

I invite you to read my programme in full. In this way, you will be able to see the coherence, the breadth and the depth of what I propose. But I would also like to add a little relief with this synthesis of the main points that underpin the programme.



I will work to achieve gender parity in the team of the rector and vice-rectors. There is talent and experience enough, both among men and women.

I will not immediately propose candidates for the group vice-rectors. With a view to maximum support and connectivity, I prefer to use a nomination procedure. Consequently, I will ask the deans, the boards at faculty and departmental level, and the heads of service of the medical board to nominate other possible candidates. In addition to compatibility with the policy vision, the level of consensus will also help to determine who leads the groups. I will also ask the KULAK board for nominations for the position of campus rector.

I will take over the responsibility for personnel policy and interdisciplinarity, in view of the great importance of these matters and the need for transversal anchoring.



I want to turn our organizational logic on its head and in the first instance I will listen to the priorities and ambitions of the faculties, departments and research units, including the students of whom they consist. For this reason, I wish to invite each faculty and the related departments at least once each year for discussions with the Executive Office.

On the basis of these discussions, I hope to discover where these entities come into conflict with the university's governance procedures and regulations, so that, where necessary, our methods of working can be adjusted. This will require a number of extra meetings, but this is crucial if we wish to take as the starting point for our actions the needs and strategic objectives of the entities that really make the difference.

In line with this, I wish to transform the Academic Council from being an organ for the ratification of policy into a meeting place that can actually nourish policy.



I want to develop a feasible model for basic funding. I understand the term *basic funding* to mean a combination of three related measures:

- seed financing for everyone who starts a fulltime academic career at KU Leuven, as a form of basic funding for the first five years after appointment;
- research credit for those who do not have the necessary means to continue their work, after allocation of working resources by the faculty and taking account of any reserves available to them;
- regular sabbatical periods awarded on the basis of a points system that gives greater weight to years spent in governance positions.

The research credit and sabbatical points will be awarded on condition of a positive evaluation. Taken together, these measures will ensure that every academic receives the minimum time and working resources necessary to carry out good research. This will increase our attractiveness as an employer and stimulate research productivity.

These measures are less relevant for the clinical ZAP. For these staff members I propose an alternative system for sabbatical leave, in a format that will allow clinicians to plan for academic

terms or academic years free from teaching obligations at regular points throughout their career. In this context, we must also examine carefully how we can build up a middle management level - effectively a cohort of permanent postdoctoral assistants - who can support the clinical ZAP in their academic tasks.



I wish to test our research and education policies against the criteria of inter- and transdisciplinarity. Metaforum will be given the task of exploring the avenues that can lead to greater cross-discipline and cross-university interaction. With this in mind, a project group of independent thinkers and board members from the faculties and departments will be created, with input from the other LERU universities. In line with this, I want to reform the Holland College, allowing it to become a valuable platform for both interdisciplinary debate and intellectual and societal discussions, for which the necessary investments will be made.

Within the teaching services, I wish to anchor expertise in interdisciplinary education. In this respect, I draw inspiration from University of Amsterdam's Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies: a knowledge centre for interdisciplinary learning and education, which acts as a guiding hand in the development of courses and subjects, working in close collaboration with the faculties.

Working towards greater interdisciplinarity also demands that that we make the distinctive boundaries between groups more permeable and that we stimulate the more frequent development of cross-group initiatives and institutions. This means that we must dare to look at complex matrix structures and the strict delineation of disciplines in a different light.



I wish to develop an integrated plan for scientific integrity. The recognition of peer review as an important academic task, the stimulation of Team Science and the encouragement of replication research will help to make this possible.

The vice-rectors for research and education will be given the task of anchoring research and education policy more firmly in greater attention for integrity.



The students have a long list of requests: longer hours of opening for the learning centres, a growing infrastructure compatible with their needs, good reach for Eduroam on every campus, a clearer set of norms for our points scale and gradations of merit, a smartphone-friendly version of Toledo, lower prices for vegetarian meals, and so on. All these requests are legitimate. But it is not possible to fulfil them all within existing resources. We will need to discuss and clearly define the number of projects we can afford to undertake.

With this aim in mind, I want to recognize the students as full partners in the governance of KU Leuven, also in respect of their role within the Executive Office. I want to discuss important issues central to student policy with the Student Council, including a plan intended to ensure greater diversity in the student population and a plan for a more effective (re-)orientation of studies.

In the interest of the students, I also wish to enhance the value of the Education Council, so that it can become a powerful forum for dialogue, policy development and advice. Together with the Student Council and the Education Council, I want to create a clear and verifiable framework that clarifies how a properly functioning permanent educational commission (PEC) should operate and how this functioning can be better anchored in the governance of the faculties. In the same spirit, I want to invest in a better version of the online student questionnaire and give it a clear position in our quality care and personnel policies.



I wish to give a clearer focus to our commitment to research-driven education. I want to see this commitment given more relief in our vision on teaching and students, whilst at the same time retaining the good elements in the current vision. We wish to formulate the choice for research-driven education in a more engaging manner by devoting sufficient attention to the translational component, the bridge between research and practical relevance.

