Good morning and welcome to the 2017 convocation of the University of Michigan School of Information. I'm Thomas Finholt, dean of the School of Information.

I want to begin by reasserting the values that bring us all together. At the School of Information we are guided by many core principles. We want to conduct cutting-edge research, we want to provide world-class instruction, we are fundamentally oriented to the intertwining of people, information and technology – and we want to have fun. We also aspire to be a diverse and inclusive community. In other words, you are all welcome and we are glad you are here. These are difficult times and there are those small number of individuals who through their hateful acts, words and thoughts seek to divide and intimidate us. They will not succeed. We will stand united, annealed by our shared belief that all of our students and scholars will be able to pursue their ambitions and the opportunities they have earned by being members of our community. As Provost Philbert said in his remarks earlier this week: "We know that our society's move toward a more perfect Union will include many challenges to respect and inclusion. Our response is and will continue to be an absolute commitment to welcoming students, faculty and staff whose diverse experiences, beliefs and backgrounds enable us to challenge the present and contribute to enriching the future."

How will we act on the School's values during the coming academic year? Here are a set of guiding priorities.

1. Expand educational opportunities for under-represented groups through external transfers, increased need-based aid and publicizing the Go Blue Guarantee

2. Conduct high-impact research in the public interest, as exemplified by the new center for improving social media

3. Increase global access to UMSI instruction, particularly via massive open online courses

4. Engage the professional communities in the areas of our academic programs

5. Develop additional resources for student support and new programs, such as the University of Michigan Augmented/Virtual/Mixed Reality Initiative

As my first priority, we continue to seek external transfer students through various outreach efforts. In May, we hosted our first-ever Community College Summer Institute. Over three days, 40 students from nine Michigan community colleges got a taste of what it would be like to pursue their BSI here at Michigan. With financial support from the office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, we expect to make this an annual event. It supports one of our school goals: increasing the size and diversity of our undergraduate population by attracting external transfer students. We are leading the way at the university with our conscious efforts to broaden our socio-economic spectrum, including reaching out to first-generation college students. Even though we are in early days with this initiative, I'm proud to say that thanks to the dedicated efforts of our Office of Student Affairs, approximately 10 percent of our entering BSI class are coming from outside the University of Michigan.

We now have four diversity-focused scholarship funds, including one funded by members of the UMSI faculty. And we will be heavily promoting the Go Blue Guarantee, the university's ground-breaking program to offer free tuition to students from families with income below $65,000.

My second priority is to conduct high-impact research that will serve the public interest. As one example, we are investing funding to start a center that will serve as a hub for those committed to improving the responsible use of social media. While there are many benefits to broad access to the means of public communication and information sharing, in recent years we have also experienced the darker side of what this technology enables. At the School of Information, we not only have the expertise, I believe we also have the obligation to use our research to influence online public engagement in a positive manner. I expect this new center will attract faculty from across the university as well as outside partners, formed into working groups, who will develop tools that have practical applications for improving social media.

Third, we will continue to extend our instructional reach globally, through our massive open online courses. Last fall we introduced the highly successful online MicroMasters program. We were one of the first schools at the University of Michigan to begin offering MOOCs and we currently lead the university in number of courses and number of enrolled students in this growing educational venue. Chuck Severance was one of those in the MOOC vanguard and his hugely popular portfolio of Python courses and internet history recently topped one million learners.

Fourth, we will increase our engagement with professional programs in our areas of research, such as the American Library Association, the American Medical Informatics Association, the Association for Computing Machinery, the Economic Science Association, and the Society of American Archivists. We already have a presence at many of their conferences, whether through participation as presenters and organizers or by hosting receptions for alumni and attendees.

Finally, we will seek to develop additional resources for student support and new programs, such as the University of Michigan Augmented/Virtual/Mixed Reality Initiative. That initiative has brought us partnerships with Microsoft and other firms. For example, Microsoft has donated HoloLens devices to multiple schools across U-M so that faculty and students could use them in the classroom to develop new, innovative ideas to harness the potential of these devices and push the boundaries of augmented realioty. Microsoft researchers will be advising on the development of a new AR/VR/MR curriculum for UMSI and U-M students. Partnerships like this expand boundaries for students by allowing them to explore and experiment with new technologies.

Involving corporate sponsors provides mutual benefits for all. When students interact with the latest technology, their insights and perspectives can provide designers with valuable feedback. Students are inspired to develop their own projects based on the possibilities they see in new technology. The partnerships also open the doors to internships, future employment and corporate financial support of research.

