Professor Dan M. Frangopol, Anna Azcárate, Professor H-C Holmberg and Professor Robert W. Orttung.

18 JUNE 2026

Honorary Doctors of Luleå University of Technology 2026

Luleå University of Technology has appointed four Honorary Doctors for 2026: Professor Dan M. Frangopol, researcher in life-cycle engineering of civil structures and infrastructure systems; Professor H-C Holmberg, researcher in cross-country skiing and Olympic high-performance sport, Anna Azcárate, actor, director, artistic leader and educator; and Professor Robert W. Orttung, researcher in sustainability, political science and Arctic studies.

Professor Dan M. Frangopol has been appointed Honorary Doctor of Technology at Luleå University of Technology, among other reasons for his research on structural reliability, risk, life-cycle optimisation, resilience and sustainability of the built environment under extreme conditions. His work has had a profound influence on engineering research and practical application worldwide, and he has contributed to the development of research and education in this field at Luleå University of Technology. Throughout his career, he has supervised numerous doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers, many of whom have gone on to prominent academic and industrial positions.

"I am deeply honored and humbled to have been appointed Honorary Doctor at Luleå University of Technology. Both the University of Colorado Boulder and Lehigh University have provided great academic environments and colleagues. This honor would not have been possible without the excellent students, post-doctoral researchers and visiting scholars who inspired me during my academic career, and without the unwavering support of my wife", says Dan M. Frangopol.

Professor H-C Holmberg has been appointed Honorary Doctor of Philosophy and Technology at Luleå University of Technology, among other reasons for successfully combining academic research with practical application at the highest international level in his role as Head of Research and Development in the Swedish Olympic Committee. At Luleå University of Technology, he has helped strengthen the connection between physiology, biomechanics and technical research related to performance on snow and ice. His work is an exemplary demonstration of how knowledge of human performance can be integrated with technological development and interdisciplinary research, closely aligned with the university's initiatives in sports and performance technology.

"It is with great joy and pride that I receive this distinction. Luleå University of Technology's commitment to sports and performance technology is close to my heart and represents a field with great future potential, where physiology, biomechanics and technology meet for the benefit of both elite sport and public health", says H-C Holmberg.

Anna Azcárate has been appointed Honorary Doctor of Philosophy at Luleå University of Technology, among other reasons for her long-standing artistic work and deep commitment to education and societal development, through which she has made outstanding contributions that combine artistic excellence, pedagogical leadership and social responsibility. Her work has been of great importance both for Swedish performing arts and for the development of arts education in northern Sweden. Of particular significance to Luleå University of Technology is her central role in establishing and developing the Theater Academy in Luleå. She was actively involved in building the programme from its start in 1996 and has since contributed both as a teacher and in leadership roles. Through her commitment and experience, she has been a driving force in developing a strong and sustainable educational environment for performing arts in northern Sweden.

"When, on an ordinary icy-blue day, I am told something as utterly unexpected as being appointed Honorary Doctor, something is added to my self-image that I did not know I had longed for: a confirmation of the value of the curious and playful human being. In gentle play resides the free thought that leads to unexpected discoveries and insights. How beautiful she is, the playful human! "says Anna Azcárate.

Professor Robert W. Orttung has been appointed Honorary Doctor of Philosophy at Luleå University of Technology, among other reasons for his contributions to research on societal transformation, security, democracy, energy and environmental policy, and sustainable development in Arctic regions. Of particular importance to Luleå University of Technology is Orttung's long-standing and close collaboration with the university's researchers in Arctic research, social sciences, and sustainable development. He has played a significant role in advancing research related to the Arctic and for building long-term collaborations between Luleå University of Technology and leading international research environments.

"I am deeply honored to receive this honorary doctorate. Working with colleagues at LTU has been enormously productive and extremely pleasurable. Since Luleå is at the heart of northern Sweden's green transition, it is the perfect place to study the changes and seek lessons that can be applied elsewhere. My students and I have learned a lot from our exchanges with LTU faculty mentors", says Professor Robert W. Orttung.

Dan M. Frangopol, **H-C Holmberg**, **Anna Azcárate** and **Robert W. Orttung** will be conferred at Luleå University of Technology's Academic Ceremony in November 2026.

Anna Azcárate has been appointed Honorary Doctor of Philosophy at Luleå University of Technology

Citation: Through her long-standing artistic career and her deep commitment to education and societal development, Anna Azcárate has made outstanding contributions that unite artistic excellence, pedagogical leadership and social responsibility. Her work has had a significant impact on Swedish performing arts as well as on the development of arts education in northern Sweden.

As an actor, Azcárate has for many years been a prominent figure in Swedish theatre. During her 25 years at Norrbottensteatern, she contributed to the development of the region's performing arts through a large number of acclaimed roles. Alongside this, she has appeared in several film and television productions, reaching a wide audience and establishing herself as an important cultural figure in Sweden.

Although trained as an actor, Azcárate has also worked as a director, artistic leader, educator and presenter. Of particular importance to Luleå University of Technology is her central role in the establishment and development of the Theater Academy in Luleå. She was actively involved in building the programme from its inception in 1996 and has since contributed both as a teacher and in leadership roles. Through her commitment and experience, she has been a driving force in creating a strong and sustainable educational environment for the performing arts in northern Sweden.

