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Esteemed honorary doctors, jubilee doctors and newly conferred doctors, ladies and gentlemen,

Dr Jairan Nafar Dastgerdi,

On behalf of everyone present, let me express our pleasure at you not having given up your curiosity and eagerness to learn, "Miss why".

Far too many girls around the globe still feel that technology is a man's sphere but luckily the number of role models **like yourself** has been increasing also in Finland since the 1990s and roughly a quarter of the doctoral degrees now awarded at Aalto University are to women.

The number of female professors has also increased since the establishment of Aalto, and now 21% of our professors are women. Science and technology is a viable career option for both sexes.

I fully agree on your view of passion being one of the main driving forces of a scientist at any level.

It is also one of Aalto University's values, which complemented by the other values identified and adopted by this community of bold thinkers have led to excellent development in cutting-edge research in our focus areas.

This shows clearly in the increasing high quality of Aalto researchers' publications and in exciting breakthroughs and innovations. Consequently, we see growing international recognition of our work demonstrated for example by the remarkable rise in the international university rankings relevant for Aalto.

You, Dr Nafar Dastgerdi, and your now conferred colleagues have played an important role in this. Thank you for this!

Soon all our Schools will be on one campus and the Aalto promise of multidisciplinary in research, teaching and societal impact has the possibility to rise to yet another level. We want foster the collaboration but often the mere proximity and the serendipitous encounters between people

from fields currently far apart are starting points to amazing new avenues of research, teaching and innovation.

Grand challenges such as global warming, need for sustainable materials and sources of energy, healthcare needs of the aging population, problems of urbanisation, are all becoming more and more severe.

The challenges require systemic comprehensive solutions based on the latest research based results and insights.

I feel strongly that we must all join forces to tackle problems. Dear newly conferred doctors, your capabilities and competencies are greatly needed.

I was glad to hear that your studies at Aalto also gave you something else besides scientific knowledge. Self-confidence and communication skills are vital to get the research-based messages across in this fast-pace age where actual knowledge is sometimes difficult to discern from the continuous flood of information.

Wherever you may continue your careers, dear newly conferred doctors, you have an important role to play in upholding the beacon of true knowledge.

We at Aalto University strive to give everyone a sense of community and it pleases me to hear that you, Dr Nafar Dastgerdi, consider Finland your second home as it implies that we, for our part, have made a contribution towards this.

All of you newly conferred Doctors of Technology are now alumni of Aalto University and we hope that in the spirit of sharing and life-long learning you keep in touch with us throughout your careers.

Dr Nafar Dastgerdi, thank you very much for your inspiring speech.

On behalf of the entire Aalto community I would like to thank the honorary doctors and the jubilee doctors for their significant contributions to Aalto University and congratulate once again all the newly conferred doctors and wish you the best of success in the next phase of your lives.