

Closing speech by Henk Kummeling, Rector Magnificus

Start of the Academic Year 2022-2023, 5 September 2022

Dear all,

So, we have come to the end of what I believe has been a very valuable and worthwhile afternoon. I would like to thank all involved for their honesty and openness in sharing their insights and experiences. In particular I would like to thank the panel members and both Naomis.

It is very clear that the problem requires calibration at many levels, and that social safety is a topic deserving of our ongoing and long-term attention. It is an uncomfortable subject, but one that we must learn to embrace if we desire change. Today, I felt the genuine intention among many people to give it a go.

I would also like to extend a big thank-you to the musicians of the Utrecht Jazz Archipel, for their marvellous song on the connection between the University and the city, which this year celebrates its 900th birthday.

It is a bond that we cherish, and that we aim to reiterate and strengthen wherever we can.

I find it a good thing, for example, that we broach uncomfortable topics not only internally at the university, but also that the Studium Generale is launching an entire series with the title "Uncomfortable Conversations," which addresses social taboos. Everyone is welcome to attend, and I sincerely recommend it.

Last year was an anniversary year, which we celebrated jointly with UMC Utrecht. Then, too, we sought connection with the city, and made a start on the Utrecht Research Agenda. No fewer than 1200 questions were collected, and the Utrecht Research Agenda will be officially presented to the city council at the Betweter Festival. A sneak-peek at the questions and the kinds of answers the university has to offer is available on the website from today. And for those here at the Dom Church, in just a moment a magazine will be handed out.

In October, we will celebrate the anniversary of the Centre for Academic Teaching. Inclusive education will be a central theme. Also of note in this context is the "One Book, One Campus" initiative. The entire university will be challenged to read Booker Prize winner Bernadine Evaristo's book entitled *Girl, Woman, Other*. Another great initiative in the context of Community Building.

A particularly memorable fact is that last December 1 our eminent university professor Frits van Oostrom celebrated his 40th anniversary as a professor. He will deliver his farewell address on Friday, May 19, in which he will reflect on developments in education and research and his rich career.

Dear all,

And with that, in a moment the organist will start the University Anthem, and the Beadle will lead the procession. For those in the church: I look forward to seeing many of you next door in the University Hall. And for those at home: thank you for your interest and attention!

Until next time.