by another two years, with the opportunity to serve as a Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) researcher, before moving to the International Centre for Water Hazard (ICHARM) in Tsukuba Science City where I worked for another 3 years, before returning to Sri Lanka and assuming duties as a Senior Lecturer at University of Moratuwa in 2010, where I am working today.

When I look back, I am extremely satisfied with my decision to study in Japan. Further to the exceptional learning environment, my stay in Japan was very rewarding and enjoyable with numerous FSO events, opportunity to learn Japanese and unique Japanese culture (my two host families still write to me!). The vibrance of riverfront Hanabi (fireworks), various colourful Omatsuri (Japanese religious and cultural festivities), and the beautiful memories of mesmerizing Sakura Blooms will never fade away from my mind. Moreover, while staying in Japan for ten long years, I unwittingly learnt the efficient academic and administrative setup and the committed work attitudes in the University, International Student Program as well as in other Research Institutions. Today, this life-changing experience is immensely helping me to run our own UNESCO Madanjeet Singh Center for South Asia Water Management (UMCSAWM) attached to the University of Moratuwa as the present Director/Centre Chairman. The Centre was established in 2013 with the vision to promote regional cooperation through advancing Water Management Education and Research, and we annually offer 12-16 postgraduate scholarships to practising engineers from the region.

I am indebted to my academic supervisors, Saitama University and the FSO for facilitating me to achieve all these and I sincerely wish that the ongoing International Program will similarly benefit many other foreign students to accomplish their own goals while contributing to the future development of their countries.

With warm regards,



Dr. Lalith Rajapakse

Senior Lecturer/Director-UMCSAWM
University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka

Message from the Foreign Student Office

Warm greetings from the Foreign Student Office!

We sincerely hope that everyone is doing well in a difficult situation worldwide caused by COVID-19.

Normally, the Research Profile Series (24) should be a part of our newsletter, but this year due to COVID-19, there are restrictions for the students to enter the campus, which resulted in fewer opportunities to conduct experiments. Therefore, we have changed the theme of the research profile for this year to feature the measures taken against COVID-19 by Saitama University and Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering.

The lively voices of students and faculty members, experimental sounds from the laboratories were daily heard, but since online classes have become the mainstream, the campus has completely changed, and only the voices of cicadas are ringing these days.

Although there is a significant change in the learning environment,

tremendous efforts of faculties and staffs have enabled students' learning active by online classes.

Let's make it a priority to protect ourselves from COVID-19, and look forward to the joy of meeting face-to-face in the future, by doing our best to tackle this situation in each country.

We are always looking forward to hearing from you!

The Foreign Student Office (FSO)

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