Transcript for December 2020 Doctoral Celebration Video:

Wojtek Chodzko-Zajko:

Good Afternoon, I am Wojtek Chodzko-Zajko, Dean of the Graduate College and I want to welcome you to a special celebration of our doctoral graduates at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Although we cannot be together in person right now for our traditional hooding ceremony, we want to take a moment to applaud the accomplishments of those who have earned the highest degree – the doctorate.

We also want to thank the family, friends, mentors, and colleagues who have been instrumental in this achievement.

We know you share our immense pride in these outstanding graduates.

Today’s celebration will begin with congratulatory remarks from Chancellor Robert Jones and Provost Andreas Cangellaris.

Chancellor Robert Jones:

To all of you in this graduating class, congratulations on your accomplishments. I know we are not celebrating today exactly the way you expected, but I hope you feel an additional sense of pride as you reflect on all that you have achieved.

Afterall, today is an enormous milestone.

We often say that the Illinois Family is made up of people who rise to their very best when faced with a challenge.

And during this very challenging year, I am incredibly proud to say that this graduating class has done exactly that.

Your courses were delivered in alternative ways, at times your research and scholarships were put on hold, and some of you were separated from friends and colleagues and instructors by a significant distance.

I want to be very clear. You have achieved great success while enduring something that has never been done before in the history of our University.

And in a year that has been nearly impossible to predict, you have shown extraordinary strength.

So behalf on the entire University Community, congratulations. We are so proud of you.

And we can’t wait to see what you’ll accomplish next as alumni.

Provost Andreas Cangellaris:

It is my great honor and privilege to speak with you on one of the most important moments of your academic careers.

I would like to thank you, on behalf of our University and the state of Illinois, for sharing your talent and your time, your most valuable assets, with us. Without them, we cannot succeed in our mission as Illinois’ land-grant flagship university.

I would like to thank you, for your patience, perseverance, and compassion during this extraordinary year that the pandemic brought upon us. I would like to thank you, on behalf of your mentors and advisors. Your aspirations and your ambitions inspired their pursuits. Your curiosity advanced their scholarship. Your accomplishments fulfilled their commitment to question the known and the familiar, to explore and to discover, to advance the human condition. And, in doing so, prepared you to be the scholars, thought leaders, public servants, inventors and innovators of tomorrow.

I would like to thank you, on behalf of all of our students, for being such an integral part of their education and training. You have been their peers and their friends, and you served as advisors and role models. Their launch onto successful careers and lives wouldn’t have been possible without you.

I would like to thank you, on behalf of our Urbana-Champaign community, for sharing with us your cultural perspectives and your values, enriching our diversity and advancing our global understanding.

I would like to thank you, on behalf of academia, for having embraced and demonstrated through your scholarly contributions, the power of the free, curious mind. We count on you to defend it, and to protect it under any circumstances and anywhere in the world life takes you. The well-being of humanity depends on it.

I would like to thank you, on behalf of the world, for all the new ideas and the new knowledge that have sprung because of your dedication and hard work. They are the promise and hope for a better tomorrow for everyone.

Finally - I would like to thank you, on behalf of the future, for all the things yet to come because of you and all those who you will help, lead and inspire.

Congratulations colleagues! And Best of Luck!

Wojtek Chodzko-Zajko:

Doctoral education would not be possible without the dedication of our faculty mentors.

I can tell you from my own experience that mentoring graduate students through their journey is one of the most rewarding parts of the job.

Our graduate students are at the heart of what we do, and we learn as much from them as they do from us.

It is my pleasure to introduce our next speaker, Dr. Josep Torrellas, the Saburo Muroga Professor of Computer Science and recipient of the Campus Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Mentoring.

Dr. Josep Torrellas:

Good morning,

My name is Josep Torrellas, and I am a professor of Computer Science. I have been a faculty at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign for 29 years.

I’d like to start by offering my heartfelt congratulations to the doctoral degree recipients, their spouses, significant others, families, friends, and doctoral advisors.

Dear doctoral degree recipients:

This is your day. The faculty of the University of Illinois are proud of your outstanding achievements and the promise of your future. You are now joining our worldwide family of PhDs from the University of Illinois, a very distinguished group of global citizens. If you check the web, you will see that you are joining a group that includes 5 Nobel Prize winners, 1 Pulitzer Prize winner, countless leading scholars of all fields, many college presidents, many industry leaders, entrepreneurs, prime ministers, and a president.

These are folks who, with their work, have advanced our societies, our thought, our culture, technology, art, medicine, and in short, our quality of life. It is a club you should be proud to join.

