

Graduate School of Information Sciences, Tohoku University

Congratulatory Address

In April 2020, the Graduate School of Information Sciences of Tohoku University welcomes 144 new graduate students enrolling in master's programs and 28 in doctoral programs. Congratulations on your entrance to our graduate school. I also extend my warm congratulations to your families and all around you who have encouraged and supported you so far.

In consideration of the current critical situation regarding the rapid spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) infection we made a decision to cancel the Orientation for new coming students but to send you my congratulatory video message. As a member of society, the graduate school makes every reasonable effort to prevent the spread of the infection and has prohibited all the students from entering the school buildings. We hope your understanding and cooperation.

Graduate School of Information Sciences professes interdisciplinarity. We are very happy to welcome new students with diverse backgrounds such as mathematics, engineering, computer science, economics, transportation, urban planning, media, philosophy, biology, psychology, sociology and so on. I have the impression that a university like Tohoku University is integrated densely into our graduate school.

Our motto is to create a new paradigm of information science where 'information' is considered as an object of science and a subject of study, not just as a basic research target of information technology. To our goal we always make an attempt to gather open-minded researchers with various backgrounds and to share the landscape beyond the boundaries separating traditional research fields. The significance of our existence is in parallel with the significance of academia's comprehensiveness.

Our graduate school is often referred to as a typical example of a successful fusion of humanities and science. However, it is hard to believe that different disciplines are mixed so easily and quickly to create something new because each discipline has its own original thought developed over the long history. The main idea of being interdisciplinary is to study different thoughts, to understand variety of ideas, to respect various sense of values, and to stand together on the stratum of existing disciplines.

We live in an age of various difficult issues. From environment, population, health, education, economics to local communities and private industries most of the problems are hardly solvable within a single field of expertise. In the near future you will play the leading role, it is certain that cooperation with various experts will be more essential toward the solution. This is also true for innovation.

I think that you have your own expertise and interest in a specific field. I strongly hope that you will widen your own scope by taking this valuable opportunity of joining the interdisciplinary graduate school. It is indeed necessary to deepen your knowledge and skills in your major but it is not sufficient. It is important to learn that there are completely different perspectives even for the same object.

Our graduate school emphasizes importance of being international and global. Today, we have 25 new foreign students enrolling in master's programs and 7 in doctoral programs. Together with the foreign students and many visiting foreign researchers we are making an international atmosphere in our daily life. Our graduate school operates the interfaculty graduate course called the *Graduate Program in Data Science* where all the lectures are in English. Moreover, we increase the number of course lectures in English and provide English training classes for your progress in communication skills. We encourage you to take advantage of such opportunities. Feel the international stage close to you and extend your global scope.

Finally, I strongly hope that you will overcome the current difficulties, hew your own way, and push forward with your work.

Once again, I offer my sincere congratulations to you on your entrance into the Graduate School of Information Sciences, Tohoku University.

April, 2020

Graduate School of Information Sciences

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