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March 17, 2006

University of Tokyo Board of Directors

## Declaration on the Prevention of Academic Harassment at the University of Tokyo

As the Preface to the Charter of the University of Tokyo states, “A university originates from the fundamental character of academic pursuits that are conducive to intellectual growth and open to the infinite development of human possibilities. This requires freedom and autonomy,” the University firmly recognizes the importance of freedom and autonomy in allowing members of universities to fulfill their social mission of enhancing and promoting education and research. In other words, this freedom and autonomy is built on the freedom and autonomy of each and every member of a university’s academic community, and the university possesses a variety of systems to guarantee this freedom and autonomy.

However, in an environment with such generous guarantees of freedom and autonomy, power relationships arise between members of universities that are not seen in the rest of society. Taking the example of faculty members and students or people in equivalent positions, an unequal power relationship exists between the person providing education, instruction or assessment and the recipient of these actions. Faculty have huge influence over their students. It goes without saying that this authority is granted to faculty with the aim of achieving the objective of education, and education requires strictness. However, the preconditions are that students are accepted as equal individuals and that their individuality be respected. The education, instruction and assessment given by faculty to students must only ever be impartial, neutral, fair and just.

Wherever there is power, there is the risk of the abuse of power. This applies particularly to universities, which are guaranteed great freedom and autonomy for the purposes of education and research. Paragraph 19 of the Charter of the University of Tokyo states: “The University will strive to provide a fair education, research, and working environment where all its members can adequately manifest their individuality and abilities.” In order to achieve this goal, there must be a system in place to prevent the abuse of power.

Academic harassment is a violation of personal rights, when a university member abuses his or her authority in an educational and research setting, and speaks or acts improperly and unfairly to another member of the university. Consequently, the recipient of harassment is hindered from studying, receiving education, conducting research, or performing duties, or it causes mental and physical suffering that will inevitably hinder him or her from studying, receiving education, conducting research, or performing duties. Such behavior is included among the infringements upon basic human rights referred to under Paragraph 19 of the Charter of the University of Tokyo. Inflicting and incurring damage through academic harassment does not only occur within the narrow and prescribed relationship between a faculty member and a student. It is important to remember that a broad range of language and behavior can be deemed as academic harassment, including language

and behavior that abuse authority and damage or remove the “fair education, research, and working environment where all its members can adequately manifest their individuality and abilities” (which is guaranteed for all members of the University of Tokyo) within the context of an unequal power relationship between the involved parties.

In order to prevent and resolve academic harassment, the most important thing is to strive to take actions and improve the environment in a way that suits the academic and research environment of each department of the University. There is also a pressing need for each department to take responsibility for developing its own systems for preventing and resolving academic harassment.

The University of Tokyo is determined to combine the strength of the entire university and each of its departments in order to prevent and resolve academic harassment.