Congratulations also to the parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, and sisters. You supported the new doctor. This is your day too. You are rightly proud of them. They did not choose the easy path. Rather, they chose the harder path, but they are now equipped to do well for themselves and for the rest of society. And what a great role model they are for their siblings.

In the next few minutes, I'd like to invite the degree recipients to reflect on what brought them to this point of their life and what comes next.

If you are like me, getting a PhD has been a lot of hard work. I remember when I started graduate school; I was unsure that I was going to make it. You, like me, probably suffered through multiple research dead-ends, some very stressing times, perhaps even some tragic event involving your family or friends, and now, COVID-19. You have endured much to get to this exceptional day.

But you made it. You reached this day. In the process, you made lifelong friendships. You also found out what you are made of. You strengthened your ambition, your sense of purpose, and motivation. You are now equipped with a spirit of achievement. You are ready to take on big problems and responsibilities. Now, your new employers and new colleagues expect you to make a big difference in your new company, academic department, laboratory, or startup.

You are now embarking into a new, exciting, life: a challenging job, an unfamiliar city or environment, new colleagues, perhaps a new family. I'd like to encourage you to look forward and have confidence in yourselves. If you have been able to get a PhD from the University of Illinois, what can stop you now?

Do work that breaks new ground and solves important problems. If you think a problem is important and believe that what you are doing can solve it, do not let anything stop you. Be ambitious in your plans.

There will be disappointments and rejections, but you have steeled yourself for them and you can face them. The two best pieces of advice that I received from my advisor and that I have passed to the 43 PhDs that I have graduated so far are: one be focused and two be persistent. Concise, isn’t it?

But remember that belonging to the club of UIUC PhDs carries quite a bit of responsibility. The first responsibility is to behave ethically. People rightly expect us to tell the truth, be honest, and respect other people and the environment. At a time of widespread misinformation in social media, be a counterforce.

The second responsibility is to work to improve the lot of your community and, indeed, of humanity. Use your talents and energy to make a positive impact. Through knowledge, you have tools that most people do not have. Use them wisely to contribute to society and improve the lives of other people.

Finally, I’d like ask you that, in the years ahead, you do not forget the University of Illinois. You, plus the large number of past PhDs from UIUC, and us, faculty here, are family now. And family members need to keep in touch. I urge you to stay in contact with your professors. Stop by the UIUC campus, and learn about what we and other PhD graduates are doing. Speak with our students and tell them about your experiences and career paths. Help them to find their way.

Once again, congratulations and wish you great success in your future endeavors. I look forward to reading and hearing about your accomplishments.

Thank you

Wojtek Chodzko-Zajko:

Our graduate students come to Illinois from every state in the Union and from countries around the world with their diverse experiences and viewpoints. They come with a passion and determination to ask new questions and seek new answers, to envision new possibilities, and to make a difference.

The graduates we celebrate today join generations of distinguished University of Illinois alumni who are leaders and innovators, impacting the lives of people around the world.

I am confident that these graduates, with their commitment and perseverance, will use their knowledge and expertise to shape our future in profound ways.

It is now my honor to recognize the 2020 May and August graduates and candidates for December graduation.

We present their names by academic college.

