

An Interview with
Prof. Maximo Q. Mejia Jr.
President of World Maritime University

Navigating Seas of Knowledge for People, Peace and Prosperity

Before My WMU Days

When did you become intrigued by the marine world?

My entry into the marine world came by way of a desire to join the army while I was in my late teens. While I was a cadet at the Philippine Military Academy, I was offered the opportunity to join the United States Naval Academy, which I accepted. I flew to Annapolis and joined as a Midshipman. I am glad to say that the four years at the Naval Academy formed my passion for the sea.



Because my initial intention was to join the army, deciding to join the US Naval Academy was kind of a leap of faith. However, I became very happily convinced that I made the right decision. I focused on international relations at the Academy and my research actually revolved around the Spratly Islands. It is very relevant today because of the geopolitical tensions in the South China Sea. However, it has had no direct use in my subsequent research since my WMU research focus has been on technical issues.

What motivated you to getting involved with WMU?

After the Naval Academy, I attended the Fletcher School in Massachusetts, USA, for graduate studies in international law and diplomacy, and took an excellent course on the law of the sea. After returning to the Philippine Navy and Coast Guard, I learned about the World Maritime University. It looked like an excellent opportunity to



receive advanced knowledge and education in maritime affairs. Studying at WMU, I had only one thing in mind as far as the ocean was concerned — to work for the separation of the Philippine Coast Guard, because our ships and seas needed an independent

and professional maritime safety agency to promote safety and environmental protection.

After graduating from WMU in 1994, you returned to PCG once and taught at WMU from 1998 to 2013. Then, you took up the post of Administrator/Director-General of Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) in the Philippines from 2013 to 2016 during your sabbatical. What was the biggest administrative challenge there?

The biggest administrative challenge was demonstrating Philippine compliance with the standards of the STCW Convention. I approached the challenge by focusing on building internal MARINA capacity and expertise at short-, medium-, and long-term horizons, instead of subcontracting services to third-party actors. This was made possible by partnering with Congress to enact critical legislation, uniting the different STCW-related government agencies in a common cause, engaging industry, and collaborating closely with the IMO and an international task force that provided technical advice and capacity development.

The WMU of Today and Tomorrow

What is the most significant issue facing WMU today?

The most significant challenge facing WMU remains its financial stability. The University benefits from strongly committed partners and supporters, such as Sweden and The Nippon Foundation. However, assembling the rest of the University's operational budget is still a challenging annual endeavour.

What specific goals do you aim to achieve as part of the Academic Agenda WMU@50?

I would like WMU to reach a wider audience of maritime and oceans stakeholders both in terms of the diversity of our programmes and in terms of our educational formats. Interdisciplinary thinking is required to address and resolve contemporary and future local, national,



regional and global problems and challenges in the international maritime and global ocean sectors and such thinking and training will inform the work that we do. In addition, research will continue to inform our curriculum and offerings to allow for comprehensive interrogation of new ideas to inform trends and developments in society.

DX, IOT, and AI are examples of rapidly progressing ocean-related technologies.

As a university, we need to harness and master the potentials of advanced technology. They are important tools in conducting research that will lead to developing novel solutions to maritime and oceans issues. Changes should therefore be made to both curriculum and facilities. Students must be kept abreast of the latest maritime and oceans applications of technology. WMU must also upgrade its classroom and laboratory facilities; advanced technologies are key to continued development in WMU's e-learning programmes, and reach to a wider global audience.

What steps should be taken to gain global recognition, including in developed countries?

We need to gain global recognition by highlighting how important WMU's work is to promoting world trade and sustainability of the oceans. In this regard, WMU will be positioning itself as a thought leader and a global forum for the exchange of ideas. WMU will engage in research that will create more new knowledge that can be shared not only in the classroom but also in international fora and conferences. Through the WMU-Sasakawa Global Ocean Institute, WMU has extended its scope to broader themes of ocean governance and therefore reach an even wider audience.

The fact that we are one ocean and one planet, and that the efforts of developed countries to save our seas will be futile unless they are matched by similar implementation efforts in the rest of the world. By highlighting the impact our graduates have in their respective maritime and oceans sectors, WMU can gain global recognition even among developed countries.

