

**Ávarp rektors Háskóla Íslands, Jóns Atla Benediktsson, í kveðjuathöfn Kees
Kouvenaar, fyrrverandi aðalritara Aurora
16.11.2021 – myndband – birt á fundi Aurora í Tarragona, Spáni**

Dear Aurora colleagues and guests,

It is a great pleasure for me to say a few words in honor of our friend and colleague Kees Kouweenar, but Kees has been an incredibly influential and prolific figure in the world of international higher education since the start of his career.

Kees was at the forefront of the Aurora cooperation since the very beginning and helped pioneer the vision that underpins our solid and excellent cooperation today. We have a lot to thank him for.

As most of you know, Kees served as Aurora's Secretary General from 2017 to 2021. In his role as Aurora Secretary General, Kees worked extremely hard in achieving the goals of Aurora and did a tremendous job. He was active, supportive and attentive to the needs of the Aurora members, steering and coordinating the day-to-day work of Aurora impeccably. On his watch Aurora grew from the solid foundation of a network of nine strong research universities into Aurora that received EU funding for the Aurora European Universities programme which is based on the original vision of Aurora.

On a personal note, I worked closely with Kees from when I became Aurora treasurer in 2017 until his retirement and we worked even more closely after I became President one year ago. In short, it was absolutely terrific to work with Kees. He is extremely reliable and always thinking about new possibilities to increase the value of Aurora for all of us.

Dear Kees, I would like to use this moment to thank you for all your hard work on behalf of the entire Aurora Community. We have greatly benefitted from your strong contributions.

Happy retirement, my friend!