

IEEE Kansai WIE Symposium 2021

IEEE Kansai WIE Symposium 2021 was held as a hybrid of online at Zoom and on-site at UMEDA campus of Osaka Institute of Technology on September 25, 2021. Kansai Section WIE AG organized the symposium with the cooperation of IEEE Kansai Section Young Professionals Affinity Group, IEEE Kansai Section Educational Activities, IEEE Student Branch at Osaka University, IEEE Student Branch at University of Hyogo, IEEE Student Branch at Ritsumeikan University, IEEE Student Branch at Kyoto University, IEEE Student Branch at Kansai University, IEEE Student Branch at Doshisha University, IEEE Student Branch at Nara Institute of Science and Technology, Osaka Institute of Technology, IEICE Kansai Section. This was the eighth symposium.

The total number of participants was 54 including 33 IEEE members and 21 non-members. And about 10 students (high school students, undergraduate students, and graduate students) participated in this symposium. In addition, staffs from the gender equality offices of several universities participated in this symposium. 15 people participated on-site and 39 people participated online.



The symposium consisted of a welcome message, three role model talks by women engineers, and a group-talk session. Welcome message was given by the Chair of Kansai Section WIE AG.

Three role model talks were given by three women researchers from different generations. The first talk, titled "Career Change from University to NASA" was given by Ms. Yumi Iwashita from NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory. She talks about the mission of NASA IPL Laboratory, including her research, her background, how she came to work at NASA, and her life in the U.S., including raising her children. She experienced childbirth in the United States a year ago. She joined this symposium via zoom from her home in Los Angeles, USA.



The second talk, "Working as a female researcher at IBM Research" was given by Ms. Sachiko Yoshihama from IBM Research. She talked about the system for women to be active in IBM. She also talked about her own experience of transitioning from the humanities to the sciences. She joined this symposium via zoom from her home in Tokyo, Japan.



The third talk is entitled "Thinking Outside the Box: My Research Life in Wearable Computing" by Ms. Ayumi Ohnishi from Kobe University. She talked about her and her laboratory's research project, her life as a student and how to choose a research topic. She gave a talk at on-site.



After the presentations, We had a group talk session where all the participants were divided into six groups and they exchanged opinions and information on how to enjoy science, technology and life in each group and then across the groups. In each group, students or young researchers consulted with older researchers about their career paths and research. They also discussed why the number of female researchers is not increasing.

Participants enjoyed the symposium to get images of careers as women researchers and make a WIE network. In the post-event questionnaire, most of the participants answered that they were satisfied with the symposium. They also commented that "the lectures were informative" , "the exchange of opinions in the group talks was meaningful".