



Keidanren Women's Executive Network

# Leadership Mentor Program

## Promoting Diversity and Inclusion for Innovation



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## Leadership Mentor Program Vol.19

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### Diversity and Inclusion at Astellas Pharma

Looking back over the history of organizations, during the period of postwar rapid economic growth, homogeneity was a strong presence, and it was enough to achieve step-by-step evolution. But there are limits to the value that can be produced in this way, and at some stage something more is required: it becomes necessary to go beyond evolution to transformation. Different kinds of knowledge must stimulate each other and create innovation. In this context, companies' capacity to incorporate diverse human resources becomes increasingly important.

As part of our efforts to become a globally attractive company, at Astellas Pharma we have learned that we cannot grow unless we accept diversity as a matter of course, and we have moved to promote diversity in a natural way as part of our growth. In that process, we have overcome a number of challenges, including a move away from the habit still common in Japan of referring to people in management roles using their positions to a more equal system of using family name plus *san* for all employees, and organizing the "Women in Action" event, which brought together 1,600 female attendees from inside and outside the company to develop women's leadership and confidence in the United States, where is one of the world's leading countries in terms of diversity and still exists the gender gap.

### My message to leaders

I hope that those of you who are in positions that require you to give instructions to diverse

employees across national borders will consider carefully the "magic of words" (the reverberations that words have and their inherent instability). No fixed definition exists for words like "public opinion" or "young people," for example. If we use these terms without proper examination, they are likely to be understood in 100 different ways in the real world. As well as having the discernment to choose words carefully, it is important always to take care with the language you use, including thinking about how your message will be conveyed in another language. I think it can also be beneficial to experience "being a minority" values personally. It was only when I went to the United States that I struggled for the first time to explain who I was, what I could do, and what I did not know. The experience brought home to me how important it was for me to be aware of and accept myself as Japanese, and to express myself without fear. I encourage all of you, if you have the opportunity to become a "minority" within your career, to use and relish that experience.

Next, I hope you will value leadership and also followership. There are times when you need to demonstrate leadership in a style that suits your personality—but at other times, you should become an ideal follower and do what you can to help make the leader's work better. People with this balance make an organization stronger and quicker to respond. Another important thing is to be able to let go sometimes. In thinking about your career, avoid setting goals that are too clear and inflexible. If you do, it takes a lot of energy and effort to get back on track once you deviate from that goal. I believe a more loosely defined image of your career is enough—one you can work toward flexibly.

Lastly, we cannot achieve our aims alone. This goes for work and life in general. We need to work to understand partners better, and to think on a daily basis about doing good for others.

### Mentor Profile

## Yoshihiko Hatanaka

Vice Chair of the Board of Councillors, Keidanren Representative Director, Chairman of the Board Astellas Pharma Inc.

Yoshihiko Hatanaka became Astellas' Chairman of the Board in April 2018. Hatanaka served as the company's President and CEO from June 2011 to March 2018. He joined Fujisawa Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. in 1980. He became Fujisawa's Vice President of the Corporate Planning and played a key role in the merger of Fujisawa Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. and Yamanouchi Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. to form Astellas Pharma Inc. He assumed the roles of President and CEO of Astellas Pharma US, Inc. in 2006, and Chief Financial Officer and Chief Strategy Officer of Astellas Pharma Inc. in 2009. He holds a bachelor's degree in Economics from Hitotsubashi University, Tokyo, Japan. At Keidanren, he serves as a Vice Chair of the Board of Councillors since May 2018.

