

Toespraak deur Jan Greyling, Studenteraadsvoorsitter van die Universiteit Stellenbosch, by die inhuldiging van die nuwe Leersentrum in die JS Gericke-biblioteek

Honourable Consul General, Members of Embassy, Mr Mayor, Dr Cluver, Prof Botman, staff, and as they say at the Military academy, all protocol observed.

I want to begin by thanking Ms. Tise for two things, the first is for the opportunity to say something at this historic event and the second is more of a personal nature. After her request I decided to study in the commons for a few hours just to experience it for myself. As my luck would have it Prof. Botman also visited the area during the same time. Now whenever my mother acquires if I spend time on my studies, I simply refer her to Prof Botman.

An article in the Journal Science estimated the total amount of data stored in the world in 2007 at 295 exabites. Now the hierarchy is as follow: byte, kilobite, megabite, gigabite, terabite, pentabite and then an exabite. An exabite represents a billion gigabites.

Now as a agriculturalist I don't understand this very well but ultimately it translates to the following. If one were to print all this data to books, it would be enough to cover the total area of either China or the United States in books... thirteen layers deep. Now this poses a serious question to the future of these 4 000 year old institutions that we call Libraries. Where are we going to put all these books, which are we going to choose, are we going to buy China for this purpose?

I believe that today is a truly historic event, not because this learning commons is unique in the country and but one of a few in the world, but rather due to what is symbolised here today. Today we acknowledge the fact that libraries are not just faults of knowledge anymore, but rather represent institutions which create spaces for interaction and learning. Spaces where people on not only acquire knowledge but also share it with others, through both physical and digital interaction. It is for this reason that I feel so privileged to be part this event to day.

Maar vir eers genoeg oor die breë historiese betekenis van die learning commons. Op die ou einde is hierdie 'n ruimte wat studente direk bevoordeel, iets wat bydra tot ons akademiese sukses en die kwaliteit van ons studente-ervaring. Hierdie is dus nie net simbolies van die toekoms van kennis nie maar ook van 'n bewys van die Universiteit se studetegesentreedheid.

Dit is ook baie belangrik om te onthou dat wat julle hier sien, nie moontlik sou gewees het sonder die HOOP-projek nie. Baie studente vra dikwels waarom die HOOP-projek gaan en dan is dit moeilik om hulle te oortuig maar... Hier het julle dit nou. Dít is die HOOP-projek. Minder as 'n jaar na dit amptelik geloods is, kan alle Maties nou by die learning commons instap en sê: dit is wat die HOOP-projek vir my beteken het.

Ek wou ook hê dat studente self moet praat en daarvoor het ek hulle op my facebook-blad genooi om ook hul mening te gee: Uit die kommentaar was dit duidelik dat hulle hierdie, soos die Antwoord sê, as 'n "next level" biblioteek sien. Een se: "like, funky", "die vibe daar is awesome", "dit voel nie asof ek op kampus is nie" en " hoekom kan ek nie my koffie invat nie?".

To make a full circle, in the beginning I said that 295 exabites of data that existed in 2007, if printed would cover the whole of China in books, 13 layers deep. This however is minute compared to what nature can do: The total storage in a human body's as DNA is 300 times this figure!

I thank you.