



[Closing speech by Dean Miguel O´Ryan]

We have witnessed today a new milestone of an ambitious endeavor that began approximately 8 years ago, a Joint Degree Program in Medical Sciences associated to three subspecialties, between a leading University in Japan, and a leading University in the other side of the globe, the University of Chile.

This high-level academic program follows after the fruitful longstanding collaboration initiative in early diagnostics and prevention of colorectal cancer in Chile, initiated in 1970 with the key role of Dr. Tadashige Murakami from TMDU. An important step was the creation of the Gastric Cancer Center in Santiago in 1977 supported by JICA and based at the Hospital Paula Jaraquemada, later renamed the Chile-Japanese Institute for Digestive Diseases. In 2009 the Health Ministry of Chile, CLC and TMDU signed a collaborative agreement leading to the Latin American Collaborative Research Center (LACRC) followed by the PRENEC initiative in 2011. In this process key people were Drs Francisco Lopez , Udo Kromberg and Alejandro Zarate from CLC, Drs Tomoyuki Odagaki, Takashi Ito, Takuya Okada, Koji Tanaka, Hiroshi Kawashi, Tetsuro Nishikaga, Msahiro Tsubaki, Horuyuke Uetake, Yoshinobu Eishi, and Tatsuyuki Kawano. At the time, it became evident that there was sufficient academic potential, under the umbrella of our two universities, to advance towards an academic program, work that began between TMDU and the U of Chile and CLC in 2014, year when I became, to my fortune, actively involved. But the challenges were enormous: language and cultural differences, enormous distance and dramatic time zone difference, differences in academic and governmental practices and regulations, among many others. Main strengths were the growing trust between the academic teams, I must mention here my friend Dr Masanobu Kitagawa a true supporter of this initiative, and also recognize the initial perseverance of Dr Eishi as well as the push provided by my friend and colleague and now Vice Dean, Juan Pablo Torres whom together with a group of U Chile academicians worked to make this Program a reality. Crucial was the recognition of the powerful academic value of the JDP by our universities, through our Rectors and Presidents.

Because JDPs are a maximum expression of high-quality academics, bringing together universities that must meet, interact, discuss, trust, agree, and continuously advance with the supreme academic aim of providing the best knowledge of both worlds to new generations. Young MD/PhD physicians who most likely do not comprehend yet, the

tremendous value for the future professional lives, of having been protagonists of this program.

Our JDP has had difficulties, mostly related to overcoming our own limitations due to our sometimes-narrow perspectives and administrative bureaucracies, the difficulty of bringing together researchers tied up in our daily local struggles for papers, grants and specialty training, and the difficulty of opening the minds of new generations to the profound benefits in applying to this Program. A benefit that is not less than obtaining a dual PhD degree from a Japanese and Chilean University, with global implications, while becoming a medical specialist/subspecialist with hopefully, a broad and creative mindset.

We have worked together to overcome several barriers and I am enthusiastic and happy to see the impulse that Tomohiro Morio has brought to our program, together with a committed group of TMDU colleagues and great support from staff like Jaime and Miki, adding to our Chilean team with Drs Uribe, Poniachik, Abedrapo, Fco Lopez, with the permanent support of Margarita and Andrea. With four young MDs from Latin America and one from Japan in different stages of their programs, we aim to expand, as significantly more benefits can be obtained from our continuously growing collaboration.

This leads me to the milestone that we are witnessing today as I mentioned at the beginning of these words. The symposium brought together high-quality researchers from both Institutions, whom should be spearheads for future research collaborations, amplifying our initial JDP subspecialty focus to other areas of mutual interest in biomedicine. We now know each other better and recognize areas of strength, and our potential students, the MD/PhD professionals must lead tomorrow, should find more common grounds for their research careers and professional developments, hopefully leading to more program candidates in the near future. I am particularly thankful today to Dr Manuel Kukuljan whom as former Dean, highly supportive of this initiative, has now gracefully accepted the responsibility of moving the Program to a new level. A much-needed evolution considering the tremendous benefits of a mind-expanding program such as our Joint Degree in Medical Sciences. We are training the leading academic medical professionals that our countries will require for the benefit of our people; we should all take pride of this effort and continue to work hard to assure its success.

Thank you

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