
PROSPECTUS

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PROSPECTUS President of JSSTS Tadashi KOBAYASHI (Nanzan University) The twentieth century has seen an unprecedented development and global expansion in Western science and its accompanying technological advances, stimulated in part by two world wars. This wedding of science and technology-or "technoscience" as it is sometimes called-has spelled great prosperity for some and a radical change in lifestyle for most. The enormous range of products and services it has produced has profoundly affected ways of thinking and social structures across the world. But it has also left its scars in the form of environmental pollution, harmful medications, technological accidents, and weaponry of unprecedented destructiveness. The variety of problems brought about by technoscience confront the twenty-first century with a number of socio-political and philosophical challenges. The uncontrolled production of artificial goods is fast overwhelming the natural world, aggravating an already precarious environmental crisis; developments in biotechnology and information technology threaten the survival of traditional lifestyles and value systems. Human societies and individual need to rethink their relationship with technoscience. Given the close ties of technoscience to so many aspects of social existence, from industry and politics to education and medicine, the construction of a "new relationship" will require cross-disciplinary cooperation among those working in the social sciences, humanities, natural sciences, engineering, and medicine. Not only the production of technoscientific knowledge but also its distribution and consumption need to be rethought. In addition to scientists and engineers, the cooperation of scientific journalism, mass media, institutional education, and the general public will have to be solicited. And since the reach of technoscience has long since transcended the national boundaries, the forging of a new relationship will require a transnational perspective. In the face of this situation, the Japanese Society for Science and Technology Studies (JSSTS) is being established with the aim of providing a forum for genuine cross-disciplinary, critical, and constructive academic study of questions related to science, technology, and society. 7 October 2001