

# Promoting Social Innovation: A Global Partnership

# SIGMA



**SIGMA**  
**Societal Impact &  
Global Management Alliance**



**FGV**

**An international partnership among 9 universities with highly competitive business administration faculties/MBA courses and research and education capabilities in social sciences**

In December 2016, Hitotsubashi University joined “SIGMA,” a newly formed global alliance of universities. The name SIGMA (Societal Impact &

Global Management Alliance) emphasizes the societal impact of knowledge transmitted by the universities; it also expresses the spirit that goes beyond business management in the narrow sense in order to study various management issues in broader global domains, such as society, economy, politics, and the environment.

The alliance includes nine universities: Hitotsubashi University (Japan), Singapore Management University (Singapore), the University of St. Gallen (Switzerland), Copenhagen Business School (Denmark), Vienna University of Economics and

## SIGMA's Member Universities



HITOTSUBASHI UNIVERSITY

### Hitotsubashi University (Japan)

Founded in 1875 as an academy of commerce, Hitotsubashi University has become Japan's oldest research university, specializing comprehensively in social sciences with a large and outstanding faculty. It is known for producing prominent business leaders and numerous successful alumni. International students make up about 12% of all students on campus.



### Copenhagen Business School (Denmark)

Founded in 1917. Largest and best business school in Denmark, exemplary in Northern Europe. It actively promotes partnership and collaboration with business. There are four campuses located in the city of Copenhagen, and the school has more than 20,000 students, of which at least 4,000 are international students.



### ESADE Business School (Spain)

Founded in 1958. Contributes to the education of high-level professionals for management and law. Has campuses in Barcelona, Madrid, and Buenos Aires. Also offers executive and MBA programs in the field of management.



### Fundação Getulio Vargas (Brazil)

Founded in 1944. Leading research university and graduate school in South America and Brazil covering management, law, and every field of the social sciences. Being proactive in industry-government-academia collaboration, and collaboration with international organizations such as the World Bank. It is also known for its important role in the Rio Olympics bid.



### Paris Dauphine University (France)

Founded in 1968. Rapidly-growing unique research university and graduate school with its campus in the former NATO headquarters in downtown Paris. Conducts one of the leading internationalization efforts in France.



### Renmin University of China (People's Republic of China)

Founded in 1950 as the first research university in the People's Republic of China (whose predecessor is Shanbei Public School, founded in 1937). Top in China in the fields of humanities, social sciences, and management. Has a long-standing exchange with Hitotsubashi University since 1990. Member of GNAM, a network of the world's top graduate schools for management, along with our Graduate School of International Corporate Strategy.



### Singapore Management University (Singapore)

Youngest SIGMA member, founded in 2000. Modelled on the Wharton School with the support of the Singapore Government. The University has developed rapidly around six schools: Accountancy, Business, Economics, Information Systems, Law, and Social Sciences.



### University of St. Gallen (Switzerland)

Founded in 1898. Public university that, like Hitotsubashi University, grew from an academy of commerce. Comprises five schools: the School of Management, the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Law School, the School of Finance, and the School of Economics and Political Science. With similar features to Hitotsubashi, it has grown remarkably in recent years and is one of the benchmark universities for us.



### Vienna University of Economics and Business (Austria)

Founded in 1898 as the Imperial Export Academy of the Habsburg Empire. Largest business school in Europe. Located in Vienna, a crossroads of exchange between East and West, it has achieved excellent results in fields such as international business. Largest number of international students (about one out of four students) in the German-speaking countries.

Business (Austria), Paris Dauphine University (France), ESADE Business School (Spain), Fundação Getulio Vargas (Brazil), and Renmin University of China (People's Republic of China).

Vice President Satoshi Nakano states, "All these universities have some features in common. First, we all have highly competitive business administration faculties and MBA courses, including executive programs. While these courses constitute the core of our education, we also have extensive research and education capabilities as social science universities. Moreover, our universities are highly regarded globally."



## Toward universities with societal impact in global management that is directly linked to sustainability

SIGMA evolved from its forerunner, the Alliance of Like-Minded Universities. This alliance comprised seven of the universities introduced above, and later, Hitotsubashi University and Renmin University of China were added to the SIGMA list. It was an attempt by a group of "like-minded" universities around the world, having the similarities highlighted by Vice Presi-

dent Nakano above, to further strengthen exchange and collaboration in research and education and enhance their global presence. When SIGMA, which had strengthened its bonds through regular Presidential forums and other occasions, sought to discover “like-minded” institutions in Asia, Hitotsubashi University and Renmin University of China were obvious choices. Hitotsubashi University first received a request from Singapore Management University to participate as an observer, with whom Hitotsubashi University had already concluded a student exchange agreement, and in December 2016, President Koichi Tadenuma and Vice President Nakano attended the Presidential Forum. At that time, the members agreed to form a new stronger alliance of nine universities and adopted the name “SIGMA.”