Please share your perspective on university management for the next 10 years.

University management should be inclusive and inspirational. I place a strong emphasis on the empowerment of colleagues by identifying and recognising their talent and expertise, and allowing latitude in the performance of tasks, while at the same time holding them accountable for their deliverables. I would like to cultivate an environment at WMU where the hallmarks will be diversity, inclusivity, cooperation, consensus, discussion, open communication, and positive reinforcement.

Alumni Association Activities

What do you expect from alumni in order to make them even more active in the future?

WMU has an Alumni Office, whose functions will be further enhanced in the months to come. I would like to see alumni

continue to be proud of WMU and show confidence in their abilities. We have seen how small groups of alumni have been involved in many of the maritime policy enhancement and reform programmes in their countries. The impact could even greater if more alumni pool their collective knowledge and talents, and in an organised manner make a contribution to their local and regional maritime sectors. Alumni should maintain contact and keep themselves updated with developments at WMU. This way, they can identify opportunities to continue to contribute to the work of WMU. Many alumni occupy senior positions in their countries and should organise mentorship programmes and structured activities for knowledge sharing.

Anything that the Friends of WMU, Japan can contribute?

The Friends of WMU, Japan is the most highly organised WMU alumni network. Its many activities keep this network active, relevant, and a strong force for positive change in many countries around the world.

The Friends of WMU, Japan can strengthen the spirit of lifelong learning after the graduates have returned to their home countries. Their contribution to creating new knowledge will contribute to global efforts to solve conundrums and challenges in the maritime and oceans areas.

Is there any way for graduates to utilize and incorporate WMU as part of their lifelong education?

Lifelong learning is the essence of the WMU experience. By living together, working together, traveling to see places together, and learning together, each WMU graduate develops a desire to continue to stay updated with the latest developments in maritime affairs. Alumni should visit the WMU website occasionally to read about resources and opportunities for continuous learning and education.

WMU provides publications, research, dissertations, and other reference materials for free download in the maritime commons (<https://commons.wmu.se/>). The University also regularly organises webinars, conferences, and workshops.

Prof. Mejia Behind the Scenes

Will you tell us a little about your personal interests?

My first choice is to spend free time with my family and friends. The arrival of grandchildren has added an extra special dimension to family gatherings.

Whenever I travel abroad, I try experiencing local cultural diversions.

In terms of music, opera and jazz are two of my favourites. Outdoors, my favourite sports are skiing, golf, and practical shooting.





Planting the Seeds for the Network

Gathering Orientation 2023 took place on a sunny evening on September 15th, where Sasakawa Fellowship Students from the Classes of 2023 and 2024 met for the first time.

The orientation session, led by Takanori Uzumaki (Japan, 2023) and Daiki Maeno (Japan, 2023), was held in the Sasakawa Auditorium after the taking of group photos outside the entrance of the WMU building, which evokes a sense of both history and modernity, under the beautiful autumn sky.

Following warm words by Mr. Uzumaki, Mr. Eisuke Kudo, Senior Advisor to the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, delivered a humorous self-introduction and explained the purpose of this orientation during his opening remarks. At the end of his remarks, he also introduced the motto of Dr. Yohei Sasakawa, Chairman of The Nippon Foundation and Chairman of Friends of WMU, Japan, “One World, One Family,” and expressed his hope that the friendships built at WMU will continue forever.

The orientation began with Ms. Emi Shimada from the Friends of WMU, Japan Secretariat explaining the content of the Sasakawa Scholarship Program, the role of the secretariat, the relationship between The Nippon Foundation and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, and what is expected of the students.



Subsequently, there were presentations introducing each specialization from the Class of 2023. These were given by senior students from the Class of 2023 in a humorous manner, with the students saying, “My major is the best!” They also shared valuable information with the Class of 2024, including insights into field studies, assignments, and tips not found in brochures. The Class of 2024 members paid close attention to the presentations, occasionally breaking into laughter in the welcoming atmosphere fostered by the seniors of the Class of 2023.

