

Your Majesty Queen Silvia,  
*Rector Magnificus*,  
Chairman of the Riigikogu,  
Prime Minister,  
Dear academic family.

It was here in Tartu, in the intellectual circles of rural peasantry concentrated around the University that the idea of Estonia was born. Without the spiritual refinement created by the University, we would never have become a civilised nation. If we had not had our own intelligentsia already at the end of the 19th century – Estonian doctors, journalists, clergy and lawyers – we would not have been fully fledged to found our own state in 1918.

Yet today, I would like to ask: what was it that enabled our forefathers to accomplish so much?

And what is it that sets the University apart from other colleges and institutions of college education? And why are many so-called "universities" in fact not universities at all?

At the simplest level, the answer can be found in the Latin (but also German, French, English) word *universitas*, denoting universality, the quality of being all-encompassing. Yet it would be incorrect to assume that *universitas* simply means a wide variety of courses. What exactly a university has to offer is secondary. What kind of education – the *raison d'être* of any university – the students receive, is of primary importance.

Let us make a brief excursion to the sources of western-style education, to ancient Greece. In the days of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, true education was called *paideia*. The word *paideia* is alive even in today's Estonian, in the word *entsüklopeedia* (in English, encyclopaedia). In the Platonic sense, *paideia* was ideal education, which brought out the true, perfect form of a human being. Brought out what we were meant to become.

*Paideia* comprises three branches of the ancient education: science, art, and philosophy, the classical ideals on which *Academia Gustaviana* was built. These are also Humboldtian ideals, on which *Universitas Dorpatensis* re-opened more than two hundred years ago, was built.

For ancient Greeks, the opposite of *paideia* was *banausia* – banal, common, applied knowledge, a term which still lives on in the German language as *banausich*.

I dare assert that if our forefathers, the alumni of Tartu University, had received *banausia* rather than *paideia*

here a hundred years ago, then the Republic of Estonia could not have been born 90 years ago. Without all three – science, philosophy and fine arts, in right proportions requisite for each profession: mathematician, theologian, or art historian – a human being is not perfect.

Applied studies – business management, public administration and all that – are certainly necessary. *Universitas* may offer even such study courses, but if this is the limit of one's college education, then it is difficult to call such a person educated; then we are not talking about *paideia*

It is important to understand that classical education proceeds from the concept of *universitas*. *Universitas*

has to ensure that a university alumnus indeed has been moulded into his or her ideal shape. Which means that each and every one – a physicist, a scholar of Romance languages, a physician – must be educated also in other fields.

Otherwise, it might happen over and over again that the term "median", used synonymously with "average", sweeps our sociologists off their feet. Or that we read an article written by a scientist, in which alienation from the western democracy can be detected.

If we wish to be certain that our democratic Estonian state will live, grow and prosper just as in our forefathers' dream, and in our own dream under the occupying powers, for Estonia to be a perfect ideal, we must be sure that the University – *universitas* – is educating and cultivating the students with this purpose in mind. And this, in turn, can only be ensured by us – the professors, the government, but also the students, demanding that our motto shall always be *paideia*

Congratulations, Tartu University! Through the ages, you have borne different names, such as *Academia Gustaviana*

, *Universitas Dorpatensis*

and Tartu Ülikool, and under each name made sure that talented and clever people in this country could become what they were meant to be.

*Vivat!, Crescat!, Floreat! Universitas Tartuensis in aeternum!*