

April 6, 2021

President's Address
Academic Year 2021 Entrance Ceremony

Yuji Oie, President, Kyushu Institute of Technology

Congratulations on your entrance to Kyushu Institute of Technology (Kyutech).

On the occasion of today's entrance ceremony, I would like to offer my heartfelt congratulations to all of you on this auspicious spring day. It is the ultimate pleasure for us to welcome you to Kyutech.

On behalf of all the faculty members, I would also like to express my sincere congratulations to the families of our new students.

Last year, due to the expanding impact of the novel coronavirus infection (COVID-19), we had to make the tremendously difficult decision to cancel our Entrance Ceremony in order to minimize the risk of further spread of infection for the health and safety of our new students, their families and everyone concerned.

Now, I would like to express my deepest respect to you all who have endured a variety of hardships around a year and overcome adversity to finally join this entrance ceremony with us today.

As you begin your academic life at Kyutech, I would have you know that our school was originally founded in 1907 and opened in 1909 as a private institution called the Meiji College of Technology.

Our founder, Mr. Keiichiro Yasukawa, with his belief that "Profits earned in this country must be used for the country", donated a large amount of funds to establish Kyutech, and entrusted education and research to Dr. Kenjiro Yamakawa, who were then the president of Tokyo Imperial University, to invite him as the first president of Kyutech.

At the opening ceremony, Dr. Yamakawa declared to strive to develop human resources with dignity and creativity as described in the Kyutech's founding principle "Educating gentlemen with excellent knowledge and skills in technology" which has been adhered to all the generations and still guide us today after more than 110 years.

Over the course of the past 110 years, Japan and the world have experienced upheavals of many kinds, including a number of wars, large-scale natural disasters, pandemics and global depressions.

Today, we find ourselves living through a major historical event of ever-growing magnitude, as the COVID-19 pandemic has spread around the world, infecting more than 100 million people, with it being said that in economic terms, too, the world is facing its gravest economic crisis in the postwar period.

The Spanish influenza pandemic that began just over 100 years ago in 1918 (Taisho year 7) is estimated to

have infected more than 500 million people globally, and claimed between as many as 20 to 40 million lives. In Japan it is said that it infected 25 million people, leaving 380,000 dead.

Whereas we could see a lot of unimaginable challenges which we have faced in the past, we can also learn and be blessed by the wisdom from the past. More than 200 years ago, philosopher Immanuel Kant wrote, “Everything has either a price or a dignity...whatever is above all price, and therefore admits of no equivalent, has a dignity.”

I hope that the pandemic can provide us all with an opportunity to realize just how many important things are granted in our ordinary daily lives, and to reconsider the preciousness of human life.

The era in which we all find ourselves, with its rapid technological innovation and the continuous progress of globalization, is often characterized by the term “VUCA” (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity).

As we are now facing the global-scale spread of the novel coronavirus, our physical movements are being greatly restricted and various social and economic activities are being severely impacted; and it could well be said that Volatility and Uncertainty are being further amplified.

Based on our founding principle, Kyutech is committed to fostering highly skilled engineering professionals who will continue to play an active role in just such challenging times. In order to educate our students to learn high-level specialist knowledge and skills and utilize them continuously, Kyutech provides various learning opportunities and programs that enable students to acquire what we call “Global Competency for Engineers” (GCE), comprising five elements: acceptance of diverse cultures, communication skills, autonomous learning skills, problem discovery and solution skills (investigative skills), and design skills (engineering design).

In the society of the future there will undoubtedly be challenges which have not yet been anticipated. However, it is you who will be the ones to tackle with these challenges by creating technologies and methodologies that have yet to be devised.

I hope that you will learn, think, and try many things during your time as students at Kyutech, so that in the future you will be able to recognize and be open to diverse ways of thinking, share your wisdom, identify challenges, and contribute to solving problems in a way that creates social value.

In concluding my address, let me say that although the COVID-19 pandemic has imposed various constraints on our lives, I sincerely hope that you, our new students, will give thoughts to the irreplaceable importance of various activities in our daily lives and the preciousness of human life, and, taking good care of your own health, enjoy life and learning, and pursue a meaningful undergraduate or graduate student life. Once again, my sincere congratulations.

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