**(Doctoral Celebration Video May 2021)**

***Dean 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 this moment to applaud the accomplishments of those who have earned the highest degree – the doctorate.

And we 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 who have completed your doctoral studies, congratulations!

Earning a doctoral degree is an enormous personal and professional milestone. Having reached this moment, many of you are probably feeling pride that is only matched by an enormous sense of relief.

Trust me -- that balance will quickly change.

The relief part will fade.

But the pride will only grow.

You have earned your degree from one of the very best and most rigorous universities on the planet.

The choice to pursue a doctoral degree requires more than just being a good student and having natural talent. It requires devotion to learning. It demands that you immerse yourself completely in your discipline. And it also usually requires you to become familiar with getting things wrong the first time.

Whether that’s an unsuccessful experiment or a thesis argument that ultimately proves to be unsupported – becoming a good scholar and good researcher demands patience. And, it forces you to develop a discipline and focus that is hard to explain to someone who hasn’t been through it.

This past year has created challenges beyond what any of us could have imagined. But it has also showed us the importance of seeking solutions to whatever lies ahead.

We often say that the Illinois family is made up of people who rise to their very best when faced with a challenge. You have done exactly that.

We are so proud of you and we can’t wait to see what you will accomplish next.

Congratulations!

***Provost Andreas Cangellaris:***

It is my great honor and privilege to acknowledge one of the most important moments of your academic careers.

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.

Thank you, on behalf of your mentors and advisors. Your aspirations and your ambitions inspired their pursuits. Your curiosity advanced their commitment to question the known and the familiar, and to advance the human condition.

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 into successful careers and lives wouldn’t have been possible without you.

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.

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.

Thank you, on behalf of the world, for all the new ideas and new knowledge from your dedication and hard work. They are the promise and hope for a better tomorrow.

And finally - 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!

***Dean 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, Christopher M. Span, Professor of Education Policy, Organization and Leadership and Associate Dean in the College of Education.

***Christopher Span, Associate Dean, College of Education Professor, Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership:***

My name is Christopher Span, and I am the Associate Dean for Graduate Education in the College of Education, and a Professor of History of American education in the Department of Education policy organization and leadership, and a three time graduate of this outstanding university.

I am honored to serve as the keynote speaker on behalf of the Graduate College for this year as virtual celebration of doctoral graduates, one of my favorite quotes is by the late great humanitarian and South African leader, Nelson Mandela.

Mandela once said, "It all seems impossible until it is done." How appropriate for today. To all of our graduates and their families and attendance today, I say to you, "It is done. You've done it. Congratulations." What perhaps seemed impossible when you started is now an accomplishment today. One an important milestone and reminder that all goals, no matter how big or time consuming, are accomplishable, you are living proof. I thank you for choosing to be a part of the Illinois experience and story, as a historian, my job is essentially to document and record what happened. Each of you are a part of this important Illinois story.

I look forward to seeing and sharing how your presence will be chronicled, not just as graduates of Illinois, but as leading contributors in research, teaching, and public engagement for society and life.

Unless you started graduate school at the start of last year, I don't think any of us could have predicted or imagined the society and university we've inherited or reside within today, we celebrate this occasion, your commencement from us to the world in isolation through a virtual format, because of a viral contagion, plaguing humanity.

We bear witness to an economic crisis, unseen in a century. We stand at another crossroad determining the future of racial and social injustice. Many of similar mind and like as I believe that the behaviors choices and decisions we make today on these ongoing matters will define and determine the very soul and future of this nation. And in some ways, humanity itself.

And yet here you are. Graduates, on the cusp of venturing into this brave new world, not as a future participant and picking aside and addressing these challenges, but as seasoned competent, confident leaders, eager to upend them.

So we can usher in the next normal society and life. I was able to witness and mentor, some of you, as you earn your degrees despite these challenges. I witnessed you protest racial and social injustice and push campus leadership to rethink the way we think and respond to these matters.

I saw you on the frontline modeling social responsibility, self care and public engagement. Amid this pandemic in the challenges it hurled at us. I read how you developed alongside your professors, innovation to create a saliva based test to detect and stymie COVID the breakthroughs redirected our campus.

It gave us hope and a tool to solve this grand challenge. Just as important, I saw you proceed with grace and dignity, as you were asked to defer, or recalibrate courses and degrees, abruptly shift to unknown modified learning environments, and wondering what the future holds for you and yours. A year ago, everything seemed impossible and uncertain, but here we are, here you are proving the possibility of everything, even graduating with a master doctoral or professional degree, the steadfast courage, strength and confidence.