Following that, the students each introduced themselves and had a 30-minute conversation about enhancing the Sasakawa Fellows Network, with facilitation by Mr. Uzumaki. Concrete ideas were generated, such as the use of social media and the formation of groups within either the same nation or organization. The discussion



was initiated by the Class of 2023, but the Class of 2024 also actively contributed, which resulted in a lively discussion.

After the official program ended, the group moved to the World Bistro, which everyone loves. President Max Mejia’s toast with MC Jorge Alfonso Gómez Prado (Nicaragua, 2023) set the tone for a lively reception that saw many WMU faculty and staff participate.

The students enjoyed delicious food and free-flowing conversation. At the end of the reception, Francesco Leonardo Castiglione Escontrela (Venezuela, 2023), representative of the Class of 2023, and Carlos Manuel Mosquera Athanasiadis (Panama, 2024), representative of the Class of 2024, delivered closing remarks, and the students were encouraged to join the Sasakawa Fellows Network.

We hope that the seeds of the Sasakawa Fellows Network that were planted today will grow into big trees that bear beautiful fruits.

Specialization Courses Introductions

MET : Beauty Ebiere Maghloromi (Nigeria, 2023)

MLP : Rahul Lodhi (India, 2023)

MSEA : Xavier Stephen Roger Perry (Antigua and Barbuda, 2023)

OSGM : Aziza Mohammed Swazuri (Kenya, 2023)

PM : Suraya Yeasmin Jui (Bangladesh, 2023)

SML: Adama Jatta (The Gambia, 2023)



Class of 2024 WMU Sasaka



Brandon Ralph Potter

Trainee Manager of Operations, Antigua and Barbuda Port Authority

I will complete my studies and return home to contribute to my country, and the international maritime community. I hope to make the best of this opportunity, and be sure to be an exponent of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation and The Nippon Foundation, wherever and whenever possible, as a Sasakawa Fellow.

Antigua and Barbuda
PM



Aji Keway Bangura

Assistant Manager of Traffic Dept (Rating Office)
Gambia Ports Authority

To make the best use of this unique opportunity in furthering my personal development and improvement of my knowledge of the maritime sector, empowering fellow women into participating more in the maritime sector and working towards a sustainable global maritime environment.

The Gambia
PM



Akbar Akbarov

Chief Specialist of Legal and International Relations Dept
State Maritime and Port Agency under the Ministry of Digital Development and Transport

I am very grateful to SPF and The Nippon Foundation for creating such an opportunity to study at the World Maritime University. I hope that the invaluable experience that I will gain here will help me contribute to the development of maritime transport in my country.

Azerbaijan
MLP



Tiffany Andrea Skinner

Port Engineer of Port & Harbours
Maritime Administration Department

It is with great pleasure that I extend sincere gratitude to Sasakawa Peace Foundation and The Nippon Foundation for this tremendous opportunity to foster an MSc in Maritime Affairs at the World Maritime University, Malmö, Sweden. This opportunity will contribute to sustainable development of Guyana's Maritime Sector.

Guyana
PM



Md Al Hasnat

Hydrographer
Chittagong Port Authority

I feel privileged to have received a prestigious fellowship from the Sasakawa Peace Foundation. It's instrumental in pursuing my dream of studying Ocean Sustainability Governance and Management. I aim to enhance my country's ocean governance system using the knowledge gained. Thanks to SPF and all supporters.

Bangladesh
OSGM



Simranjeet Singh

Commandant, Indian Coast Guard

I am grateful for the trust you have placed in me to make a positive difference in the maritime field. I will do best to uphold the values and standards of The Nippon Foundation, and I am committed to being an ambassador of the goodwill and generosity for which your foundation is renowned.

India
MLP



Md. Rasel Pradania

Assistant General Manager of Cargo Supervision & Operation Dept
Bangladesh Shipping Corporation

It was my long cherished dream to meet people of different nations. I express my deepest respect and gratitude to Sasakawa Peace Foundation and its associates to let my dream come true through fellowship to study at WMU. I believe my specialized knowledge will enrich my organization and the country.

Bangladesh
SML



Ryo Hiwatashi

Associate Professor and First Officer
Japan Agency of Maritime Education and Training for Seafarers (JMETS)

My heartfelt gratitude to Sasakawa Peace Foundation for giving me the opportunity to study at WMU with excellent fellows. After graduating, I would like to contribute to the improvement of maritime education and training internationally as well as domestically by utilizing the experience and the knowledge gained from WMU.

