Dear colleagues, students, alumni, partners and friends of Copenhagen Business School, dear CBS community,

Welcome to our Annual Celebration.

Tonight, we gather to mark what we have achieved together – and to look ahead. But before we toast to the future, I want you to pause with me for a moment.

When I listened to Christian Hendriksen just now, one question stayed with me: how would we actually like to live with superintelligence?

It is a simple question. But also, a profound one. Because it shifts the conversation. From what AI *can* do… to what we *want* it to do.

And perhaps even more importantly: what kind of society we want to build with it.

We live in an age of acceleration where technologies evolve faster than our ability to fully understand them.

In this fast-moving world, universities have a special role to play. To pause and create space for reflection.

Our theme this evening is artificial intelligence – a technology that could transform – and probably is transforming – our society fundamentally. A technology evolving so fast that it's hard to predict where it is headed. A technology that holds many promises and many potential dangers.

As Christian Hendriksen put it in the video: How can we use AI to create value?

To reflect on this technology tonight, I would like to invite you to go back in time with me.

Lilian already sent us 400 years back in time to witness the invention of the calculator. But I want to go even further back.

Because the potential of AI reminds me of a story that is quite frankly, very old.

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In Greek mythology, there was a titan named Prometheus.

His name means forethought. The one that thinks ahead. The word “promise” is related.

This titan looked at humanity, and he found us fragile. Unfinished. And he imagined what we could become if only we possessed the right capability. So, Prometheus steals the fire from the gods and gives it to the humans.

Fire is perhaps the first general-purpose technology. GPT.

It enables us to use tools. To transform raw material. To cook food and extend the daylight into the evenings.

Many evolutionary biologists say that fire may have fuelled the development of larger human brains by allowing us to extract more energy from our food.

In other words, fire did not just change what humans could do. It helped change who we became. And with it, we built our civilization as we know it.

And we lived happily ever after – in peace and harmony forever.

No, I’m sorry. This was not the case. As you may know, Greek myths rarely have a happy ending. And this one has a second chapter as well.
Zeus, the king of gods, was furious that Prometheus stole the fire and gave it to us. So, Zeus sent us an extra gift along with the fire.

You may have heard of Pandora’s box. In the actual myth, it is a jar, but it makes little difference. As soon as the jar is opened, it releases all the miseries of human existence. Disease. Suffering. Hardship. Misfortune. And death.
And as for Prometheus, he was punished as well. Chained to a mountain top, he sits and waits. And every day an eagle eats his liver, and every night it grows back, so he can be punished yet again .....Quite dramatic, I know.

One thing this story makes very clear is, that new and powerful technology brings both good things and bad things.

Fire can be used for enlightenment. And fire can be used for destruction.

Artificial intelligence carries that same dual character.

AI can help doctors detect cancer earlier and more accurately. It can help researchers develop new medicine faster than ever before.

It can help companies reduce waste, improve efficiency and use fewer resources.

Artificial intelligence writes software, analyse vast amounts of data in seconds, translate languages in real time, and support decision-making.

It frees up human time from routine tasks and allow us to focus on what humans do best: to think creatively, to exercise judgment, and to solve complex problems.

But artificial intelligence also brings new risks.

It can generate fake news. It can amplify bias. It can be used to automate cyberattacks. And It can create job insecurity.

Therefore, it is very important that we learn how to handle this fire.

I will get back to this.

But first, let’s reflect on where we are today.

Here in Denmark, 75 percent of companies with more than 250 employees use AI.

And this is very much in line with global numbers.

Globally, investment in AI is exploding. Last year alone, hundreds of billions of dollars flowed into AI. That tells us one thing: this is not a niche technology. It is becoming foundational.

Of course, these high expectations could turn out to be exaggerated, and talks of an AI bubble have been widely discussed.

While the hype may be exaggerated currently, it's still clear to me that the fire has been lit – and that it is spreading fast.

It is now hard to imagine a world, where humans discovered fire, but chose not to use it. Likewise, it is now already hard to imagine a world without AI.

It is not an option to stand idly by, while the rest of the world discovers what AI can do.

The International Monetary Fund estimates that AI could increase global economic growth by one percent annually. At the same time, they warn that 40 percent of jobs will be affected in some way by AI transformation in the coming years.

This is not just technological progress. This is a societal shift.

A shift in how we work. A shift in how we create value. And a shift in how we use our time.

This brings me back to the role of universities.

Because we need more knowledge. And we need to know how to use AI in the most beneficial and responsible way.

At CBS, this responsibility is something we take very seriously.

In 2024 we made a central AI strategy – recognising that it will transform not only society, not only business, but also research and education.

And in 2025 we established a dedicated AI Board to ensure that this work is guided responsibly and strategically.

In education, we are moving from experimentation to integration.

We have launched fourteen AI pilot projects across our educational programmes – testing how AI can strengthen learning, improve feedback and support responsible use.

An increasing number of programmes are now working with systematic AI integration in their curriculum.

And in Denmark, CBS is at the forefront when it comes to guidelines on the transparent use of generative AI in student assignments.

Because banning AI is neither realistic nor beneficial. Teaching students how to use AI responsibly is.

In research, the development in AI is equally visible.

The share of AI-related journal articles at CBS has grown from 5 to 8 percent in just one year.

And we have established AI-focused PhD positions across departments to strengthen our long-term research capacity.

That is what responsible AI looks like in practice.

Better quality. Greater efficiency. More time for human judgment.

Speaking of human judgment, this brings me to the last part of my speech.

AI is moving forward in our society. And AI is moving forward here at CBS.

And maybe sitting in your cosy seat, you are now worrying about the future. Because, let's be honest, there are many things to be worried about.

Will we become too dependent on this new technology?

Will our students be able to learn anything for themselves?

Will we lose our jobs?

These are genuine worries. And you can probably think of many more.

And this brings me to the important role universities play in all of this.

The core value of the university is not technology. It is the scientific method.

When the ancient Greeks told the story of Prometheus, it was a story about humans becoming independent of the gods.

About stepping out of their shadow and beginning to observe the world themselves.

And that is precisely what the ancient Greeks did themselves.

They began to ask questions about the world and form hypotheses. They began to experiment and they argued with each other.

They weren't always right. In fact, they were often wrong.

For example, the famous philosopher Aristotle thought intelligence was placed in the heart, and that our brains were… cooling devices.

But the ancient Greeks built something more important than any single answer.

They built a method.

And out of this method grew philosophy, mathematics, politics, medicine and physics, and all the other academic disciplines we know today.

Out of that method grew the first academies. And from those academies grew the universities we know today.

The university is, at its core, a place where critical thinking thrives, and where claims must withstand evidence.

Where new tools are not just adopted but examined carefully.

This is what we must bring to AI.

We too need to approach this new fire carefully. Not with fear, but with careful curiosity.

We need to keep asking questions. We must never be satisfied with the immediate answer but remain critical.

We must educate citizens, leaders and businesses to understand both the power and the limits of this new fire.

And we must use our human judgment to identify how artificial intelligence transforms society into something better – not worse.

Fire once shaped civilisation. This new fire will do the same.

The question is not whether it will change the world, but whether we will shape that change wisely: It carries the promise of Prometheus.

Thank you.