

Congratulatory Remarks

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

As of today, NAIST has conferred more than 10,000 degrees. Many of the NAIST graduates have been active in universities, research institutes, and large corporations both domestically and abroad, assuring the value of the NAIST brand. I expect you to increase this value as newly-minted NAIST graduates working in society.

The NAIST Alumni Association has been planning various programs to support both NAIST graduates and current students. I believe that there will be many instances after graduation when you feel a sense of pride towards your experience at NAIST and many opportunities where you feel your connections to NAIST. Your gratitude for these will surely grow over the years. I hope all of you will join the Alumni Association and make full use of these ties.

I myself completed my doctoral degree here in 1998 as a member of the second class of students accepted to NAIST. When I entered NAIST, there were barely any graduates, and NAIST's reputation was nowhere near what it is today. The appeal of NAIST is not its reputation or its history; internationally recognized faculties and passionate students come together with the boldness to challenge the unknown, and this has been the strongest appeal of NAIST. More than twenty years after my graduation, I believe it more than ever.

For the past year or so leading up to today, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I know that you endured very difficult circumstances to complete your studies. You may have felt unsure because your experiments didn't go as planned or felt lonely because you were unable to meet with your friends and family. Through your perseverance, and the generous support from those around you, however, you made it to this day. Don't forget to thank people who have supported you, take pride in your valuable experience here at NAIST, and make it your motivation as you look towards your future.

This pandemic has uncovered some of society's accumulated strains and weaknesses in a most unexpected manner. While we cannot lose any time in pushing forward social transformation in line with SDGs, we are now at a point where what used to work for common sense is no longer viable and no one has the answers. However, there is one thing that is certain: We cannot just

wait for things to happen. Rather, it is crucial that each of us takes the lead, giving serious thought to what we can do to better our society without being afraid of change, coming up with solutions, and following through with their execution.

With the desire to challenge yourselves in a new environment, you all chose to the leap from your previous universities and institutions where you felt at home to continue your studies at NAIST. Now, having engaged in cutting-edge researches, you have the abilities and the outlook to respond to the demands of the times. The efforts of each of you as you enter the workforce will change the future of humanity. Making use of what you have learned at NAIST, I hope that all of you carve out and actively lead a new era. I have no doubt whatsoever that you will achieve great success.

Let me end my comments by saying once more, congratulations on your graduation!

KIYOKAWA Kiyoshi

Chairperson

NAIST Alumni Association