I'm proud to bear witness to your grit, persistence, and pioneering spirit, many in this graduating class are the first in their families to earn a post baccalaureate degree. The first to graduate with an IMBA or doctoral degree from an online degree offering, the first I have a child, amid a pandemic in complete their degree requirements. I am honored to serve as a colleague professor, friend, mentor, and witness to your perseverance and accomplishment, and I'm very very proud of you. You prove there are no such things as uncertainties, if you have patience, good planning, and a strong moral compass.

As I close, I want to leave you with two thoughts. The first is a recommendation. I asked you to remember what it took to get to this moment today. I speak from experience here. When the days ahead seem dam, are out of balance. Remember how you repeatedly mustered the focus and commitment to determine your seat at the table today. These attributes will ensure your future outcomes tomorrow.

Your choices, all of them, the good and the bad brought you here today, they will guide where you want to go tomorrow.

Continue to learn from them. The second thing I want to leave you with is a reminder. Remember, in Illinois, you never walk alone. You are now a proud member of one of the largest alumni associations in the world.

Welcome to the next normal of your professional lives. You know what it means to be a part of the Illinois family, embrace this new relationship, and continue to build partnerships networks and friends. And if you feel like the world isn't quite working as it should.

Remember who you are, who we are.

We are Illinois, people that imagined futures yet on imagined, and who through our collective intelligence and determination, transform the impossible into endless possibilities. Again, congratulations, and enjoy the day, and fruits of your remarkable accomplishment.

I-L-L!

***Dean 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 doctoral candidates for May 2021 graduation.

We present their names by academic college.

