

Verwelkoming van nuwelingsstudente en hul ouers
Danie Craven-stadion, Coetzenburg, 18:00, 23 Januarie 2014
Prof H Russel Botman, rektor en visekanselier, Universiteit Stellenbosch

Goeiedag, almal. Molweni. Hello, everyone. It's great to see all of you. *Baie welkom. Wamkelikile.*

This is it, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to Maties, your dream destination!

Just before entering the stadium, our new students participated in a "Dream Launch". You got a biodegradable helium-filled balloon, you were asked to write your dreams on it, and to give them flight by releasing your balloon into the air.

Ek wil hê julle moet daardie oomblik onthou: Onthou die drome wat jy vir die toekoms koester. Dit is jou drome wat jou gaan motiveer om jou beste te lewer.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are very happy to welcome the Matie intake of 2014. You young men and women represent a "dream intake" for us as University. You are our biggest intake of new students ever. You are also our strongest intake in terms of academic performance ever, having excelled in matric.

We had 16 000 applications, but only 5 000 spaces. You were selected by hand to be here – remember that, and that there were many others who did not make it to where you are.

You are our most diverse intake in terms of population group and first-generation students ever.

To all of you I want to say that it's good to dream ... and to dream big. An amazing time awaits you the next few years. Don't let anyone limit you by labelling you. You are the best.

Thank you for joining us. You have come at an exciting time. Last year we adopted a NEW VISION for the University – to be:

"inclusive, innovative and future-focused, a place of discovery and excellence, where both staff and students are thought leaders in advancing knowledge in the service of all our stakeholders."

We want you to make this vision your own. You are now part of the Matie family, and in this family we stand together, we respect each other, we afford each other dignity – whatever our differences.

This is reflected in the five values on the back of your Matie T-shirt – take a look. *’n Maklike manier om dit te onthou, is met die akroniem "DUIME" – dankie aan die HK van Heemstede vir hierdie blink idee.*

Die "D" staan vir "DIENSTELIKE LEIERSKAP" – "LEADERSHIP IN SERVICE OF OTHERS", that's our 1st value. At Maties you will get every opportunity to further develop the leadership abilities that got you here in the first place, and that will take you into the future. We want to ensure that our leaders are not self-centred, but leaders that will change the world for the better. Wanneer jy oor ’n paar jaar gradueer, gaan jy toegerus wees om ’n leiersrol in die samelewing te speel – soos derduisende Maties voor jou gedoen het.

Die tweede letter in "DUIME" is "U" vir "UITNEMENDHEID" – "EXCELLENCE", that's our 2nd value. Maak geen fout nie – jy is by 'n goeie universiteit, en dit is belangrik, want hier gaan jy die beste opvoeding kry. You might not know this, but we recently got official confirmation that Stellenbosch is now the best university in the country in terms of student success. We planned on reaching 85% by 2015, but ahead of schedule our figures now already stand on 84,9% of our students passing their modules. That's the best we've ever done, and higher than at any other University in South Africa.

What this means for you, new Matie, is that the studies you are about to undertake will not be a walk in the park. You are going to have to work very hard to earn your Stellenbosch degree, but it will be worth it.

Die derde letter in "DUIME" staan vir "INNOVASIE"; "INNOVATION" – that's our 3rd value. It means that we think and act in new and different ways. As a 21st-century institution, we make better choices and decisions, not only for ourselves but also for our country, continent and planet as a whole. Ons gaan op julle staatmaak vir "INNOVASIE". Julle is immers ons land se "droomgenerasie" – ons het gedroom om julle hier te hê – ons "born-frees". Julle moet ons help vars dink en nuut doen.

Reg, dit bring my by die tweedelaaste letter van "DUIME" uit: "M" vir "MEDE-VERANTWOORDBAARHEID". That's the fourth Matie value – "SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY".

All of us are responsible for our own actions, yes, but at the same time, we should be accountable to each other. That's what makes a society work. *By "Maties" is jou medestudent jou "maat". Ons neem saam verantwoordelikheid vir ons Universiteit, ons dorp, ons land, ons vasteland en ons planeet.*

Dit bring my by die laaste letter van "DUIME", wat staan vir "EMPATIE", ons vyfde waarde. Have a good look at the drawing of a camel on the Matie T-shirt. There's something strange – it's got zebra stripes. This shows that EMPATHY is about putting yourself in someone else's position ... as if you are wearing their skin. Maties weet almal is op menswaardigheid geregtig, ongeag velkleur, geslag, geloof of seksuele voorkeur.

A few words to the other VIPs in the audience – all the parents and guardians who brought their children to study here. *Baie dankie vir die VERTRoue wat u in ons stel. Dis 'n groot verantwoordelikheid, dis 'n morele taak wat op ons rus, en ons neem dit ernstig op.*

I know that university studies are expensive. But let me assure you that we will do our utmost to give you a good return on your investment as soon as possible. We are very proud of our student success as reflected in our first-year retention rate – 87% of our new students pass their first year of study and go on to their second year at Stellenbosch University, compared to the national average of 50%.. A lot of this has to do with the introduction of our First-year Academy seven years ago, and it is running well.

So, by bringing your child here, you are giving him or her the best opportunity of realising their dreams. Parents also have dreams, and probably the biggest dream of any parent is to see their child succeed. Let me assure you that team Maties stand ready to make that happen.

Maties funksioneer as een span, en ek is seker u het dit al begin ervaar. Of jy 'n fakulteit bel, of steundienste, of iemand in die gange vra om jou te help – daar is een groot sterk span – Maties. Ons

dosente en studente werk saam; ons speel nie op verskillende velde nie, en ons speel nie teen mekaar nie.

Dames en here, op daardie noot stel ek ten slotte graag lede van die Universiteit se leierskorps aan u voor, ek vra hulle om hulle te identifiseer as ek hul name lees.

Ek begin met Dekane:

- *Prof Johann de Villiers, Ekonomiese & Bestuurswetenskappe*
- Prof Nico Koopman, Theology
- *Prof Jimmy Volmink, Geneeskunde & Gesondheidswetenskappe*
- Prof Sam Tshehla, Military Science
- *Prof Maureen Robinson, Opvoedkunde*
- Prof Sonia Human, Law
- *Prof Hansie Knoetze, Ingenieurswese*
- Prof Johan Hattingh, Arts and Social Sciences
- *En prof Louise Warnich, Natuurwetenskappe.*

Let me also introduce members of Management:

- Prof Julian Smith, Vice-Rector: Community Interaction & Personnel
- *Prof Eugene Cloete, Viserektor: Navorsing & Innovasie*
- Prof Arnold Schoonwinkel, Vice-Rector: Learning and Teaching
- *En mnr Johann Aspelng, Registrateur.*
- Also with us, is Mr Mohammed Shaikh, whom you've met already. He's Senior Director of Communication & Liaison at the University.

Dankie, kollegas.

That's it from my side, ladies and gentlemen, except for one thing: Work hard to get your degree, but remember it is only your first. Stellenbosch is a place where you come back for more. So welcome back, in advance, for your second degree!