

October 3, 2016

President's Address for the Master's and Doctoral
Programs Entrance Ceremony, October 2016

Yuji Oie, President of Kyushu Institute of Technology

Congratulations on your entrance to our university.

On the occasion of this entrance ceremony, I would like to offer my heartfelt congratulations to all of you on this auspicious day, and also express my great respect for all of the efforts you made to arrive at this point. It is with the great pleasure that we welcome you to the National University Corporation Kyushu Institute of Technology. On behalf of all the faculty members, I would like to deliver this celebratory address.

Out of the 63 students who are being admitted to our university today, 54 students, approximately 86%, are international students from 15 countries and regions. We are absolutely delighted to have so many students from such a large number of countries.

First, let me tell you a bit about our university's history. Kyutech, where you are going to start your academic life, was originally founded in 1907 as a private institution called the Meiji College of Technology. Mr. Keiichiro Yasukawa, a founder, was a prominent figure in the business and industrial community of Kitakyushu and the Chikuho region, and he established various businesses that served as the foundation of our nation's industrial growth. Based on the belief that profits earned thanks to a country should be used for the country, Mr. Yasukawa donated a large part of his private fortune to found the Meiji College of Technology, with the aim of training engineers who could support the industrial advancement of Japan. He entrusted education and research at the Meiji College of Technology to Dr. Kenjiro Yamakawa, then president of Tokyo Imperial University.

At the opening ceremony of the college, Dr. Yamakawa declared that the Meiji College of Technology was a school that would "produce gentlemen

well-versed in technological skills,” aiming to develop human resources with dignity and creativity. Dr. Yamakawa’s philosophy has been adhered to through the generations, and still guides us today after more than 100 years as our university’s founding principle of “instilling a deep knowledge of science and engineering in high caliber students.” I would like the new students here to learn by heart the phrase of “high caliber students with a deep knowledge of science and engineering.”

The Meiji College of Technology became the National University Kyushu Institute of Technology in 1949, and then it was transformed into the National University Corporation Kyushu Institute of Technology in 2004. During this time, the Faculty of Computer Science and Systems Engineering was established in Iizuka City, and is marking its 30th anniversary this year. And the Graduate School of Life Science and Systems Engineering at the Kitakyushu Science and Research Park of Wakamatsu was founded 16 years ago. Kyutech has become one of Japan’s major engineering universities, with diverse features, composed of two undergraduate schools and three graduate schools with approximately 5800 students.

Our alumni, who studied under the founding principle of “high caliber students with a deep knowledge of science and engineering,” have been highly sought after in industrial and academic circles across many eras, and have made significant contributions in many fields. It might sound unusual to hear a motto created more than 100 years ago. However, Kyutech has interpreted this motto as one that fits with each era, and has continuously produced talented individuals who stay in step with the times for society. Our university maintains one of the best employment records in Japan in terms of both quality and quantity. I believe that this is proof that our education and study support activities have been highly valued by the companies that employ our students, and I am greatly appreciative of the fact that this is only possible because of the bond of trust built up by our alumni, and grateful this foundation is based on such trust.

Now I would like to talk about some important things to remember as you continue in your studies at Kyutech. It is expected that you will acquire

high-level expertise and skills through a variety of studies at the university. The ability to utilize acquired knowledge and skills is called 'competency'. Kyutech places great emphasis on the acquisition of competency so that you all can keep playing active roles as high-level professional engineers, and acquire the diverse views and ways of thinking required for creative research and development activities.

We call the skills needed to keep playing a key role in a global environment after graduation GCE (Global Competency for Engineers). Kyutech has defined the five elements of GCE, and prepared study programs and an environment in which to develop these elements. The five elements are "the acceptance of diverse cultures," "communication skills," "autonomous learning skills," "problem discovery and solution skills" and "design skills." These are the essential elements for continued learning and growth. I hope you will take advantage of a variety of study opportunities and environments to obtain these skills. For example, "the acceptance of diverse cultures" is the starting point of an attitude towards learning. We can learn a lot about each other by understanding our differences and respecting them.

To this end, Kyutech promotes team-oriented study. Each member of a team has a different way of thinking and approaching things, which is influenced by that person's knowledge and personal experiences. In addition to systematic knowledge, the unforgettable first-hand knowledge acquired through direct experience and the information and emotional lessons obtained through the five senses influence how a person approaches a problem. For instance, those who have not only systematic knowledge, but first-hand knowledge and information of environmental or aging society issues may have different ways of understanding and approaching the issue than those without such first-hand experience. Those who live in a country with serious environmental or aging problems, and who are deeply involved in such issues, surely have a different way of understanding them than those who don't. Therefore, addressing a problem as a team offers a good opportunity to not only exchange new knowledge, but to understand differences in each other's ways of thinking and understanding, as well as to instill respect for alternative viewpoints and learn from others. This will foster logical and critical thinking, as well as a flexible

approach that allows the consideration of diverse possible solutions.

It is said that a good question leads to a good solution. Likewise, a good perspective and way of thinking generate a good question. With these good questions, please find some good solutions.

I have just spoken about problem-solving. In addition to an attitude that encourages us to discover a problem and solve it, there is another starting point essential to learning. That point is intellectual curiosity. Professor Jared Diamond of the University of California, Los Angeles, USA, stated in his book titled "Guns, Germs, and Steel" that many of our actual discoveries are the products of human curiosity, and that they were not produced because the inventors wanted to create something specific. He also pointed out that it often isn't until after the discovery that we learn how to apply what we have discovered, and that numerous discoveries come to be used for completely unintended purposes rather than their original ones. Many of the major discoveries of the modern era are of this nature, including airplanes and automobiles, internal combustion, light bulbs, phonographs and transistors. Surprisingly, people did not know what purposes they would serve at the time of their discoveries.

Learning starts from intellectual curiosity. Knowledge and skills are the achievements of studies that are guided by this curiosity and an inquisitive mind. They will make it possible to identify problems and discover solutions. In addition, we do not exist in isolation. We have a variety of networks that we are a part of. In this context, reactions occur, mutual influence is generated and learning evolves. When students from many countries influence one another and grow as a team, this is an irreplaceable study achievement. I hope you will maintain a high level of intellectual curiosity and an inquisitive mind, and learn about a great many things through diverse interactions.

Let me conclude my address by saying that I hope you, the new students, will stay in good health and experience a significant graduate life at our university by taking advantage of diverse study opportunities and environments. Congratulations once again.