And now, I want to conclude by celebrating the School's many accomplishments during the past year. First, last week, I had the pleasure of meeting and speaking individually to the new bachelor's students, new master's students, new doctoral students and new faculty during their orientations. I'm proud to say that our incoming classes counted all together are the largest in the school's history. We welcomed 14 new doctoral students, 272 new master's students and 151 new undergraduate students. We are also welcoming the newest members of our faculty, and I'd like to invite each to stand as they are introduced.

Eric Gilbert. Eric joins UMSI as the John Derby Evans Endowed Professor of Information and associate professor of information. He comes to UMSI from the School of Interactive Computing at Georgia Tech. There, he led the comp-dot-social lab, a research group that focuses on building and studying social media. He holds a PhD in computer science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His work has been supported by grants from Facebook, Samsung, Yahoo, Google, Yik Yak, and the National Science Foundation. Welcome, Eric.

Libby Hemphill. Libby returns to UMSI as an associate professor. She earned her MSI with us in 2004 and her PhD in 2009. She has been an associate professor of communication and information studies at the Illinois Institute of Technology. Her recent work focuses on how users leverage Twitter and Facebook to influence public policy and advance collective action. She is especially interested in how people marshal information and communication technologies in service of social change and in the ethics and pragmatics of research using big social data. Welcome back, Libby!

Alain Cohn. Alain joins us as an assistant professor this fall with a focus on large-scale causal behavior analytics and social design. He holds a PhD in economics from the University of Zurich and comes to UMSI from the Center of Decision Research in the Booth School of Business at the University of Chicago, where he was a postdoctoral scholar. His research interests include applied microeconomics, behavioral economics, behavioral finance, experimental economics, labor economics and public economics. He graduated magna cum laude with a diploma in economics and finance from the University of Zurich.

Patricia Garcia. Patricia was a postdoctoral fellow at UMSI last year and this year joins us as an assistant professor. She conducts sociocultural research on race, gender, and technology with a special

interest in studying how to increase girls' participation in STEM activities. She holds a PhD in informational studies from UCLA and a MLIS in archival studies from UCLA and a master's in English literature from the University of Texas Austin. She earned her bachelor's degree in English literature from St. Edward's University. She is a former bilingual elementary school teacher.

This fall, she will be teaching SI 435: Exploring Computational Thinking Through Making and SI 580: Records and Archives.

David Jurgens. David joins us as an assistant professor in large data analytics. He holds a PhD from the University of California Los Angeles and was a postdoctoral scholar in the Department of Computer Science at Stanford University. His research combines natural language processing, network science and data science to discover, explain and predict human behavior in large social systems. He is data co-chair of the International Conference on Web and Social Media.

David will be teaching Data Mining (SI 671/721) this fall.

Andrea Thomer. Andrea is an assistant professor of digital curation. She earned her doctorate at the School of Information at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her research focuses on the areas of digital curation, information organization and information systems usability. Her interests in natural history and museum informatics are evidenced by the fact that, before starting graduate studies, she excavated ice age fossils for the Page Museum at the La Brea Tar Pits in Los Angeles.

Andrea is teaching SI 666, Organization of Information Resources, this fall.

Chris Teplovs. Chris joins us as a Lecturer III/Research Scientist. He is the lead developer of the Digital Innovation Greenhouse, which nurtures digital enterprises at the University of Michigan, moving them

from innovation to infrastructure. He has a PhD in curriculum, teaching and learning from the University of Toronto. During his post-doctorate fellowship at the Copenhagen Business School, he created several startup ventures focusing on analytics.

In fall, he will be teaching SI 330, Data Manipulation, and SI 370, Data Exploration.

Robin Brewer. Robin joins UMSI as a Presidential Postdoctoral Fellow at the School of Information. Her research explores the interaction of social computing and accessibility. She's researching how to develop and design more accessible interfaces and also how to create more meaningful online communities. She received her PhD in technology and social behavior from Northwestern University and her master's in human-centered computing from the University of Maryland Baltimore County.

Please join me in welcoming all our new faculty. [Applause]

Second among the list of accomplishments are the faculty recipients of our awards for teaching and service. Although we'll be doing more formal presentations of these awards at our first faculty meeting in October, I want to take this occasion to acknowledge the honorees before the entire UMSI community.

This year, our Excellence in Instruction Award goes to two members of our faculty, Mark Newman and Chris Brooks, for their leadership in creating two very successful massive open online courses, or MOOCs. Mark has championed the first UMSI EdX MicroMasters series,"User Experience (UX) Research and Design"; Chris designed the "Applied Data Science with Python" specialization through Coursera which was named one of the ten most popular MOOCs by *Class Central* in September 2016. Both worked with other UMSI faculty in each of these endeavors. Congratulations to you both.

