

On behalf the Nara Institute of Science and Technology faculty and staff, I would like to congratulate the 428 students entering the master's course and the 67 new and continuing students entering the doctoral course of Graduate School of Science and Technology today, along with their families. We are also excited to welcome those who decided to leave their home countries and joined us today. We are proud of the fact that you have chosen the Nara Institute of Science and Technology as a place for your graduate study.

I would also like to thank all the distinguished guests attending today who are here to congratulate you on your new start.

From the viewpoint of preventing the spread of the new coronavirus, today's entrance ceremony is being held in a hybrid format, with a limited number of participants at the venue and also streamed via the Academic Channel and the internet. So far, have been successful in minimizing the number of infections on campus with NAIST students, faculty and staff taking basic infection control measures such as wearing masks, etc., the introduction of various education and research activity innovations including the class video archive system, and vaccinations given here at Millennium Hall with the cooperation one of today's guests, Mayor Komurasaki, and the support of Ikoma City.

I hope that from today, as a member of NAIST, you will join us in our efforts to protect yourselves and the entire NAIST community from the new coronavirus and to continue our active educational and research activities. By working together, we will be able to continue our activities while maintaining the same level of safety.

Of course, the beauty of this campus is not just its response to the Corona pandemic. I am sure that all of you who have newly enrolled at NAIST will discover and experience the charms of this community one after another. This was the case for myself when I moved to NAIST after a long teaching career at the University of California, USA. One of the characteristics of the NAIST community is diversity. Among the new students today, we welcome 41 international students to NAIST today from 17 countries/regions. With roughly one in four students coming from overseas to study at NAIST, this is a truly global campus. Also, in contrast to most Japanese postgraduate schools that generally accept a majority of students from their own undergraduates, NAIST attracts graduates from various universities, faculties and technical colleges, as well as students from the workforce. In addition to this, while some universities have their Alumni as the majority of their faculty members, our faculty comes from very diverse backgrounds.

Diverse attributes, knowledge and experience produce creativity and flexibility to change, which are essential for research in science and technology, and by engaging with diverse people, we are able to expand our own possibilities without being confined by our own previous values. This is exactly what NAIST's motto is all about: "Outgrow your limits", in other words, break your own limits. NAIST has recently formulated and released the Declaration of Co-creative Community, which clearly states that members of NAIST recognize the value of such diversity and will protect and nurture a community culture that respects the differences and individuality of each member. I encourage everyone to read the full declaration.

'Co-creation', written as 共創 (kyoso) in Japanese in the declaration, means to create together and represents the concept of "working together with various stakeholders to create new value" as advocated by Professor Prahalad and Professor Ramaswamy of the Ross School of Business, University of Michigan.

This was also a key phrase in the President's Vision 2030, which I announced last year when I was inaugurated as President of NAIST. The term co-creation represents the process where students and staff share issues and ideas, discuss them together, and work together to realize NAIST mission of education, research and social contribution. The driving force behind this co-creation is the diversity of the NAIST community.

Now, each of you will be assigned to a laboratory and begin work on their dissertation research. In other words, you are both students and young researchers at NAIST. In cutting-edge scientific and technological research, even professors do not have the answers, because they are working on things that no one else in the world has yet achieved. Professors are not teachers that teach you the answers to your research, but they will work with you as your collaborators on the world's most advanced research. This collaboration on research between faculty and students is co-creation, and within this, postgraduate training is a way of acquiring the multifaceted knowledge and skills needed to identify and solve problems and issues. Our top researchers, NAIST's professors, look forward to starting new collaborations with you.

Finally, I repeat the NAIST's motto once more.

"Outgrow your limits"

Please remember that you all have great potential within you that you are not yet aware of. Do not set your own limits. NAIST is a place that enables you to discover new possibilities for yourself and to grow beyond your previously assumed limits.

Welcome to NAIST.

April 5th, 2022

Kazuhiro Shiozaki

President, Nara Institute of Science and Technology