FAREWELL SPEECH

FOR

TANYA BONDAROUK

Hello everyone… It is my pleasure and privilege to stand here and say a few words in honor of a man who means so much to each one of us and to this University. I would like to thank all of the speakers who shared their wisdom before me… and I mean that on many levels… but right now here’s to those who’ve just shared their thoughts: Prof. dr. Rienk Goodijk, professor of Governance en Medezeggenschap, Universiteit Tilburg Prof. dr. Jaap Paauwe, professor Human Resource Management, Universiteit Tilburg, Annemieke Nijhof, voorzitter raad van bestuur Advies- en Ingenieursbureau TAUW Deventer. You’ve all given us insights and have shared experiences of what it’s been like to have the privilege to “navigate” this system, the research, and the lessons learned and taught under the watchful eye of our esteemed Professor Jan Kees Looise.

The topic of Jan Kees’ own farewell speech is “much has been changed, much remained the same”. Allow me to take a few minutes to look back and recall some of the main historical highlights and accomplishments of the HRM group, but first, as we are researchers and educators, I would like to share a fun fact with you. Although everyone has probably heard the quote that has inspired Prof Kees farewell theme, and most are familiar with the French translation, “Plus ca change…” how many of us realize it is attributed to Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr, the French journalist who lived…. and quoted… in the early part of the nineteenth century?? Plus ca change indeed!! What a perfect example of the evolution of man and the ever present need to reference history and commonality-no matter how far we’ve advanced.

Today we stand a juncture in the history of the University of Twente and as our predecessors have almost certainly done before us, this is a perfect opportunity to look over our shoulders, acknowledge the growth and progress that has been achieved, and project the challenges, changes and innovations for the future while referencing the lessons we’ve learned and taught under the tenure of Prof. Kees. As we go through this process and plan for the next phases, keep in mind the words of the Chinese warrior Lao Tzu who taught us, “If you do not change direction, you may end up where you are heading.” The world is constantly evolving…. do we maintain a linear path in a global atmosphere, or do we bend to accommodate conditions and innovations? In the spirit of the adage, “Adapt or die,” let’s take a look at our history and see how it will inform our future actions.

* In 1987 – the HRM department was established consisting of 5 scholars – (**do you want to keep the joke? if so, you can say**) four of them were quite good… one was so-so… no names please… (**Wait for the laugh**)
* By 1991 – Jan Kees took the leadership of the department
* 2001 – the department had already 7 full time employees and 8 PhD students. I am happy to see them today. (**Do you want to keep this joke??**)… wellll… **MOST** of them… once again… no names please!! (**Wait for the laugh**)
* By 2003 – the department’s growth was expanding geometrically and the merger with other two academic units within the university formed the OOHR department with about 24 full time scholars. Jan Kees was leading the HRM group within the new department
* 2012 – merger with yet another academic unit, part of the large BA department with about 60 FTEs, again - leading the HRM group
* By March 2014 – it was back to basics and roots: “plus ca change….” an independent HRM department was reborn.

There is nothing more permanent as change… Changes of offices, buildings, off-campus, on-campus, large and small departments, interim and permanent deans, strategies like Route-14 and Route-14+, Vision 2020… Strong winds, light winds from “the top”; dominant focus on teaching or dominant focus on research... to me, I think the art and genius of Jan Kees was to sail along with through those winds of change and guide his crew through all shifts in the evolutionary process. It was not always easy, there were days when colleagues felt the need to move on, but isn’t that part of life? I know we are happy to see them today. There is an expression, “Adapt or die,” and I opt for the former!! The theme of HRM and Social Innovation that Jan Kees introduced in 1996, therefore, is more than a research theme. If I paraphrase the definition from 1996, I would say - it has become a symbol that helped the group to introduce “novel ideas, activities, services, and processes” to meet their needs; and to advance social relationships within, throughout and beyond our organization and scope.

This year has been very special from several different focal points. We have received the prestigious NWO grant for three PhD projects (a joint work with colleagues Jeroen Meijerink and André Veenendaal). Three new junior researchers have joined the group as of the 1st of September: Jorrit van Mierlo, Milana Korotka and Maarten Renkema. After so many years of sailing and searching, in this large research project we are back to the topic “Innovating Human Resource Management for Employee-Driven Innovation”. We will look at HRM and Innovation from a new lens: focusing on fresh and new creative characteristics of employees’ human capital, their abilities, motivation and opportunities to develop and implement new ideas. The common-sense opinion remains that R&D departments and high-tech firms compose the main source of innovation. Instead, our focus will be that, if properly supported, front-line employees effectively develop and produce novel products and services, called “employee-driven innovation”. Indeed, much has changed, but much has remained the same. When we held job interviews with PhD candidates, I confess I am guilty of recalling my own– I can picture myself at my own meeting 15 years ago in the “BB building” having a job interview with professor Looise, Dr Klaas Sikkel and a PhD student Huub Ruel, and hoping to get a PhD position… I still remember difficult questions, but I will “pretend” that I don’t recall my answers (**Wait for the laugh**) … let’s say that I am more than happy that I got that position! And it’s amazing to think that it’s been 15 years!!! I have been working and trying to innovate within the HRM group since then. I also think we can all agree that there is optimism in diversity–the current group consists of Jan Kees’ PhD students of different generations: Jan de Leede, Anna Bos-Nehles, Jeroen Meijerink, and myself. It is still the feeling of an HRM family being together in Ravelijn and beyond. We find ourselves working together, sharing coffee together, partying together… and most importantly - publishing together. It’s a true privilege having freedom and satisfaction, innovation and respect for traditions, bolstering the legacy of this department and the university while setting our sights as we forecast the future.

