

University of Yamanashi 2021 Entrance Ceremony Video Message

My name is Shinji Shimada, and I am the President of the University of Yamanashi. I would like to congratulate all of you who enrolled in the University of Yamanashi this year.

Over a year has passed since COVID-19 began to spread around the world and was officially declared to be a pandemic, but it continues to affect our lives adversely.

Giving top priority to the protection of your health and safety, following last year's precedent, we are refraining from holding a big entrance ceremony with all students gathered together. We appreciate the understanding and cooperation of both the newly enrolled students, who studied hard to pass the entrance exam and are full of hopes and expectations, and their families, who have long awaited this auspicious day.

From the 13th, in accordance with our Class Implementation Guidelines for the First Semester 2021, where feasible we will promote online lessons, and all face-to-face lessons, including experiments, practical training and exercises, will be carried out with the utmost caution to prevent the spread of infection. Various events and lessons continue to be affected, but I can assure you that we are fully prepared to provide you with the education that you deserve.

With or without COVID-19, nature proceeds at its usual pace, bringing cherry, plum and peach blossoms one after another in Yamanashi, this kingdom of fruit trees. With the fresh greenery of springtime, now is a season that is suitable for the beginning of the next chapter of your lives.

I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to all 1,210 students who have enrolled this year in the undergraduate, graduate and special advanced courses of the University from all over Japan, and from overseas. On behalf of all the faculty members and current students of the University of Yamanashi, let me sincerely welcome you and congratulate your families, who have nurtured and supported you up to this day.

In the new era that the ultra-smart society (Society 5.0) guided by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, utilizing IoT, AI, and big data will bring us to, our lives and environment will change dramatically. Your education must look ahead to this coming age. To this end, last year the University of Yamanashi was designated as a cooperating institution for National Development of Mathematics, Data Science and AI Education by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science

and Technology, and all undergraduate freshmen are required to study a curriculum that includes mathematics, data science and Ai education regardless of their major subject. Incorporating innovations such as the flipped classroom, we are promoting a new style of education throughout our academic system.

Although COVID-19 has plunged local national universities into an increasingly difficult situation, the University of Yamanashi has been implementing effective reforms, ahead of the rest of the country. Last year we officially started the University Alliance Yamanashi, a general incorporated association designed to promote cooperation with Yamanashi Prefectural University, certified by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology as the first University Cooperation Promotion Corporation. Recently I made a formal announcement regarding this project in the Ōmura Memorial Hall of the Satoshi Ōmura Museum. Utilizing special academic measures enabled by this association, we will establish a total of 53 collaborative courses related to life science, humanities, and the Yamanashi region, and develop various inter-university collaborative projects.

I sincerely hope that your studies here will be a meaningful part of your life, and that they help you realize your full potential.

The catchphrase of the University of Yamanashi is “Creating the Backbone of the Community and Developing Citizens of the World.” We are working together as one to provide high-quality education, research, and social contribution that we can take pride in.

Among our fields of research, the Fuel Cell Nanomaterials Center and the Clean Energy Research Center are leading the world in hydrogen and fuel cell research. The Advanced Biotechnology Center promotes research into cutting-edge areas of life science, using micromanipulators (devices to directly contact and process microorganisms, animal and plant cells and so on) to conduct various experiments that are the first of their kind in the world. The Institute of Enology and Viticulture is the only institution to research wine in a national university, and is achieving great results in fostering human resources and advancing wine research. In addition, this year we newly established the Yamanashi GLIA Center, affiliated with the Faculty of Medicine, to promote cutting-edge brain science research and develop new methods of education. We are hoping that in these institutions we can produce some of the world’s finest research.

In terms of education, in the Faculty of Medicine we have developed a

research doctor training program called the Life Science Course, which allows students to participate in advanced research from their first year at the university. Students who have taken this course have received high praise, including the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Award and numerous other awards. In addition, the Faculty of Engineering has achieved great results by quickly incorporating flipped classrooms and active learning with the catchphrase "Engineering Education for the Next Generation," and in the Faculty of Life and Environmental Sciences, two unique courses in Japan, the Wine Science Special Course and the Tourism Policy Science Special Course have been established.

In addition, the University of Yamanashi Hospital is the only hospital in Yamanashi Prefecture that has been designated an Advanced Treatment Hospital by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, providing high-level, safe medical care. The spacious, clean and comfortable new wards I and II are in operation to meet the needs of patients, with Japan's highest-performing 3 Tesla High Magnetic Field MRI system in our surgical room for neurosurgery, a full-scale hybrid operating room system to perform advanced cardiac surgery called TAVI (transcatheter aortic valve replacement), and high-performance surgical equipment such as the endoscopic surgery support robot "Da Vinci."

