

**Entrance Ceremony for Incoming Students,
September 21, 2019**

**Aiji Tanaka
President, Waseda University**

To all incoming students, congratulations on your entrance to Waseda University! My hearty congratulations are extended also, of course, to the students' parents, other family members, and friends. On behalf of Waseda University, I am delighted to take this opportunity to offer some words of welcome.

Today, 374 students are entering undergraduate programs, while 677 students are entering the graduate schools of Waseda University. I really hope each one of you will have a fruitful and joyful student life at Waseda.

For the incoming students present today, I would like to share our future vision of Waseda with you. Since the time I was inaugurated as President, on November 5, 2018, I have been advocating a new long-term goal for Waseda. I have been saying that the faculty members of Waseda University, as well as the administrative staff, should be determined to make Waseda one of the world's top-notch universities, no matter how long that may take.

The reason behind my thinking is that the top universities in the U.S. in the 1930s took 40 years to catch up with the leading universities of Europe. In the early 30s, such American giants as Harvard, Yale, and Columbia were far behind their top European counterparts, such as Oxford and the University of Paris, but they made up their mind to catch up with the world-leading European universities of their time. That is exactly what they did—and indeed, they went on to surpass them in the 1970s. It took them 40 years of dedication and effort.

Therefore, unless we at Waseda make up our minds to catch up with the leading universities of the world now, Waseda will not become one of those top-notch universities. Those who now teach at or work for Waseda should make up their minds to achieve that goal. At the same time, you students should have faith that you now belong to a university that will surely be one of the world's leading universities in the future. The reason for this is that the alumni of Waseda University have for a long time been contributing greatly to Japanese society and have made Waseda well known abroad. Now, I would like to ask you to contribute to people around the globe in some way, and make Waseda's name a truly global one.

However, contributing to human beings around the world does not mean that you must work outside Japan or in an international setting, such as United Nations, but rather that you should work with pride and determination to contribute to human society in any way you can, no matter how small the city you live in or the organization you belong to. The important thing is not the size of your city or your organization. It is that you should be confident in contributing to your fellow global citizens in some way.

In order to contribute to others, you must learn how to use your own brain, how to think about the solutions that each community will need. Nowadays, around the globe, we human beings face problems to which no one has the complete solution. Problems like global warming, the growing gap between the rich and the poor, conflict between nations, the polarization of politics within advanced democracies. You name it—the list goes on and on. No one knows the complete solution to any of those problems. Indeed, no single solution may exist. It may be that there are multiple solutions to each problem. It is your task to come up

with your own solutions.

At the same time, you should be exposed to people with a different language than your own, a different nationality, a different ethnicity, a different religion, a different gender, a different sexual orientation, a different culture and set of values. You should become able to understand how other people feel and think. In other words, you should be able to understand diversity. When you achieve that, your solutions to the problems we face will be persuasive to people around the globe.

In order to understand diversity, the best approach is to study together with students from other nations and regions. There are currently nearly 8,000 international students studying at Waseda every year. Furthermore, more than 4,600 Waseda students leave Japan to study abroad every year. You must seize every opportunity to utilize this environment to enhance your understanding of diversity.

Similarly, we faculty members and administrative staff should do our best to provide you with a superlative educational environment that allows you to graduate from Waseda University with the confidence to contribute to human society around the globe in some way. Please study hard while you are students of Waseda, but at the same time, make sure to enjoy your student life. When you graduate from this university, I hope you will have found at least one thing to which you are determined to devote yourself.

Once again, I wish you a wonderful and fruitful student life at Waseda.

Good luck to you all, and best wishes!