Japan
MET



Jasmine Deneen Bellini

Lieutenant Commander
Belize Coast Guard

When preparation meets opportunity, it's a unique moment, not by luck but by destiny. The Sasakawa Peace Foundation has given hundreds of transformational minds the opportunity to create meaningful change in the world. I am proud to represent Belize and to be part of this growing family.

Belize
MET



Miki Shirakabe

International Affairs Office of General Affairs Division
Japan Transportation Safety Board

I am honored to have been given this wonderful opportunity through the Sasakawa Peace Foundation. I would like to make efforts to become a person who can contribute to maritime safety and development after completing my studies by using my experience at WMU and the network I will gain here.

Japan
MSEA



Da Ly

Officer of Port Administration Dept
Ministry of Public Works and Transport

I would like to be thankful Dr. Sasakawa for giving me this wonderful opportunity being a part of Sasakawa fellowship and study at WMU. I believe that my academic achievements at WMU will contribute to develop my country for a better future of the maritime sector.

Cambodia
PM



Andrew Lumbasi Barasa

Environment Officer of Health, Safety and Environment Dept
Kenya Ports Authority

The Sasakawa scholarship is one of my dream-come-true cases. With the large bucket of knowledge at WMU, I am certain that at the end of my studies, I will have a lot of maritime ingredients to take back to my country. Thank you Dr. Yohei Sasakawa and the Sasakawa fraternity.

Kenya
OSGM



Sovisal Srey

Deputy Chief of Bureau, Africa-Middle East Dept
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

As Friend of WMU, I am looking forward to interact closely with my fellow Sasakawa Fellowship to expand our networking of Maritime Professional.

Cambodia
MLP



Lucy Garmai Varnie

Environmental Compliance Officer of Environmental Safety Dept
Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia

It is with great honor to be one of the beneficiary of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation and The Nippon Foundation. Appreciate goes to Dr. Sasakawa for giving me such a life changing opportunity to acquire skills in the Maritime field. I am proud to be selected and to part of this foundation.

Liberia
OSGM



José Miguel Jaramillo Mendoza

Officer
Ecuadorian Navy

The impact that the Foundation has is beyond what I expected, which is why I would like to contribute to accomplish its mission. My resolution is to keep strengthening links between members from different countries and make sure to be a positive influence back home as a Sasakawa Fellow.

Ecuador
MSEA



Stephen Yekeson Kamara

Head of Training Dept
Ministry of Defense

I am thankful to the SPF for the confidence imposed in me with an award of Sasakawa Fellowship at WMU. I am confident to return home and serve better in my country Maritime Space on issues concerning maritime policy formulation, implementation and make follow-up nationally and internationally. Thanks!!!

