

Welcome Address for the 2018 Matriculation Ceremony

Freshmen of 2018!

I am very pleased to welcome you all today. I sincerely congratulate each and every one of our 766 freshmen on your matriculation. In particular, I would like to congratulate the 18 students from abroad from the bottom of my heart. I welcome all of you to KAIST.

My deepest gratitude goes to your parents, who have raised you with deep devotion and love. I am thankful to them for coming a long way, often from across the country, to join us for this meaningful occasion.

I would also like to thank the distinguished guests who have taken time out of their busy schedules to join us, as well as the KAIST professors and staff who are here today.

Freshmen of KAIST!

KAIST is the best science and technology university in Korea, which also takes pride in its strong global reputation. KAIST was founded in 1971 with only master's programs, then established its first undergraduate programs in 1984. To date, the number of KAIST alumni has reached 61,000. Among them, 12,400 graduated with Ph.Ds. They have been the backbone of Korea's science & technology advancement and industrial growth.

About 25% of the leading scientists and researchers in Korea's top universities, corporations, and government-affiliated research institutes are KAIST alumni. I am also a proud KAIST alumnus.

KAIST has emerged as a leading global university with worldwide recognition from renowned scientists and educators abroad. So be proud of becoming a part of the KAIST community, namely KAISTians.

Dear freshmen!

Let's give a big round of applause to your parents, who have supported you with love and have made it possible for you to become a proud member of the KAIST community. I also would like to ask all the international students to thank their parents with a big round of applause.

Dear parents!

Please congratulate the students on joining one of the best universities in the world with a big hand.

Students!

You will study here for the next four years and beyond. While at KAIST, I believe you will have a very critical opportunity to prepare for your future. You will explore the fields of your interest and build your knowledge and skills in pursuit of becoming a big leader in your field.

With that in mind, I would like to give you three pieces of advice that will help your college life toward the realization of your dreams.

First, deepen and broaden your basic studies.

The main difference between a 100-story building and a 10-story building is how deep and strong its foundation is. It is not possible to make a 100-story building on a foundation meant for a 10-story building. Deepen and broaden your knowledge in the basic studies to build the strong foundation on which you can build a monumental tower of academic growth.

Especially in the new paradigm of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the majority of new discoveries and inventions will happen on the border of multidisciplines, not from single disciplines. You will need broader ranges of knowledge in basic studies in order for you to traverse the disciplines.

I would also like to advise you to devote yourselves to the study of basic science and

engineering subjects such as physics, mathematics, chemistry, biology, computer coding, AI, statistics, automatic control, and engineering design among others. In addition, knowledge in the humanities will broaden your intellectual spectrum as well. Steve Jobs once said that knowledge in the humanities was the force behind innovation.

Conventionally, the science and technology fields cultivate the left side of brain while the humanities and social sciences develop the right hemisphere. KAIST offers a curriculum of full-brain education, which will actively stimulate both sides of the brain. Students will have the opportunity to broadly explore basic studies during their first year and will choose a major in their second year.

KAIST will also offer a new non-department program of transdisciplinary education from March 2019. Under this new track, students may expand their ingenuity in comprehending the newest trends of science and technology while being equipped with a strong foundation of basic studies in science, engineering, and the humanities during their undergraduate course. The track will make you be ready to crisscross all the disciplines and endeavor to create new knowledge across multidisciplines.

Second, strengthen your global leadership skills.

You are the top 0.3 percent of science and technology talents in the nation. Our future calls for your leadership and this is your responsibility and obligation.

Especially, the Korea of the future that you will lead will be completely different from the Korea of today. Korea is now emerging as one of the seven most innovative countries in the world. Korea's economy also had become one of the ten largest in the world with enormous growth potential toward becoming a leading country in the world. Korea is the one of the five countries to have ever hosted many of the world's major sports events such as the Summer and Winter Olympics, the World Championship in Athletics, and the World Cup.

I would like to ask you all to think beyond Korea and aspire to be a global leader. Over the next three decades, I look forward to seeing many in your class become presidents of globally prestigious universities or CEOs of global corporations

However, leadership is not built in a day. You should reflect on what you will pursue and how you can prepare for your role on the global stage. You should train well and prepare yourself for this leadership role from your earliest days at university.

Now, I would like to advise you to focus on three qualities every global leader should possess during your studies at KAIST.

First and foremost is creativity.

Creativity is the key component that any expert requires in order to earn respect. Continuous training and effort may further cultivate creativity. However, your creativity will not flourish if you merely copy others.

You should challenge yourself to identify your own creative solutions and take the road not taken. Even more, please remember to keep asking yourself “why” during your studies.

Israel has the highest number of Nobel Prize winners by population and has the second highest number of NASDAQ-listed companies after the United States. ‘Chutzpah’ spirit encourages people to share their opinions and not hesitate to keep asking questions when in doubt. This was the force behind the advancement of today’s Israel.

I would like to encourage you to engage in every opportunity for intellectual exchange and debates and expand the horizon for your creativity.

Next is communication ability.

You will live in a hyperconnected and lateral society and communication skill is the basic trait required for every leader. You should present your ideas and opinions logically and clearly to others. Even more, you will encounter many opportunities to persuade others with your writing and speech. You should carefully listen to what others say, regardless of your status or position.

Last is caring spirit.

Your excellence will shine brighter when caring for others. Such a caring spirit will double your value as a member in this society. Our society will achieve more balanced, sustainable growth if led by leaders who have caring minds for others, including the socially marginalized.

I believe Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg have donated large amounts of money to society because they have such caring minds and have valued human prosperity since their childhoods. If you have a caring spirit, your leadership will be greatly recognized and admired, like theirs.

As such, when you are equipped these '3Cs' of Creativity, Communication Ability, and Caring Spirit, you will become a great leader to be remembered.

Last but not least, I would like to stress time management skills.

Until now, your teachers and parents might have managed your daily schedule. You could not control it on your own.

As you start a new life at KAIST, you should manage your time and responsibilities wisely by yourself. I have seen many students struggle and end up with grades of Christian Dior (C,D) or double pistol (F,F). In most cases, their low grades were caused by poor time management. Sometimes, students fail to manage the sudden freedom they are given in their first semester.

So from now on, I advise you to set up a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly plan and manage your time wisely. Please prioritize furthering your majoring studies, spiritual exercise,

emotional growth, and physical health. A report by the World Health Organization revealed that successful leaders were healthy in knowledge, mind, emotion, and body.

There is a saying that goes “Well begun is half done.” Looking back on my life of 66 years, I think that the beginning determines not half, but 99% of any outcome.

Your undergraduate course will be the first step for preparing for your future career. Your future will be determined by what dreams you dream in college and how you prepare for them. I hope that your days at KAIST will be a time of diligent preparation for your ambitious dreams. Professors at KAIST will teach you with passion. Our staff will do their best to support you.

I will do my best to make your dreams come true. The offices of all of our faculty and staff members as well as our emails are always open, including mine. So please do not hesitate to ask for help if needed. I will listen to your voices. You are the most important reason why KAIST exists.

Let me congratulate you once again on your matriculation and thank the parents who are with us today. Thank you once again.

February 26, 2018

KAIST President Sung-Chul Shin