I wish to retain the framework of the institutional review, although this exercise can and should be more challenging. Together, we must refine and amend the current Cobra quality care system, so that it becomes an efficient and indispensable instrument for determining the direction of our courses.

I also wish to strengthen the external benchmarking and benchlearning perspective in the quality care process and to encourage the faculties that opt to integrate or combine the Cobra quality care system with external accreditation systems.

I want to invite the PECs to take as their starting point for all future curriculum development the question of the skills and competencies that will count in the labour market and society of tomorrow. We also want to make better use of the available knowledge that already exists within KU Leuven on these matters. In 2025, we want to celebrate, amongst other things, 600 years of preparedness for the future.



I want to devote greater attention to the quality of the recruitment and selection process. Potentially good candidates have the right to expect a proper campus visit. Ideally, the *shortlist* candidates should be asked to give an extended seminar for a broad public, including members of the recruitment commission, a delegation from the BeCo and – why not? – students. They must engage in a series of conversations/discussions with future colleagues, the BeCo-delegation and, if possible, the dean or head of department. This will make them feel that they are being tested and challenged thoroughly, which will increase the attractiveness of the post they are seeking. It will also make them feel more welcome and increase the chances of them accepting the post, if offered to them.

We will only be able to realize this more intensive approach if we enhance the role of the recruitment commissions. Ideally, they should be embedded in the research units and departments. They must be responsible for a wide-ranging international search-and-recruitment exercise, drawing up shortlists of candidates and ensuring that the selection procedure is prepared by those who are best qualified for the task: the experts in the discipline. Properly developed recruitment commissions are also an excellent way to involve young ZAPs fully in the search and recommendation processes. This is crucial. After all, they will need to work with the selected candidates throughout their career.



I wish to involve our professional staff in the ATP, who are indispensable experts in their own domain, more closely in decision-making and governance, whilst at the same time respecting the specific organizational structures and needs of each individual entity.

I want to increase ATP representation in the Academic Council, so that each group and the central and support services are represented. I also want to invite the officials responsible for marketing, press and public relations, personnel, technical services, research and educational policy, etc. to take part in the discussions of the Academic Council, when subjects relating to their specialized field of expertise are on the agenda. This method of working will lead to greater cohesion and inclusion.

I want to focus more consistently on smart work: *work smart, not hard*. A smart organization is only possible if everyone, irrespective of the echelon to which he or she belongs, is allowed to think carefully about how, when and with whom they work. Smart work goes hand in hand with shorter

lines of decision-making and the elimination of superfluous coordination. It involves working in an atmosphere of mutual trust, especially between academics and administrative personnel.

Smart work requires a contemporary method of organization, with openness towards and acceptance of time and place-independent work in the ATP.



I want to more systematically compare the doctoral courses and see how we can create room within each one for the development of transferable skills. I wish to achieve the better formalization of the educational efforts of the ABAP and include an evaluation of their teaching performance in the revised online questionnaire for students.

I want to devote greater attention to the performance reviews and, with the aim of providing adequate feedback and guidance for the ABAP, set up pilot projects to explore agile bottom-up assessment in research units or departments that are willing to lend their cooperation. We want to learn from their experience, so that we can inspire more academic heads of service, without adding new responsibilities.

We want to investigate the possibility of developing a broad middle management layer from within the ABAP by means of a selective extension of the granting of permanent contracts.



I opt for the maximum retention of all campuses, taking care to preserve the unique profile of the integrated courses and working with more region-specific marketing to create a clear identity for each campus.

I want to adopt an approach that will give the campuses the necessary stability during this crucial growth phase. I prefer to continue with the guaranteed campus envelopes after 2023, with any eventual growth to be distributed across the entire university.

I wish to give priority to increasing the scope for promotion on the integrated campuses, so that a career perspective can gradually be created. I also want the rapid conclusion of a collective labour agreement for staff in the integration framework.

'Making a university together' is something that we can only do with the involvement of all campuses.



A relaxation of the allocation model during a period when the overall size of the cake is not growing is not appropriate. In these difficult times, solidarity must be the order of the day.

As long as the allocation model is not more sensibly designed, it would not be correct to consider a reallocation: it is difficult to play good billiards with a bent cue. I want to initiate a discussion about the best allocation model. Having first built in the necessary calm, we can debate in all serenity about a more finely meshed framework; about how we can stimulate smaller scale education and how we can give the necessary oxygen to small but nonetheless worthwhile courses; and about the possibilities for better fine-tuning with the strategy of the faculties and departments.

I want to give the faculties, which are currently making great efforts to comply with the heavy demands of various recovery plans, a proper perspective for the future. Recovery plans must be the basis for a better way forward and not the first wave of a negative downwards spiral.



Discover the world, start with yourself. I want to open the world for our students, lecturers, professional staff and researchers. I wish to invest in collaboration with other institutions from whom we can learn. I want to set the bar high in our efforts at greater internationalization. We will select

partners by looking up, not just down.

