

## Aalto Day One

Dear President

Dear Provost

Dear Aalto Community

Happy academic year to new and returning students.

I want to congratulate all the new students on your acceptance to Aalto! The next few years will be your time to learn and develop yourselves. The years spent at university and in the student community will be memorable.

Student years are busy and full of opportunities. You can find lifelong friendships, a passionate career and new interests. This phase of life also comes with a great number of expectations and pressure to do well in studies and experience all the amazing things that previous generations of students always talk about. Even though you should take your studies seriously, you should also be able to enjoy your student years. Hobbies, participation in student community activities and other leisure activities are an important part of student life.

All students have their own unique path. What others are doing, or perhaps even telling you to do, is not necessarily the right path for you. Students are not supposed to only study. In addition to lectures, student life may include drinking coffee in a guild room, having hobbies in student associations or engaging in subject organization activities. My own student path has included active engagement in the community. In the student union, we strive to make different paths visible. Community activities in the student movement, associations and various student communities prepare students to be active members of society. Student years include new experiences, which will shape your world view. At Aalto, you have a great opportunity to create a study path that is suitable for you.

Each student's path is their own, and no path is any worse or better than another. Student life is quite different for everyone and the daily routine of a student is a personal experience. Thus, it is important to remember that you never know the burden your fellow student is carrying. There are as many student experiences as there are students, involving many issues that are invisible to outsiders. You may experience loneliness in large lecture halls and it may take a long time to find your own place in the community.

Diversity of the Aalto community is a strength and an important value for our community. We must ensure that everyone feels welcome and included in the Aalto community from the very first day of the academic year. This is not at all self-evident, but something that we must all pay close attention to. In our community, everyone should be able to be themselves and study freely, regardless of their nationality, gender, sexuality, religious conviction or any other characteristic. There should be no room for any kind of harassment at Aalto. We must all work actively against discrimination and racism, both in the Aalto community and in society as a whole. We are strongest united.

It is important that we understand and are aware of student experiences that are invisible to the mainstream. In this way, we can ensure that no student feels invisible. We should have an open mind and get to know each other as individuals. Let's head together towards the new academic year and the opportunities it will bring.

Have a great academic year!