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

**The Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering**

Shorma Bailey

Congyu Hou

Ayesha Sarker

**The Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics**

Jhorland Ayala Garcia

Federico Ceballos Sierra

Joshua Huang

Akito Kamei

Yijia Li

Armand Tossou

Yuying Xing

**The Department of Animal Sciences**

Danielle Coleman

Heidi Doden

Molly McGhee

Taoqi Shao

**The Department of Crop Sciences**

Brendan Alexander

Rodrigo Goncalves Trevisan

Brandon Jordan

Christopher Landau

Heng-An Lin

German Mandrini

Brent Murphy

Giovani Preza Fontes

Brian Rhodes

Brian Rice

Seth Strom

Jeshurun Asher Tarun

Wei Wei

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

Nagiat Hwisa

Ashley Oyirifi

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

Brianna Anderson

LaKisha David

Tekisha Rice

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

Mary Arenberg

Douglas Becker

Matthew Candeias

Todd Jones

Hyungsuk Kim

Yushu Xia

**The Division of Nutritional Sciences**

Luis Perez

**College of Applied Health Sciences**

**The Department of Kinesiology and Community Health**

Matthew Haugen

Amadeo Salvador

Susann Sears

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

Maggie Phan

**The Department of Speech and Hearing Science**

Macarena Galvez Barrera

Abbigail Kirchner

Carolyn Legare

Rachael Piper

**Gies College of Business**

**The Department of Accountancy**

MJ Kim

Ryan Sommerfeldt

**The Department of Business Administration**

Joshua Downs

Joshua Katz

Hyunsun Kim

Sreekumar Arun

**The Department of Finance**

Filipe Pecas Correia

**College of Education**

**The Department of Curriculum and Instruction**

Karie Brown-Tess

Autumn West

**The Department of Education Policy, Organization and Leadership**

Maria Anderson

Tatiana Austin

Allison Aziz

Nicole Ball

Krista Black

T.J. Breeden

Valeria Carrillo

Lisa Chason

Barbi Chisholm

Natalie Coleman

Shameka Davis

Ben Dotson

Kara Francis

Roman Friedman

Juan Gardner

Ashley Gragido

Erin Groth

Debbie Hrubec

Gabriella Jackson

Ahreum Ju

Jonathan Kosovski

Tara Kristoff

Shaunita Levison

Jana Lithgow

Nichole Lucas

Joseph Martinez

Barbara Mason

Myeisha Ramirez

Beatrice Reyes Childress

Alicia Robinson

Scott Sowinski

Katelyn Talbott

Robert Ward

Emily Wenneborg

Lori West

**The Department of Educational Psychology**

Bethany Hoff

Xiaomei Liu

Sherry Yi

**The Department of Special Education**

Magen Rooney

Kristen Schraml

**Grainger College of Engineering**

**The Department of Aerospace Engineering**

Renato Bichara Vieira

Javier Puig Navarro

Akshay Shetty

Simone Venturi

**The Department of Bioengineering**

Ian Berg

Jacob Berger

Ariana Mostafa

Kathryn Sullivan

**The Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering**

Andrew Anderson

Omar Baltaji

Fernando Gomez Sanchez

Chi-Ying Lin

Jacob Mathew

Daniel Mosiman

Mir Amirali Najafi

Darin Peetz

Daniel Rhee

Meredith Richardson

Jorge San Juan Blanco

Nathan Shauer

Shuai Tang

Ankit Verma

Siqi Wang

**The Department of Computer Science**

Himel Dev

Amin Javari

Theodoros Kasampalis

Adit Krishnan

Suhansanu Kumar

Stephen Macke

Umang Mathur

Amarin Phaosawasdi

Hashim Sharif

Gao Tang

Spencer Whitehead

Simon Xie

Yu-Chun Yen

**The Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering**

Mostafa Ahmed

Ashutosh Dhar

Matthew Grawe

Fu Chen Hsiao

Phuc Huynh

Jinhong Kim

Ali Kourani

Katherine Lakomy

Benjamin Lew

Lingling Meng

Safa Messaoud

Carl Pearson

Francis Roxas

Tarek Sakakini

Charbel Sakr

Leda Sari

Palash Sarker

Noyan Sevuktekin

Kiran Thekumparampil

Raymond Yeh

**The Department of Industrial and Enterprise Systems Engineering**

Massi Amrouche

Tonghui Cui

Timothy Murray

Albert Patterson

Satya Ravi Teja Peddada

**The Department of Materials Science and Engineering**

Faraz Arastu

Craig Daniels

Amlan Das

Leon Dean

Marley Dewey

Aidan Gilchrist

Haw-Wen Hsiao

Manohar Karigerasi

Christian Ocier

Dylan Steer

Yingfeng Yang

Renliang Yuan

Chengxi Zhao

**The Department of Mechanical Science and Engineering**

Oyuna Angatkina

Emil Annevelink

Esteban Cisneros Garibay

Yanran Ding

Joao Paulo Jansch Porto

Heonjae Jeong

John Kim

Wenzhe Li

Brendan McGann

Jacob Meyer

Mina Mikhaeel

Hyunkyu Moon

Hongliang Qian

Fereshteh Alsadat Sabet

Svjetlana Stekovic

Jeewon Suh

Emily Weerakkody

Yuhang Yang

Bingyang Zhang

**The Department of Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering**

Katarzyna Borowiec

Gianluca Panici

Zengming Shen

Huan Yan

**The Department of Physics**

Alejandro Cardenas Avendano

Guannan Chen

Jahan Claes

Souvik Dutta

Sangjun Lee

Tianhe Li

William Rose

Tong Wang

William Wei

Jialu Yan

Matt Zhang

**College of Fine and Applied Arts**

**The School of Art and Design**

Jody Stokes-Casey

**The Department of Landscape Architecture**

Michael King

Fatemeh Saeidi-Rizi

**The School of Music**

Stephen Busath

Kai-Wei Chen

Kirsten Hedegaard

Marcelo Kuyumjian

Eui Gun Lee

Janice Lee

YooBin Lee

Christopher Madsen

Ion Malaimare

Christopher Mason

Mike McAndrew

Michael Minarcek

Patrick Murray

Lauren Pellant

Crystal Rebone

Nolan Vallier

**The Department of Theatre**

Ryan Prendergast

**School of Information Sciences**

**Informatics**

Priscilla Boff Ferronato

Pan Zhang

**Information Sciences**

Natã Barbosa

Yun Hao

Kinyetta Nance

Kirstin Phelps

K.R. Roberto

Noah Samuel

DeAnza Williams

**The School of Labor & Employment Relations**

Lucille Headrick

