

New Year's Address 2018

Dearest members of KAIST,

The year 2018 has dawned upon us. May you and your family enjoy a blessed year of good health and happiness.

The year of the golden dog is said to be fortunate for those who are trusted by others and who show a strong sense of responsibility. By staying committed to our mission, let us earn the trust of the nation and the people in the year ahead.

The year, 2017, was a milestone in the history of KAIST. By embracing challenges and driving innovation, our community members' passion and commitment toward the advancement of humanity has borne fruit in many fields.

KAIST's groundbreaking innovations have been recognized at home and abroad. Kyu-Young Whang, a distinguished professor in the School of Computing, and Sang Yup Lee, a distinguished professor in the Department of Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering, were named winners of the 2017 Korea Supreme Scientist and Technologist Award. This is particularly notable as two KAIST professors swept the award this year. In addition, more than 20 professors received awards from leading institutes in recognition of their innovative research achievements.

Our students have also made us proud. Sangeun Oh, a Ph.D. candidate in the School of Computing, was selected as a Google Ph.D. Fellow. The KAIST Africa Volunteer Team won all of the categories of the 2017 World Friends ICT Year-end Roundup. Once again, I would like to express my congratulations to all who have added to our reputation.

KAIST has also contributed to the advancement of Korea and humanity through innovative R&D results. We worked hard to be "the world's best, first, and most unique." Evidenced from the top 10 R&D projects of 2017, many professors including YongKeun Park have conducted innovative research or launched startups to resolve key issues faced by humanity. And, KAIST's total research funds for 2017 increased by 15% (9.7% government, 40% private) compared to the previous year, totaling 340 billion won.

For the past year, KAIST has continued to build its reputation as a startup incubator in Korea. The technology-powered startup model developed by KAIST has created a new startup culture. This led to the launch of 10 startups by faculty members and 13 by students.

The number of large-scale technology transfers has been increasing thanks to KAIST's ever-growing patent portfolio. We became the first university in Korea to register 22 standard patents, including High-Efficiency Video Coding (HEVC).

Last year, KAIST hosted the Tech Fair for the Fourth Industrial Revolution for the first time since its foundation. The fair was held to help SMEs better familiarize themselves with the competitive technology and patents KAIST possesses. The event drew more than 250 participants from 197 SMEs. At the fair, KAIST showcased ten of its leading patents and even partnered with several companies for technology transfers.

International university rankings recognized our innovations. In the QS World University Rankings by subject, several departments made top 20s in the world. Sooner or later, I believe the Department of Materials Engineering now ranked in 13th will advance into top ten groups. Thomson Reuters ranked KAIST as the sixth most innovative university in the world and first in the Asia-Pacific region for the second year in a row.

The KAIST Development Fund gained new momentum. Since the global financial crisis, fund raising campaigns have been sluggish. However, in 2017, we saw a 330% increase in donations compared to the previous year. The number of donations in 2017 exceeded 11,000 for the first time.

Globalization initiatives also increased. Last June, KAIST hosted the first Embassy Day. More than 100 diplomats, including 31 ambassadors, from 65 countries attended the event. The diplomats urged us to expand admission opportunities for their students. We plan to actively cooperate with foreign embassies in Korea to attract outstanding faculty and students.

KAIST saw a 7.3% increase in the number of international students, including both students in degree programs and exchange students. With the increase in the international population, it has become increasingly important to establish a more globalized campus environment. Policies are underway to create a bilingual campus. English proficiency was added as a crucial criterion in hiring, and 22 new staff members fluent in English were employed last year.

Institutional competitiveness relies on excellent human resources. As president, it is a great pleasure to have such exceptionally talented people. Last year, KAIST recruited 26 new faculty members. They are all remarkably talented with high integrity and global minds. In addition, 12 offer letters were sent out to other outstanding individuals.

We can only make real progress when heading toward a common goal with a shared vision. I stressed the importance of future strategies in my inaugural address and kicked off the Vision 2031 Committee soon after my inauguration to set up both short-term and long-term strategies for KAIST to sustain its growth.

More than 140 members participated voluntarily to help develop innovation strategies over the past ten months. The proposed strategies went through an internal consensus building process. The President's Advisory Council (PAC), which is comprised of prominent global leaders around the world, will make a final review.

Respected members of KAIST,

In 2018, KAIST will take a leap forward for becoming a Global Value-Creative World-Leading University. In order for KAIST to fulfill its vision, the Vision 2031 Committee presented the action plan for the five innovation initiatives that I proposed.

The first is innovation in education.

Science and technology are changing the world in the age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The future of Korea is in the hands of its talented individuals in science and technology. We must exert efforts to nurture creative, transdisciplinary talents with the capacity to enhance the social value of science and technology.

KAIST will establish a new non-department program of transdisciplinary education, aimed at nurturing global leaders best fit for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. It will help students build a strong foundation in basic science and engineering and encourage multidisciplinary approaches. The steering committee headed by Professor Jong Duk Kim and ten faculty members will design a new curriculum. We plan to offer the new undergraduate program from March 2019. This will provide students with more options in choosing their major.

KAIST students are aiming for the global stage beyond Korea. We will teach them to be global shapers, global innovators, and global movers who can make the world better. To this end, KAIST espouses volunteerism. The global volunteering corps will offer various opportunities to exercise leadership and serve others. We also plan to host distinguished lectures by Nobel laureates and many other prominent industry leaders to inspire and empower students.