Liberia
MLP

Sasakawa Fellowship Students

 <p>Malaysia MSEA</p>	<p>Nadarajan Perumal Asstt Secretary of Maritime Division (Safety Unit) Ministry of Transport Malaysia</p> <p>I hope completing my Master's at WMU will give me a deeper understanding of the maritime industry, especially the conventions, regulations, and emerging issues. I aim to build connections with fellow students at WMU, exchanging valuable experiences and discussing potential future work opportunities. I am committed to studying with dedication and maintain consistent focus and discipline to achieve academic excellence.</p>	 <p>Sri Lanka PM</p>	<p>Prasanna Kumara Rajapaksha Superintendent Mechanical Engineer of Mechanical Plant Engineering Division Sri Lanka Ports Authority</p> <p>To be an inspiring manager with essential management skills and knowledge required for ever growing maritime industry.</p>
 <p>Mongolia MSEA</p>	<p>Dashbalbar Oyungerel Officer in charge of Foreign Affairs of Administration and Management Dept Mongolia Maritime Administration</p> <p>I would like to contribute to the global partnership and collaboration, supporting the participation of landlocked states into the maritime activity and marine environment protection. Eager to learn experiences on innovation and technology advancements as well as collaborative leadership.</p>	 <p>Sri Lanka OSGM</p>	<p>Thirunavukkarasu Shripathy Assistant Manager Northern and Eastern Province Marine Environment Protection Agency</p> <p>After completion of my specialization, mainly I will share this important knowledge with my colleagues in the country. I will take the effort become the party to the IMO convention specially MARPOL annex VI to Sri Lanka. Preparation of regulation on removal of bio fouling procedure in Sri Lanka is the focus of my research work at WMU.</p>
 <p>Nigeria OSGM</p>	<p>Peter Tamarakro Orubebe Principal Administrative Officer, RC&SM/BE Unit The Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA)</p> <p>I resolve to be a worthy fellow of the Sasakawa Fellows' Network, working assiduously to contribute my quota in seeing to the expansion and implementation of the Fellowship's ideals and objectives in furtherance of the most sterling works of Dr. Yohei Sasakawa.</p>	 <p>Thailand MLP</p>	<p>Tanapit Petchmune Transport Technical Officer of International Affairs Division, Planning Bureau Marine Department of Thailand</p> <p>To be a part of connecting global tools for cleaner ocean to national implementation, I am interested to study on the development of policy and legislation related to marine environmental protection, particularly GHG reduction. I aimed to assist my country toward the accession of MARPOL Annex VI.</p>
 <p>Nigeria MSEA</p>	<p>Adetayo Yusuf Adesokan Commander in Nigerian Navy Navigator (Executive Branch)</p> <p>To acquire maximum benefit from the WMU experience in learning and networking to enable me give back to my country in the best possible way, particularly in the governance of the maritime domain by using the tools of knowledge, network and Sasakawa Fellowship gained while on the course.</p>	 <p>Thailand PM</p>	<p>Anusorn Orachorn Accountant and Financial Management Staff of Collection Section, Financial Management Dept Port Authority of Thailand</p> <p>Being one of essential part to develop my organization and my country's logistic system.</p>
 <p>Panama MSEA</p>	<p>Carlos Manuel Mosquera Athanasiadis Technical Engineer of Segumar Dept Panama Maritime Authority</p> <p>My primary goal is to obtain all the knowledge and expertise possible here at WMU, so I can apply them in a sound and friendly manner without disrupting the three pillars of sustainability that WMU has sowed in me. Additionally, to keep a long-term relationship with Sasakawa Peace Foundation.</p>	 <p>Tonga MLP</p>	<p>Sikini Falesiva Donors Relations Officer of Marine & Ports Division Ministry of Infrastructure</p> <p>I am deeply honored of the opportunity given by Dr. Yohei Sasakawa and SPF to be one of WMU's students. The knowledge and skills I have gained will undoubtedly contribute to the promotion and enhancement of the maritime industries in my country and on a global scale. Therefore, Malo 'Aupito!</p>
 <p>Philippines MLP</p>	<p>Livia Endozo Deputy Chief of Training Staff for Human Resource Management and Records, T-1 Philippine Coast Guard</p> <p>As a woman Coast Guardian, I intend to promote gender and development programs through education and training as this is an "invisible" but palpable gap dominated.</p>	 <p>Trinidad and Tobago OSGM</p>	<p>Kathy Ann Young Managing Director Reef Conservation</p> <p>My resolution is to strengthen collaborations and partnerships to advance solutions for healthy oceans and a sustainable planet. As a fellow, I will actively disseminate my work, to foster knowledge exchange through conferences, workshops, and publications and share insights to promote ocean science for sustainable development and societal understanding.</p>
 <p>Philippines MLP</p>	<p>Patrick John Cabasag Officer of Department of Transportation Philippine Coast Guard</p> <p>My Heartfelt gratitude to the Sasakawa Peace Foundation for bridging us to this transformative phase of our lives. As an officer in the Philippine Coast Guard, I will carry forward the wisdom and learning experience gained in World Maritime University (WMU) to contribute meaningfully as future maritime leaders in our country.</p>	 <p>Tuvalu MSEA</p>	<p>Asela Penueta Assistant Secretary Ministry of Transport Energy and Tourism</p> <p>I would like to thank Sasakawa Peace Foundation for the opportunity given to me to study at World Maritime University in Malmö, Sweden. My primary goal is to make use of my studies to ensure I can be an asset to my country in the future on completion of my studies, especially in the maritime sector.</p>
 <p>Sierra Leone MLP</p>	<p>Jattu Bridget Koroma Logistic Officer of Administrative Dept Sierra Leone Maritime Administration</p> <p>After graduating at WMU, I will go back home to support my Administration with addressing maritime policy challenges and implement the importance of National Legislation for IMO instruments. Also, I will help in promoting programmes Sasakawa is aimed at and contribute to the furtherance of world peace.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ MET (Maritime Education & Training) ■ MEM (Maritime Energy Management) ■ MLP (Maritime Law & Policy) ■ MSEA (Maritime Safety & Environmental Administration) ■ OSGM (Ocean Sustainability, Governance & Management) ■ PM (Port Management) ■ SML (Shipping Management & Logistics) 	



