

2017 Okayama University Graduation Ceremony

Congratulatory Speech

It is my great honor and pleasure to hold the 2017 Autumn Graduation Ceremony of Okayama University together with the Academic and Executive Staff Members. I am delighted to express my sincere congratulations on the successful completion of your courses in the Undergraduate and Graduate schools.

Among graduates, 63 students completed doctoral degrees, 20 with Masters Degrees, 3 with professional degrees, and 30 undergraduate students.

Just 2 weeks ago I attended the 11th Entrance Ceremony for Okayama-Hue International Master's Program in Hue Vietnam and I gave a congratulatory speech. I am sure 4 of you are graduating from this Okayama-Hue International Master's Program.

I was appointed as President of Okayama University last April and one of my first priorities was to announce my “Makino Vision” as the operating principle of the university. The details of the “Makino Vision” can be found in an essay titled “Going Beyond to Fruitful Academic Capital”. しなやかに超えていく実りの学都へ I posted it on the university homepage and if you haven't read it, I encourage you to do so.

Basically, our university has continued efforts to create “academic capital” in Okayama over the past twelve years. The 12th president, Mr. Chiba, first set out the idea of “academic capital” and former President Dr. Morita

developed the idea as “beautiful academic capital and the beautification of the campus.

Now it is high time for realization of academic capital developed by overcoming boundaries and difficulties. Okayama University is a comprehensive university with 11 Faculties, 7 Graduate schools, 3 Authorized Research Institutes, a University Hospital, and Attached Schools. We should create a Meta-Academia cooperating with one another and create new value which cannot be achieved by each part alone.

A good example of what can be achieved through cooperation can be seen in the recent recognition of Okayama University as a key source of research in Japan. Last March the University Hospital received approval as a “Clinical Research Core Hospital by Law”. So far, our University and University Hospital was selected to take part in “Project of Translational and Clinical Research Core Center” by the Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development, “the Program for Promoting the enhancement of Research Universities” in 2013 and “Top Global University Project” in 2014. Moreover, the University is one of only 8 universities in Japan that have been selected for all of the above 4 major projects.

We named our Top Global Project as the PRIME program, which stands for producing “practical-oriented human resources in a global community”. Under the program students will not only be able to acquire three capacities covering the strengths found in the liberal arts, linguistic ability, and specialized knowledge, but also be given opportunities to utilize these capacities globally through inter-discipline, inter-society and inter-culture activities.

Graduates, you will be able to act globally after experience in many fields solving problems and acquiring the ability to make the right decisions, taking appropriate action, and thus assuming leadership. I am sure you established your identity and the ability to express yourselves during your study in our university so from now you can push yourself in new stage of life.

Many intractable problems including the global environment, disaster risk management, energy, low birth rates, and financial and employment issues challenge the world today. In an effort to negotiate solutions to such problems, the world is struggling to attain new growth through innovation.

In 2015, the United Nations set 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets to be achieved by 2030. In order to collectively solve these problems in the world today you must foster a global sensibility and lead in the innovation of global knowledge. Every graduating student here today needs to develop a global consciousness and promote international cooperation.

For academics like us, who work to expand knowledge, we need to respond to the demands of society. Therefore, we all should be aware that it is OUR mission, to resolve the global challenges facing us.

You are graduating from Okayama University today, but your pursuit of knowledge will never end. Your ties with the University will continue throughout your life. There may come a time when you want new challenges. Okayama University will always welcome you back if you wish to return to study more.

I would also like to mention that Okayama University has established 51 alumni associations all over the world. Through these associations, we would like to strengthen the ties among Okayama graduates. I do expect international students graduating from our university today to play important roles in this project. Please join the chapter in your home country so that many more students will have a chance to study at Okayama University and students from Okayama University can have the chance to study in your home country. Let's work hard together for an even better Okayama University in the future.

Last, I want everyone to be proud of your education at Okayama University and your respective degrees. Your ongoing success will set an example for the next generations. In this way, Okayama University will continue to expand through the contribution, knowledge, experience, and hope that all graduating students pass on to their juniors.

I once again express my heartiest congratulations to everyone on your graduation, today.

Hirofumi Makino,
President,
Okayama University
National University Corporation
September, 29th, 2017