In an effort to better respond to the ever-changing global business environment, the re-training of human resources is essential for companies. KAIST will promote the Virtual Campus program to play its part in the upskilling of corporate employees. Under Virtual Campus, KAIST offers degree programs for the general public that utilize smart learning infrastructures such as Edu 4.0 and KOOC. Online lectures will allow employees to study and work at the same time.

Second, we will conduct innovative research.

Knowledge happens across and beyond disciplines during the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Thus, our research portfolio should reflect this trend.

KAIST plans to build a Network of Excellence for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (NExFIRE) for convergence research.

‘Cross-Generation Collaborative Labs’ will be a new collaboration platform. This novel approach in Korea will pair up senior and junior faculty for sustaining research legacies across generations. That will be a stepping stone to extend the spectrum of knowledge and its competitiveness without any cessation.

KAIST will continue to collaborate within the triple helix of universities, industry, and research institutes. The importance of open innovation and collaborative research cannot be overemphasized. This partnership among universities, industry, and research institutes will broaden our horizons.

Third, we will drive innovation in technology commercialization.

The University’s R&DB activity is essential not only to expand the university budget but also to create jobs for young people and improve national competitiveness.

KAIST will maximize its intellectual property and economic value by stimulating technology-invested companies and startups. We will recruit experts capable of recognizing the potential value of technology and business, and implement policies to attract diverse forms of investment. We will speed up the launching of startups through deregulation and cutting red tape. Inviting successful startups by students and successful CEOs, we will work to instill a challenging spirit into our young entrepreneurs.

KAIST will cooperate with venture capitalists at home and abroad to further accelerate the commercialization. As part of this move, KAIST signed an MOU with Israel's Yozma Group. The Fourth Industrial Revolution is significantly changing the business landscape. We will launch K-Industry 4.0 to help SMEs integrate smart technologies. The launch of K-Industry 4.0, powered by KAIST's outstanding human resources and technology, will bring SMEs in Korea to the level of world-class smart factories.

Fourth, we must pursue innovation in globalization.

Globalization is no longer an option, but a necessity. KAIST will strengthen its efforts to establish a bilingual campus. Students will have more opportunities to improve their English proficiency. International students will have diverse opportunities to learn Korean through various sets of programs and participate in cultural programs that complement their learning experiences. Every form of internal communication and information sharing, including the KAIST portal system, will be done bilingually.

KAIST will make every effort to create a more welcoming and comfortable atmosphere for the international community and their families. First, we will identify problems faced by our international populations and actively explore ways to address those issues. We will expand benefits to our international community, such as the KAIST Child Care Center and through collaboration with the Taejon Christian International School (TCIS).

KAIST will make more global networks and partnerships. We will strengthen ties with world-leading organizations, such as the World Economic Forum (WEF) by co-hosting international events. I will play my part in promoting KAIST's innovations and increasing global visibility by making keynote speeches at international events including Times Higher Education (THE) and Quacquarelli Symonds (QS).

Finally, we will implement innovative future strategies.

The year 2018 will mark the first stride toward becoming a ‘Global Value-Creative World-Leading University.’ Innovation at KAIST will serve as a beacon of hope for the nation and beyond.

As I mentioned earlier, the Vision 2031 Report is in the final review stage now. At the Vision 2031 Declaration Ceremony, to be held on March 20, KAIST will present its new vision and reaffirm our dedication and commitment to our shared future. The report titled “*KAIST, the Future of Korea*” will be available to the public.

In April, KAIST will co-host the Fourth Industrial Revolution Forum with the World Economic Forum (WEF). Chairman Klaus Schwab, who coined the term “Fourth Industrial Revolution,” will be attending the event. In collaboration with the WEF, KAIST will establish itself as a role model for the Fourth Industrial Revolution and enhance its international reputation.

KAIST will also open the Future Strategy Research Center to deliver a new hope to people in this age of uncertainty. Think tank groups must present effective strategies to ensure sustainable growth for the nation and its related institutes. The Future Strategy Research Center will serve as a think tank, performing research and advocacy on future strategies for KAIST and Korea.

Respected members of KAIST,

Under the core values of creativity and challenge, we have pursued excellence and have been striving to derive greater value for a better future. Now, I wish to imbue a ‘caring mind’ into our organizational culture. Let us treat each other with respect and warmth, creating a caring campus for all.

Last month, I attended a year-end party for the international community. At the event, the international students handed out a plaque of appreciation to express their gratitude to members of KAIST. The recipient of this year’s award was the cleaning service team. It made me reflect on my days studying in the USA more than 40 years ago. Why didn’t I think of this back then? I was deeply moved and humbled at the same time.

KAIST has now grown into a global campus with more than 900 international students from 92 countries. The international population will continue to increase. It is more important now than ever to establish a culture that embraces diversity and inclusiveness. Our core values of creativity and a challenging spirit will have deeper meaning if we show more care and respect for others.

So far, the ideal qualifications expected of KAISTians have included creativity and a challenging spirit. From now on, we will nurture talents with a focus on the 3Cs: Creativity, Challenge, and Caring.

These 3Cs will serve as important criteria not only in student admissions, but also in the recruitment of new faculty and staff. KAIST will develop various educational programs to instill a caring mind in all our members and to attain mutual growth.

As you are the future of KAIST, KAIST is the future of Korea. Our dream and vision for a better future will have a significant impact on national progress and the advancement of humanity. As we move one step closer to becoming a Global Value-Creative World-Leading University, KAIST will emerge as a trailblazer during the Fourth Industrial Revolution. We will lay the foundation for Korea to join the ranks of advanced countries, with our national pride continuing to grow.

May you all have a blessed year and enjoy success in your future endeavors.

Thank you.

January 2, 2018

Sung-Chul Shin

President, KAIST