International Students Science Fair 2017 (June 22, 2017)

해외 과학영재학교 교장단 만찬 간담회 환영사

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President, KAIST

Good evening!

It is indeed my great pleasure and privilege to host tonight's dinner as the KAIST President. On behalf of the KAIST community, I would like to welcome all of you tonight.

I am sure that you know the Korea Science Academy, KSA is under the umbrella of KAIST. KAIST has a close relationship with KSA in its education and operation. KSA is a very important pipeline to supply elite students to KAIST. Principal 정윤 has demonstrated an excellent leadership in upgrading KSA over the past four years during his first term. He was reappointed for a second term early this year.

Now, I would like to take this opportunity to talk a bit about KAIST.

Most of you know that half a century ago Korea was one of the poorest countries in the world. The per capita GDP in the late 1960s was around 200 US$.

However, now, Korea ranks 13th in the world in terms of GDP and ranks eighth in the world for trade volume. Korea has emerged as one of the seven most innovative countries, according to the IMD report.

Not only our economic growth, but also the scientific growth is astonishing. For instance, back about 40 years ago, not a single SCI paper was published by Korean scientists.

Now, more than 50,000 articles are being published, helping Korea rank 12th in the world in terms of publications. In terms of the patent registration, Korea ranks fourth in the world.

The question is what brought about such phenomenal change. My answer for the question is that there are three driving forces to bring about such phenomenal change. Those are Visionary leaders, Innovative Plans, and Passionate People, which I call the 'VIP' driving forces. The success of KAIST is one of the best examples achieved by the 'VIP' driving forces.

First, through the vision of the Late President 정희 박, KAIST was established in 1971 under the special foundation law. It was time for Korea to transform from an agricultural country to an industrialized one. KAIST was tasked with a mission to foster highly talented manpower in science and technology and conduct basic and applied research, both of which were desperately needed at that time in the nation's development.

To achieve this mission, the innovative plan for the first research-oriented university in Korea was made mainly under the leadership of Dr. 근모 정. He is the man who made KAIST happen.

Finally, KAIST recruited passionate faculty and students. In those days, elite students went abroad for advanced studies and did not come back to Korea. Brain drain was a serious problem. An innovative plan was developed to retain elite students in Korea. KAIST took the mission. KAIST provided special benefit package for KAIST students including full scholarships, free room and board, allowance, and waiving of military obligation. KAIST also recruited the best faculty from home and abroad offering salaries three times higher than other Korean universities.

KAIST has fulfilled its mission passionately and faithfully, thus far producing over 58,000 graduates including 11,700 doctoral degree holders. KAIST graduates, who are now working at universities, research institutes, industries, and governmental agencies, have driven the progress of science and technology in Korea, and have played a pivotal role in the nation's industrialization and information revolution during the past half-century.

KAIST now is preparing the next half-century for another quantum leap. As the first alumnus President since the foundation of KAIST in 1971, I have a mission to prepare the platform for a quantum leap. This is a great deal of work to be done. Moreover, there is a great deal of pressure to me because expectations are high from not only KAIST community, but also Korean society. But, I can tell you that it is very honorable and valuable pressure to have.

For the mission, at my inaugural address I proposed a new vision of KAIST, which is to become a "Global Value-Creative World-Leading University."

By this I mean that KAIST should foster global leaders who can create knowledge which can make global impact and to produce world-leading research achievements in science and technology to benefit the world.

To realize this vision, I am going to pursue innovations in five areas. One of them is innovation for education. We will implement a non-department educational track where students are not required to choose one department during their undergraduate studies. In this track, we will emphasize basic science education such as physics, chemistry, biology, and mathematics, and basic engineering education such as AI, computer coding, statistics, engineering design.

In addition, we will teach a variety of humanities and social sciences courses such as comparative history and Eastern and Western philosophies. With this non-department educational system, we expect to foster scientific leaders who can move across various academic disciplines with confidence and collaborate with people from a wide range of backgrounds.

Globalization is another innovation we are going to implement. Currently, 179 foreign professors and researchers, representing 8.7 % of the total faculty, are working at KAIST. Also, 710 foreign students from 82 countries, about 8% of the total students, are studying now at

KAIST.

We will actively recruit more foreign professors and students to KAIST in the coming years to achieve a truly global campus. In this regard, we are keenly interested in educating elite students from your countries. We will strongly consider your recommendations for students who wish to study at KAIST.

Let me close my speech by welcoming all of you once again and sharing my hope that you have a wonderful experience in Korea.

Thank you very much.