I want to give a special position to our sister university UC Louvain. The development of more joint courses and more joint research programmes can strengthen the position of both our universities, not only in the region, but also in Brussels, the rest of the country and the rest of the world.

With the support of the Flemish Inter-university Council, I want to engage in further dialogue with the Flemish government about language policy and the levers for a comprehensive policy of internationalization. Multilingualism is necessary in an open economy that relies on international trade. It is also necessary in our university, close to and in the capital of Europe.



In line with our mission, I want to opt for boundless and borderless altruism. I wish to redefine and reorder priorities in the field of university development cooperation, giving it a new élan based on investment in a credible and effective project that forms an integral part of the policy for our three main areas of activity as a university: education, research and social engagement.

In order to develop a new and feasible policy in this respect, we will make use of in-house experts, spread across the different faculties, departments and services, both in the university and the university hospitals. The Inter-faculty Council for Development Cooperation (IRO), in synergy with the Internationalization Council, is the ideal instrument to coordinate this task.

To reverse the downward trend of recent years, I want to augment the PACO Fund (Partners in Academic Capacity Build-up), which, in view of its connection with research and doctoral trajectories, can be financed in part from BOF resources.



UZ Leuven is largely unknown in the rest of the university. And, to a large extent, the opposite is also true. This is another area in which I want to 'make a university together'. With this aim in mind, I want to ensure a higher level of biomedical expertise amongst the external members of the university's Board of Governors. In keeping with the principles of good governance, I prefer to see a separation of powers between the positions of Vice-rector for Biomedical Sciences and the Chairman of the Management Board of UZ Leuven. Ideally, both the Vice-rector and the Chairman will sit in the Academic Council, so that the connection between both parties can be strengthened.

Once each year, I wish to initiate a discussion within the Academic Council about the specific challenges facing the specialists, general practitioners and biomedical researchers in the BMW Group. This discussion would be organized in Gasthuisberg.

We must devote more attention to UZ members of staff with academic appointments. They must care for patients, work in accordance with a strict economic logic, undertake research and provide services. In the addition, the UZ staff member must also navigate his/her way through a dual organizational structure: the organigram of UZ Leuven, with its services and care programmes, and the structure of KU Leuven, with its groups, faculties and departments. To reduce this complexity, we need to base our actions on a holistic approach towards the UZ staff member, with a single job description that encompasses all three core tasks (clinic, education, research) but also sets out a single clear line for reporting and assessment from within the clinical service.



In **KU Leuven+** I wish to use the mission statement as our compass. I want to give this mission statement a contemporary content and significance, taking as our starting point the Sustainable Development Objectives agreed by the member states of the United Nations. The Sustainable Development Objectives set targets for as far as 2030 and therefore offer us what we so desperately need: a long-term project focused on the needs of society.

I want to govern today, but also make choices for tomorrow. To achieve this, by the start of 2020 I want to develop a vision text for KU Leuven 2040; a vision text that will make it possible for us in 2025 not only to look back on 600 years of history, but also to look forward to the next 15 years of the future.

I want to set up an internal Academic Forum, consisting of members from all echelons of KU Leuven, including students, which will operate alongside the Academic Council and will elaborate inspirational and broadly supported proposals that question existing structures and traditions, thereby creating a basis for future improvement. This will strengthen democracy within KU Leuven. I also wish to create a diverse group of experts within Metaforum to make the necessary preparations with regard to the composition (election, ballot, etc.) and operation of the Academic Forum. This forum must have the resources to allow it to learn from the deliberations of internal and external experts, and from the inspirational example of other LERU universities.



I want the Academic Council to examine the question of the ideal composition of the Board of Governors, not in terms of names and persons, but with a view to achieving the required level of diversity in terms of background, expertise and position.

I wish to strengthen the academic wing within the Board of Governors, because the presence of just a single former rector is too little to ensure that the university is governed with a proper sense of what is most urgently required. Greater attention also deserves to be devoted to the biomedical sector in a university with important hospital activities.

I want preferential treatment to be given to female candidates for new appointments to the Board of Governors, so that a proportion of at least one-third of female governors can be reached as quickly as possible. If, at the same time, we move towards a balanced composition within the Executive Office, the university representation within the Board of Governors will contribute towards a fairer gender balance.



Making **KU Leuven+** together: it really is possible. Some of you may think that the above 'wish-list' is too good to be true. Others will say that an institution like ours is too large to be led in such a new and innovative manner. The plans are indeed ambitious, but there are many who support them and we are all ready to do our utmost to turn them into reality. We need effective leadership more than ever before. Providing well-considered and inclusive leadership will save us from chaos and doubt. In view of my many years of governance experience, you can be sure that I will watch carefully over the course that we are sailing together. My proven willingness to serve and my human approach have won me the trust and confidence of many in the university. These things mean a lot to me and I would never do anything to dishonour them. Our common goal must therefore be: to serve KU Leuven by making the difference every day. Supported by the help of so many dedicated colleagues and enthusiastic students, I know that this is within our reach.