

Amsterdam University College celebrates second Dies Natalis

Amsterdam University College (AUC), a joint initiative of the University of Amsterdam (UvA) and VU University Amsterdam, celebrated its second Dies Natalis (anniversary) on Thursday 22 September 2011. The official speakers at this event were Prof. Alexander Rinnooy Kan, president of the Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands and professor of Policy Analysis in the Private and Public Sectors at the UvA, and Dr. Marja Zonneville, site manager at Shell Technology Centre Amsterdam. Dr Bart van Heerikhuizen was named AUC Teacher of the Year.

Rinnooy Kan used his speech to advocate higher education that challenges and stimulates students to fully develop their talents. This expressly requires excellence to be fostered, as is the case at AUC. The educational system needs to be more flexible in order to adequately serve the varied demands of students and the labour market, argued Rinnooy Kan. Furthermore, the international orientation of higher education requires greater attention.

Shell's Marja Zonneville stressed the importance of interdisciplinary education in her speech. In addition, she spoke at length about the 'gift of failure'. Constant attention is necessary to get the best out of students during the learning process. At the same time, an academic environment needs to give students the space to be able to make mistakes, so that they can broaden and develop their learning, according to Zonneville.

During this event, the AUC Teacher of the Year was also announced. Van Heerikhuizen (UvA) teaches *Classical and Modern Sociological Thought* at AUC. His students appreciate his passion for his field and his commitment to them, describing him as a source of inspiration.

About AUC

Amsterdam University College (AUC) was established in 2009 as a joint excellence initiative of the UvA and VU University Amsterdam. AUC's motto is *Excellence and Diversity in a Global City*. It offers an international liberal arts and sciences programme that crosses the boundaries of languages, cultures and academic disciplines. As a selective and residential honours college, it attracts students from all over the world. They engage on a daily basis in intensive and small-scale seminars with high calibre international staff. AUC has a scholarship fund sponsored by Shell, Rabobank, Schiphol Group, KLM, Akzo Nobel and PwC.

Please see the link below for further information.

www.auc.nl

Note to editors:

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