



This year, we had 52,600 applicants for our entrance exam, a record since our establishment. This meant that we were number one among Japanese science and technology universities (excluding night courses) in general entrance exam applicants. The thought that so many high school students have their eyes on us gives us great pleasure. Chiba Institute of Technology (CIT) has no intention of resting on its laurels, however. We will continue to make reforms to respond to the expectations of high school students and society.

Regarding educational facets, I have been carrying out various educational reforms to boost the quality of our training, such as promoting faculty development to increase our faculty's teaching skills. The reforms are gradually producing results. The number of dropouts has fallen by more than 190 during the past two years.

I strive to train human resources who can contribute to global culture through technology in line with CIT's founding principle. Our continuous efforts include decision-making and university management based on confidence in the chairman and president; reforms and stimulation of education and research implemented with mutual cooperation from faculty members; and increasing the number of opportunities for studies abroad and overseas exchanges, as well as strengthening foreign language skills, to boost the skills to succeed in global society. I will do what is best for our students and upgrade our scholastic training so that they develop the skills they require.

CIT has enthusiastically collaborated with famous overseas universities for thirty-five years. In just the last two years, in fact, we have entered into new exchange agreements with more than ten universities that are in the top ten percent in their countries or regions to enhance our study abroad and overseas internship programs. Moreover, we are transforming our campuses into places that provide a connection to the rest of the world with classes taught in English, the establishment of the Global Cafe and the Global Lounge (where only foreign languages can be used), and arranging interactions with students from other countries at student dormitories. There are no national borders in science and technology, especially in the fields in which you will play a part.

From the war-torn country it was seventy years ago, Japan achieved recovery and a high level of economic growth, commonly called the Japanese economic miracle, and became the second-ranked global economic power in a mere twenty-three years. What sustained that growth was none other than the technical capabilities of the manufacturing industries that imported cheap raw materials from overseas and turned them into quality industrial goods that were exported, and the construction industry that built the Shinkansen, expressways and other infrastructure. The public and private sectors joined together to raise the level of this technical prowess, underpinned by high education standards, and achieved the world's highest pinnacle of quality, capability, reliability, safety and other factors. Many countries based their nation building on the post-war Japanese model. Japan subsequently entered a period of stable growth, and even today real economic growth continues despite the bursting of the bubble economy at the outset of the 1990s. Now then, will the economy continue to grow in the next three decades. Unfortunately, it has to be said that it will not be smooth sailing from here on.

For example, around thirty percent of people in Japan work in the manufacturing industry today, which is to say that they make their living manufacturing and selling industrial products. However, predictions are that over the next three decades this will decline to ten percent. Reasons for this decline include companies relocating their factories and other manufacturing sites overseas where labour costs are cheap and markets are close, and the ability to mass-produce without the need for manual labour due to progress on technologies in information, machinery, robotics and other fields. There will come a time when people are no longer needed to mass-produce things in Japan.

The declining number of children and the aging population are also big problems. In thirty years, Japan's labour population is predicted to decline by more than ten million. It is said that if per capita productivity is the same as today, the size of Japan's economy will shrink by around twenty percent. There is already a glut of things in Japan, and in a future of population decline, a time will come when there is no demand for manufactured goods.

In the midst of that, countries that used Japan as a model to heighten their technical capabilities will come to make and sell industrial products on par with Japanese products. To stay above the competition, Japan will need to develop more advanced scientific technologies than those countries, increase productivity, develop innovations and expand into overseas markets to an even greater degree.

Seen in this light, the future is fraught with difficulties. However, it is possible that in thirty years you will be demonstrating your presence in ways completely different from now. This is because the age in which countries all compete to acquire markets, wealth and resources as they do now will end. Modern society is said to be in an age of globalization. A pan-global society that has eliminated various barriers and borders will unmistakably arrive. A society in which people, products and money move dynamically without regard to countries will be achieved. In the future, one must keep global sustainability in mind and impartially cooperate and collaborate with all of humanity to solve issues such as environmental destruction, global warming, infectious diseases, food and energy shortages, and inequality. In thirty years, you may be helping to lead the world to solve some of these issues.

The fact that there is a need for the ability to create value, the goal of engineering, for Japan to survive new competition, as well as take the lead in solving worldwide problems. The human resources that society will require will shift from the specialized personnel who have been the driving force in high-quality mass production to sophisticated global science and technology personnel equipped with inventiveness, the skills to identify issues and leadership who can bring innovation to Japan.

CIT stressed engineering education and research, the basis of technologies that would sustain Japan's modernization and growth, from the time of our establishment before the Second World War until Japan's period of high-level growth. We subsequently were the first in Japan to establish various courses society was demanding, including design, project management and advanced robotics, changing into a university whose diverse content extended beyond science and technology. We were a university with just 160 students in our first-year class at the time of our founding. We have become a university that is quite large not just by Japanese standards, but in global terms as well, with ten thousand students. In the spring of 2016, the Faculty of Engineering's six departments will be reorganized into three faculties with a newly enhanced line-up that will include artificial intelligence, media and life sciences. We will be reborn as a university with five faculties and seventeen departments. CIT is a university that not only has traditions, but one that always takes on new challenges and continues to evolve.