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April 3rd, 2025

President's Entrance Ceremony Address for April 2025

Yasunori Mitani, President
Kyushu Institute of Technology (Kyutech)

Congratulations on your admission to Kyushu Institute of Technology (Kyutech). On this beautiful spring day, it is a great honor and joy for all of us—faculty, staff, current students, and everyone connected to Kyutech—to welcome you and celebrate this special occasion. I am sure that today is not only a proud moment for each of you as new students but also for your families and loved ones who have supported you along the way. On behalf of Kyutech, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to you all.

Our university traces its origins to a private institution called the Meiji College of Technology (MCT), which was established in 1909. MCT was founded in the Tobata area with the goal of training engineers to support Japan's industrial development. This was made possible through the private investment of Mr. Keiichiro Yasukawa, who was involved in the establishment of several related companies. The college began as a coal mining business to supply the Imperial Steel Works, which started operations in 1901, in the Chikuho region, where our Iizuka campus is located.

At the time of its founding, MCT, under the leadership of its first president, Dr. Kenjiro Yamakawa, established the guiding principle of "educating gentlemen with excellent knowledge and skills in technology." The term "gentleman" refers to an individual who excels both academically and in character. Since its founding, this principle has been the cornerstone of the institution's education, focusing on the cultivation of engineers with profound intelligence and cultural knowledge, as well as the creation of new technologies. Even as the institution transitioned from a private school to a government-run institution, and eventually to the National Kyushu Institute of Technology, the original guiding principle has been continuously upheld, enriching education, research, and social contributions.

In today's uncertain society, where unpredictable events are increasingly common, engineers who can thrive must possess not only technical expertise but also a strong ethical sense, business acumen,

and a global mindset. There is a growing societal demand for the cultivation of such well-rounded individuals. In this regard, we once again express our deep respect for the foresight of Mr. Keiichiro Yasukawa and Mr. Kenjiro Matsumoto, who proposed the principle of "educating gentlemen with excellent knowledge and skills in technology" over 116 years ago—an idea that remains relevant and valuable in contemporary society.

The venue for today's entrance ceremony is the Memorial Hall here at Kyutech. This building was constructed in October 1959 as part of the 50th-anniversary project of the university. Thanks to the enthusiasm of then-President Heihachi Kamura and the generous donations from many individuals, it emerged as a building that would support the future of the institution. President Kamura, deeply aware of the importance of creating a space that was not only suitable for the academic environment but also pure and sacred, proposed the construction of this Memorial Hall. It has since become a place that continues to carry the university's mission of "educating gentlemen with excellent knowledge and skills in technology."

This hall is positioned as a venue for academic research presentations, musical performances, and other cultural events, and has become deeply rooted in the post-war ideals of new university education. At the first graduation ceremony held after its construction, Mr. Konosuke Matsushita gave a commemorative lecture. The design was undertaken by the renowned modern Japanese architect, Mr. Seike Kiyoshi. The roof design, which resembles an open fan, is an iconic feature that has been etched in the memories of many and is cherished as a symbol of the university. By holding the entrance ceremony in this space, we reaffirm the historical value and the legacy of the university's ideals, and we hope it will continue to be a place that contributes to the development of education and culture for many years to come.

In recent years, various technologies have been developing, particularly in the fields of digital transformation and green transformation. The word "transformation" carries the meaning of change or revolution, and it aims at a dramatic improvement in productivity across all sectors through the use of data and digital technologies. Our university, by combining tradition with transformation, continues to grow as a university that creates cutting-edge technologies. Recently, Kyutech was selected by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) as one of the 25 universities nationwide recognized as "Regional Core and Characteristic Research Universities." Commonly referred to as J-PEAKS, Kyutech is recognized as one of the leading research universities in Japan, representing the pinnacle of excellence. Today, all of you who have joined us have become a part of this esteemed institution. As you embark on your studies, let us move

forward together and lead the world.

In this rapidly evolving world, the rise of generative AI has made it easier than ever to access vast amounts of knowledge and conduct objective, data-driven analyses. As a result, concerns such as "Will AI take our jobs?" have frequently been discussed.

As you embark on your studies at Kyutech, simply acquiring knowledge will not be enough—AI can already do that. What sets you apart is your ability to actively engage with knowledge, leverage your own experiences, and critically consider different perspectives. It is essential to develop a mindset that constantly seeks to grasp the essence of things through independent thought.

Instead of accepting information at face value, you must always evaluate its accuracy—this ability, known as critical thinking, is fundamental to enhancing your skills as a human being.

At Kyutech, we have designed various learning opportunities within our academic environment to help you cultivate this essential mindset.

For example, we are developing a diverse and dynamic campus environment that includes a Beyond 5G ecosystem aimed at establishing next-generation communication standards, as well as collaborative spaces where startups and various industry players can come together. We call this concept the "Future-Thinking Campus"—a place where students can engage with cutting-edge technology while exploring the future alongside a diverse community.

In your academic journey, you will have the opportunity to learn in a multicultural environment, where individuals from different nationalities, genders, and ethnic backgrounds come together to share their cultures and perspectives. We provide various opportunities, such as study abroad programs, student projects, and networking events with alumni who are making an impact in the industry.

As you embark on your experiences here, we encourage you to embrace unexpected encounters, remain curious about a wide range of subjects, and develop the habit of critically evaluating the accuracy of the information you receive. By doing so, I am confident that you will grow into individuals who cannot be defeated by AI.

The convergence of technology and human creativity can lead to unexpected breakthroughs, serving as the driving force behind innovation. In this future-thinking campus, I urge you to explore boldly, analyze objectively, and develop the ability to solve complex problems.

Finally, as exemplified by the COVID-19 pandemic, we must acknowledge that zero risk does not exist in our world. Moreover, we are living in an era of increasingly complex global challenges.

As you embark on this new chapter, I encourage you to manage risks wisely in your daily life, reflect on the preciousness of each moment and the value of life, and take good care of your health. At the same time, I hope you will enjoy learning, build meaningful friendships, and fully embrace the enriching experiences that campus life has to offer.

With these wishes, I conclude my address. Congratulations to you all.