Speaking of our future directions in research and teaching, I doubt that anybody would be surprised if I say – we keep the same line and go on with HRM and Innovation: Contribution of HRM to the Innovative Performance and Innovating HRM Function, through involvement of line managers, employees, New Ways of Working, and Information Technologies. Yes, there is one content addition – Technology. Over the past years, HRM and the topic of technology have gotten considerable weight and recognition, and we will develop it further. Together with two PhDs, Sri Herawati and Dustin Schilling, we will be exploring international aspects of e-HRM. I’m glad to mention that a new and enthusiastic colleague has recently joined us, Sjoerd van Heuvel, who has academic interests in technological aspects of HRM and Big Data and HRM, new topics within the field. Jan Kees, when you are stepping into another professional development stage, isn’t it symbolic and satisfying to realize that the group you brought through all Beauffort scales and winds that the topic of HRM and Innovation rebounds with new inspiring content, and four new colleagues have joined the group? We are always proud and thankful for our team to be strengthened by forward thinking, globally minded innovators… once again, “plus ca change!!”

Back to Jan Kees…. Let us not forget that the work of a professor lives on in his/her students and in particular, PhD students. We counted 20 who were directly supervised by Jan Kees: all with different research and other interests, as well as private and professional developments. The most rewarding aspect in my view is that the majority of them stayed in the turbulent and demanding world of academia, and earned great success in different universities. I have to say again how glad I am to see you all today in this room, former PhDs and colleagues: events like this one reunite us, so different and yet so similar… A sort of re-union of the HRM department: Janke, Beate, Andre, Diana, Nicole, Michiel, Maarten, Martijn, Stefan (**to check?).**

I would like to extend my warmest thanks to all the guests today, family, friends and colleagues of Jan Kees, who came to share such an extraordinary passage and emotionally fulfilling day. (**If you want to make a joke you can say**) And for those of you who might not know Prof. Kees and just happened to drop into the wrong ceremony (**or you can say**) or thought this was a crowd waiting for the new iphone 6 plus…. You have NO idea what you’ve missed!!! (**And wait for the laugh**) I am not planning to keep you too much longer listening to me, but still – allow me to mention two more remarks. After this official part, there will be several unofficial surprises that we – as a group – have prepared. Please, enjoy the special film report edited by Dustin Schilling and presented by Jan de Leede; and please remember to include your message for Jan Kees in the special book provided, and next to it – do not forget to pick up the book of abstracts of 124 Jan Kees’ publications, compiled by Jeroen Meijerink. Anna Bos-Nehles will help you there. And… Don’t forget to look up!! Please pay attention to the wall of history – newspapers and materials since 1980s, compiled by our PhD students.

To finalize my talk at this point would not be enough, nor would it be “final.” I would like to conclude with the first surprise. A year ago, together with former PhDs of Jan Kees, we decided to compile an academic book to reflect on HRM and Social Innovation. It has become a collection of 12 chapters, published by Emerald, co-edited with Prof Miguel Olivas-Lujan – it’s diverse, innovative, and filled with thoughtful reflections, conceptual and empirical, challenging and stimulating. I would like to share with all of you the text written on the first page **[ slide** ]. I assume that the h-index of prof. Looise has increased during the last three months although he did not immediately find an explanation…. At we finalize the official programme, I would like to invite Jan Kees and Heleen. [ **to check**]. The first exemplar goes to you; all guests in this room will receive a gift exemplar, helped by Anna and Jeroen [**to check**].

Jan Kees, allow me express my personal thanks for our collaboration, for your supervision, your insights and your brilliance, and for the academic freedom I had through the years of working with you. You have truly advanced the legacy of your predecessors and it is my intention that there will be new and exciting opportunities for HRM and Innovation. Let me also thank Heleen, who as we all know, played a vital role in supporting you and giving you the inspiration and energy that you needed through these years. LS, I hope you enjoy the rest of the day…Let’s also keep in mind that as we explore the advances and needs in the HRM, we cannot lose sight of the fact that we, too, are to be observed for our practices and challenges in the HR environment. It has been a privilege to be a part of this professional and academic infrastructure and I look forward to many years of innovating change while honoring traditions…. after all, “plus ca change…!” Thank you all for your attention.