**The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences**

**The Department of Anthropology**

Yoonjung Kang

Karthik Yarlagadda

An-Di Yim

**The Department of Atmospheric Sciences**

Randy Chase

Geoffrey Marion

Douglas Miller

Sujan Pal

**The Department of Biochemistry**

Joseph Seimetz

Vinh Vu

**The Center of Biophysics and Quantitative Biology**

Xiaoman Xie

**The Department of Cell and Developmental Biology**

Mohd Tayyab Adil

Qinyu Hao

**The Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering**

Talha Al-Zoubi

Gavin Donley

Connie Yu-Tong Hong

Alexander Horn

Evan Lloyd

Sayani Majumdar

Mai Ngo

Ajit Vikram

Xiong Xiong

Tianwei Yan

**The Department of Chemistry**

Kristopher Benke

Yaroslav Boyko

Stephanie Chen

Michael Counihan

Sudharsan Dwaraknath

Edzna Garcia Ramirez

Yiran Huang

Ke Li

Martin McLaughlin

Tabitha Miller

Ephraim Gabriel Morado

Maria Philip

Chengtian Shen

Yung-Ching Wang

Yujue Wang

Ruixian Zhang

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

Sada Egenriether

Alonso Favela

Ellen Haynes

Shay-Akil McLean

Tolulope Perrin-Stowe

**The Department of Economics**

Aram Grigoryan

Dana Shaat

Mariya Shappo

Bei Yang

**The Department of English**

Paul Beilstein

Maria Carvajal Regidor

Ryan Sherwood

**The Department of Entomology**

Robert De Moya

**The Department of Geography and Geographic Information Science**

Junghwan Kim

**The Department of Geology**

Ching Chang

Julia Cisneros

Xiaobao Lin

Olivia Thurston

Allie Wyman

**The Department of History**

Brian Campbell

Leanna Duncan

Saniya Ghanoui

Koji Ito

Marco Jaimes

Tariq Khan

Matthew Klopfenstein

Veronica Mendez Flores

Juan Mora

Carolina Ortega

Peter Thompson

**The Department of Linguistics**

Sea Hee Choi

Daniel Ross

Elias Shakkour

Mien-Jen Wu

**The Department of Mathematics**

William Balderrama

Yusuf Chebao

Ravi Kiran Donepudi

Mary Gramcko-Tursi

Xiaolong Han

Emily Heath

Elliot Kaplan

Vaibhav Karve

Heejoung Kim

Chongda Liu

Tsutomu Okano

Hadrian Quan

Hsin-Po Wang

**The Department of Microbiology**

Samantha DeWerff

Kristen Farley

Eliot Joya Sandoval

Andi Liu

Pritha Rao

Ananya Sen

Preethi Narayani Thattai Ragunathan

**The Department of Molecular and Integrative Physiology**

Yenny Yook

Jiaren Zhang

**The Neuroscience Program**

Patricia Cintora

Connor Courtney

Carly Drzewiecki

Collin Kaufman

**The Department of Plant Biology**

Charles Burroughs

Ingrid Carolina Romero Valero

Stuti Shrivastava

**The Department of Political Science**

Nuole Chen

Eristeo Perez

**The Department of Psychology**

Janice Ng

Gavin Ng

Trisha Patel

John Pfeiffer

Jian Ming Colin Wee

Tiffany Yang

**The Department of Sociology**

Julie Krueger

Merin Thomas

**The Department of Spanish and Portuguese**

Iker Garcia Plazaola

Amanda Rector

**The Department of Statistics**

Trevor Harris

Yutong Li

Yan Liu

Danielle Sass

Yihe Wang

Teng Wu

Ruixuan Zhou

**College of Veterinary Medicine**

**The Department of Comparative Biosciences**

Emily Brehm

**The Department of Pathobiology**

Jameson Mori

***Dean Wojtek Chodzko-Zajko:***

To all our graduates, I commend you on reaching the pinnacle of academic achievement.

Your Illinois family is immensely proud of your accomplishments and takes great pride in calling you our alumni. I am certain that your future will be shaped by the very same passion and dedication that led you to earn your Illinois degree.

Across our entire campus, we celebrate you.

***Katie Frye, PhD candidate, Microbiology:***

Getting a doctoral degree is just an immense honor, and it really shows the world in just three letters, PhD, that you're really at the top of your field.

***Aadeel Akhtar, PhD, 16’ Alumni, Neuroscience:***

And one of the great things about getting a PhD from the University of Illinois, is that it really prepares you to do these meaningful things that your work isn't just going to just end up in just like a journal paper but it actually can have impact on millions of people's lives.

***Ken Vickery, Director of Fellowships, The Graduate College:***

Graduating doctoral students remind me that nothing valuable comes easily, that almost all true achievements in life come only through years of effort. That's what I think of when I see a doctor before someone's name, and that's why I think that time it deserves such respect.

***Avé Alvarado, Executive Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, The Graduate College:***

Never forget that you have earned a degree from a world class institution, one that is respected around the world. And you should know that what you have to say, will certainly matter and I wish you, just the very best in your life. In all of your undertakings.

***Christopher Span, Associate Dean, College of Education Professor, Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership:***

We are Illinois, people that imagined futures yet unimagined. And who, through our collective intelligence and determination, transformed the impossible into endless possibilities. Congratulations.

***Aadeel Akhtar, PhD, 16’ Alumni, Neuroscience:***

Congratulations. We are so proud of you.

***Katie Frye, PhD candidate, Microbiology:***

Congratulations and we are so proud of you.

***Avé Alvarado, Executive Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, The Graduate College:***

Congratulations. We are so proud of you.

***Ken Vickery, Director of Fellowships, The Graduate College:***

Congratulations. We are so proud of you.

***Dean Wojtek, Chodzko-Zajko:***

Congratulations, we are proud of you!