

Speeches

The spoken word applies

Honorary doctorate 2019

Acceptance speech Prof. Dr. Evelyn Hu

Zürich, 16. November 2019

Rector Springman, President Mesot, Bundesrat Parmelin, honored guests, distinguished awardees, colleagues, and friends, deepest thanks for the honor you give to me.

I am grateful and humbled to be one of the very distinguished list of Honorary Doctors at ETH. Yesterday, under the auspices of your hospitality, I spent an exceptional day of discovery and rediscovery. I had the chance to spend time with friends who have been long-time colleagues, and meet talented, visionary new faculty just starting on their journey of discovery, education and mentorship. I also had the honor of speaking with graduate students and postdoctoral researchers who are already contributing their idealism, energy, talents and vision in helping to guide us all to a sustainable, more responsive and responsible future.

The days' activities brought home to me how fortunate I am to be part of this enduring and resilient community: a community that is truly global in its origins, in its perspective and in its impact. This is a community of colleagues and collaborators that share common values of delight in ideas, and belief in the power of science and technology to transform, help to equalize and contribute to society. A community that is committed to continual innovation and embracing of new challenges. A community that is committed to transfer of the knowledge gained, the tools and insights developed and the benefits realized to new generations of researchers and indeed to society more generally.

In a world dominated by social media and computer-generated reality, it is profoundly important as well as delightful – to create with our minds and our hands, the substance, the shapes and forms of our collective infrastructure, using artisanship to craft the instrumentation, materials, devices and information platforms that will augment the quality of life for all.

In a world that at times appears to be alarmingly sectarian, partisan and divisive, it is profoundly important to establish models of inclusive communities that embrace diverse talents and work to achieve global benefits.

Referate

These are tasks that are not easy to teach, to implement, to reform, refine and develop – and these are tasks that lie at the core of ETH's strength and contributions. I am deeply proud to be a member of that community: thank you for the honor you bestow upon me.