Career in Training for Marine Aids to Navigation-AtoN and VTS

Latifa Oumouzoune
(Morocco, 2022)

It was upon graduating from World Maritime University in the year of 2022, that I was given the opportunity to take on the position of Education and Training Manager at The International Association of Marine Aids To Navigation And Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) World-Wide Academy (WWA).

IALA is a non-profit, international technical organization. Established in 1957, it brings together maritime aids to navigation authorities, manufacturers, consultants, and scientific and training institutes from all over the world, offering them the opportunity to exchange and compare experiences. IALA aims to foster the safe, economic and efficient movement of vessels, through improvement and harmonization of aids to navigation and VTS worldwide and other appropriate means, for the benefit of the maritime community and the protection of the environment. In terms of education, training, and capacity building, WWA serves as the vehicle by which IALA delivers its programmes.

IALA is currently in the process of changing its status from an NGO to an IGO. There are currently 25 ratifications/acceptances/accessions to the IALA Convention as of this date, 20 November 2023. The Convention will enter into force on the 90th day after the date of deposit of the 30th instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.

Acting now as an Education and Training manager at IALA WWA, I am contributing in supporting coastal states worldwide to comply with IALA guidelines in order to harmonize the delivery of marine aids to navigation to ensure the safety of navigation. We are supporting the states through our training programmes and capacity-building actions and events. In my role at the WWA, I am responsible for developing training materials based on the IALA model course, assisting in the accreditation of training organizations, delivering training, and all other activities related to training. It is an excellent opportunity for me to apply the knowledge I gained during my master's studies at WMU.

The current location of my office is Saint Germain En Laye, near Paris, in France, and I am required to travel extensively as part of my duties. I regularly travel to several coastal states for training, seminars, workshops, and conferences. Each time, it serves as an opportunity to

meet WMU graduates as well as Sasakawa Fellows and Family. It has been my pleasure to meet graduates from Japan, Chile, and China, and I have had the opportunity to have correspondence with a number of them regarding AtoN and VTS training.

I was thrilled to meet the Sasakawa Peace Foundation representatives, Dr. Tomonari Akamatsu and Dr. Kotaro Tanaka at the 20th IALA conference held from 27 May to 3 June 2023, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The Sasakawa Peace Foundation is an associate member of IALA, on this occasion of the IALA Conference, there was a meeting between the IALA WWA team and Sasakawa Peace Foundation representatives to discuss possibilities of collaboration in the future in terms of capacity building.



IALA WWA Team at SPF

While studying at WMU, I did not have the opportunity to visit Japan with my Sasakawa fellow students due to COVID restrictions in 2022. But this year, I was able to visit Tokyo during the IALA conference on financial and general regulations, hosted by the Japan Coast Guard (JCG) from 6 to 10 November 2023. From both a professional and personal perspective, I believe that this trip was a success. Also, IALA WWA team and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation were able to meet to explore possibilities for further collaboration.

I take this opportunity to convey my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Sasakawa for providing me with the opportunity to study at WMU, which has opened up opportunities for professional advancement and the ability to help people all around the world.



