

Graduation Ceremony Address (video message)

My name is Shinji Shimada, and I am the President of the University of Yamanashi.

The spread of pneumonia caused by the COVID19 coronavirus, which has become a global epidemic, has had various influences on our lives.

To prevent any spread of infection, we have canceled the graduation ceremonies for all graduates. We understand that this is an event in your lives that cannot be replaced, and we apologize profoundly to you and to your families, who have been looking forward to it.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

In this ever-changing situation, we must work together on a global scale to tackle our critical situation.

The University of Yamanashi Hospital actively accepted people infected on cruise ships and patients who contracted the disease within the prefecture. Of the 9 patients accepted, 6 have been discharged. Our hospital is desperately fighting this global infectious disease along with the world.

Once again, we ask that each person cooperate to prevent the spread of infection.

Now, I would like to congratulate all of you who are watching as a video message.

Congratulations to all of the 1,093 people who have graduated and completed the undergraduate, major, and graduate programs at University of Yamanashi today.

All faculty members extend our heartfelt congratulations to you and your families, and we sincerely thank you for your generous support of the University.

Many of you may feel that your student life, which you began full of dreams, passed fleetingly. During this time, I think that you have attained a wide range of knowledge through your daily studies, gained a great deal of skill, and overcome various hardships. Through these experiences you have grown as a human being.

Through labs, clubs and other student activities, you have met respected teachers, seniors, peers, juniors and still others, cultivated special friendships, and made good memories.

I hope that these experiences will help you on your journey to the next stage of your life.

We have produced many outstanding graduates and graduates. One of them is Satoshi Ōmura, a graduate of the Faculty of Education who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Medicine and Physiology in 2015. It was a great pride and encouragement for the University of Yamanashi that Dr. Ōmura received the Nobel Prize, and this was also great news for local national universities, which have been in a difficult situation in recent years.

Dr. Ōmura donated the Nobel Prize money to the university, and based on this and warm support from graduates, the general public, companies and groups, the University of Yamanashi Ōmura Satoshi Memorial Fund was established. In addition to granting scholarships to excellent students every year, in July of last year we constructed the “Ōmura Satoshi Memorial Museum” on the north side of the main gate of the university. This museum has a commemorative hall for 150 people and an exhibition corner.

We hope that the Ōmura Satoshi Memorial Museum will become a symbol of our university and that it will be effectively utilized as a building loved by students, alumni, and local residents; and we will honor Dr. Ōmura eternally. We will continue to do our utmost to further develop the University of Yamanashi with pride in his legacy.

Dr. Akira Yoshino, Honorary Fellow of Asahi Kasei, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for the development of the lithium-ion secondary battery in October last year. Dr. Yoshino was involved in an educational program for graduate students of the University of Yamanashi who are aiming to become specialists in the field of next-generation energy from 2012 to 2017, and highly evaluated their research.

I have heard that the graduate students evaluated highly by Professor Yoshino are working for a major automobile manufacturer and are active in research in the field of fuel cells. I am very proud of this achievement. I believe that it is the mission of the university to cultivate internationally active and highly evaluated researchers, following in the footsteps of Dr. Ōmura and Dr. Yoshino. To that end, the government must make a drastic change in its austerity policy for education and research, and financially support national universities strongly.

Although local national universities have been placed in a financially severe environment in recent years, this university is implementing various reforms, ahead of other universities in Japan. The General Incorporated Association University Alliance Yamanashi was established in December of last year to promote cooperation with Yamanashi Prefectural University, aiming to be the first accredited “university cooperation promoting corporation” in the country. In addition, the University of Yamanashi was awarded the first-ranking evaluation among local national universities regarding national university innovation creation, and because of this was able to earn 200 million yen as a subsidy from the Cabinet Office. In addition, we are implementing advanced initiatives such as establishing a “market research team” in order to make a major revision to reduce expenditures. We pride ourselves on practicing high-quality education, research, and social contributions, uniting all faculty and staff with the catchphrase “Regional core & Global professionals”.

Please warmly monitor your alma mater and support your university and the students to

come.

The current world situation is chaotic. As the “fourth industrial revolution” caused by new technologies such as IoT, big data, AI, and robots progresses, the world economy is undergoing major transformation.

- * COVID-19 infection
- * The US presidential election
- * The end of Brexit

With such issues changing our global situation, our future remains uncertain.

On the other hand, through the so-called SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals), developed and developing countries are working together to tackle global challenges.

We have to pay attention to the challenges facing the world and respond to the rapid changes as they occur.

In the future society, it is possible that you will engage in jobs that you cannot imagine at the present time in the future, and you will be required to have the ability to create new ideas and ideas beyond the ability of AI. Also, as we approach the age when it becomes possible to have a 100-year lifespan, the knowledge we have learned becomes obsolete quickly amid the rapid changes in society, and it is necessary to constantly learn new knowledge.

As you can see, the future society that awaits you is not only rosy, but also very difficult, but I hope that you will continue to learn in various ways and you can pave your way to the future based on the problem-solving skills, logical thinking and normative judgment that you have learned at this university.

Please believe in yourself and brave your own life with courage. Of course, I want you to pursue happiness as an individual, but at the same time, as a person with higher education, I want you to live with a sense of mission to improve society. All the faculty members at the University of Yamanashi will work together in order to provide appropriate support and a place for lifelong learning sustainably as your alma mater and as a place you can always return to.

By the way, again this year, there are 32 graduates from 9 countries around the world. I think that it must have been very difficult to study in an environment where the language,

culture, customs, and other aspects are very different. We would like to send a message in English to everyone who overcame these difficulties and graduated today.

Among today's graduates are 32 international students from 9 different countries.

You have made it to this day after studying hard, and overcoming the difference of languages, lifestyle and food here in Japan.

I congratulate you on your great efforts, and I wish you every success in your future endeavors.

I hope that you will look back on the time you had here in Yamanashi with fondness, and treasure the memories of the people you met and the things you learned at our university.

Thank you.

In conclusion, I sincerely hope that you will make a wonderful life for yourself, and also that you play an active role for the region, for Japan, and for the world. Thank you for being a part of our history.

March 19th, 2020

University of Yamanashi President

Shinji Shimada