School of Transdisciplinary Studies

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▣ Overview

KAIST was established in the early days of Korea's industrialization with a mission to produce advanced scientists and engineers desperately needed for the national development at the time, and it has successfully fulfilled its national calling. The School of Transdisciplinary Studies was established to produce global leaders capable of creating knowledge required for the future in response to the new zeitgeist of KAIST, which is to lead the Fourth Industrial Revolution, prepare for future education, and take the initiative in comprehensive changes for the years to come.

To achieve its goals, the School promotes its education with an aim to equip its students with professional capabilities at the level of undergraduate program and develop them into creative and transdisciplinary global leaders in preparation for the era of hyper-connectedness, hyperintelligence, and convergence of the 4IR. Each background for this effort is described below:

- Broad education: Develop students' broad, deep, and diverse abilities to draw an academic and social map in the areas of their interest
- Customized education: Pursue uniqueness and diversity of each student based on their disposition and talent
- Creativity and executive ability: Develop the ability to create and produce something that can actually contribute to humankind
- Community and global citizenship: Help students contribute their talent, abilities, and academic and social achievements for a better society and humankind
- Spontaneous motivation: Provide education based on students' spontaneous motivations including academic curiosity, intellectual desire, and social sense of community

Professor Jaeseung Jeong of Bio and Brain Engineering was inaugurated as the head of the School on March 1, 2020. In reflection of the internal and external environmental changes, the School was renamed the School of Transdisciplinary Studies on October 15, 2020, and its curriculum underwent an innovative transformation. As of January 1, 2023, the School has two full-time faculty members including the head of the School, seven adjunct professors, 31 mentors, and 30 students, as well as three administrative employees.

▣ Characteristics of the curriculum

A. P/NR(Pass/No Record) credits of all courses

B. Individual curriculum: Students may take any course from any department and, based on complex keywords, design their own curriculum for in-depth topics.

C. Personal mentors: Transdisciplinary research professors provide customized education and research guidance and organize one-on-one mentor groups for personal guidance.

D. Reading 100 books: This program is designed to produce scientists who read books and engineers with in-depth thinking. Students may gain insight into life and the world by reading 100 books and develop the ability to draw a map into the broad and deep world and see the forest rather than trees. They can also gain both academic insight and social introspection.

E. Project Based Learning (PBL): Students are encouraged to make something through joint and personal creation. Instead of grades, portfolios and recommendation letters are used to demonstrate individual students' abilities.

F. Exchange student/internship: Students may engage in various social activities through the exchange program and internship at companies/public institutions. They are encouraged to recognize realistic problems, identify the issues faced by the humankind, and develop their character by by interacting with various people.