

Acceptance Speech
Kalevi Ekman

Ladies and Gentlemen

I would first like to thank the World Cultural Council for this beautiful and exciting moment. University education has a history of thousand years, but never before changes over just a human lifetime have been so radical, numerous and fast. Jose Vasconcelos World Award of Education gives a strong signal for all the educators to continue their work, despite how hard and hopeless it sometimes can feel.

Trying something new has always built-in uncertainty. But usually we are told to avoid risks. And we don't want to go too far from our own comfort zone. I think we should. I love the citation from a famous racecar driver that "if everything seems to be under control, you are not driving fast enough". Whatever your dream in education is, it's worth for driving fast.

There are many parties I should be thankful to. Let me just point out few.

First, I'm very grateful to my own professor Matti, who introduced me the idea of industrial companies as an endless source of excellent problems for course assignments. In general, I think we should be more open to others' ideas.

Secondly, as an engineer, I have learned the importance of art, design, and business in product development. Thanks to my colleagues and rectors of the previous Helsinki University of Art and Design and Helsinki School of Economics.

Since 2008, Aalto University has been a unique, colorful, rapidly changing environment, and our Aalto Design Factory particularly. We have got magnificent support from the university management, and without my Dean there would be another person standing here.

There is no such a bad day at work that these people couldn't make you smile. I'm speaking about the Design Factory team!

Lastly, my priority no 1 are the students of Aalto University. The cooperation with these ever changing people over 20 years has been such an energizing time. I'll repeat the same, as one of my students wrote about my course:

"It's been the hardest, funniest, most ridiculous and most rewarding journey"