

Professors, ladies and gentlemen and, above all, dear graduates

It is an honour for me to be here to represent the University Council and to share this special occasion with you today.

In the last 18 months, you have greatly expanded your knowledge. During that time, you spent traveling the world, listening to lectures, reading as many books as you could, preparing for presentations and working for your master thesis. It took great effort and time of your part to be here today – and you can be proud of that and I congratulate you on your successful graduation. In the name of all graduates, I would also like to thank their families and friends, who have shown a lot of understanding and tolerance during these 18 months and who have accompanied the graduates on their way.

The Executive M.B.L.-HSG program has a long history of 23 years and was one of the first post-graduate programs in Europe, which was based on the compound of intramural and extramural studies. It started with seven modules, four of which took place at the University St.Gallen itself, the other three modules were held in Brussels, Geneva and Vaduz. As time passed, new modules were established in Brügge, Luxembourg, Vienna and Harvard - just to name a few. The program has evolved to such an extent that its participants have travelled to leading universities and centres of excellence in Europa, the United States and Asia. With this unique opportunity, a global faculty which consists of professors, lawyers, in-house counsel, judges, politicians, officials and economists from business and academia have shared their knowledge and their experience with you. During this time, you have not only expanded your competence in methods, questions and problem identification, but you have also gained knowledge that can be directly applied in practice on a daily basis.

It is the end of an era and we are grateful to look back on many successful years with numerous program participants. However, the education market is developing continuously and the competition between the varied number of programs has risen, which is why this program has recently experienced many crises. Due to a decreasing number of participants, the E.M.B.L.-HSG is no longer able to finance itself. The self-financing of each program is the cornerstone at the University of St.Gallen and is seen as a clear quality feature. In order to ensure the equal treatment of all programs, the University of St.Gallen has therefore decided to close the program in the future.



The men who made it happen all these years and who ensured that the program remained cutting edge are Prof. Carl Baudenbacher and Prof. Othmar Strasser. At this point, I would like to thank them for their untiring effort. It is because of their vast network and invaluable experiences that this program could grow and become what we can look back on with pride.

But not only the E.M.B.L.-HSG has developed over the years, the entire University of St.Gallen is in a state of constant change. In order to meet the challenges of digitalization and to enable a new quality of learning, the “Learning Center” will be established in the near future (right next to us), which enables innovative ways of learning and interaction between students, teachers and people from practice. In the autumn semester 2020, the University of St.Gallen will not only offer the traditional courses of study, but is expanding its range with the Medical Master in cooperation with the University of Zurich and Kantonsspital St.Gallen, as well as computer science courses with five new chairs and institutes. With the new courses of studies the University of St.Gallen masters the challenges of recent times by making a major contribution to promote the region as a business location and countering skill shortages in both sectors.

Once you receive your diploma, you will be a part of an elite group of over 750 graduates from 50 different countries. In addition to that, you will become a member of a network of more than 28'000 alumni of the University St.Gallen. With these words I welcome you to the HSG family and congratulate you once again on reaching this milestone.