

## Fall Welcome 2022

Hello, I'm Kaz Shiozaki, President of the Nara Institute of Science and Technology, NAIST for short. On behalf of our faculty and staff, I would like to welcome you all, 23 and 45 students entering our master's and doctoral programs, respectively. We are proud of the fact that you have chosen NAIST as a place for your graduate study.

Having new members in our campus community, this time of year is always exciting. I am pleased to tell you that this is a remarkable community. With the commitment of every member of our campus community, we have been navigating the COVID-19 pandemic, while continuing active educational and research programs. Of course, such resilience is not the only strength of this campus. Those who have just arrived here will soon find out or feel how fascinating the NAIST community is. That's what happened to me after I moved from University of California to NAIST.

One of the strengths of the NAIST community is diversity. Today, we have welcomed 53 new international students from 18 countries and regions, adding up to the total of 1,124 students among which about a quarter of them are international students. The NAIST students are graduates of diverse universities and colleges with various educational backgrounds and experiences, and so are our faculty members.

Diverse attributes, knowledge, and experience hatch creative ideas and allow flexibility to changes. By interacting with diverse people, you can learn viewpoints different from your own and expand your intellectual horizons. This is exactly what our school motto says: "Outgrow your limits". NAIST is a diverse community where you can discover more of your potential, beyond what you think your limits are. Last year, our community drew up and published The Declaration of Co-creative Community, which begins as follows:

"The Nara Institute of Science and Technology is a community that encompasses students, faculty and staff of diverse identities and backgrounds. As members of this community, we must create and maintain an environment where we all can study and work to our full potential in order for NAIST to continue its contributions to the development of science, technology and society.

The Co-creative Community we aspire to is a community where members strive for the creation of new value through the exchange of opinions with courtesy and empathy. We value our individual differences and pursue mutual understanding and respect while rejecting discrimination."

You can find the entire Declaration on our university website and it is also posted at the entrance of your Division buildings. Please take the time to read it.

Starting from tomorrow, you will be a student as well as a researcher, who will carry out your own thesis research. At the forefront of scientific and technological research, you try to discover or achieve something novel, something that has not been accomplished by anybody else including your professors. So, even your professors cannot teach you exactly what to be discovered or how to accomplish your research goals. Rather, they are your collaborators who tackle the latest research questions with you. I would call it "co-creation" between you and your professor; that is the core of graduate training where you acquire multifaceted

knowledge and skills required for identifying and solving important problems. Our faculty members are world-class researchers, and they are looking forward to collaborating with you.

A week ago, 60 master's and doctoral degrees were conferred on our newest graduates here in this hall. In years to come, I am expecting you to come back here and receive yours. The successful completion of a postgraduate degree is a challenging task, as research is so long-term and uncertain, with pitfalls here and there. During my own thesis research thirty-some years ago, I remember I fell into pitfalls from time to time and struggled to find a way to get out of them and complete my research projects. Looking back over those troubles that I encountered, I couldn't agree more with what the American writer Mark Twain said: "What gets us into trouble is not what we don't know. It's what we know for sure that just ain't so."

Troubles often happen when we assume we know what we don't know. In other words, we dig pitfalls for ourselves to fall into. We need to be afraid more of such assumptions than the lack of knowledge. Indeed, the ability to objectively distinguish between what you know and what you don't know is one of the essential qualifications for researchers, a faculty that you are to acquire through your graduate training. Including such an ability, many of the capabilities and skills that you will be trained for through your thesis research are relevant across various fields and many aspects of your life. So, they are sometimes called "Transferable Skills". I encourage you to get the most out of your study at NAIST, taking advantage of this unique environment where you can interact with and learn from our diverse academic community as well as our local and international collaborators.

Before closing, I'd like to reiterate our school 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 try unexpected opportunities beyond what you can imagine right now.

Ready, Set, Go and outgrow your limits!