

Good afternoon everyone,

My name is Linde Helfrich, and today I have the pleasure to introduce myself to all of you as the assessor of the faculty of social and behavioural sciences. I am delighted to see so many staff members and students here today. To all new students: welcome to the Pieter de la Court building – the place that will be the centre of your student time for the coming years. To everybody else: welcome back!

Today's opening could be themed around the value and future of social sciences. That it's important to look forward, goes without saying. The way in which we move forward however, is a different story. Will we face the future with fear, or do we enter into new conversations? As the debate we have just heard illustrates, the latter is of outmost importance. And even though today that future may seem more insecure than ever, one thing that we can be sure of is the significance and worth of our research and education, that analyses and shapes the society we live in.

Today is not just a day to reflect and look ahead, but also to celebrate, and, even if it seems a fairly non-dutch thing to do, a day to be proud of our achievements. As our dean already mentioned, our faculty is a lively, vibrant place. A place where all students can feel at home and enjoy their time as a student. The beautiful new and improved library, which was designed with the help from our own students, will most definitely contribute to this.

That our students are not afraid to participate and make their opinions known, is worth cherishing. We are really lucky to have four very active study associations, which organize all sorts of events and bring students together. As a student, you can also become active in your program's teaching committee, in numerous working groups, the student sounding board or for example the faculty council.

Starting university can feel like a leap of faith, or, how I remember it, like a parachute jump. A new city, new friends, may be a new home with new roommates, innumerable associations and activities to choose from... The possibilities really are endless, and most of you haven't even opened your study books yet. But please remember: this does not mean everything that is possible

has to be done. Don't be afraid to choose, and, most importantly: don't be afraid to make mistakes.

I would like to ask all students that are present here today, to keep in mind that in our faculty, for any problem you may face, there are many people who would be more than happy to help you, like your study advisor, the career-service and the POPcorner. Finally, I want to stress that you can also always come to me if you think the faculty is missing something or to share any ideas you may have about possible improvements.

Now is the time take your chances, to make the jump. Let's make sure that our faculty allows for a smooth landing.