

December 18, 2023

SMBC Nikko Securities Inc.  
NYK Line  
BANQ Corporation

**SMBC Nikko Securities, NYK, and BANQ Participate in Fourth KOSEN\* Intercollege Challenge**  
**-- Students from KOSEN present their original ideas on issues related to the shipping industry, human resources, and business --**

On December 9, SMBC Nikko Securities Inc., NYK Line, and BANQ Corporation held the final judging session for the fourth KOSEN Intercollege Challenge, an innovative event in which students from KOSEN come up with ideas and solve real problems companies are working on.

The challenge opened on October 22 under the auspices of the National Institute of Technology and was held online for the entire competition duration. A record number of 26 students participated in eight teams of students from different KOSEN. They competed for unique ideas while receiving advice from mentors, mainly entrepreneurs and KOSEN graduates.

The challenge focused on nine corporate issues facing the NYK Group, centered on issues concerning gamba (the place where the work is done and value is created), human resources, and business. BANQ provided technical support to the students by presenting a lecture on Web3 and blockchain technology, which was one of the subjects of the competition, and by providing the next-generation blockchain infrastructure "THXNET." In the final judging session, the students gave powerful presentations to the panel of judges, which consisted of NYK employees. The students made high-level proposals, conjuring images of concrete products and services.

The grand prize went to "VESSELS VIEW," a map application that uses beacons to locate items on board. The application enables crew members to shorten the handover time by making it easy to know where things are located on board by using search and guide functions to improve the efficiency of inspection work when crew members transition on and off the ship. The application was the brainchild of a team of students from KOSEN in Akita, Ishikawa, Niihama, and Hiroshima.

The NYK Challenge Award for original ideas was presented to a team of students from KOSEN in Tomakomai, Hachinohe, and Toyama who proposed "Ship Quest," an application that allows users to earn ship miles in proportion to the distance their online purchases are transported by ship. The idea was to include elements of Web3 with the opportunity to earn award drawings and one-of-a-kind digital content (NFT), \*\* such as views from the ship, depending on the number of miles.

SMBC Nikko Securities will continue to support KOSEN with unique technical education curricula that are community-based and highly specialized while deepening cooperation with KOSEN and its graduates. NYK will further accelerate the creation of new businesses and industry-academia collaboration. BANQ will realize a world where services and users can easily enjoy the benefits of Web3 as a Japan-originated Web3-aaS.\*\*\*

\*Higher educational institutions that aim to train practical and creative engineer  
National Institute of Technology (NIT, KOSEN), Japan : <https://www.kosen-k.go.jp/english/>

\*\*Abbreviation for Non-Fungible Token. Refers to a non-substitutional token that can be proven to be the "one and only real thing" using blockchain technology.

\*\*\*Abbreviation for Web3-as-a-Service, the first service in Japan that provides Web3-ization in a SaaS model.

This translation is based on the press release in Japanese announced on December 18, 2023. The content of the translation may not be coincident with the original.

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