

Conferment Dinner, 14 June 2024
Response to Doctor Eerika Borgentorp

Esteemed doctor Borgentorp, honorary doctors, Jubilee doctors and our freshly minted doctors, distinguished guests,

A doctoral degree is indeed the result of hard work and perseverance, as Doctor Borgentorp so well pointed out.

Doing a doctorate challenges your thinking in ways you cannot imagine when you are getting started. It's about creating something new, something that has not yet been discovered. Typically this process throws you curve balls, makes you change plans, and forces you to challenge assumptions – and usually not just your own.

As everyone who has gone through the doctoral thesis process knows that it certainly offers a sufficient supply of the "sisu moments" mentioned by Doctor Borgentorp which in the end determine the direction of the work.

For those of you who have come to Finland, embarking on your doctoral studies has also meant getting to know a new culture and home. It can be cold and dark here at times – but I trust you have also witnessed the warmth and dedication of the Aalto community. Working together with many talented people is one of the gifts of the doctoral studies process, one that I hope you have come to appreciate.

But whether you are from near or far, the end goals of a doctorate are the same: develop the skills and knowledge needed to carry out independent research. Create the cutting-edge knowledge and solutions the world needs. When you earn a doctoral degree, it means you have mastered the building blocks of your field.

Dear new doctors,

this is the moment to look back of all you have learnt and experienced. This is the moment to reflect on how far you have come and this is the moment to cherish your accomplishments.

We are all so very proud of you!

But while your doctoral education journey comes fully to a close, this is not the end.

Some of you may continue in the academic world, others may be moving into industry, joining a company or even starting one yourself.

Wherever you work, your skills and knowledge are needed more than ever as we are living in an increasing complex world where new ways of doing and living need to be created to solve the big challenges that we have in front of us.

We like to say that Aalto is a place where challenges become possibilities, and anyone – student, researcher, alum or partner – can make a difference.

I hope that you take that spirit with you in the next stages of your career and work for a better world.

You are now and will always be an Aaltonian, a valued member of the Aalto community.
And I hope that you stay in touch with your alma mater.

Because together we are stronger, together we are a force of change!

Let me propose a toast to all the new doctors here today for their accomplishments and their future success. Cheers, Kippis, skål!