The Michael D. Cohen Outstanding Service Award recognizes commitment to serving the UMSI community and mission. This year, the award goes to Professor Karen Markey, for the herculean task of researching, collating, preparing and proofing the 253-page document we submitted for our successful re-accreditation by the American Library Association. Congratulations and our sincere thanks, Karen.

The Joan Durrance Community Engagement award recognizes excellence in building partnerships with communities in order to develop information-related projects that can lead to social change. I'm proud to announce that the award goes to Tawanna Dillahunt. Since arriving at UMSI, Tawanna has launched several projects aimed at improving opportunities for lower-income Detroit area residents. These include helping people to build job interview skills, finding mentors through ride-sharing programs, and coaching budding entrepreneurs. She recently received a half-million dollar grant from the National Science Foundation to research ways to improve digital employment tools so they don't exclude people with few or no technical skills. Tawanna and her work personify our vision of using information, with technology, to improve people's lives. Congratulations, Tawanna.

The additional accomplishments of our faculty over the past year are impressive – I can't mention them all but I do want to share a few highlights since our last convocation.

Last October, professor Paul Resnick received the University of Michigan Distinguished Faculty Achievement award. These awards honor senior faculty who have consistently demonstrated outstanding achievements in the areas of scholarly research or creative endeavors, teaching and mentoring of students and junior faculty, service, and a variety of other activities.

In February, assistant professor Silvia Lindtner and PhD student Jean Hardy received honorable mentions at CSCW for a paper they co-authored on "Constructing a Desiring User."

In April, Professor Barry Fishman was named a Michigan Distinguished Professor of the Year by the Michigan Association of State Universities. He was praised for his research on technology that fostered student learning and for representing "the excellence in higher education for which Michigan's public universities are globally renowned."

In May, assistant professor Sun Young Park was selected to participate in the first class of the Association of Computing Machinery's Future of Computing Academy, which was created to foster the next generation of computing professionals.

Also in May at the annual CHI conference, Paul Resnick received a SIGCHI Academy Award and was co-author, along with assistant professor Sarita Schoenebeck and PhD student Carol Moser, on a paper that received an honorable mention at the CHI conference. Our new presidential post-doc Robin Brewer also received an honorable mention at that conference for a paper she coauthored.

In July, clinical associate professor Chuck Severance was awarded the 2017 William H. Graves Leadership Award by the IMS Global Learning Consortium, the world leader in ed tech interoperability and innovation. Chuck was cited for his vision and pioneering work in the ed tech community.

Also in July, a founding faculty member of the health informatics program at U of M, associate professor Tiffany Veinot, was appointed the director of the program. Her appointment officially began on September 1. Congratulations again, Tiffany.

In August, Silvia Lindtner received one of the NSF's first Convergence Awards, which support the integration of multiple disciplines to advance scientific discovery and innovation. Her grant will fund a workshop aimed at understanding how new forms of work, such as makerspaces, are transforming the nature of work, the labor force, and many industries.

Finally, last Thursday, professor Mark Ackerman received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the European Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work, in recognition of his vision, skills, capability and dedication in his early work that opened the research field of knowledge sharing from a CSCW /practice perspective.

Third, I want to acknowledge the accomplishments of our students. Last spring we named our outstanding graduate student instructors of the year, based on nominations and course evaluations. This year's outstanding GSIs were doctoral student Lindsay Blackwell and MSI student Younghun Lee. Lindsay's SI 110 students described her as "an amazing educator who cares about her students," who consistently went above and beyond to make sure her students understood the material. Younghun Lee's SI 507 students described him as "awesome, knowledgeable, dedicated and patient," with an answer to every question. Congratulations to both.

The Gary M. Olson Outstanding Ph.D. Student Award is given yearly to a student based on progress in the program, achievements in terms of publications and presentations, as well as service to fellow students. I have the pleasure of announcing that this year the award went to Wei Ai, whose research interests range from online lending systems to the use of emojis. Congratulations, Wei.

Fourth, I have two staff awards to acknowledge. These awards are presented internally over the summer, but they deserve a wider recognition, as the work of the staff benefits the school at all levels. The peer-to-peer staff award honors someone who has made significant contributions in service of other staff, and this year's winner was our Career Development Director Joanna Kroll. The outstanding staff award for advancing the UMSI mission went to events manager Todd Stuart – who in addition to coordinating the ALA accreditation visit has organized today's convocation ceremony. Please join me in congratulating – and thanking – both Joanna and Todd.

