



DkIT Conferring Of Awards 2020

Speech by DkIT President, Michael Mulvey, PhD

Graduation Ceremony

A Chairde: Failte romhamh go Léir

Good morning. You are all most welcome to our online conferring ceremony today.

I'd like to commence by expressing my warmest congratulations to you, the graduates, on this milestone day.

Today is a special day for all of us who gather here virtually from multiple locations across our region and the globe, to celebrate your accomplishments and efforts, and to express our sincere best wishes for your future endeavours.

Today's ceremony is unique for many reasons. Not least because it is the first in our 50 years that we have not been able to come together face-to-face to mark your achievements. I understand that this is not perhaps the

graduation day that you had envisaged. It is, however, like all graduations at DkIT, a joyous event that marks the culmination of much hard work, dedication and commitment to the realisation of your goals and ambitions.

My colleagues and I are immensely proud and privileged to be here to share this very special day in your life. It's a day to switch off from everything else that is going on in the world to celebrate, and to reflect on the magnitude of your achievement and a day to look forward to a bright future.

It is also a very important day for our region that we serve, North Leinster-South Ulster. This week 1,422 skilled, diverse and talented graduates will have their awards conferred from Level 7 to Level 10 before going out to make their unique and valuable mark on the world.

I think we can all agree that 2020 has been a year like no other. Perhaps more than any year, all graduates participating here today have demonstrated their ability overcome unforeseen and unprecedented challenges. The successful conclusion of your conferring today is a testament to that and I know that the resilience and

adaptability that you have shown over recent months will add to your success in the years ahead.

In the words of the Northern Ireland-born writer, C.S. Lewis *“hardship often prepares an ordinary person for an extraordinary destiny.”* We expect great things to come from this class.

During your time at DkIT, you have all developed your natural gifts, developing your capacity for organised thought, acquiring in-depth skills in a particular knowledge domain

You will have enhanced your abilities in teamwork, independent research, identifying problems and creating solutions, and learned to hone your enterprising qualities to develop new business or social ideas. These skills will support you in the years ahead as you forge your unique path through life – both in your career and in your personal lives.

As we reflect on how DkIT has helped you develop and prepare for *your future*, I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the valuable contribution that you have made to this Institute and its continued progression and growth.

Many of you will have served as class representatives elected by your peers. You have drawn attention to what works well and those aspects of programmes where modification and change is needed. My colleagues and I thank you for that – your input strengthens our academic quality enhancement systems and leads to constant innovation and resulting high academic standards.

Many of the graduates here today also participated in one of our 50 active Sports Clubs & Societies here. You gave generously of your time and energies in creating a rich and vibrant college life for all students. Many of you have impacted on our community and the region in a tangible way by working with the Students' Union to raise funds for charity or perhaps you were involved in volunteering. We thank you for your contribution.

At DkIT we firmly believe that your Higher Education experience is about much more than what happens in the classroom or indeed the award you have received today. To quote the esteemed American civil rights leader, Martin Luther King Jr., *“Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education.”* Your participation in college life will have helped build and shape **your character**. It will have

helped you discover who you are, introduced you to new people and new ideas, and ultimately helped you learn about what makes you passionate. We hope you can **use this passion** to make a positive impact on the world – whether that’s in your community, your field of work or society in general.

More than ever, our world needs new thinkers, new problem-solvers, new creators and new leaders who can unite others. Each of you have the capacity to bring about this change and as Dr King also famously said, *“If I cannot do great things, I can do small in a great way.”* There is no better way to approach the next phase of your life.

As we recognise the achievement of our graduates today, it is important that we also acknowledge the people who helped you get here. Your **support networks** which are today perhaps more important than ever; the mothers and fathers, the siblings, the children and indeed partners and friends, all those here today who have supported the graduates throughout their academic journey. Your role has been invaluable and this ceremony here today is also about you. I hope that if you cannot be with your loved ones today in person, that you have an opportunity to watch along virtually and can share in their joy. I encourage



our Graduates to take some time out of your celebrations today to let your support networks know that you appreciate them. You will continue to draw strength from these support networks in the years ahead.

This year, at DkIT we celebrate our 50th year and as we reflect on our past achievements. We are also keen to look ahead to an exciting period of evolution for DkIT as we accelerate plans to become a Technological University for our region. This ambition is central to our new Strategic Plan 2020-22 published earlier this year and you can rest assured that this will have a positive impact on your qualifications and the region that we serve.

As we look to the future, we look forward to another 50 years of commitment to regional development, knowledge and innovation, and to the many successes that lie ahead for you and all our alumni. The institute remains on an exciting trajectory of protracted growth.

We are absolutely determined to ensure that DkIT continues to increase access to higher education via new initiatives to encourage progression from our Further Education Partners, and maintaining our top position within

the sector for Research and our Engagement with industry. We also look forward to continuing to deepen and strengthen our alliance with DCU – and we are delighted that we are joined virtually today by the DCU President, Professor Daire Keogh and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar, Professor Lisa Looney to confer the awards for graduates from the DkIT-DCU graduate school.

The future does not come without its challenges. The impact of COVID-19 and uncertainty around BREXIT means that testing times are on the horizon. But we are confident that our commitment and promise to our region as is evident within our new Strategic Plan is what will ground and direct us during these periods.

I know staff from across the Institute are logging into today's ceremony from home to celebrate your successes. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the efforts of my colleagues, who like you, our graduates, have dealt with unprecedented change this year. They have shown immense creativity and innovation in their response to the pandemic by continuing their teaching, learning and wider supports via remote delivery. As educators, they do this because they are deeply invested in the success of you their students and this will continue even after your graduate today.

COVID-19 has had untold impact on our lives, the way we live, the way we learn and the way we celebrate major life events such as these. But looking to the positive, I think it has also taught us the value of connection. We are all now connected to one another via our 40,000 strong Alumni Network and we hope that you will remain connected to one another, your lecturers and the institute in the years ahead. I'd like to invite you to join our Alumni Network, I believe my colleagues from our Careers & Employability have been in touch with details about how you can stay connected and I know that details are also available on our website.

It is our fervent intention to organise an opportunity to come together in person as alumni to celebrate your achievements at a date in the future when health situation allows. Until then, please do stay in touch.

Before I finish, I would also like to acknowledge the valiant and courageous efforts of our nursing and midwifery graduates here today, many of whom have been working and continue to work at the front line of this health emergency. We are immensely proud of you and deeply appreciate your commitment to your profession and our

communities. Later we will hear from senior representatives from the health sector who are keen to convey their own words of appreciation. But on behalf of the institute I would like to thank you and will continue to keep you in our thoughts.

To all our graduates, well done and Congratulations!

Sin deire an chlár a chaired