

Entrance Ceremony Address (video message)

Hello everyone. My name is Shinji Shimada, and I'm the President of the University of Yamanashi.

COVID-19, the infectious disease that causes pneumonia due to the corona virus, is spreading rapidly throughout the world, and on March 11 the World Health Organization (WHO) officially pronounced it a pandemic. The Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics have been postponed to next year, and we have become accustomed to hearing such words as “cluster” and “overshoot.” This has affected our lives in many ways. I also sensed that a crisis was coming from an early stage, and expected the postponing of the Olympics. I hope that we can pause here and calmly work toward creating a more perfect Olympics for our future.

I know that new students, filled with dreams and expectations, and their families, looking forward to the entrance ceremony, will be extremely disappointed. However, with the health and safety of everyone as our highest priority, to prevent any spreading of COVID-19 we have cancelled this year's entrance ceremony. Also, we have decided that classes will begin in May, and various other events have also been affected. We would like to thank all of you for your understanding and cooperation.

This extraordinary situation is changing from moment to moment. We must all cooperate on a global scale to overcome this crisis.

In the University of Yamanashi Hospital, we have established a thoroughly secure system for treatment and are actively accepting those infected on cruise ships and those infected within Yamanashi Prefecture. We are on the front line, desperately fighting this global infectious disease. So again, I hope that each and every one of you will do your part to prevent infection from spreading.

Now then, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to everyone watching this video message.

The cherry blossoms are in bloom, and a warm wind is blowing through the Kofu basin. The season is right for a fresh start.

Congratulations to all of the 1,180 students who enrolled in the undergraduate, graduate schools and special majors of University of Yamanashi. The faculty members and current students welcome you with open arms.

Let me first thank your families, who have supported you along your path. In May of last year, the new emperor was crowned, and the Reiwa Era began. The coming age will see the rise of technological innovation such as AI, 5G, IoT, and autonomous driving. Our lives and our environment will change dramatically. The curriculum for new students

must also be geared for such an age. For this reason, from this year, we are implementing curriculum reforms, making data science related subjects compulsory for all undergraduate students. We hope that your study at our university will be meaningful for you, and you can achieve great academic progress.

The university's catchphrase is, "Regional Core & Global Professionals." The first of our important missions is to contribute to the development of world science and technology by promoting cutting-edge research. The second is to foster human resource development through academic excellence.

To fulfill these missions, our university is eagerly conducting research activities in various fields. The Fuel Cell Nanomaterials Center The Clean Energy Research Center are a global center for nanotechnology research. The Advanced Biotechnology Center promotes advanced life science research. The Institute of Enology and Viticulture, Japan's only national university wine science research center, have achieved great results. In addition, the Center for Advancing Clinical Research, centered on medical science, conducts cutting-edge research in the fields of neuroscience, immunology, and oncology. In 2016, the world's leading scientific journal Nature introduced the outstanding studies of our university.

Regarding our academic education, the School of Medicine offers the "Life Science Course", a unique research doctor training program that enables students to start advanced research from their first year. Students who have taken this course have received high praise, including being awarded the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Award and numerous other awards. In addition, the Faculty of Engineering introduced flip teaching and active learning early on, achieving great success; and the Faculty of Life and Environmental Studies has original courses such as the "Wine Science Special Course" and "Tourism Policy Science Special Course" which cannot be found in most universities.

In addition, the University of Yamanashi Hospital, linked to the Faculty of Medicine, is the only special functioning hospital in the prefecture. It provides high-level and safe medical treatment, with a ceiling-suspended MRI device, a hybrid operating room called TAVI that can perform advanced heart surgery, an endoscopic surgery support robot "Da Vinci," and a new ward that responds to the needs of patients that is spacious, clean and comfortable. With strict medical safety and infection control, the hospital provides top-ranking treatment. We continue to work on improving the management of hospitals and are producing results which have been extremely highly evaluated by external organizations.

