

Fall 2025 – President Shiozaki's Commencement Address

Parents and families, our faculty and staff, it is an honor to join you in congratulating the members of this graduating class, on which I have just conferred 27 doctoral degrees and 30 master's degrees.

First of all, let me offer my sincere congratulations to each of our graduates. I know it has been a long road to get to this day. With commendable enthusiasm and perseverance, you all have been striving toward one of the life milestones you have reached today. I applaud you. I could not be prouder.

Today, we have assembled here to celebrate your hard work and remarkable achievements. But you did not do them alone. You have received your diploma because of so many who have faith in you. This is a perfect opportunity to show appreciation to everyone who has been supporting and standing by you during your time at NAIST. To your parents, families, friends, NAIST professors, and staff, why don't we give them a round of applause?

As you prepare for the next stage of your lives, I want each of you to pause and reflect on the changes that have happened to you during your days at NAIST. You have just completed a fantastic journey that must have significantly impacted what you know, how you think, and who you are. Well, some of you may not see it right away, but you will realize later in your life what you have picked up from NAIST and carry with you into your careers.

At NAIST, you studied in a specific education program, learned in a particular laboratory, and worked on a specialized thesis project. They offer an excellent platform to acquire skills and abilities that can be applied to a wide array of tasks, issues, and obstacles. Such skills and abilities are sometimes called "transferable skills," as they can be transferred to diverse contexts and help identify solutions. Therefore, having completed your study at NAIST, you are now ready for new challenges, even outside the particular research field you chose for your thesis research.

Indeed, you may soon forget some of the knowledge you acquired at NAIST. That's okay, as the latest in science and technology is doomed to become outdated quickly anyway. But the transferable skills, such as ways to objectively observe, logically think, and critically evaluate thinking of your own and others, will stay with you for years to come. By tackling different problems and tasks with those skills, you can continue to evolve even after you leave NAIST. That's how graduate education works. Look at your professors; they completed their graduate studies decades ago. Much of the then-latest knowledge must be obsolete now or forgotten by them. Yet,

your professors are at the forefront of today's science and technology, continually evolving even after leaving graduate school.

You are stepping into a world of rapid changes, from science, technology, and geopolitical risks to the climate. The time of change is the time of uncertainty. We feel unsettled as we cannot tell what may come. In such a period of "VUCA", you also won't remain the same as you are now. There may not be a single job that brings you lasting comfort. Seize a career path that challenges you and unleashes your potential! You may not like it at the beginning. But if you keep trying with your best and embrace unexpected changes, you will evolve into a person that you cannot imagine now. Yes, I'm talking about "Outgrow your limits!" A French philosopher of the last century, Henri Bergson, wrote in his book titled "Creative Evolution" as follows:

For a conscious being, to exist is to change, to change is to mature, to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly.

Obviously, the famous kung fu master Bruce Lee reached a similar wisdom. He expressed it in his own unique way, and I'd like to share his words with you:

We are always in a process of becoming, and nothing is fixed. Have no rigid system in you, and you'll be flexible to change with the ever-changing.

Life is flowing, and like running water, when it stops, it grows stale.
Go bravely on, my friend.

The future is a time and a place where every worthy ambition you possess is within your grasp.

Congratulations again to you all. In your faces, I see joy, pride, and promise where many exciting stories are about to unfold. NAIST is proud of its newest alumni. Today, you are joining over 10,000 alumni who have also been trained here at NAIST and are trying to make this world a better place. The NAIST Alumni Association is a global network for our graduates. I encourage you to participate actively and stay connected with NAIST. Even after graduation, you remain a member of the NAIST community. We assure you that the NAIST diploma you received today will only increase in value and prestige over time, as NAIST is an institution on the move. Like yourself, NAIST will continue to change and evolve. We look forward to sharing its future achievements and developments with our alumni.

Let me close my commencement address with my parting wish for you all: May your future be rewarding and fulfilling!

Now, go and outgrow your limits!