24 successfully certified IALA Risk Management Toolbox participants, training held from 24-28 July 2023 at IALA HQ



Navigating Maritime Sustainability: A Voyage through Academia and Practice

Anas Saleh Mohammad Alamoush
(Jordan, 2016)

Embarking on a scholarly journey post my 2016 studies at World Maritime University (WMU), generously supported by the Sasakawa Fellowship, my trajectory seamlessly merged academia with practical endeavors. Fuelled by an unwavering commitment to delve into the realms of sustainability and decarbonization within the maritime domain, my academic pursuit transitioned into a self-funded Ph.D. program at WMU in 2019.

Navigating the academic waters of a doctoral program while embracing the opportunity to contribute as a research assistant at WMU presented multifaceted challenges and opportunities. Grateful for WMU's unwavering support, this tenure afforded me the privilege to delve into high-level projects such as the Future of Work WMU/ITF initiative and SEANERGY for port decarbonization, serving as instrumental platforms to apply theoretical underpinnings into tangible, impactful solutions.

A testament to my dedication to knowledge dissemination, numerous articles and reports have emerged from my research efforts, illuminating the intricate pathways toward port and shipping decarbonization. Presently, my role as a research associate at WMU revolves around the pivotal nexus between ports and sustainability, channeling expertise and passion into catalyzing change within this critical sector.

Central to my journey has been the invaluable network

of Sasakawa Fellows, a community that extends beyond mere connections. This network facilitated transformative encounters, fostering an environment conducive to mutual learning, collaboration, and the expansion of a global network. From knowledge exchange to aiding in the dissemination of my Ph.D. survey, the camaraderie and support within this network have been immeasurable.

Beyond academia, my commitment extends to serving those in need, locally and internationally, in the unyielding battle against climate change. By championing awareness and action, I endeavor to be a catalyst for change, striving to make a tangible difference in our collective fight for a sustainable future.

As an open invitation, I am eager to engage with fellow WMU Sasakawa Fellows, extending my hand in support, guidance, and collaboration. The dynamic exchange of ideas, queries, and requests enriches our collective pursuit of a sustainable maritime realm.

In conclusion, my academic expedition intertwined with practical engagements embodies an unrelenting passion for fostering sustainability within the maritime industry. This journey, propelled by scholarly rigor, practical application, and a collaborative ethos, continues to chart a course toward a more sustainable and equitable future. Arigato Gozaimasu to all who have contributed to this transformative voyage.

The Nippon Foundation's International Seminar on Offshore Development

The Nippon Foundation's International Seminar on Offshore Development was held on September 28th, 2023. The seminar used a hybrid in-person and online format and roughly 170 people participated, with presentations by speakers followed by a lively question and answer session.

In 2020, then Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga announced a target of Japan achieving a carbon-neutral society with zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015, set a goal of limiting the global rise in temperatures to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, and many countries around the world, including Japan, are working toward this goal. This means that a variety of issues, including global warming countermeasures, the use of renewable energy, and finding alternatives to carbon-based fuels need to be addressed in the field of international offshore development.

To contribute to these efforts, The Nippon Foundation has concluded agreements and launched coordinated technological development projects with the U.S.-based DeepStar, a marine technology development consortium in which oil majors from around the world, GCE NODE and NORSE of Norway, and Scottish Enterprise. To date, The Nippon Foundation has assisted 40 projects with subsidies totaling roughly 2.3 billion yen. The seminar featured presentations on the current status of DeepStar's joint technological development and achievements being made in joint technological development in Norway.



In the opening remarks at the seminar, Chairman Dr. Yohei Sasakawa explained the marine projects undertaken by The Nippon Foundation and also touched in the 40 years of human resources development in the maritime field. The full text of Chairman Sasakawa's address can be viewed on the Friends of WMU, Japan website. (<https://www.wmu-japan.net/events/speech/-01.html>)

This was followed by the keynote address by Shakir Shamshy, DeepStar's director, who gave an overview of DeepStar and the project's latest activities, and a presentation titled "Chevron Deepwater Strategy and the Energy Transition". Next, five companies presented updates on ongoing projects under the TNF-DeepStar Joint Ocean Innovation Project.

