

Ceremony to award Dame Wendy Hall an honorary doctorate

UOC Campus auditorium

Professor Dame Wendy Hall, I will do it in Catalan. Deans, patrons, president, vice presidents, professors, ombuds officer, friends.

The line that separates a crazy notion from a good idea can be very fine. Its success or failure often depends on the conditions in place, since they can determine whether a potential concept becomes a reality. The creation of the UOC 27 years ago was a fortuitous idea because it was a timely idea.

«The creation of the UOC 27 years ago was a fortuitous idea because it was a timely idea.»

As we all know, timeliness means arriving at just the right time. It's no good being early or late, but instead being there at precisely the right time. Because when there is a synchronicity between the idea and the context, time speeds up and the paradigm changes. And that is a revolution. In the case of online education, the internet, which was still in its infancy, enabled a transformation of the relationship between students and teachers, helped knock down all kinds of barriers to access to higher education, and made lifelong training a reality.

This educational revolution benefited from certain conditions which, with other people, our new honorary doctor played a key role in creating. As professors Riera and Megías have mentioned in considerable depth, Dame Wendy Hall has continued to be a timely and essential presence, with research that has expanded the frontiers of computing and artificial intelligence and at the same time she has been a decisive contributor in the different debates about the digital world, from both a technological perspective and concerning its social repercussions. If we are aware that such powerful tools will change the world – and indeed, they are changing it – it is worth making an effort to make the change one for the better. Hence the importance of **opening up technology for everyone, fostering its use in favour of equality, and making an effort to leave no one behind.**

«Dame Wendy Hall has continued to be a timely and essential presence, with research that has expanded the frontiers of

computing and artificial intelligence and at the same time she has been a decisive contributor in the different debates about the digital world, from both a technological perspective and concerning its social repercussions.»

To quote our guest: "If you don't have a diverse workforce, there's more chance that what you're producing is biased and won't work for a large section of the population." Bearing in mind this thought of Dame Hall, and considering her career, I would like to reflect – albeit briefly – on three characteristics that in my opinion, define and will continue to define good research – in other words: the university of tomorrow.

First, the assumption that networks have a multiplier effect on knowledge. Networks understood as the relationships between nodes for the creation, generation, dissemination and exchange of knowledge in the broadest sense (from hospitals to universities, governments and companies to professionals). Networks understood as a grid defined by technology, when technology is placed at the service of open science and exchange, under equal conditions. And networks understood as a bond, which is not always visible, but which, like the butterfly effect, means that as a result of some pioneering research in both the United States and Great Britain, today we can celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the creation of our Faculty of Computer Science, Multimedia and Telecommunications.

«Networks understood as a bond, which is not always visible, but which, like the butterfly effect, means that as a result of some pioneering research in both the United States and Great Britain, today we can celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the creation of our Faculty of Computer Science, Multimedia and Telecommunications.»

Second, I would like to highlight the need to learn: not for today's answers, but for tomorrow's questions. As the Scottish philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre wrote, education should be projected into the future, and must be assessed based on its subsequent impact. As an example, he said that what is important is not the marks students obtain, but instead the books that those graduates would be reading in 5, 10 or 20 years. If we replace the word *books* and we update it with *jobs, competencies, questions, technologies*, etc., we can understand the idea much more easily.

«The need to learn: not for today's answers, but for tomorrow's questions.»

And third, and finally, I would like to add a political perspective. A political perspective that is committed to a digital world that is more democratic, secure and open, to work towards progress and skills. A political perspective committed to science that is open, interdisciplinary and humanist so that – for the benefit of the majority – it includes all the possible talent. And at this point we need to specifically mention female talent. Our future president describes it much better than I can in an as yet unpublished text in which she states: "**A science that puts itself at the service of global challenges making a virtue of its complexity**. And a science that by including women as a scientific subject, object and verb, ensures the global nature of their contributions." And she is right.

«A political perspective that is committed to a digital world that is more democratic, secure and open, to work towards progress and skills.»

And now I will conclude. **Network, future, female. Three nouns that define the career of our honorary doctor.** As a leading figure in the promotion of female talent in STEM subjects. As an activist for a more democratic, safe and open web, and as a driving force for a digital world particularly sensitive to humanism. *Network, future, female.* Three words that define a horizon of progress. Three characteristics that make up the UOC. Three aspects that will enable us to identify good ideas, timely ideas, necessary ideas, transformative ideas.

«Network, future, female. Three words that define a horizon of progress. Three characteristics that make up the UOC. Three aspects that will enable us to identify good ideas, timely ideas, necessary ideas, transformative ideas.»

Dame Hall, thank you very much for agreeing to be a part of our university community. Many thanks for joining us.