



**Henk Kummeling**

Rector Magnificus  
Executive Board

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Executive Board, I would like to welcome you to this Start of the Academic Year. The Start of the Academic Year is a wonderful tradition that is celebrated in almost all of the university cities. As you no doubt know, this year we're holding an additional Opening ceremony, announced as the 'Alternative' or even the 'True' Start of the Academic Year, organised by WOinActie as a protest against the possible consequences of the implementation of the Van Rijn Commission's plans for collaboration between disciplines, the loss of jobs in the arts, humanities, social sciences and medical faculties, and a further increase in workload in those same parts of the academic world. On behalf of the Executive Board, I want to make it clear that we support the objectives of WOinActie. In recent times, we've implemented a range of measures to not only encourage staff to talk about the issue of workload – see last year's Start of the Academic Year – but also to reduce their workloads. The Board has also decided, in part to protect individual disciplines, but also to protect multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity, that for the time being we won't make any changes to our university funding distribution model. This is important to us.

Another group of passionate employees who want to bring about a change and whom we as the Executive Board wholeheartedly support, is the Open Science Community Utrecht, a bottom-up initiative led mainly by young academics. The goal of the Community is to get all employees of UU talking and learning about the various practices associated with Open Science. Would you like to know more about the Community? You probably saw their banners as you entered the Dom Church. If not, you'll have a chance to take a good look at them after the ceremony. We invite you not only to learn about the activities of the Open Science Community, but also to take part in them if you wish, or even become a member.

The concept of open science represents the major transition that we in the academic world are currently going through. This transition has many aspects, which I'm not going to go into now. You've probably already heard a lot about it from our Vice Rector, Frank Miedema, and the Programme Manager of our Open Science programme, Anja Smit. And if not, I can assure you that you will! One thing is certain: we cannot achieve the changes we want to see if we in the academic world don't know how to organise the right incentives for our people, both scientists and non-scientists. The theme 'Recognising and Valuing' is therefore crucial for our future. That's why we made it our central theme for



today. The theme will be examined from many different perspectives by three speakers.

We're extremely honoured and delighted that the Chair of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), Stan Gielen, is willing to share his views on developments. The NWO plays a leading role in relation to today's theme, and we look forward to hearing more about that. Our own Belle Derks, in her capacity as Chair of The Young Academy, will reflect on the theme from the perspective of up-and-coming and newly-arrived talent. Finally, Annetje Ottow, Vice President of the Executive Board and holder of the HR portfolio, will argue for major changes in the way we look at performance.

Since all of these speakers are from the Netherlands, it seemed logical to us to hold this ceremony in Dutch. For those who are not e fluent in Dutch yet, we have provided a translation of the speeches in English. We have however made one exception to this general rule: the presentation of the Student Awards will be conducted in English, because not all our nominees for both student prizes understand Dutch.

This presentation will take place after a musical interlude, which will be performed by Archie's Grand Adventure.

To close out the ceremony the President of the Executive Board, Anton Pijpers, will briefly reflect on some of the major issues we will face over the coming academic year, after which he will lead us in – hopefully – a closing song.

On behalf of the Executive Board, I wish you all an inspiring afternoon.