Professor ZHANG Jie took office as the 39th President of Shanghai Jiao Tong University on November 27, 2006. He is a physicist in x-ray lasers, high field and laser-plasma physics, and he was elected Academician of Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) in 2003, Member of German Academy of Sciences Leopoldina in 2007, Fellow of Third World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) in 2008, International Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering in 2011 and a foreign associate of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in 2012. He was elected as an Alternate Member of the 17th Central Committee of Chinese Communist Party in 2007 and of the 18th Central Committee of Chinese Communist Party in 2012.

Professor ZHANG got his Ph.D. in Optical and Atomic & Molecular Physics from the Institute of Physics, CAS in 1988. Then he spent 10 years at the University of Oxford, UK, carrying out research on x-ray lasers and laser-plasma physics. Prior to his appointment as President of Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Professor ZHANG had consecutively held positions as: Director General of Bureau of Basic Sciences, CAS (2003-2006), Deputy Director of Institute of Physics, CAS (1998-2003), Director of Laboratory of Optical Physics, CAS (2003-2009).

Professor ZHANG’s academic achievements were recognized by TWAS with the 2007 TWAS Prize in Physics; by CAS with the 2007 Outstanding Science and Technology achievement Prize; by the Chinese State Council with the Natural Sciences Prize in 2006; by the Hong Kong Ho Leung Ho Lee Foundation with the award of the Science and Technology Progress Award in 2006; by the Overseas Chinese Physical Society (USA) with the 2004 Achievement in Asia Award; by the Chinese Physical Society with the 2003 CPS Rao Yutai Award in Physics; by the Chinese Optical Society with the 2002 COS Wang Daheng Award in Optics; by the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

In 2006, Professor Zhang assumed the Presidency of Shanghai Jiao Tong University and is the youngest President of the institution since 1949. With a shining history of more than 114 years, Shanghai Jiao Tong University is one of the premier Chinese institutions of higher education with the strategic goal of becoming a world-class university. Professor Zhang believes that the surging Chinese economy and the national strategy of reviving China by means of science and education have created a demanding social and political environment for establishing the first rate universities by world standards in China. He emphasizes that the fundamental principle of a university lies in its mission and responsibilities. For Shanghai Jiao Tong University, the mission is
“to become a core builder of the national innovation system of technology, a significant participant in the international system of knowledge innovations, and a powerful promoter of social advancement and human civilisation”. A university is not just a place of knowledge transmission, but sacred ground on which student abilities are cultivated and their personalities developed. Thus, Professor Zhang advocates an ethos that “pursues knowledge and respects scholars”. He also advocates a model of nurturing creativity that is “student-oriented, integrates the curricular with the extra-curricular spheres, the sciences with the humanities, and teaching with research”. He is dedicated to establishing a university culture that is imbued with “gratitude and responsibilities” as well as “dreams and passion”.

Professor Zhang strongly promotes research endeavours that are oriented towards the global forefront of science and technology and address problems rising from China’s major strategic needs. He took the lead in developing and implementing the road maps of institutional and academic development of Shanghai Jiao Tong University towards 2020, and in a systematic way, advanced the international and comprehensive evaluation of the disciplinary development of the university, which have provided important reference for the strategic planning of various disciplines and established a more improved evaluation system widely recognized by the society. In the mean time, he promoted an institutionalized, standardized and humanized administrative system, which has enhanced efficiency and quality of the management of the university. Professor Zhang has placed particularly emphasis on attracting and cultivating talents, especially the establishment of high-caliber teams of academic leaders in the university. He believes that these high-caliber talents are the most valuable strategic resources in the process of propelling the university into a first-rate institution and making China an innovation-oriented country. His reformatory efforts have resulted in significant progress in talent attracting and nurturing. Under his leadership, Shanghai Jiao Tong University is full of vigor and vitality and have made remarkable progress on its way to becoming a world-class university. Professor Zhang’s education philosophy and new practices have provided invaluable exploration and experience in achieving China’s goal of building world-class universities.