

I would like to express my congratulations to all of the graduates here today and to your parents, relatives and those who supported you through your studies.

The NAIST Alumni Association is developing various programs to support both graduates and current students. After graduation, I feel that there will be many instances when you will have a sense of pride towards your studies at NAIST and many opportunities where you realize your connections with NAIST. Gratitude for this will grow over time. I hope all of you will join the Alumni Association and make full use of these ties.

What are the feelings of those of you who are about to enter the workforce? Are you relieved that you can finally become financially independent after your long student life? Are you anxious about whether you will be able to handle your work or how society and its conditions will change in the future? I would like to encourage you all to have a strong sense of "I'm going to do it," and to take on various challenges more positively than ever before.

So far, a total of 11,000 students have graduated from NAIST. Many of our graduates are active in universities, research institutes, and large companies in Japan and abroad, and have made the NAIST brand a firm fixture in the education and industry. Last year, NAIST was ranked No. 1 for taking initiative and No. 2 for originality in a survey of university images held by major corporations conducted by the Nikkei newspaper, etc. Among the items that make up taking initiative, "a spirit of challenge" was ranked first and "work independently" was ranked third. Your seniors have been evaluated as the students with the strongest sense of challenge in Japan.

These qualities have been passed on to you as the genes of NAIST students.

Let's take a look back at when you came to NAIST. You left your familiar universities or technical colleges and entered NAIST's gate with the desire to take on new challenges. I am sure that NAIST has provided you with an environment that accepts your passion and allows you to challenge yourselves in a variety of ways. Surrounded by professors who are active around the globe and students who are passionate about what they do, I am sure that your days at NAIST have been invaluable.

Research is something that you can never know whether it will work or not. You never know until you try, you may never see results despite your best efforts, and your research activities must have been a series of such experiences. Now you have learned the value of taking on challenges, the joy of success, and methodologies to increase the likelihood of success.

I believe that these qualities and attitudes are of utmost importance in today's society. Our society is faced with unprecedented challenges such as unpredictable pandemics, unstable international situations, global warming, population explosions, and a rapidly declining birthrate and aging population in Japan. Conventional wisdom is no longer valid, and no one knows the correct answer.

I hope that you will proactively confront these turbulent times and contribute to society. I hope that you will have a sense of ownership, and without fear of change, seriously consider what you can do to create a peaceful and prosperous world, make proposals, and carry them out. I hope that each of you will use what you have learned at NAIST to pioneer and lead a new era. Your individual pursuits will make a difference in the future of humankind. With your success being a given, I look forward to your great accomplishments.

Finally, I would like to once again congratulate you on your graduation.

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