

Entrance Ceremony 2026 (Spring) Welcome Address

Congratulations on your entrance to Nitobe College Graduate Curriculum! This spring semester we are happy to welcome 14 new members of Nitobe College including 6 international students.

My research is primarily about Protestant Christianity in the late 1800s and early 1900s in Japan. In graduate school, I focused on Uchimura Kanzo who was Nitobe Inazo's classmate and lifelong friend. Uchimura had the idea that grafting Christianity onto Bushido would make a stronger system of belief and ultimately save Japan and the world.

When we talk about grafts on trees, we might mention several reasons to place a graft.

First, grafts strengthen the tree. They promote hardiness and sturdiness. Grafts protect the tree from disease. And the graft helps trees to gain the ability to produce fruit more quickly in addition to the ability to produce different kinds of fruit on one tree.

You have a solid base of knowledge and skills in your field of study. Now, by becoming a member of Nitobe College, you have chosen to learn new skills outside the area of your field. These new skills and knowledge will be grafted onto the base of knowledge you already possess. You will become stronger as you become more proficient in the 3+1

Competencies of Nitobe College. The graft of these new competencies will lead to hardiness, resilience, and hopefully self-confidence. As you learn, you will make mistakes and fail, but through practice, you will become more resistant to despondence or giving up. And perhaps these newly grafted skills will lead to results faster or lead to a synergy of results you didn't even imagine. You may discover that the lessons of Nitobe College are applicable to a wide range of situations outside of academics.

Of course, it will take some time to become accustomed to using these new skills.

Fortunately, you have classmates that you can rely on to help you navigate incorporating the competencies into your academic and private life. And as you and your classmates work through the program you will form a natural network that hopefully will support you even beyond this program.

President Houkin has called on all of us to find ways to solve difficult issues in the world. We hope that after your time in Nitobe College, you will be more capable of identifying these problems and then working with others to find viable solutions.

We hope to help you become a stronger, more resilient, and more confident version of yourself.

Welcome to Nitobe College!

April 18, 2026

La Fay Michelle

Vice-Principal, Nitobe College

(Vice-President; Professor, Faculty of Humanities and Human Sciences)