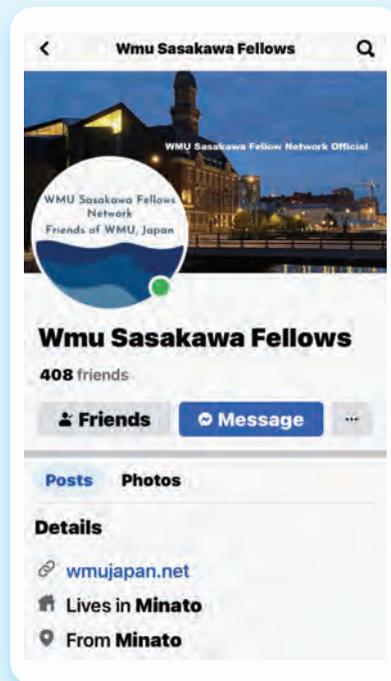
The second part of the seminar featured presentations on the TNF – Norway Joint Ocean Innovation Project. Nabil Belbachir of project partner NORCE gave an overview of the project and presented recent developments, and was followed by an update on ongoing projects by project partner Yokogawa Electric Corp. The seminar concluded with a lively Q&A session with the participants who attended either in-person or online.

Follow & Friend Us on Facebook!

Did you know that Friends of WMU, Japan has an active Facebook account? While we've been less active due to COVID, we're now considering using Facebook as an additional tool for sharing and receiving information to better connect with you!

On our Facebook page, we'll be posting activities of Sasakawa Fellowship Students and Fellows, as well as sharing news updates from The Nippon Foundation and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation. In case we can't reach you via email, Facebook Messenger will be our backup communication tool.

Connecting with us on Facebook is another great way to stay in the loop, alongside our newsletters. Visit our Facebook account, give us a like, hit the follow button, and friend us!



Welcome, Little One!

Ud Tuntivejakul (Thailand, 2016)

Hi I am Ud Tuntivejakul from S16, Thailand. On the 28th of August 2023, I celebrated the joyous and heartwarming occasion of the arrival of my baby girl. Her first name is "Alicha", which means "knowledgeable", and her nickname is "Minna" which we just like the name.

Months ago was a time for family and friends to come together to celebrate this new chapter in our life. My wife and I were so busy cleaning our home, preparing the room with furniture and decorations for her arrival. It's a tough time being parents, however, joy in our hearts.

So, I would like to share these profound and rewarding experiences with The Nippon Foundation and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, and colleagues.

I would like to express my gratitude to The Nippon Foundation and the SPF for providing me with the opportunity to share our wonderful news.



Editor's note

Hi everyone! I'm Yasko Suzuki, a graduate of class 2003 and I joined the editorial board for the second time after 18 years. It's been quite a long time since my student life at WMU and I still clearly remember our International Day celebrating WMU's 20th anniversary in the courtyard of Henrik Smith Residence welcoming many outside guests. This year, WMU celebrates its 40th anniversary! This means 20 years have passed since then, and there might be a lot of changes among us, and I think so do you - all of the readers of this newsletter, no matter the graduation year or how you are involved in the activities of the

Friends of WMU, Japan. Please share some updates on you, your family, job, or any kinds of your life events. We are looking forward to hearing from you!

As for me, I'm currently working in the Niigata, North-Western part of Japan where you can enjoy skiing, rice and rice wine (sake), and Nishiki-goi (Colorful carps). Do not forget to contact me when visiting Niigata and you are always welcome!

Now it's getting cold in Japan towards the winter and we are enjoying forests and mountains changing colours of their tree leaves. I wish you all have chance to come and see these beautiful scenery!



Yasko Suzuki
(Japan, 2003)
Hokuriku Shin'etsu District
Transport Bureau, MLIT



This newsletter is published under a grant from The Nippon Foundation to promote communication among the Sasakawa Fellows of WMU (World Maritime University) and edited by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation in cooperation with Dr. Koji Murai Ms. Yasko Suzuki, Mr. Shun Masui, Mr. Eisuke Kudo and Ms. Sue Jackson.

Friends of WMU, Japan Secretariat, The Sasakawa Peace Foundation
The Sasakawa Peace Foundation Bldg., 1-15-16 Toranomon, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-8524 Japan
Tel: +81-(0)3-5157-5263 Fax: +81-(0)3-5157-5230 URL: <http://www.spf.org/en/>

