

Dear Prof. Schücking Rector of our University, dear Mr. Vice-rector, Prof. Schwarz, dear Vice-Doyen, Prof. Rytel-Schwarz, spectabilis esteemed guests, respected colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, dear Alfonso,

as a long-time colleague and vice-director of the institute, I have the particular honor of greeting you all on behalf of the Institute for Romance Studies.

As we all know, German Romance studies doesn't have many international stars. You are one of them.

It is you we have to thank for the fact that the Institute for Romance Studies has advanced to become an international and globally renowned location for research on Borges, Kahlo, the Maghreb, hybridity, and diaspora. At the same time, it has also become a heterotopic site of encounters and discursive negotiation between cultures; for this too, we have you to thank.

You are one of the few academics who has always remembered the university's need to remain a site of freedom of thought, a heterotopia apart from habitualized norms and binary order.

*Plaisir du texte*, joy in the text, and joy in thought are holy tenets of your research and teaching with which you have been able to inspire many young scholars, and with which you will continue to do so.

As a cosmopolitan *flâneur*, as a Derridian nomad, a crosser of boundaries, you serve as an example to all who reveal the obsolete terms and ideas of homogeneous identities as the phantasms they are, and who recognize the pressing need for approaches to thought that transect identities and nations.

The research centers you have founded – the Ibero-American Research Seminar, founded in 1994, and the international Francophone Research Seminar, founded just a few years ago – these have long become globally recognized laboratories for innovative approaches in Postcolonial Studies as well as in hybridity and diaspora research, as you have shown once again with your recent international conference on Diaspora and Performative Identities.

For your exceptional contribution to the realms of culture and education, you have received numerous honors in recent years, of which I would like to name only a few. In 2009, the Chilean government presented you with the Gabriela Mistral Order with the rank of *Grand Officier*. Thus, the Chilean Government presented you with the highest honor awarded to individuals of high intellectual standing.

In 2014, you were made a member of the *Academia chilena de la lengua* because of your exemplary contribution to Literature and Culture Studies.

Dear Alfonso, not only are you a renowned and internationally esteemed scholar, but you are also a fair and courageous colleague who has always worked for the internal interests of the institute.

On behalf of the institute, I would like to thank you for your brave engagement in hard times, for your effective action in light of the strict need to preserve Romance Studies and our strong location with appropriate equipment and resources in Romance language literature, linguistics, and Romance culture.

The institute for Romance Studies hopes that in your new role as a professor emeritus you will remain an active researcher, advisor, colleague, and friend, and will grace us with your assistance in many future cooperative efforts and joint projects.

The future tasks of the institute will include maintaining our international resources, and to continually support the institute as a space for free thought and the spirit of transcendence. On behalf of the institute, I thank you from the bottom of my heart, and wish you and your guests a wonderful and lively celebration.