



Speech by the Rector, Gabriel Ferraté

Dr Bates, Vice-Rector, Director, Councillors of Castelldefels Town Council, Members of the Board of Trustees and Councils of the Fundació per a la Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Members of the University Community, Friends,

Having listened to the laudatio from Dr Rubio and heard Dr Bates, you surely understand why the university welcomes him with not just satisfaction, but with enthusiasm.

The UOC celebrates then, as I said, this solemn act of investiture with great enthusiasm and for, at least, three reasons:

Firstly, because of Tony Bates's extraordinarily valuable academic and scientific contributions: the reason why he is being awarded the title of Doctor Honoris Causa. I shall not dwell on these, as Dr Rubio has already detailed them excellently, but I would like to highlight them as, in speaking on behalf of the university, is my obligation.

Tony Bates is, currently, the professor and researcher who has best known how to appreciate the value of ICT in university education: the positive effect of new technologies on the quality of that taught and in terms of knowledge dissemination. He is the point of reference in his field. Dr Bates has studied the relationships between the channel and learning, and between the channel, function and organisation in depth, leading to extraordinarily valuable contributions. Valuable to us, who have been the focus of his research, through his analysis of the UOC as a paradigm for distance education, throughout our life, but also, if you will allow me a solemn reflection, valuable for a world which needs this learning, and, thanks to Tony Bates, a world that can increasingly access this learning with much sounder skills.

Dr Bates's merits are due, then, to his ability, but what makes him truly worthy of our highest regard is that this ability has directly benefited many academic institutions and, thus, many individuals. Being able to reward this is a source of great satisfaction for us all.

The second reason for our pleasure at being able to celebrate this ceremony today is based on the fact that, with this Doctorate Honoris Causa, we are able to express our gratitude to Tony Bates, the scientist and the person. We have always seen in him not only his teaching, but also three points that have formed the basis for the relations, the fruitful relations, between Tony Bates and the UOC:

- His interest in our activities.
- The enriching advice he has given us when we have asked him.
- His commitment to what we do.

And we are very grateful for his support for the UOC, which inevitably is of great benefit to the University and, thus, its students and everyone who works here. Being able to thank him here today, at this solemn ceremony, in the presence of the representatives of civil society who are accompanying us, gives us great pleasure and, as we have said, is a source of great satisfaction for the whole of the university community.

The third reason is closely connected to what I have just mentioned. We are extraordinarily pleased to be able to hold this ceremony as it solemnly marks Tony Bates's belonging to the UOC; not as much as we would like, perhaps, but we are still very pleased.

That is why we have chosen this venue, the IN3, which is the standard bearer for our research. The UOC and the Catalan government are looking to focus on what is the fundamental tool for our teaching methodology and to ensure it progresses, becoming a worldwide centre for excellence in research and innovation in e-learning. Tony Bates is to lead this project. This is not collaboration or advice, but a commitment that provides guarantees for our project and for which we feel honoured.

Today then, we are, in a way, solemnly recognising Dr Bates's belonging to the UOC and I would like to stress the consequences of this: it enhances the self-esteem of our university community, reinforces the UOC's leadership in the field, and offers guarantees for the effectiveness of the training we offer: the aim and point of reference for our academic activities.

For all these reasons, Dr Bates, my friend Tony Bates, on my own behalf and on behalf of the UOC, I would like to offer you our most sincere and enthusiastic thanks and congratulations.

Thank you very much.

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