

Congratulatory Remarks for Entering Students (October 4, 2021)

Hello, I'm Kaz Shiozaki.

As President of the Nara Institute of Science and Technology, I'm excited to welcome you who are starting your postgraduate study here at NAIST. About 50 international students couldn't make it today, but they are with us through live streaming. It is also a great pleasure for me to see those who received their Master's degrees here at NAIST and decided to continue for their Doctoral degree.

This October, NAIST celebrates its 30th anniversary, and the university is just about to start its new phase. So, this is a very special class, as you are starting a new chapter of your life, together with this university. Today, you are joining the NAIST community to strive and thrive together.

This is a remarkable community.

NAIST has been successful in keeping away from serious outbreaks of the new corona virus, while continuing active education and research programs. This accomplishment reflects the commitment of every member of our campus community; students, faculty, and staff. We are also proud of our joint initiative with the city of Ikoma that has made on-campus vaccination possible. As new members of the NAIST community, you are strongly encouraged to join our endeavor to protect yourself and the community as a whole. Together, we can keep this momentum going.

Resilience is not the only strength of this campus.

You will be learning from and collaborate with our amazing faculty during your time here. The world-class research conducted by our faculty offers an ideal platform for world-class graduate education.

Have you ever thought about why research is the major component of graduate education? Scientific research is a multimodal activity that requires different skills and abilities. Importantly, those skills and abilities are relevant across various fields and many aspects of your life, and sometimes they are called "Transferable Skills".

To start a scientific research project, you first need to identify a problem to study.

Then, skills are required to collect and evaluate information relevant to the problem.

Next, you need an ability to develop a hypothesis, which should be tested by designing executable approaches.

And then, you should be able to interpret the test outcomes to evaluate your hypothesis.

You also need writing and verbal communication skills to disseminate your research and discuss it with others.

All of these skills and abilities are very important, but not sufficient today. Global challenges, such as the current pandemic, global warming, and SDGs, long for the next generation of innovators and leaders. The world is waiting for you. The challenges that we face today are complex, and they demand innovation from our collective efforts.

The concept of “innovation” was first defined by the Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter, one of the most influential economists of the 20th century. Interestingly, in his early book, he used the term “neue Kombination”, instead of “innovation”. “Neue Kombination” are German words that mean “new combination”. Innovation can be created by a new combination of existing technologies, or by bringing technology or knowledge in one field to another.

As future innovators and leaders that tackle global challenges, you need to develop an ability to discover “new combinations”. Being an expert in one field is important, but not enough. To invent new combinations, you have to be aware of expertise different from your own. You need to know languages to communicate with experts in other fields. You have to be prepared to get out of your shell and seek opportunities for collaboration.

NAIST has a perfect environment for you to develop such ability and capability. In 2018, the three graduate schools of NAIST, in Information Science, Biological Sciences, and Materials Science, were integrated into one. This bold reorganization of the university aims to promote interdisciplinary research. In

addition, as you can find in the “President’s Vision 2030” announced in April, our university has set new goals with the concept of “co-creation”, which means value creation in collaboration among diverse stakeholders. I urge you to take advantage of this unique environment where you can interact with and learn from our diverse faculty members as well as our local and international collaborators.

Before closing, I’d like to introduce our school motto to those of you who are new to our campus.

“Outgrow your limits”

That’s our university motto.

“Outgrow your limits”

I want you to keep in mind that you don’t know your full potential yet. Don’t set limits on yourself. NAIST is a place where you can discover more of your potential, beyond what you think your limits are.

I cannot wait to see how you will develop yourself, what you will achieve, and how you will collaborate with others to create a better world.

Have fun and outgrow your limits!

SHIOZAKI Kazuhiro, President, Nara Institute of Science and Technology

October 4, 2021