

Dear President Treusch, vice President Ziegler Joens, Dean Kramer, dear guests,
Dear Larissa Kuehler who has been the main organizer of this event, Dear Rob,
dear RAs,

Dear Students!!!

My wife Tijana and I arrived at International University Bremen in 2002. The first course I taught here – I am a math professor – was Analysis 1. A small class of 11 people from 6 different countries. Facing this international group and checking whether they really understood the mean value theorem, heads started moving in completely incoherent ways. After double checking, they actually confirmed that all were affirmative. This was the first IUB message we've learned: Knowing the cultural background of your peers is very useful to judge his or her actions.

It was a crazy, but also a very inspiring time. Only first and beginning second year students on campus then. No pass/fail options yet to give an example. The faculty was very engaged and full of enthusiasm. But the truly great ingredient at IUB was well recognized: its students, true entrepreneurs, adventures, difference makers. They well understood that they could not only influence the content of the third year of education, but also their own graduation requirements.

Five years later, we find ourselves again in the midst of a “founding year”. IUB is reshaping itself as Jacobs University. Certainly, the side constraints might be a bit more rigid this time around – we do have well established graduation requirements - but students are again presented with similar challenges and opportunities that we hope the current student body recognizes so that it will become a true founding student generation!

Our family is also experiencing a second beginning, as we moved into College III. Here, the intercultural experience is becoming much more apparent, living with 51 countries under one roof. (This total number of countries was always a theoretical number to me, as the math courses that I've taught were dominated by Germans and Rumanians. And then, does it matter with whom to discuss the mean value theorem?)

51 countries, ranging from France to Nepal. Yes, some countries more exotic, others less. In College III, we have 17 Nepalese students and exactly one from the more exotic country France. In fact, he is Czech. We still did not figure out the details in this case, but likely, this international community is representing many more countries than a passport count will give you.

If you walk across campus, you experience a varied mixture of languages. [pause] In many tourist guides such mixture is highly regarded as a sign of great cultural diversity, but at Jacobs, this phenomenon is met with suspicion. And, true enough, some of the magic of the early IUB years was exactly the blending in of students of different nationalities, the so called "melting pot" with English as the far more dominant language. But now, student numbers are growing and the culture appears to be changing, and my predecessor Ryan Richards might say that increasing a few ingredients to our mix of nationalities may strongly affect the chemistry. In fact, sitting on weekends in the dining room, you notice a Nepalese table, a Rumanian, a Bulgarian, an African table, each speaking their native language, a salad bowl. But is there something wrong with this? We are not sure. Maybe some of us need to "go home" on the weekend? But we all should realize that this is a development that needs to be reflected upon and

maybe some soft steering can be done. And once more, students should play a significant role in redefining this growing and changing community.

College life at Jacobs University teaches intercultural understanding and many more so-called key qualifications. All abilities which complement the CENTRAL GOAL of visiting Jacobs University: To receive a first class university education.

In fact, to find the right balance between extracurricular and curricular is probably one of the main challenges for students at Jacobs. The ambitious atmosphere and the tightly packed curriculum invite students to neglect private time and personal development by letting your academic ambitions run free, while on the **other side** some students may drift off into a world of parties, social events and university clubs. Hopefully, we can help some of the students to find the right balance.

Let me close our speech with telling you of our first challenging College Master experience. About a week ago, on a weeknight, a party at the fire place accompanied by loud music and sing alongs kept my wife and me awake well past midnight. With growing anger, I decided to go down myself in order to, lets say, relieve some tension. Arriving with a red face at the party, I only met charming faces, telling me that they are celebrating Ethiopian Millenium, and, fearing that I did not understand the concept, adding “It is once every Thousand years”. Well, what do you do in a situation as such... Who of us was really at the wrong place at the wrong time?

There are many people to thank on this occasion. For example, the Jacobs Leadership for their trust, the RAs and Rob for their great work, Sarah and Ryan

for being instrumental in building this community and for the advise they gave us. The other CMs for pretty much the same.

We chose College III not as a new professional challenge. Much more, we chose in College III a community that we want to be a part of, and, more importantly, a place to raise our children in.

Take care of each other.

This is a special place, thanks for having us.