

Hyvää iltaa kaikille! Good evening everyone!

I am very happy and honoured to be here today addressing you. I want to start by thanking everyone here who has worked so hard to make this day possible. Today is the day we celebrate our graduation with a doctorate degree. I would like to congratulate my fellow colleagues and new doctors and I wish you all the best in what comes next, academically and otherwise. The road to get here was not at all easy. However, we made it! All the hard work we put in has finally paid off! But, as we stand here today looking forward, we need to remind ourselves that we should thrive to be learning new things every day. This is not an end to our education, this is only a beginning, as our education will carry on till the last day of our lives. I encourage all of you to follow your dreams and listen to your instincts. Give it all you have got. We should never be afraid to fall or to fail, for failure is only a step leading to success. And as Denzel Washington once said “Nothing in life is worthwhile unless you take risks. You will fail at some point in your life. Accept it. Never be discouraged, never look back, give everything you’ve got. and when you fall throughout life, fall forward.” And I tell you that no dream is crazy, and nothing is impossible.. If you have faith in yourself, nothing can get in your way. And together, we should try to put our knowledge to try to do something good and beneficial for the coming generations.

And as this is a graduation speech I would like to look back at the days I have spent here.

The first time I came to Finland, it was a research visit to Aalto. I remember that when I got here, I knew immediately that this is a place where I would love to work. Afterwards, I got a position as a doctoral student here. Of course, I did not even hesitate. During the time I was working towards my degree, Aalto has been like a home to me, the people I worked with were like family. And it was so great to find a home away from home, and that is exactly what Aalto has been to me. I want to thank my supervisor and advisors for always being there for me, not just academically, but also as friends. Their door was always open for us. My supervisor has always reminded me that work is only a part of life and not all of it. She was always there to tell me to stress less and relax (Something which I do not do often). Having her as a supervisor is the best thing that can happen to a doctoral student. I wish she were able to make it today. Moreover, I am very grateful

to the staff and faculty members who have made everything so much easier to deal with. I can safely say the days I spent here, despite the stress and hardships encountered during my doctoral studies, were among the best of my life. And now, I leave here knowing that I have a great background with which I can start a new chapter of my life with confidence. Along with the scientific background, I leave here with a great network of people whom I had the pleasure of meeting and getting to know along the way.

I also want to thank my awesome friends and colleagues who have helped me through my troubles and who have been by my side whenever I needed it. Furthermore, I would like to thank my family who has been there through it all. I used to call them and talk about my research and work and they were always there to listen to me and help whenever possible. I truly wish they were able to be here with me today.

Today marks a milestone in our lives, an achievement, and we should celebrate it! This is our day so let us seize it and look forward towards our future! I really do think that the best days of our lives are still ahead of us.

Thank you Aalto for making this possible and Congratulations again for my fellow graduates! Kiitos ja Onnea!!

Razane Tajeddine