

## Closing words, graduation ceremony FEB, campus Leuven

September 11, 2026, written by Katrien Antonio<sup>1</sup>

While preparing these closing words, I was reminded of something a colleague who teaches career development once told me. When asked about their sources of information and inspiration, third-year bachelor students in Business Administration<sup>2</sup> increasingly point to podcasts. A message from a podcast! That would become the direction of my closing words tonight. There is an advantage, though: while driving from hobby X to swimming pool Y and football club Z, you can prepare a bit for the job while listening. So let me take you briefly to Spotify > Paul Simon > Graceland (25th Anniversary Deluxe Edition), the final track<sup>3</sup>, where the artist explains, in podcast style, the story behind the album. There are some very specific reasons for my choice: (1) the album Graceland is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year - which may make it more recognizable to the parents than to the graduates in the room, I realize, but hey, at least I managed to build that podcast connection; (2) perhaps for that very reason, it was part of KLM's in-flight entertainment between Johannesburg and Amsterdam earlier this Summer; and (3) I listened to the album on that route, as well as while travelling through the city of Ladysmith, the Kingdom of Lesotho, Johannesburg - places in South Africa that were highly influential in the making of iconic songs such as Graceland, You Can Call Me Al and Diamonds on the Soles of Her Shoes.

A few days ago, in preparing for this celebration, my colleague Tamara casually mentioned *"Katrien, we're going to swing tonight"*, thanks to the musical interludes performed by the Interfak Dixieland band<sup>4</sup>. I could hardly stay behind in the presence of such musical enthusiasm. That makes a fourth reason I went looking for my closing message in that wonderful mix of American and South African *"very up, very happy music – familiar and foreign-sounding at the same time"*, the music composed by Paul Simon and co 40 years ago. The artist explains how he sees the album Graceland *"as a very good example of how a collaboration works even if you're not aware of it occurring"*. He describes how local South African musicians suddenly started using a relative minor chord – something not often heard in South African music – which prompted Paul Simon to ask: *"That's interesting – why do you do that?"* *"I was just imitating the way you write music,"* musician Ray Phiri answered. Paul Simon continues: *"The two musics finding a commonality. That's really the secret of world music: people are able to listen to each other, make associations, and play their own music in a way that sounds as if it fits into another culture. That's how it works. That's how it worked then."*

And that, of course, is my closing point – one that I hope you will take home with you, swinging along the way: educated with strong academic and disciplinary foundations in business, economics or – who knows – actuarial and financial engineering<sup>5</sup>: dare to listen, foster creative dialogue, build connections with other disciplines, interact with other perspectives, cultures – artificial intelligence too – but cherish and keep on developing your foundations, your values, your own voice. Let all of this come and work together, and let it swing with originality!

Godspeed, dear FEB graduates! Thank you!

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<sup>1</sup> <https://katrienantonio.github.io/>

<sup>2</sup> KU Leuven OPO [Loopbaanontwikkeling](#) on the Antwerp campus

<sup>3</sup> Check it out on Spotify, [here](#).

<sup>4</sup> [Interfak Dixieland Band](#) with conductor Bart Preneel, performing (among others) Do You Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans? (Eddie DeLange and Louis Alter) and The Sheik of Araby (Ted Snyder)

<sup>5</sup> The courses I teach are part of this 120 ECTS programme in [actuarial and financial engineering](#).