Phase II construction of the new ward started two years ago, and preparations are being made for the opening of the new ward in September this year.

As you all know, in autumn 2015, Satoshi Ōmura, a graduate of our Faculty of Education, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Medicine and Physiology, a great achievement not only for Yamanashi but also for Japan. Local national universities have experienced difficulties in

recent years, and this wonderful news gave the University of Yamanashi great pride and encouragement.

Dr. Ōmura made this an occasion of further joy by establishing the University of Yamanashi Ōmura Satoshi Memorial Fund with the Nobel Prize money, and with warm support from graduates, the general public, companies and other organizations. In addition to granting scholarships to outstanding students every year, in July of last year, the "Ōmura Satoshi Memorial Museum" was constructed on the north side of the main gate of the university, with a commemorative hall for 150 people and an exhibition corner.

We hope that the Satoshi Ōmura Memorial Museum will be the symbol of our university, and that it will be a building that is loved and effectively utilized by students and the local community, eternally showing our great respect for Dr. Ōmura.

Yamanashi Prefecture is a scenic area. To the south, we have a view of Mt. Fuji, which is a World Cultural Heritage site. To the north, we can see Mt. Yatsugatake, and to the west, we can see the Southern Alps. According to the latest Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare survey, for "healthy life expectancy", which indicates the period during which people can live independently and daily, Yamanashi is ranked first in the country for men and third for women, and it is also top-ranking every year in the survey of areas where people wish to migrate. By the end of this year, the entire section of the Chubu-Chuo Expressway from Yamanashi Prefecture to Shizuoka Prefecture will be opened, and it is expected that the efficiency of logistics and transportation will be improved and the tour area for inbound tourism from Shimizu Port will be expanded. In addition, the Linear Chuo Shinkansen between Tokyo and Nagoya is scheduled to open in 2027, and the time it takes to get from Tokyo to Kofu will become about 25 minutes. The resulting economic and industrial development and fusion of human resources and culture is expected to create new innovation and revitalize the region.

As new students, you will be studying in this wonderful environment in Yamanashi Prefecture. Your living environment will change dramatically, and you may be worried. Please always remember that we have various consultation and support systems centered around the Student Support Center to ensure that you can live a comfortable and fulfilling school life, so feel free to contact them when in doubt.

In our changing society, it is possible that you will engage in jobs that you cannot imagine at the present time in the future. You will be required to create innovative ideas with modern technologies like AI. We approach the age when a 100-year lifespan is becoming feasible, but we must realize that the knowledge we have learned is becoming obsolete quickly with the rapid changes in society, and it is necessary to constantly learn new knowledge.

In order to survive in such a rapidly changing future society, you will not only be required to have specialized knowledge through learning at our university, but also to have international communication ability and problem-solving ability. I hope you will make an effort to acquire

such skills, and be able to use logical thinking and normative judgment.

Also, with the spirit of “you may never meet again, so make each encounter a meaningful one,” one of the favorite idioms of Professor Ōmura, I would like you to actively interact with students from other faculties with different goals and ways of thinking, and make many friends whom you can openly talk to. I also hope that you will be interested in other activities such as sports, reading, travel, art, and so on, which will deepen your education and cultivate a wealth of humanity.

This year, we will welcome 68 international students from 8 countries and regions around the world to our undergraduate and graduate schools.

To all the international students : we would like to welcome you to Yamanashi. You are coming from all over the world, including Brazil, China, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea, Vietnam and Taiwan.

It is our great pleasure to have you here. We sincerely hope that you will enjoy campus life here in beautiful Yamanashi.

We will endeavor to do our very best to facilitate your educational needs, and help with your career development.

We hope that your stay at our university will be a successful one.

Thank you.

To conclude, we would like to ask the families of our new students to continue supporting them warmly, and we hope that you will come to support our university as well.

I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the 1,180 students who entered Yamanashi University and their families again. Congratulations!

April 7th, 2020

Shinji Shimada, President

University of Yamanashi