In other staff news, we made a new director-level appointment this summer. Kelly Kowatch, the director of engaged learning, is now the head of our Office of Professional and Community Engagement. The office has the responsibility of coordinating Alternative Spring Break (ASB), the Global Information Engagement Program, Citizen Interaction Design, Design Clinic, UMSI Service Week, Community Impact Projects, client engagement in courses, and advising and programming for undergraduate study abroad. It's a big program and we know that Kelly will do her usual outstanding job.

Finally, we reached several organizational milestones in the past year.

In December our MHI program became the latest program at the university to become a Peace Corps Coverdell partner. Coverdell Fellows are returned Peace Corps volunteers who receive financial

support and academic credit for their service as they pursue a graduate degree. The MSI program has been a Coverdell partner since 2014 and we're pleased that the health informatics program now participates as well.

In June, the School of Information MSI degree program was re-accredited by the American Library Association. The evaluation process takes place every seven years, so we are good to go until 2024. Our program is one of the longest continuously accredited programs in the nation, having received our first accreditation in 1926.

Last September, we launched our first MicroMasters program in User Experience Research and Design on the online learning platform edX. This nine-course series offers learners a flexible educational offering, whether they're taking the course for professional development or sample the grad school environment. In January, one of the courses in the sequence, Principles of Designing for Humans, was named one of the top 10 most popular MOOCs by the website Class Central. As of late August, the MicroMasters had an enrollment of 139,500 students, with 56,000 enrolled in the Introduction to UX course.

Throughout the past year, we've made significant steps toward our diversity, equity and inclusion goals. Last summer, Judy Lawson was named assistant dean of DEI and has been working diligently to engage faculty, staff and students in her strategic planning – including hosting a half-day workshop in April. We received our first diversity scholarship for the BSI program from Roger Ehrenberg and Carin Levine-Ehrenberg. And in May, we presented our first UMSI Diversity, Equity and Inclusion awards to

one student, Mariama Weaver; one faculty member, Sarita Schoenebeck; and one staff member, Allison Sweet. Vidhya Aravind received the award for Gender Diversity in Information and Technology.

Finally, in this year we declared victory in our multi-year Victors for Michigan campaign. Thanks to the efforts of our superb development team and the generosity of over 3200 alumni, faculty, friends, students and staff, we soared past our $20 million goal and have raised over $27 million as of June 30.

To conclude, we have an exciting fall ahead of us, and I want to call attention to a few events of special interest.

This next Monday, September 11, UMSI is co-sponsoring a presentation by New York Institute of Technology professor Kevin LaGrandeur. He will be speaking on ways in which artificial intelligence has the potential to replace much more than manual labor jobs. "Robocalypse Now? Technology and the Future of Work" presents ways in which society can prepare for technological unemployment. Our own Casey Pierce will be serving as commentator at the talk. It's next Monday at 4, at the Ford School.

Our big bicentennial event this fall takes place on Friday, October 6, when UMSI sponsors a day-long symposium in celebration of the University of Michigan's 200th anniversary. Leading experts from the fields of information, technology, public and special libraries, and entrepreneurship will present their views on the present and future of information and society.

Our speakers will include some of our own illustrious alumni, like author and NPR commentator Nancy Pearl and LA City Librarian John Szabo, plus entrepreneurs such as the CEO of Twilio and the president of 2K Games.

Peter Lee, Corporate Vice President at Microsoft Research; Bradley Horowitz, Product VP at Google; and Jamie Voris, Chief Technology Officer of Walt Disney Studios will discuss the future of information. In addition, our faculty and students will present some of their current research. The event will take place on the fourth floor of Rackham Graduate School and you are welcome to attend all or part of the symposium on that day. RSVPs are requested; details are on the website.

I also want to mention another UMSI contribution to the celebration of Michigan's bicentennial year. The School of Information's marketing and communications department has developed the MGoView app for Android and iPhone. The app takes you on an interactive tour through the university's central campus and 200 years of Michigan history. Through archival photos, video, and virtual and augmented reality, you can learn more about the people and places that make up this great institution. You can also collect badges and earn selfies with some famous Michigan figures like James Earl Jones and Robert Frost. The app is available for free download on Google Play and iTunes. And that concludes my one and only commercial announcement in this address.

We have an ambitious agenda for the year ahead. But we have the resources, we have the will, and we have the responsibility to "walk the talk" when we describe our school as using information, with technology, to improve people's lives. Whether it's helping under-skilled job seekers in Detroit or HIV-affected families in South Africa, whether we're using maker activities to spark elementary students' interest in math and science, or working to improve civil discourse online – we are there.

I am proud to serve as your dean and as the leader of the best faculty, students and staff at the University of Michigan. Thank you for your attention this morning.

Please allow the faculty to process out before you leave your seats – and we will see you next door for

lunch.