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**Leadership / Unternehmertum / Unternehmerische  
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Having been honoured this morning by becoming an Ehrensponsor of your respected university and your Alma Mater, it's a great pleasure and privilege for me coming together with you this afternoon and exchanging with you some observations and thoughts.

Let me start with some introductory observations and remarks.

Currently we are facing multiple far reaching megatrends as there are changes in demography, the fact of urbanisation, decarbonisation, climate change, globalisation as a result of increasing connectivity, which makes it more necessary to confront with demographic challenges than physical or political geography. Its importance goes beyond administrative border lines. This has a lot to do with digitalization which is probably the most important and most far reaching megatrend. It will seize all areas and aspects of life, and is as important as the evolution of language, the invention of scripture or the innovation of the printing press.

At the same time we are confronted with the crumbling of the existing world order without a stable new one being formed or having evolved. Thereby all certainties have disappeared and new ones have not yet emerged. We have to realise that geopolitics and geoeconomics as well as powershifts are all geographically contingent on the peninsula of the Eurasian landmass and the civilization which has its roots in the fertile crescent between the region of the Euphrat and Tigris and Nile. Nowadays we are surrounded by a nearby „ring of fire“, as the

late prime minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, has already stated 20 year ago. At that time many people were convinced that after the end of the cold war the end of history would have been reached. Now we have to understand that history has returned, that we even have to face the revenge of history. This proves that very often history casts long shadows. Therefore, as Winston Churchill has observed, it is important to understand history to be better able to handle the future which does not suggest that history necessarily repeats itself. This is the background situation in which you are about to start to model the journey of your life, and it will accompany you. Keep in mind that although this world might be complex it also offers great opportunities and chances to handle these challenges successfully. Your studies at the technical university provide you with a solid basis to do that and model your life prosperously.

The accomplishment of these tasks will depend upon the dimension of your commitment and your dedication. Furthermore it will require considerable effort, creativity and initiative, determination and persistency as well as focused work and patience. Tackling future challenges requires ideas that must be developed into solutions and then to be thoroughly implemented. This means the strong and slow boring of hard boards, as Max Weber once said.

You will need ambition, enthusiasm, discipline and diligence. All of this also requires some coolness, tranquility and slowing down at times, a “creative break”, if you will.

Whilst chasing success and ambitions do not forget to enjoy life, to make it satisfying and fulfilling.

For your efforts, troubles and endeavors you will make mistakes, and will suffer and need to accept setbacks. Do not let this get you down or scare you off, never give up! Every mistake is a gift—if you can learn from it.

Winston Churchill—a man rich with great success, but also with great mistakes—once called on young people: "Never give in, never give in, never, never, never - in nothing great or small, large or petty - never give in, except to convictions of honor and good sense".

In all your ambition, eager pursuit, and self-regard, do not disregard that man is not a loner, not a hermit, but rather a social creature that is able to fully develop only in coexistence within the community. Therefore, a balance is required between a healthy egoism and altruism, between self-interest and the common good, between your own advantage and the advancement of humanity. Social responsibility is thus indispensable. A “winner takes all” mentality is therefore not a satisfactory solution; leading ultimately to isolation and loneliness and “Bowling Alone”.

And remember, only those who take a chance can win. In other words, “No pain, no gain”, or “No risk, no fun”. George Bernard Shaw framed it this way: “The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man”.

You must be willing to take risks; without forgetting or neglecting to weigh them. When the wind of change blows, you must set sail to the wide seas. However, as Antoine de Saint-Exupery clarified, you cannot have the ship you require by drumming up men (and women) to collect wood, but rather by teaching them to long for the endless immensity of the sea.

Milton Friedman, the great US economist, once pointed out, “There's no such thing as a free lunch”. What has not been produced cannot be shared. Therefore, the following also applies: he who does not sow, cannot reap. And what seems to be without a price, usually proves to be the most precious. The challenges of our time cannot be overcome by an "all-risks-

insured" mentality. So stay steadfast against satiety, comfort, and finally the paralysis that are so prevalent today.

Goethe said, "He alone deserves liberty and life who daily must win them anew". This is the understanding that one cannot trade freedom for security, as Benjamin Franklin already remarked: "Those who give up freedom in order to gain security will deserve neither". This includes peace. Here we can agree with Willy Brandt, "Peace is not everything, but without peace, everything is nothing".

Let me illustrate my thoughts with three examples: The unfortunately recently deceased Andrew Grove once said: "You need to try to do the impossible, to anticipate the unexpected. And when the unexpected happens, you should double your efforts to make order from the disorder it creates in your life. The motto I'm advocating is, Let chaos reign, then rein in chaos. Does that mean you shouldn't plan? Not at all. You need to plan the way a fire department plans. It cannot anticipate fires, so it has to shape a flexible organization that is capable of responding to unpredictable events. "

Even more pointedly, he expressed his recipe for success in the following quote: "Success breeds complacency. Complacency breeds failure. Only the paranoid survive!"

And Andrew Grove had to know, he was the legendary CEO of Intel Group and one of the most important "fathers" of Silicon Valley.

Another important protagonist of the Silicon Valley was Steve Jobs, founder of Apple and Pixar Animation Studios. In his most famous and most personal speech he called to young Stanford graduates: "Stay hungry. Stay foolish "And now, as you graduate to begin anew, I wish this for you. Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish. Then you will find your way!

I would like to bade you farewell with a quote from John F. Kennedy, the 35<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, who called

upon his countrymen in his inaugural address in 1961 with these famous words: “Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country!”

Thank you very much!