Private University Research Branding Project
2016 Progress Report

Educational Corporation Code	141001	Educational Corporation Name	Azabu University of Veterinary Science		
University Name	Azabu University				
Project Title	Developing a Science of Human-Animal Symbiosis to Realize a Healthy Human Society				
Application Type	Type B	Support Period	5 Years	Accomodation Capacity	2160 individuals
Planning Team	Department of Veterinary Medicine, Department of Life and Environmental Science, Post-Graduate Course in Veterinary Medicine, Post-Graduate Course in Environmental Health				
Project Summary	The aim of this project is to scientifically explain "Human-Animal Symbiotic Systems" and to contribute to the realization of a healthy human society through information about the structure of said symbiosis. We will explore our close social relationship with animals as represented by dogs, revealing specifically why symbiosis is valid, to what extent animal-derived microbial flora promote human health through symbiosis, and the mechanisms of human-animal symbiosis from the perspective of molecular biology. To achieve our goal, we have established the following three themes and seek to help build a new science of human-animal symbiosis and contribute to human society.				
① Project Purpose	*Canis lupus familiaris* is the oldest domesticated animal, having lived with humans for roughly 40,000 to 50,000 years. In the course of their cohabitation, humans and dogs have formed a special relationship, with dogs being found widely throughout human society as the most familiar animal. It has long been thought that living with dogs has both mental and physical benefits for humans. Thus, on this issue we will strive to elucidate the mechanisms of the relationship between humans and animals, as represented by dogs, from the perspective of its contribution to human health using both molecular biology and ethology. We will come together as a university to create this new science of human-animal symbiosis with the ultimate goals of creating a unique brand for the university and contributing to the realization of a healthy human society.				
② 2016 Execution Goals and Plan	To achieve the objectives of this project, we established the three themes of "cognitive interaction analysis," "identification of coevolutionary genes," and "microbe cross-talk." The execution goal was to determine the research project for each theme. To do so, we issued a public appeal within the school in December, carried out a review in January, decided on the research projects for each theme in February, and prepared a system for full-scale operation beginning in 2017.				
③ 2016 Project Achievements	Nineteen research projects were submitted in response to a request for topics related to this venture within the school and subsequently reviewed. A total of 14 research projects were selected for the three themes, with 4 projects for "cognitive interaction analysis," 7 for "identification of coevolutionary genes," and 3 for "microbe cross-talk." A summary of these research projects can be found on the Private University Research Branding Project homepage for Azabu University.				
④ 2016 Self-Evaluation/Assessment & External Evaluation Results	(Self-Evaluation/Assessment) Nineteen projects based on the platform of "Developing a Science of Human-Animal Symbiosis to Realize a Healthy Human Society" were submitted for participation in this venture. As a result of public presentations by research representatives and subsequent review, 14 research projects were selected as candidates and ultimately approved by the Academic Research Strategy Council, chaired by the university president. The research representatives for these 14 projects include faculty from both university departments, the teacher-training curriculum, and the foundational education system, enabling participation from the full range of human resources at Azabu University. Thus, the project is evaluated as having built a framework for the university to come together to tackle this project.				
	(External Evaluation) The project has been divided into three large research themes. These themes are research topics clearly representing the unique features of each research group at Azabu University, and we are optimistic regarding the future developments of the research. In particular, we consider "Human and Animal Microbe Cross-Talk" to be a subject well-suited to this research project. That the collaborative research structure of the school has been thoroughly considered earns the project a high rating. The topic of research—to pursue what symbiosis with dogs consists of and by what molecular mechanisms it is brought forth and associated with human health from various perspectives of veterinary medicine—reflects the strengths of the research team at Azabu University. We look forward to the blossoming of this unparalleled research on topics such as the molecular basis for cognition and the molecular evolution of symbiosis, including even microbial flora.				
⑤ Status of 2016 Subsidy Use	As 2016 was the first year of the project, the subsidy was spent primarily on equipment necessary for starting the project after consultation with the vice research supervisor and research supervisor for the project. Additionally, some funding was utilized for the production cost of the Private University Research Branding Project website.				