**College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences**

**The Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering**

Juan Sebastian Acero Triana

Aersi Aierzhati

Shorma Bailey

Keilin Jahnke

Chunhwa Jang

Jiangong Li

Samantha Lindgren

Christina Tucker

Peng Zhang

**The Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics**

Tengjiao Chen

Nicolas Gatti

Zhepeng Hu

Elizabeth Kim

Liqing Li

Yijia Li

Mateus Nogueira Meirelles De Souza

Bryan Parthum

Yujun Zhou

**The Department of Animal Sciences**

Muhammed Shameer Abdul Rasheed

Ivan Ansia Vazquez

Parker Henley

Woongbi Kwon

Su A Lee

Kailiang Li

Lauren Reilly

Brooke Smith

Zachary Traughber

Katherine Vande Pol

Patrick Von Schaumburg

**The Department of Crop Sciences**

Liana Acevedo-Siaca

Brendan Alexander

Rodrigo Goncalves Trevisan

Brandon Jordan

Marlee Labroo

Parthiban Thathapalli Prakash

Meng-Chun Tseng

Menghao Yu

Colleen Zumpf

**The Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition**

Cheng Chen

Sylvia Crowder

April Hackert

Maxwell Holle

Nagiat Hwisa

Justine Karduck

Emely Lopez Barrera

Ashley Oyirifi

Elizabeth Sloffer

Liang Sun

Ko-Lan Tsung

Anna Waller

**The Department of Human Development and Family Studies**

Xi Chen

Meghan Fisher

**The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences**

Roberta Afonso

Jaime Coon

Ethan Kessler

Zhe Li

Xing Liang

**The Division of Nutritional Sciences**

Celeste Alexander

Catherine Applegate

Erin Davis

Caitlyn Edwards

Bridget Hannon

Ching-Yen Lin

Katie Ranard

Joe Rowles

**College of Applied Health Sciences**

**The Department of Kinesiology and Community Health**

Jeremy Butler

Crina Cotoc

Gwendolyn Derk

Svyatoslav Dvoretskiy

Katherine Hsieh

Gina Lathan

Marcela Vizcarra Catalan

Zinnia Zhang

**The Department of Recreation, Sport and Tourism**

Mi Ryoung Chung

Allison Musser

Kerri Schiller

**The Department of Speech and Hearing Science**

Henry Giovanny Angulo Jimenez

Ariel Brownlee

Jacob Caravello

Zoe Dinger

Victoria Eschmann

Carolyn Jeon

Kristin Johnson

YiHsin Tai

Malorie Wagman

**Gies College of Business**

**The Department of Accountancy**

Hansol Jang

Shuyang Wang

Jeff Williams

**The Department of Business Administration**

Aaron Barnes

Joshua Downs

Jihyeon Kim

Nan Zhang

**The Department of Finance**

Sulaiman H S B Y AlBader

Meng Gao

Chao Zi

**College of Education**

**The Department of Curriculum and Instruction**

Sahar Alameh

Stanley Bell

Karie Brown-Tess

Chelsea Catt

Tanya Cordoba

Ozge Evcen

Mor Gueye

Cara Gutzmer

Susan Kelly

Lu Lawrence

Mary Lyons

Nitasha Mathayas

Vivian Presiado

Jim Sosnowski

Rob Wallon

Hicham Zemmahi

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Dinah Armstead

Shahe Bagdasarian

Nicole Ball

Natalia Barley

Kelly Best

Collin Blair

Michael Conn

Shameka Davis

Carol Dimopoulos

Lauren Dodge

Sarah Dyer

Gerald Emerick

Sonia Estima

Jacquelyn Flowers

Juan Gardner

Hannah Huang Oesch

Danielle Huff

Ahmet Ilci

ArCasia James-Gallaway

Chaddrick James-Gallaway

Boreum Ju

Lauren Kline

Tara Kristoff

Shaunita Levison

Nichole Lucas

Mbhekiseni Madela

Abdullah Mansoor

Christopher Martelli

Lauren May

Kristen Meyer

Mohamed Moghazy

Erick Montenegro

Lisa Moreno

Paul Myers

Brandi Neal

Devean Owens

Evan Phillips

Adrienne Pickett

Tonya Pulley

Myeisha Ramirez

Sol Roberts-Lieb

Alicia Robinson

Georganne Sadomytschenko

Richard Schroeder

Michael Sletten

Jennifer Smist

Rachel Storm

Jami Swindell

Xiaokang Tang

Emily Teitelbaum

Francena Turner

Kristin Vonder Haar

Robert Ward

Emily Weidner

Kelly White

Claire Wong

Bradley Wooten

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Xiao Li

Xiaomei Liu

Adnan Rebei

Briana Williams

Ted Worm

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Christopher Cormier

Suzanne Lee

Kimberly Patton

Kristina Rios

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Soumendu Bagchi

Ryne Beeson

David Brandyberry

Shubhendra Chauhan

Rohit Gupta

Girish Joshi

Kevin Kim

Branden Kirchner

Neil Mehta

Rambod Mojgani

Aaron Perry

Fan Yang

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Parinaz Fathi

Mark Gryka

Pin-Chieh Huang

Gelson Pagan Diaz

Indrajit Srivastava

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Phillipe Alves

Andrew Anderson

Tushar Apurv

Omar Baltaji

Louis Bartels

Huseyin Boler

Diana Byrne

Josue Cesar Bastos

Jamie Clark

Alessandro Contento

Robbie Damiani

Heena Dhasmana

Brian Eick

Dimitrios Fytanidis

Elyas Goli

Vamshi Krishna Gudipati

Osman Erman Gungor

Vedhus Hoskere

Wenting Hou

Okan Ilhan

Nicole Jackson

Angeli Mariz Jayme

Amir Hossein Kohanpur

Aditya Kumar

Jane Lee

Haoyang Li

Jacob Je-Chian Lin

Jacob Mathew

Ran Mei

Mohammad Amin Nabian

Yasutaka Narazaki

Eun Hyun Park

Yeritza Perez Perez

Antoine Petit

Andres Prada Sepulveda

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Sital Uprety

