

Arvoisa rehtori, provosti ja dekaani; hyvät kunniatohtorit ja tohtorit; hyvät riemutohtorit ja juhlavieraat.

Tonight, we have gathered to celebrate the remarkable achievements of us, the latest doctors of the Aalto community. On behalf of the Aalto University School of Engineering, I'm honored to give this year's new doctor's address. This speech is a testament to the dedication, perseverance, and hard work that each of us has demonstrated throughout our academic journeys so far.

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Tonight's theme is "sisu," a Finnish concept that embodies resilience, determination, and courage—qualities that every doctoral candidate needs in abundance. As a former mechanical engineer who transitioned to the world of real estate economics at Aalto, I've had my fair share of "sisu" moments. It has not been once or twice that I have been totally lost in my research (and life in general). However, each time, my amazing colleagues, and especially my thesis supervisor, Professor Seppo Junnila, have patiently explained the basic principles of real estate, and research, to me.

Today, I'm confident to announce that I know the most crucial factor in real estate: location. That's why I have sometimes wondered why anyone would come to Finland to do their doctorate, of all places available! The weather is not too good, and the language is way too difficult to learn. I truly admire all our international peers for choosing Finland. Maybe it is the sisu attitude that prompted you? Why do things the easy way when they can be done the hard way? Just like doing a PhD instead of just working on a payroll for someone else, right?

Reflecting on the PhD journey, I am reminded of last year's speech by Dr. Eija Raussi-Lehto, who compared the doctoral process to pregnancy. As someone expecting my first child, I can now fully appreciate the humor and truth in her words. The early stages of a PhD, much like early pregnancy, are filled with excitement and a bit of nausea—in my case, a lot of that! Referencing Eija's speech: *"You gather information like you're preparing for the perfect dissertation baby, only to find yourself in the throes of morning sickness every time you look at your data."* I'm sure we all have experienced that phase at the beginning of our doctoral journeys. Fortunately, I have now experienced it twice, and I cannot recommend immediately starting a second "project" after finishing your PhD. My advice would be to wait a bit longer.

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I have been honored to be part of the Aalto Community for the past 12 years. My journey started back in 2012 as a bachelor's student in the Mechanical Engineering Department. To everyone's surprise, not the least my own, six years later, I found myself finishing my master's thesis in the real estate business research team as part of the Department of Built Environment. From there, I found my passion for smart buildings, and I'm extremely happy that in my today's work, I can combine the skills acquired from both departments.

One could say that the greatest professional achievement in the academic journey is the doctorate degree. However, on a personal level, I must say one year as a visiting scholar at the University of California, Berkeley, was nearly as great a milestone for me. I had dreamed of sunny California from the day I started as a bachelor-level student at Aalto, and I was really proud of my "sisu" attitude to finally get there (even though COVID postponed my visit for two years). Spending an academic year elsewhere highlighted the relevance of communities to me. During our lifelong journey, we all have different kinds of communities we belong to. One thing is, however, certain: we all belong to the unique Aalto community, a spirit that cannot be found elsewhere, not even among the top ten universities in the world.

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Each of you has navigated this doctoral journey with a "sisu" attitude, walking on your individual paths. You have pushed the boundaries of knowledge, challenged existing paradigms, and contributed to the advancement of your respective fields. The knowledge and skills you have acquired will undoubtedly have a lasting impact. Whether you continue in academia, industry, or another path, the contributions you make will shape the future and inspire others to follow in your footsteps. But, remember, the pursuit of knowledge is a lifelong journey. Continue to ask questions, seek out new challenges, and remain curious. The world needs thinkers, innovators, and leaders like you.

As you step into the next chapter of your career, and I into motherhood, remember that you are always supported by this community. We should be confident in our abilities to make significant contributions and to be agents of positive change.

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Lopuksi haluan vielä kiittää vanhempiani, Marjaa ja Jounia, jotka ovat tukeneet ja kannustaneet pyyteettömästi koko tähänastisen elämäni ajan. Haluan kiittää myös puolisoani Akia. Seitsemän vuotta sitten en olisi uskonut, että akateemikko ja sarjayrittäjä voisivat olla hyvä pari, mutta toisin kävi. Loppujen lopuksi, yrittäjäys ja akatemia eivät ole täysin toistensa vastakohtia. Molemmissa kehitetään jotain uutta, kuljetaan koskemattomia polkuja, ja välillä seistään epätoivon reunalla. Tarvitaan myös sitä kuuluisaa "sisu" asennetta! Kumpaakaan ei voi kuitenkaan tehdä menestyksekkäästi yksin. Jo vuosi avioliittoa takana ja yksi tohtorintutkinto. Kiitos tuesta ja loputtomista ideoista tutkimukseni edistämiseksi. Ehkä joku niistä ideoista vielä saa jatkoa!

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Congratulations, doctors. Our achievements are a source of pride and inspiration for us all. Let us raise our glasses to us, the newest doctors. Kippis!

Thank you, and enjoy the rest of the evening.