

## SDC graduation, 24 June 2017

**Speech by Member of the Danish board of the SDC and pro-rector at Aalborg University,  
Inger Askehave**

Dear graduates, dear students and teachers, ladies and gentlemen,

As a Danish member of the SDC board, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate each one of you – Danish, European and Chinese students - with the fine results and accomplishments that you have achieved during the past 2 years and 3 years as students at SDC.

Young people are often encouraged to explore and experience the world, and as SDC graduates, coming all the way from Denmark and the rest of Europe to study here in Beijing, you have done exactly that.

You took a huge step when you chose to come to Beijing and decided to study in a truly cross-cultural environment a couple of years ago. A step that could prove to be one of the most important steps in your lives and future careers.

Coming to terms with teaching traditions and learning methods, different from what you are used to, and sharing the learning experience with students, who enrolled at SDC with a background different from your own (both culturally and academically), has been a huge challenge but also a unique opportunity to all of you.

Combine these experiences with the double degree diploma you receive here today, and you have a unique profile and a competitive edge that I am sure future employers will consider extremely important and attractive.

Whether you are going to pursue a future in academia, industry or elsewhere, I have no doubt that that you have obtained the building blocks needed to build a strong foundation for your future career.

It is always with great pride, I encounter SDC alumni in Denmark, China or elsewhere, and I cannot wait to see where and how you, the cohort of 2017, will put your skills and competences to use.

Just as a graduation marks the end of one chapter, it is the beginning of another, and many of you will no doubt meet each other again in the years to come.

I hope you will make use of the network you have gained inside and outside of SDC. I know that many students have become close friends. But I also know that a lot of you have developed close relations with researchers, business people and other individuals - whom you have met through your studies, internships or lab work. These networks can

be the key to unlock the door to your professional dream. Stay connected, use each other, and keep expanding your network.

Today marks the end and the beginning for each one of you, but it is also a significant mark in the history of SDC. You are the last group of students to graduate from UCAS' Zhongguancun Campus, and henceforth SDC will have a new home.

In a few months we will move to our very own, brand-new building at the UCAS' Yanqihu Campus and on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September students will inhabit the place and enjoy the splendid facilities there.

But what is just as important as the physical landmark, are the things you cannot see with the naked eye: the SDC spirit.

Each time I have visited Beijing (during the past couple of years), I have had a tradition of inviting some of the students out to dinner. To get an open and honest talk with the students about the contents of study programmes, the atmosphere at SDC and daily life as a student here. These get-togethers have been extremely fruitful and I have particularly noticed the sense of community and the effort to succeed together that characterize this particular group of courageous young people.

With all this in mind, it is with great confidence and pride that we send you out into the world. You will make great SDC ambassadors, actually – when I think about it – you will be the best ambassadors of SDC.

Congratulations to you all and I wish you all the best in your future.