Vice President Nakano further states, “What I want to emphasize in particular is that management in this sense is not limited to the domain of business administration but also includes the management of society and the management of planet earth. The member universities share a common desire to be a university with societal impact in global management that is directly linked to sustainability.” So, what kind of societal impact does Hitotsubashi University aim to achieve? This is explained by Vice President Nakano in the final section of the current article.

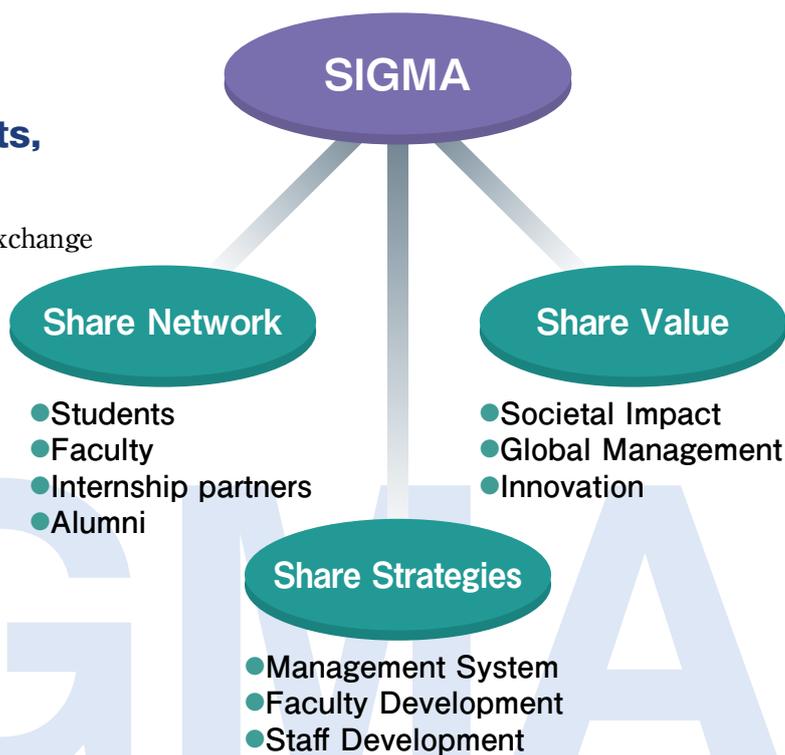
### Sharing “value,” “networks,” and “strategies,” the SIGMA universities will develop exchanges involving students, instructors, and staff

In the future, we plan to promote various exchange opportunities, in areas such as research, education, and university administration, through the SIGMA international partnership. One initiative that has already

been cemented involves hosting webinars (skype conferences) among three of the SIGMA universities—Hitotsubashi University, Singapore Management University, and Copenhagen Business School—which focus on various problems surrounding medical economy and management in aging societies. Once arrangements among these three universities are complete, the other universities will also be invited to join.

During a meeting of the Alliance members, there was a session for sharing information and know-how about the state of pedagogy (the method and practice of teaching) at universities amid a changing media environment, which Vice President Nakano attended. This is a good example of how faculty development efforts are progressing across national borders.

In an age when universities are required to conduct benchmarking (which involves identifying universities for comparison and using them to reform and improve the university), the Alliance is also important to Hitotsubashi University for this reason. In the beginning of 2017, Hitotsubashi University sent instructors and staff to universities such as Singapore Management University and the University of St. Gallen, where they study the initiatives taking place at each school, focusing on not only education but also university administration know-how, before sharing their findings back at Hitotsubashi. According to Vice



President Nakano, “When you read the reports, it’s clear that our staff return to Japan very much inspired.”

The Alliance has also opened up various other possibilities for exchange. These include double degree programs between SIGMA universities, joint classes utilizing the Internet, student exchange in short-term overseas surveys, and mutual participation in our respective internship programs. In terms of “strengthening graduate exchange,” there is a strong possibility that Hitotsubashi University will be able to play a leading role. This is because our Josuikai, a global network of over 30,000 alumni, is a more valuable asset than the alumni network of any other SIGMA member.

Thus, by sharing the “value,” “networks,” and “strategies” of each university, SIGMA can be expected to stimulate the significant development of each of its members.

### **Toward developing a global base of research and human resource development for promoting social innovation linked to broader social improvement**

Following are Vice President Nakano’s comments about the societal impact that Hitotsubashi University aims to achieve, including its SIGMA activities.

“Hitotsubashi University’s mission is ‘knowledge creation and human resources development that contribute to social innovation.’ In domains that are predicted to expand in the future, such as AI and biotechnology, as well as focusing on the core technologies, we must consider how to manage and use cutting-edge technologies in society and link this to resolving social problems and reforming society, and how to establish consensus for this. To do so, it is necessary to integrate and utilize knowledge and education across a wide range of domains, including the various fields of social sciences and humanities. To reform our systems and promote social innovation linked to broader social improvement, the societal impact that we aim to achieve will involve conducting high-level research and human resource development that contributes to the solution of problems. Then, it will be SIGMA that can provide a platform for sharing this desire on a global level, and for learning business management and social sciences together.”

