1. 50th anniversary of the Faculty of Science and Technology

Sophia University's Faculty of Science and Technology celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2012. In a ceremony in October, President Tadashi Takizawa said the faculty provided a springboard for Sophia's development as a comprehensive university and that it will continue to play an important role to "realize education integrating liberal arts and science." Ryoji Noyori, a Nobel laureate in chemistry, made a speech.

50th anniversary ceremony of the Faculty of Science and Technology

The Faculty of Science and Technology also started all-English courses in the autumn of 2012 as a part of the Global 30 initiatives for internationalization endorsed by the Education Ministry. A total of five students are studying in the two programs of the Green Science Course and the Green Engineering Course.

The Faculty of Science and Technology will continue to carry the responsibility for pioneering the future development. Until this faculty was launched half a century ago, various people in and out of Japan labored to win support from relevant parties.

2. Preparation

Sophia University decided in 1958 to launch the science and technology faculty as a part of celebrating the university's 50th anniversary.

The Society of Jesus, which founded Sophia University, had its tradition of valuing science in its teaching as indicated in the founder Ignatius de Loyola's "Plan of Studies." Astronomy and other natural science courses were taught at Japan's first Jesuit college established in the 16th century in today's Oita city in Kyushu .


President Oizumi talking about the plan to start the science faculty to Taizo Ishizaka (right) and other business leaders.

Science and technology became important for Japan's high economic growth from the late 1950s. The Education Ministry promoted the increase of technology teachers and students, and strengthening ties between the schools and industry following the cabinet's plan in 1960 to double the national income. The University of Tokyo saw applicants to its science department double in the 1960s. The negative side of economic growth, such as Minamata disease, mercury poisoning from industrial wastewater, also alarmed people about the importance of science.

Sophia's President Takashi Oizumi announced in January 1958 a plan to launch the

science department, set up a preparation committee and started fund raising for this expensive faculty.

3. Fund-raising

The university set up a fund-raising group in 1961, led by Japan's top business leaders. The chief was Taizo Ishizaka, chairman of Japan's biggest business lobby Keidanren (Japan Business Federation), and its advisors included former Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida, and Toshio Doko, the President of Ishikwajima-Harima Heavy Industrial Co. Ltd. This group collected 200 million yen.

German Prime Minister Adenauer at a ground-breaking ceremony

Building No. 3 completed in Nov. 1962

Donations were also raised overseas, led by Klaus Luhmer, Sophia's Chancellor at that time, from the Vatican, the Jesuits' headquarters, the Catholic diocese of Cologne, and the West German government, among others. Together with the Jesuit fathers' efforts in the U.S., about 2 billion yen was raised.

The German government and private firms including the heavy industry manufacturer Krupp provided funds, equipment and expensive machines. Prime Minister Konrad Adenauer visited Sophia on March 31, 1960 for the groundbreaking ceremony of a science and technology building. That's why Sophia honored the German cardinal of Cologne, Joachim Cardinal Meisner, at its 50th anniversary ceremony.

In April 1962, the Faculty of Science and Technology was opened. Classes were first held at military barracks handed down from the Occupation Forces until Building No. 3 for the science department was completed in November 1962. A science laboratory called Krupp Hall was also opened at the same time, equipped with grinding machines, lathes, machine tools and other laboratory equipment donated by Krupp and other companies. In 1965, a machine hall that had five electric dynamometers was opened. Other tools for electric, electronic, physics and chemistry experiments were also procured.

Students experimenting with optical instruments donated by a German firm, Zeiss (1963)

3. Becoming a Comprehensive University

The Faculty of Science and Technology aimed at combining natural science and technology, and had four departments of Mechanical Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Physics and Chemistry. Sophia sought to provide advanced language education and international perspectives and to nurture a close relationship between instructors and students. These principles remain unchanged even after the departments were reorganized in 2008 into

three new departments of Materials and Life Sciences, Engineering and Applied Sciences, and Information and Communication Sciences for fostering integrated studies of sciences.

After its start, the maximum number of students was expanded, and the Department of Mathematics was founded in 1965. Building No. 4 was added in April 1965. Master's programs in science and technology were launched in 1966, followed by doctoral programs two years later. Sophia University established a full educational regime to teach science and technology, becoming a comprehensive university that has liberal arts and science.

Building No. 4 completed in 1965.