Preface

Institute for Chemical Research (ICR) at Kyoto University was established in 1926 by expanding the Specialized Center for Chemical Research, which was founded in 1915 as part of the Faculty of Science at Kyoto Imperial University. Initially the institute did not possess any full-time faculty members as most of the faculty served concurrently at Kyoto University. Over time, the number of laboratories headed by full-time faculty members as well as the scale of the institute has increased. In 1962, ICR established a graduate school to offer advanced education to graduate students and the research department system was introduced in 1964, which have led to the current ICR organization operated by full-time faculty members.

Our founding vision, "Exploring a basic study on the principle of specific matters in chemistry and further extending its application," is a legacy that is proudly embraced in today's ICR. The term "specific matters" refers to groundbreaking and state-of-the-art matters. This statement asserts that ICR entrusts each scientist to choose and pursue research topics in either basic or applied chemistry, and ICR does not restrict research subject matters, but rather encourages open-mindedness and originality. Basics and applications are just like the two sides of a coin, especially since chemistry is comprised of diversified peripheral academic fields. I believe this founding vision truly describes the essence of research activities. A few years ago, the vision and mission of ICR were reexamined and it was determined that the founding vision from 80 years ago appropriately describes the future direction of the chemical research at ICR. Therefore, ICR is actively engaged in this vision and embraces it with absolute confidence.

Although society-sought advanced fields have changed over the years, cutting-edge fields at ICR, which have voluntary emerged and have achieved excellence in their respective research field, demonstrate the scope of research and the depth of the outcomes from exploring basic chemistry. In this manner, ICR has significantly contributed to society by advancing science and technology in Japan and has earned an excellent reputation at home and overseas. I regard this achievement as the fruits of the diligent efforts and supports of my predecessors.

In 1992, ICR was reorganized. In order to enhance and customize research activities, a new organization was created in April 2004 in concert with the installation of the National University Corporation Kyoto University. To realize ICR's vision and to answer to social needs, the research objectives were clarified and a new system comprised of five research departments and three research centers was established. Currently, ICR becomes one of the largest university research institutes in the nation as it consists of 31 research fields (laboratories), 104 faculty members, and approximately 240 graduate students. Each laboratory participates in graduate education as a collaborative course with one of the seven departments (Science, Engineering, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Agriculture, Medicine, Informatics, and Human/Environmental Studies) and 12 graduate courses. Hence, ICR is fulfilling the mission of a "multi-field collaborative organization" envisioned at its founding 80 years ago.

Developing outstanding young scientists is critical for advancing science and technology. ICR strives to develop open-minded and creative researchers, which only can be achieved in this unique environment. I would like to emphasize a need for collaborative efforts between the university and the research institute in order to realize the most effective education to develop future human resources. Until now, ICR has been a driving force and has served as a leader for the 21st Century Center of Excellence (COE) projects in three major fields: Chemistry, Physics, and the interdisciplinary field of Bioinformatics and Pharmacology. It is my hope that young scientists and graduate students, who are nourished through our international exchange programs and numerous transdisciplinary collaborations, may play a leading role in advancing science and technology not only in Japan, but also throughout the world.

Obviously, the most important task for ICR is to keep producing outstanding research results in chemistry and related fields. However, I strongly believe that ICR should use its uniqueness as a multi-field collaborative organization to work with the graduate school to actively pursue new research themes that cannot be achieved at a graduate school alone. We are currently in the process of establishing a support system for the "Young scientist-led interdisciplinary research projects that envision ICR's mission." It is my sincere hope to see this unique seed come to fruition and to carry on our duty as a university research institute.

To embrace our 80th anniversary, we have decided to commission an external review of ICR. Please join me in welcoming Dr. Koji Kaya, Director, RIKEN Discovery Research Institute, who is kindly serving as the chairman of the committee, as well as other members of the external review board. Their straightforward opinions and suggestions on what ICR's strengths are and how to improve are eagerly awaited. Thus, I am committed to further improving our capacity as a university research institute.

On the occasion of our 80th anniversary, I would like to extend a heartfelt appreciation for your encouragement and support.

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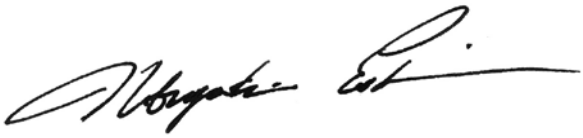

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