Through her distinguished artistic achievements, her pedagogical leadership and her decisive contribution to the development of the Theatre Academy in Luleå, Anna Azcárate is an exceptionally worthy recipient of the honorary doctorate at Luleå University of Technology.

Professor Robert W. Orttung has been appointed Honorary Doctor of Philosophy at Luleå University of Technology.

Citation: Professor Robert W. Orttung is an internationally leading scholar in sustainability, political science, and Arctic studies. Through his extensive scientific output, academic leadership, and broad international network, he has made significant contributions to the development of research on societal transformation, security, democracy, energy and environmental policy, and sustainable development in Arctic regions.

Throughout his academic career, Orttung has worked at several prominent international universities and research institutes, establishing himself as one of the leading researchers in the interdisciplinary field of sustainability studies. His research has enhanced understanding of how political institutions, decision-making processes, and various societal actors influence the development of complex societal issues at local, national, and international levels.

Of particular importance to Luleå University of Technology is Orttung's long-standing and close collaboration with the university's researchers in Arctic research, social sciences, and sustainable development. Through his engagement, he has contributed to the establishment of international research networks, joint research projects, and academic exchanges that have strengthened the university's international position. His efforts have been especially valuable for advancing research related to the Arctic and for building long-term collaborations between Luleå University of Technology and leading international research environments.

Through his scientific excellence, international leadership, and substantial support for the development of research and education at Luleå University of Technology, Professor Robert W. Orttung has made contributions that align closely with the university's strategic ambitions. He is therefore a highly deserving recipient of the honorary doctorate at Luleå University of Technology.

Professor H-C Holmberg has been appointed Honorary Doctor of Philosophy and Technology at Luleå University of Technology.

Citation: Professor H-C Holmberg is internationally recognised as one of the leading researchers in endurance performance in cross-country skiing and biathlon. Through his research, leadership and extensive international network, he has contributed to advancing knowledge of endurance performance, movement economy, and the interaction between athlete, equipment and environment. His research has been highly influential both for scientific progress and for performance development within international elite sport.

In addition to his academic achievements, Holmberg has played a central role in establishing several prominent research environments. As the founder and long-standing director of the Swedish Winter Sports Research Centre, and as head of research and development within Swedish elite sport at the Swedish Olympic Committee, he has successfully combined academic research with practical application at the highest international level.

Holmberg was affiliated with Luleå University of Technology as an adjunct professor from 2020 to 2025, contributing to strengthening the links between physiology, biomechanics and technical research relating to performance on snow and ice. His work stands as an exemplary illustration of how knowledge of human performance can be integrated with technological development and interdisciplinary research, closely aligned with the university's initiatives in sports and performance technology.

Even after his retirement, Holmberg continues to be an active researcher and collaborator with an extensive national and international network. Through his long-standing engagement with Luleå University of Technology, he has helped reinforce the university's national and international position within sports-related research.

Through his scientific excellence, international leadership and ability to unite research, technology and practical application, H-C Holmberg is an exceptionally worthy recipient of the honorary doctorate at Luleå University of Technology.

Professor Dan M. Frangopol has been appointed Honorary Doctor of Technology at Luleå University of Technology

Citation: Professor Dan M. Frangopol has been appointed Honorary Doctor of Technology at Luleå University of Technology for his groundbreaking contributions to life-cycle engineering of civil structures and infrastructure systems, and for his efforts in developing research and education in this field at Luleå University of Technology.

Professor Frangopol has a solid academic background. At the University of Colorado Boulder, USA, he initiated research on life-cycle design, assessment, and management of structures and infrastructure systems. He continued to expand his international network and, in 2006, was appointed the Inaugural Fazlur R. Khan Endowed Chair of Structural Engineering and Architecture at Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, USA.

Professor Frangopol's research on structural reliability, risk, life-cycle optimisation, resilience and sustainability of the built environment under extreme conditions has had a profound influence on engineering research and practice worldwide.

In 2025, Professor Frangopol was elected to the U.S. National Academy of Engineering, one of the most prestigious distinctions in the engineering profession, in recognition of his contributions to life-cycle civil engineering and leadership in its global development and adoption. He is also a highly regarded mentor and source of inspiration who, throughout his career, has supervised numerous doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers, many of whom have gone on to prominent academic and industrial positions.

Professor Frangopol has significant importance for the Faculty of Science and Technology at Luleå University of Technology through his collaboration with researchers in civil and structural engineering. The organisations he has initiated have provided the university with a platform for participation, engagement, and increased visibility in world-leading research networks. In doing so, he has strengthened not only the university's research but also its global position and opportunities for long-term strategic collaborations. Through lectures, research collaborations, active support for doctoral students, and service as a member of dissertation committees, he has contributed to advancing the university's research on sustainable infrastructure and risk-based decision-making areas in which Luleå University of Technology has strategic research profiles.

Against this background, Professor Dan M. Frangopol is an exceptionally worthy recipient of the honorary doctorate at Luleå University of Technology.

Published: 18 June 2026
Updated: 17 June 2026

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