03 October 2014

Speech to close the official programme dedicated to the farewell of Prof. Jan Kees Loose after his work for 40 years for the University of Twente. His speech is entitled ““much has been changed, much remained the same” that could be a leitmotiv for this closing speech, too.

**Main ideas:**

* To thank him for chairing/ leading the HRM department/ group
* To talk about a continuation of his research and future of the HRM department

**Time: max 15 minutes**

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1. Dear… It is my pleasure and honor to stand here and …..
2. Thanks to all speakers (before me):

* 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

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1. The topic of Jan Kees’ farewell speech is “much has been changed, much remained the same”

Allow me take a few minutes to look back and recall main historical steps of the HRM group:

1987 – the HRM department was established consisting of 5 scholars

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.

2003 – merger with other two academic units within the university, forming 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

March 2014 – back to roots: an independent HRM department.

1. 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...* I think the arts of Jan Kees was to sail along with all winds and bring his crew throughout all changes towards ???…. It was not always easy, there were days when colleagues left, but isn’t it a normal development? I am happy to see them today. 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 and our organization.
2. This year has been very special from different angles. 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 joint the group on 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 the HRM and Innovation from a new lens: focusing on innovative 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 remained the same. When we held job interviews with PhD candidates, I – guilty – recalled myself 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 not share now my answers… I am more than happy that I got that position.
3. And – already for 15 years I have been working and trying to innovate in the HRM group. Good or bad – the part of 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. Working together, coffee together, partying together… and not to forget - publishing together. Freedom and enjoyment, innovation and respect for traditions.
4. Speaking of our future directions in research and teaching, I will not surprise anybody 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 Technology topic has got 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. Glad to mention that the new enthusiastic colleague has recently joint 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 piece giving to realize that the group you brought through all Beauffort scales and winds that the topic of HRM and Innovation came back with a new inspiring content, and four new colleagues have joined the group?..
5. Back to Jan Kees…. Let us not forget that the work of a professor lives in his/her students; PhD students. We counted 20 who were directly supervised by Jan Kees: all with different research and other interests, private and professional developments. The most rewarding 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 am not tired to say how glad I am to see you all today in this room, former PhDs and colleagues: such events like this one brings us again together, so different and so similar… A sort of re-union of the HRM department: Janke, Beate, Andre, Diana, Nicole, Michiel, Maarten, Martijn, Stefan [to check].
6. My warm thanks go to all the guests today, family, friends and colleagues of Jan Kees, who came to share with him such an extraordinary and whole-hearted day. I am not planning to keep you long listening to me, but still – allow me to mention two remarks.
7. After this official part, there will be several unofficial surprises that we – as a group – have prepared. Please, enjoy soon the special film-report edited by Dustin Schilling and presented by Jan de Leede; please, leave your message for Jan Kees in a special book, 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. Pay attention to the wall of history – newspapers materials since 1980s, compiled by our PhD students.
8. To finalize my talk at that point would not be enough. I would like to conclude with the first surprise. A year ago, together with former PhDs of Jan Kees, we decided to put 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 – diverse, innovative, 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 last three months although he did not immediately found an explanation…
9. At this finalizing the official programme moment, 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, for the academic freedom I had through the years of working with you. I do hope there will be new 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 energy that you needed through these years.*

LS, I hope you enjoy the rest of the day…Thank you for your attention.