

Speech of the Rector of STU, prof. Ing. Miroslav Fikar, DrSc.

Dear new doctors, members of the academic community, colleagues, guests, ladies and gentlemen,

We are celebrating today new 116 doctors at STU that include 53 women and 4 students outside of Slovakia. This will bring the total numbers of PhD graduates from STU to 3890. I along with the vice-rectors, deans who are with us today, want to deeply congratulate all of you.

I myself remember this day some almost 30 years ago and can feel your joy and happiness. Today, think of all of your family members and friends. It is thanks to these people, who have supported you to this stage, that you are with us today, receiving a doctoral degree. We of the university would also like to express our appreciation of the support provided by your families to help you reach this stage. We share their joy, today.

If I could make one sentence that would characterise the moment, it would be: "young enough to be wise, old enough to be smart". It was not easy to reach this stage. Many of you felt at certain moments that the study is too hard, that results cannot be obtained, theories do not work, experiments do not support theories. Yet, you have overcome that and you stand here today. You are officially recognized as being capable to work independently in your disciplines.

PhD is the highest academic degree available. It is not just a degree, it is a commitment. Your role and responsibility in our society will be crucial, you will determine the nature of Slovakia of tomorrow.

It is not just a degree, you became PhD of Slovak University of Technology. It means you are STU ambassadors and also ambassadors of knowledge, authority. Your opinion will help to build our knowledge society, to shape our future.

And what comes next? Now, having earned your doctorates, you will begin your careers as professional researchers who are masters in your specialisations. Some of you will choose to pursue a further academic career. I strongly recommend you to go for a few years abroad, to acquire new ideas and techniques, to absorb different working environments. And, what is the most important, to create and grow your own scientific team, direction, school.

Many of you will start either work for a company or establish your own one. In either case, you will encounter difficulties greater than any you have experienced so far. Even then, your degree will certainly serve you as a strong foundation and source of confidence. You can always rely on your knowledge and mind to solve independently any challenges that will come.

We use to say that Slovakia is a small country. We need to cooperate. This will ensure that companies, the public sector, and the business world will have access to your knowledge. Also, cooperation makes us a part of something bigger. It is because science and research are not for individuals. Their key feature is community, meetings with people that love their work, solve problems, help to each other.

In conclusion, your PhD work is a small contribution in a bigger field of science and technology. A small, but important. The fact that you earned a PhD degree means that you are both smart and wise. Stick with that in your future. And stick with STU. It is my sincere hope that you will treasure into the future the bonds which have developed between you and Slovak University of Technology. You can return here anytime and you will always find the support you will need.

Once again, let me offer my sincere congratulations to each and every one of you. Thank you and good luck on your life journey!