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Dear President QIU Yong,

I was delighted to receive your letter inviting me to attend Tsinghua University's 110th anniversary celebration and its centerpiece, the Global Forum of University Presidents 2021 (GFUP).

2020 was an extraordinary year indeed. With this experience under our belts, we have a better grasp of the shape of things to come. It is becoming increasingly clear to us that „what has brought us here may not take us to the future“. The universities need to re-vision, reinvent and reorient themselves in order to rise to the challenges of the 21st century. However, I am confident that universities as the true intellectual powerhouses of modern society will be perfectly capable for this feat and we, as university leaders, have a critical role to play in this effort.

Considering all of this, I find the topics of GFUP sessions to be most exciting and thought-provoking. However, unfortunately, I will have to decline your kind invitation as I am already committed to other engagements at that time. I regret very much therefore that it will not be possible for me to join you on this important occasion.

I take this opportunity to wish you and your colleagues a happy celebration and all the success as you move on into the next phase of your University's history.

Vivat, crescat, floreat Universitas Tsinghuaensis!

Yours sincerely,

Professor Toomas Asser  
Rector