

## Message from the Co-Editors

It is our greatest pleasure to edit the special issue of Natural Science Report of the Ochanomizu University to publish selected papers from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Joint Forum of Ewha Womans University, Japan Women's University, and Ochanomizu University for the Promotion of Education and Research for Women in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century held at Ochanomizu University from November 8 to 10, 2001. The former two forums were held at Japan Women's University and Ewha Womans University in August 2000 and March 2001, respectively. The first forum was held between Ewha Womans University and Japan Women's University based on their academic exchange program. Since an agreement for academic exchanges and cooperation between Ochanomizu University and Ewha Womans University was established in March 2000, Ochanomizu University joined to the second forum with a small delegation.

The promotion of education and research for women in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is very important to realize a gender-equal society. It is very meaningful for the three traditional women's universities having a history of more than a hundred years to get together. Also Korea and Japan have a similar culture that might have the similar problems in education and research for women. To that forum, total 26 professors and graduate students joined from Ewha Womans University and they presented 20 papers including one keynote. Japan Women's University presented 10 papers including one keynote. The host university presented 27 papers including one keynote. So, total 57 papers were presented including three keynotes in one day and a half program. More than one hundred fifty people attended to the forum and it was a great success.

The idea to publish selected papers of the forum in a coming issue of Natural Science Report of the Ochanomizu University came from the board of editors when the forum was held. The idea was announced at the closing session of the forum. Responding to the call 19 papers were submitted to this issue and the board of editors accepted them on March 31, 2002. We are thankful to all the authors who elaborated much to improve the original papers to reflect the comments and the discussion given during the paper presentation at the forum. We hope that this special issue is referred by many of the people who have interest in natural science, information science, human life science, environment science, and women's education.

Yoshifumi Masunaga  
(Executive Co-chair,  
the 3<sup>rd</sup> Joint Forum)  
Hisako Watanabe  
(Editor in Chief,  
Natural Science Report  
of the Ochanomizu University)