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Introducing the Student Code of Honour
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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today , as you know, we celebrate the start of the new academic year. A festive occasion, that is even more festive this year. Because today also marks the 150th anniversary of our Mechanical Engineering programme at the Faculty of Mechanical, Maritime and Materials Engineering. As you may know, our University was founded some 170 years ago. In 1842 to be exact, so that makes Mechanical Engineering one of our very early study programmes.

As the oldest University of Technology in the Netherlands we value our traditions. One of these traditions you have witnessed here at the start of this event, when our professors and the presidents of our student associations entered the hall in procession.

As a student you become part of these traditions, and part of our academic community. That is something to be proud of, but also something that comes with certain responsibilities. Because you will be engineering our future. As managers, consultants or perhaps even in government, but most of all as engineers, inventors and entrepreneurs of technology and technology-based or technology-assisted services and products.

Now we all know that technology is something that can be used for the good and the bad. A topical example of such a technology is the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, better known as the *drone*. There are many peaceful uses for drones: monitoring the environment for example, or disaster relief. Unfortunately, they are also all too frequently used in warfare.

Of course, that doesn't mean that we should stop developing new technology altogether. It means that we should be aware of the risks and the consequences and that we should be careful how we introduce them.

In short, that we should exercise our integrity.

And where better to start then right here, right now? That is why today we are introducing our Student Code of Honour, that explains to you the duties *and* the rights of being a student at our university. In brief: we offer you a thorough education and in return we expect you to make the most of it, and stick to the rules while you're at it.

Now why a special Code of Honour? Why not just put up a notice saying "work hard and do not cheat, on pain of expulsion"? We all know that, right?

Again, technology plays a part here. To stay on the subject of cheating, I have no illusion that we will ever stop all students from cheating during exams. The only thing that is changing is the ways in which you can cheat. In my days as a student, it was all done with the help of simple cheat sheets, but nowadays you can cheat the smart way, with the help of your phone or by bypassing the security on a digital test. That means we have to stay smart in finding ways to counter cheating. But deep down I know that most of you won't be tempted to cheat during tests to begin with. After all, you would be mainly cheating yourself. Cheating means you miss a chance to prove to *yourself* that you can do it.

Integrity of course, is not only about cheating. Take another example, plagiarism. Nowadays, nothing is easier than to copy and paste things from the internet without bothering to cite your sources.

In academic circles that is not done, so don't do it. But with all the information out there it is also getting increasingly difficult to know which information to trust. So much so, that the French company Trooclick has recently launched the first digital fact-checker, an app that can tell you when there is a problem with a news story. And, Facebook is even testing a new feature that will tell you when a story is satirical. This is not a hoax....

We live in a (digital) world where it is getting harder to distinguish between fiction and reality, between truth and falsehood, and as a consequence sometimes even between right and wrong. We feel that in such a world it is time that we make things explicit again. That we put down in writing what the do's and don'ts of being a student are. That is why we have introduced this Code.

Now that is the Code part of the Code of Honour.

And then there is the Honour part. We at the Delft University of Technology feel that it is an honour and a privilege to be allowed to educate and to make you into the engineers of the future. An honour that makes it our duty to give you the best possible education. In turn, we hope you feel it as an honour and a privilege to be here in Delft. Thank you.

I would now like to ask the chairman of the Student Council to come onto the podium, so I may hand him officially the first Code of Honour. He should off course be an example in this. Jeroen Delfos, study this well and I expect you to live accordingly. All other students will be handed their copy on the way out at the end of the programme.