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Aditya Deshpande

Sanorita Dey

William Dietz

Tarek Elgamal

Ahmed El-Kishky

Simon Garcia de Gonzalo

Ritwika Ghosh

Tanmay Gupta

Monowar Hasan

Hadi Hashemi

Abdulrahman Hassan N Mahmoud

Lifu Huang

Faria Kalim

Theodoros Kasampalis

Farzaneh Khajouei

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Umang Mathur

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Kanika Narang

Anjali Narayan-Chen

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Xiaoman Pan

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Tianqi Gao

Amiremad Ghassami

Hongyu Gong

Sujan Gonugondla

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Harsh Gupta

Jonathan Hoff

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Fawad Ismail

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Purnima Ghale

Ram Sai Gorugantu

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Zahra Hosseinisarani

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Jose Guzman Borrero

Pinda Ho

Han Byul Jang

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Yunhee Kim

Andrew Lautenbach

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Seul Lee

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Hanqian Zhu

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Sang Lee

Stephen Sherman

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Fizza Mughal

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Surbhi Jain

Xinyu Kong

Kuan-Yu Lai

Josephine Lauderdale

Payel Mondal

Adedolapo Ojoawo

Ipek Tasan

Heather Young

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Johnny Ching-Wei Lee

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Rajeev Chorghade

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Lukas Smaga

Riley Svec

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Brian Trinh

Chad Ungarean

Meng Wu

Yanhua Xu

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Xi Zhang

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Adam Kozak

Clayton Schroer

**The Department of Communication**

Donovan Bisbee

Jose Izaguirre

Marisa Smith

Kristopher Weeks

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Ethan Madarieta

**The Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures**

Mark Frank

**The Program in** **Ecology, Evolution, and Conservation Biology**

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Shay Akil McLean

Tolulope Perrin-Stowe

**The Department of Economics**

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Natalia Cantet

Yuci Chen

Heepyung Cho

Abdollah Farhoodi

Brian Feld

Sofia Fernandez Guerrico

Isabel Ferraz Musse

Yi Huang

Whayoung Jung

Asad Khan

Nazanin Khazra

Bongjun Kim

Yufan Leiluo

Luiz Felipe Leite Estanislau do Amaral

Juan Munoz Morales

Jacob Vogler

Shiyun Xia

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Evin Groundwater

Annie Kelvie

Valerie O'Brien

Samantha Plasencia

Lawrence Sklaney

Eric Thomas

Carl Thompson

Kelly Williams

Zachary Williams

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Elijah Juma

Teresia Njoroge

Eric South

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Lynette Strickland

**The Department of French and Italian**

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Nicholas Strole

Peter Tarjanyi

Gyula Zsombok

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Luis Escobedo Paredes

Melissa Heil

Lirong Kou

Arrianna Marie Planey

Donald Planey

Zewei Xu

Rea Zaimi

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Julia Cisneros

Michael DeLucia

Nicole Fernandez-Franzan

Jingtao Lai

Yuchen Liu

Naomi Wasserman

Yi Yang

Yan Zhan

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Stefan Kosovych

Ethan Larson

Kent Navalesi

Beth Ann Williams

Augustus Wood

Peter Wright

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Chung-Yu Chen

Stephanie Landblom

Daniel Ross

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Iftikhar Ahmed

Hannah Burson

Daniel Carmody

Alexander Dunn

Martino Fassina

Elizabeth Field

Christopher Gartland

Terence Harris

Stefanie Klajbor-Goderich

Lina Li

Shixuan Li

Xiao Li

Christopher Linden

Xujun Liu

Nigel Pynn-Coates

Fernando Roman-Garcia

Simone Sisneros-Thiry

Lan Wang

Joshua Wen

Ningchuan Zhang

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Danielle Campbell

Luke Fenlon

Kyle Grim

Maryam Khademian

Alexander Palmer

Elizabeth Rowland

Jiayi Sun

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And to finish it at Illinois is really, really astonishing because this isn’t just a place that upholds standards.

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Think and act beyond yourself.

Continue to work towards inclusion, togetherness, and diversity in all of its beautiful and variegated ways.

Always be open to change and transformation of yourself and others.

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