



## Speech by the President of TU Braunschweig, Professor Angela Ittel, during the central reception of first-year students on 24 October 2022

Dear Students

Welcome to the Eintracht Stadium, welcome to TU Braunschweig!

The reception of first-year students at Technische Universität Braunschweig in the football stadium is something very special. Every year, we welcome over 3,000 new students in this fantastic stadium with a long history. Every year, the University prepares an impressive programme for you so that we can celebrate the start of your studies together.

A very warm welcome to you! We are very happy that you are here.

I am Angela Ittel and I have been President of TU Braunschweig for just over one year now. And I speak from conviction when I say that you have chosen a great university for your studies. For me too, it is the first time that I am here at this event and I think it is great to be here. I hope you feel the same way.

There are many students in the stadium today who are already at a later stage in their studies. For them, due to the restrictions over the last two years, the reception of first-semester students was a virtual event. I am very pleased that you, dear Students, are getting the opportunity to catch up on celebrating today in this impressive setting.

Professor Knut Baumann, Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, is also here in the stadium. Mr Baumann not only always stands up for the students' interests as Vice President, he also navigated us safely through the Corona crisis. For that he deserves a big thank you. It is great that you are here, dear Mr Baumann, so that the students can immediately get to know the face of one of their strongest advocates at TU Braunschweig. You, dear Students, will certainly receive organisational emails and information from him very soon. So it is good that you know the sender of these messages.

Today is a day with symbolic meaning for all of you. A day on which a new phase of your life begins. A day that you will most likely think back to often in the future. We, the Executive Board, the many professors and staff members of the University, will do our best to ensure that you can look back at your time as a student and this first day at our University with warmth and gratitude.

And of course, on days like these, I too have to think of my own student days. As for many people, my studies also laid a foundation for my personal development. Many years ago, I went to the USA as an au pair and then stayed there for my entire studies up to the doctorate.

These years at American universities have shaped me in many ways. During this time, I developed my set of values and my visions for life. They continue to accompany me every day in my work and private life. One experience from my time as a student in the USA had a particularly decisive impact on me: the way professors and students interacted, free from hierarchy. It was only the idea that counted and it did not matter who it came from. For me, the university was a place where I could think and discover freely. And these experiences naturally also shaped my vision for TU Braunschweig. I am fully committed to ensuring that TU Braunschweig is and remains such a place for you: A place where we can all thrive, think and exchange ideas freely, and feel safe and welcome in the process.

Today you are starting your studies in challenging times. In these times, things like studying and student life, as many of your fellow students still know it from the past, are no longer a matter of course. Whether it is Corona restrictions or the upcoming challenges of the energy crisis, they are challenging our understanding of normality and togetherness, if not turning it upside down. And then there are the never-ending political challenges at a global level. The effects of the brutal war of aggression on Ukraine or the suffering of people in Iran and other countries, where violence and not democratic action and freedom are part of everyday life, show us every day that the freedom we enjoy in Germany and at TU Braunschweig is a precious commodity. We must consciously value and use this freedom to prepare ourselves and our society for the challenges of the future.

With regard to the important issues of the immediate future, Technische Universität Braunschweig is "the place to be". Because at our University, we are working on sustainable solutions for global problems such as increasing urbanisation, the growing challenges of mobility, quantum computing, energy security and, of course, the climate crisis. TU Braunschweig is committed to addressing these issues – and, of course, many more. Through your studies and your commitment to Technische Universität Braunschweig, you contribute directly to tackle these issues and to finding the solutions.

Dear Students, Technische Universität Braunschweig is the place where social transformation takes place; and it is your place of freedom, creativity and professional as well as personal development. We at TU Braunschweig are very proud to be able to accompany you on this path and can only encourage you: Make the most of your time and the many great opportunities at our University. We look forward to seeing you around campus!

These opportunities include, for example, the new Student House on the banks of the river Oker, which opens this winter semester. The building was designed by two alumni – former academic staff of TU Braunschweig – and offers 170 new learning spaces on campus. With the Student House, a central place of learning is being established at our University. We are very happy that you will soon be able to use the new open rooms for studying, teamwork or meeting friends and fellow students.

Socialising with fellow students is an important part of everyday student life. Despite the experiences of recent years, our University is once again increasingly characterised by a very active campus life and many student initiatives. Whether music or theatre groups, initiatives in higher education policy or engineering groups – everyone can find something here according to their own interests.

Very important: Be interested in the organisation of the University and let your voice be heard in committees and in other forms of academic self-governance. Think outside the box, because studying does not only take place in the lecture hall or the laboratory!

The General Student Committee, or AStA for short, represents the political and social interests of students. Alongside the Student Parliament and the general assembly of the student body, it is one of the central institutions of your student body. The AStA office is the contact point if you have any questions, for example about the semester ticket, or for legal and social advice, political education, culture on campus or even in cases of discrimination. Tasks such as organising rooms or information stands are also covered. I am very happy that we work with the Student Committee here at TU Braunschweig in a constructive spirit – only together can we shape our University in a way that suits all of us. I would be very happy if you also got involved in this context.

And we members of the Executive Board will also be available to talk to you at any time. Personally, I would like to invite you to the four new event formats that are being launched at the University – namely the President's dialogue formats. In different events, you will regularly have the opportunity to talk to me personally in a relaxed atmosphere, ask your questions and share what is close to your heart. We, the Executive Board, and the entire university management, depend on your feedback, your ideas and your support in shaping our University. Therefore, I am very much looking forward to our encounters and conversations – also within the framework of the dialogue formats – and encourage you to actively use these and other opportunities!

If you would like to get involved in increasing sustainability on campus, the University's Green Office is the place to go! The Green Office coordinates and groups student activities for a sustainable university. Colleagues from the Green Office are happy if you want to get involved. Sustainability has become a strategic issue, deeply rooted within the Executive Board. Help us to shape the future of TU Braunschweig in a sustainable way.

Considering my own vita, it is not surprising that I would like to emphasise one thing in particular: Organise your stay abroad in good time! We offer a lot of support, because of course a stay abroad is not easy to integrate into student life for everyone. Whether it is a year, a semester or even just a short stay; there are many possibilities. This is such a valuable experience that you can only gain during your studies – and it is worthwhile. We offer numerous exchange programmes through international cooperation. You can find out more about them in our International House. Get to know the offers and programmes of the International House and start planning your stay abroad early. I can only recommend it to you. I am convinced – no matter which format you will choose – it will play an important role for you.

Internationalisation begins at home. TU Braunschweig is an open-minded and international institution at its core. Today we are welcoming more than 230 international students from 37 countries in Braunschweig. Be curious and use the diverse environment of our University to discover new cultures and mindsets, learn new languages and to open yourself to the world.

Dear Students, TU Braunschweig is a hub of freedom and transformation. Use your time and your freedom at our University for your professional and personal development. We are proud to welcome you here and to support you on this way!