

November 11, 2005

Establishment of the RIKEN Honorary Fellow program, and award of fellowship to Dr. Leo Esaki

On November 16, 2005, the first Award Ceremony was held for the new RIKEN Honorary Fellow program. For this program RIKEN invites leading academics from a variety of fields, and from Japan and overseas. The first RIKEN Honorary Fellow is Dr. Leo Esaki, winner of the 1973 Nobel Prize in Physics.

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Aims of the RIKEN Honorary Fellow program

- To provide new motivation and inspiration to RIKEN employees;
- To improve RIKEN's research activities;
- To improve RIKEN's international character and status;
- To broaden RIKEN scientists' interests and educate them about fields other than their own;
- To strengthen international awareness among scientists at RIKEN;
- To increase RIKEN scientists' understanding of the links between science and society.

These aims are achieved through lectures by the RIKEN Honorary Fellows, and discussion meetings with RIKEN employees.

The first Award Ceremony

This was held on Wednesday November 16, 2005, from 11 a.m., in Suzuki Umetaro Hall, on the 1st floor of the Bioscience Building on the RIKEN Wako Campus. The first RIKEN Honorary Fellow is Leo Esaki, Ph.D., recipient of the 1973 Nobel Prize in Physics and Chairman of the Board of the Science and Technology Promotion Foundation of Ibaraki.

Dr. Leo Esaki, the first RIKEN Honorary Fellow

Leo Esaki is especially well known for his discovery of the Esaki tunnel diode and his invention of man-made superlattices. His work has made invaluable contributions to a wide range of industries, and he has been highly active on the world stage while tirelessly continuing his work in scientific research. His outstanding achievements and powers of judgment show that he will be able to make great contributions to the improvement of RIKEN's research activities and its international character.



Selection and appointment of RIKEN Honorary Fellows

RIKEN Honorary Fellows are appointed not just from the natural sciences but from a wide range of disciplines, and from both Japan and overseas. They will be chosen from among eminent people who have produced outstanding achievements on an international level, and for their abilities to bring new interests, inspiration, and motivation to scientists at RIKEN.

There are numerous honorary degrees and titles that are granted to internationally eminent academics, but this program is unique in that RIKEN Honorary Fellows will meet with scientific researchers directly to give guidance, motivation, and inspiration.

How the RIKEN Honorary Fellowship program came into existence

The direct ancestor of the RIKEN Honorary Fellow Program is the RIKEN Eminent Scientist Program, which began in 1994, and under which outstanding foreign scientists were invited to RIKEN. A total of 119 leading researchers in the natural sciences have come to RIKEN as Eminent Scientists, including four Nobel laureates. They have given great motivation to RIKEN's researchers, and have made valuable contributions to its international character, especially in the area of collaborative research.

In October 2003 RIKEN became an Independent Administrative Institution, and the President, Prof. Ryoji Noyori, proposed the policies of the "Noyori Initiative" in order to improve RIKEN's management. One of the policies of the Noyori Initiative is a "visible RIKEN" that is well known to people in many different fields, in Japan and overseas. Others are a "RIKEN that motivates researchers" to achieve top-quality research, and a "RIKEN that contributes to culture." In June 2004 there was a meeting of the RIKEN Advisory Council (RAC), which is RIKEN's international-standard external evaluation committee. In its response to RAC's recommendations, RIKEN proposed the

development of a "RIKEN culture", and stated that it would create a cultured research environment and improve its research management systems.

To put into practice these policies of a visible RIKEN, a RIKEN that motivates researchers, a RIKEN that contributes to culture, and the creation of a RIKEN culture, the Eminent Scientist program is being replaced by the new RIKEN Honorary Fellow program. The RIKEN Honorary Fellow program is intended not just to promote research motivation and awareness of RIKEN's international character in the field of science, but also to increase RIKEN employees' awareness of the links between science and society, and of other academic fields, and to make larger contributions to and have a greater influence on everyone working at RIKEN.

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