In January of last year, the University of Yamanashi Hospital conducted a simulation of accepting COVID-19 patients ahead of the rest of the country, and set up a complete system for the entire hospital, including the earliest establishment of a PCR testing system. We also accepted people infected on the cruise ship Diamond Princess, and the first COVID-19 patient in the prefecture. In addition, we treated the world's first COVID-19 patient that developed meningitis, treated an infant COVID-19 patient with cardiopulmonary arrest, and published our studies in international journals. In addition, we have saved precious lives using advanced medical extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) for critically ill patients in the prefecture. Up to now, we have treated over 90 inpatients in total. In May of last year, we established the first drive-through PCR test system in the prefecture, and we have conducted more than 15,000 PCR tests to date. Bearing the risk of infection, and the fear of reduced hospital income, the faculty and staff are working hard together to fight this global infectious disease.

As an individual, I have appealed for the expansion of the PCR testing system at every opportunity. Now at last, the country is recognizing its importance and

adopting it as an important policy for controlling infection.

At present, the number of patients with mutant strains of COVID-19 is increasing, especially with the UK variant, but our hospital now has the capability to test for these variants as well. In the coming days we would like to take an active role in the vaccination process.

Again, I would like to ask for the cooperation of each and every one of you in preventing further spread of infection.

As you all probably know, in the fall of 2015, Professor Satoshi Ōmura, a graduate of the Faculty of Education of our university, received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. This was a tremendous feat for a local national university, and it is a source of great pride and encouragement for all of us at the University of Yamanashi.

Utilizing the opportunity that this award provided, Dr. Ōmura donated a part of his Nobel Prize award money, and with warm support from graduates, companies, organizations and the general public, the University of Yamanashi Satoshi Ōmura Memorial Fund was established to award excellent students with benefit-type scholarships every year. In July 2018, the Ōmura Satoshi Museum, with a memorial hall for 150 people and an exhibition corner, was built on the north side of the main gate of the university. Through these actions we will commemorate the achievements of Dr. Ōmura perpetually, and we hope that students and local residents will come to love this building. When you have time, please take a look at it.

Yamanashi Prefecture has amazing scenic beauty, with a view of Mt. Fuji, a world cultural heritage, to the south, Mount Yatsugatake to the north, and the Southern Alps mountain range to the west. According to a survey by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, Yamanashi ranks first in healthy life expectancy, meaning the period of life when people can live independent of others, for both men and women. It also ranks second in the category of prefectures that people desire to move to. On November 3rd of this year, we will celebrate the 500th anniversary of the birth of Takeda Shingen, and various events will be held throughout the prefecture. I hope that you take this opportunity to come to know more about the history of Yamanashi Prefecture.

This fall, the Chūbu-Ōdan Expressway will open entirely, connecting Yamanashi and Shizuoka Prefectures. This will not only improve the efficiency of distribution and transportation, but also expand the range of inbound tourism coming from Shimizu Port and Shizuoka Airport. In 2027 the Chuo Maglev Train,

also called the Linear Motor Shinkansen, is scheduled to open for passengers traveling between Tokyo and Nagoya, and the time it takes to travel from Tokyo to Kofu will decrease to about 25 minutes. These improvements in mobility lead to great expectations for regional revitalization and the creation of new innovations through economic and industrial development and the resulting fusion of human resources and culture.

Although you will be studying in Yamanashi Prefecture, with its wonderful environment, you may be worried because of the drastic change in your living environment. We have consultation and support systems centered in the Student Support Center to help you through your anxiety and lead you to a comfortable and fulfilling student life, and you should feel free to contact us.

From the commencement of your period of learning at this university, of course you will acquire specialized knowledge, but I hope that you will also endeavor to develop logical thinking, problem solving and international communication abilities that will be required from you as you take your steps into society.

I also hope that you will cherish the creed advocated by Dr. Ōmura that every meeting is a once-in-a-lifetime chance, actively deepen exchanges with students from other faculties who have different goals and ways of thinking, and make many friends you can talk to openly. And I hope that you will seize opportunities for reading, sports, travel and appreciation of the arts, all of which will deepen your education and enrich you as a human being.

The University of Yamanashi is an international university, and this year we welcome 41 international students from eight countries around the world to our undergraduate and graduate schools. I would like to welcome the international students with a message in English.

To all of our international students: we would like to welcome you to Yamanashi.

You have come from all over the world, including Bangladesh, China, Kenya, Malaysia, Namibia, Republic of Korea, Thailand and Viet Nam.

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

COVID-19 pandemic has spread all over the world, and the situation is still unpredictable. We must all cooperate on a global scale to overcome this crisis. 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.

In conclusion, I would like to ask family members to continue to support our university and warmly watch over the newly enrolled students, and I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to all of the new students and their family members, who are watching this entrance ceremony from various locations. Congratulations on your enrollment.

April, 2021
President, University of Yamanashi
Shinji Shimada