

TEACHING & LEARNING

# Charting the Future of Neuroscience: First Brain Bank in Taiwan

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The inauguration ceremony of the Taiwan Brain Bank. In contrast to numerous government-driven brain bank initiatives in other nations, the Taiwan Brain Bank is founded on the altruism of patients, adding a profoundly human dimension to its mission.

After six long years of dedicated preparatory work since 2017, NTU has finally established Taiwan Brain Bank, an initiative aimed at building a comprehensive database of tissue samples to advance domestic medical research. This landmark project, the first of its kind in Taiwan, not only complies with rigorous government regulations but also meets the highest global standards, thus joining the ranks of the 150 brain banks worldwide.

The endeavor to set up a brain bank in Taiwan is unprecedented, considering that numerous such attempts fell short during the past three decades. Inspired by the generosity of patients willing to donate their brains posthumously and the appeals of patient organizations, Prof. Sung-Tsang Hsieh of the NTU College of Medicine led a dedicated working group. Through active communication and coordination with the relevant authorities, the team navigated challenges posed by outdated domestic laws and regulations, coupled with institutional shortcomings.



From left to right: NTU College of Medicine Prof. Sung-Tsang Hsieh, Taiwan Spinocerebellar Ataxia Association Director Suei-Ping Jhu, NTU College of Medicine Dean Yen-Hsua Ni, Minister of Health and Welfare Jui-Yuan Hsueh, Premier Chien-Jen Chen, NTU Executive Vice President Shan-Chwen Chang, NTU Hospital Vice Superintendent Yi-Ru Lai, and National Health Research Institutes President Huey-Kang Sytwu.

TEACHING & LEARNING

# Empowering Leaders of the Next Generation: Innovative Program in Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience

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| Instruction during an experiment session.

Global climate change has produced an increased frequency and scale of disasters, marked by complex and interconnected factors and effects. There is a pressing demand for experts with cross-disciplinary knowledge who can meet the intertwined socio-ecological challenges in an evidence-based and socially conscious manner.

Due to her distinctive geographical location and geological features, Taiwan faces a multitude of hazards. Disjointed land development and extreme weather conditions have resulted in increasingly severe and complex challenges, leading to serious damage and heavy losses. However, these environmental factors and effects have also led to the development of exceptional expertise in science, technology, and governance in Taiwan, constituting our resilience in the face of social and ecological challenges.



| Discussion during an experiment session.

To cultivate a global perspective and competence in future generations for addressing these upcoming challenges, the International College of National Taiwan University has inaugurated a new international Master's Program in Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience (MDR<sup>3</sup>) in 2023. This pioneering program has recruited faculty members from the atmospheric, engineering, geographical, environmental, and social sciences. It is the first program of its kind to combine natural and social sciences as well as bridge the gap between research and teaching. The curriculum is designed to equip students with a holistic understanding and capability in such emerging fields as intelligent disaster prevention and management, loss and damage assessment, nature-based solutions, and resilience planning for climate justice.

MDR<sup>3</sup> has established partnerships with several overseas and domestic institutions, including the National Science and Technology Center for Disaster Reduction (NCDR), which stands at the forefront of risk and resilience management in Taiwan. These partnerships offer numerous opportunities for collaborative lectures, international exchanges, field trips, internships, and scholarships. Through nurturing an international, multicultural, interdisciplinary environment, our goal is to cultivate young talents and leaders of the next generation who will bridge the gap between research, policy, and practice to contribute to realizing a more sustainable and resilient future.



| Operating drones in class.



| Drone demo session.



Click or Scan the QR code to visit the website of MDR<sup>3</sup> and learn more about the program.