
Summary of the proposed Rector's work program
for the mandate period November 2023 – November 2027

Individualis

Academia

Universitas

Koper, APRIL 2023

Dear colleagues,

my address addresses all members of the academic community in parallel: university teachers, researchers, colleagues from administration and students.

The present work program of the rector for the future mandate period is based on a diverse range of my own experiences of my twenty years of professional activity, which I frame in four different institutional forms: university, economy, government, international associations, and networks.

I symbolically wrote the title of the program in Latin, which has been the lingua franca of science in the Western world for more than a millennium. With the title of the current program, I address in hierarchical (priority) order those three building blocks that will be the strategic focus of my activities as rector.

The fundamental starting point of all activities will be the individual (*individualis*), who is the bearer of essential, i.e. his own knowledge, in the broadest sense of the word, including his (scientific, professional or academic) curiosity. Another key focus of will be the activity of a group of individuals, i.e. the activity of the academy, where I see the key interaction of the rector with the deans and with the chairs or departments. Thirdly, the institutional form of the academy's operation is an administratively regulated legal formal framework - i.e., a university (*universitas*), where interaction with administration staff is key.

An in-depth look at the strategies or development programs of universities very clearly points out that, as a rule, they focus on the university - i.e. on the object and not on the individual, i.e. the subject. But we know that the genesis is exactly the opposite - an institution was created only on the basis of the persistent scientific activity of an individual and his integration into the academy.

Furthermore, if we look at manufacturing or service corporations, the historical model where an individual in a company is easily replaceable is also a thing of the past. The key asset of the company is the individual with his individuality and innovation. Current statistics on the state of the labor market have long warned that institutions adapt work processes to the individual and not the other way around. What's more, the corporate sector generously funds a handful of the best universities, and at the same time has begun to develop its own centers of education and research.

All those universities that, throughout their historical development, failed to rely strongly on the financial power of either their own entrepreneurship or corporations, became prisoners of the problem of the wrong sequence, where the institution comes first, and the individual must adapt to the non-competitive material limitations of this institution.

For this reason, more and more (also quasi) innovative initiatives are being created in Europe about the creation of various connecting university networks, strongly financially supported by public (European) funds. All this undoubtedly establishes the super-mobility of students between universities from such a network, where the only realistic calculation is that the better universities from such a network count on an above-average influx of students from other members of the network. In this way, the spending of the growing amount of European funds is formally justified, while the universities fail to retain the best students and allow them to release their intellectual potential within the framework of their own academic community.

The academic community has two alternatives:

The first is that it preserves the existing model of the primacy of the institution over the individual, which means the regular redistribution of public money among members of the academy through administrative mechanisms. Despite the declaration of the development orientation of these mechanisms, they are essentially restrictive, they force the individual to quantify results and do not release intellectual creativity.

Another alternative requires us to change the entire set of administrative mechanisms in a coordinated way so that they are tailored to the individual's career ambitions throughout his entire period of active employment, so that they motivate him and not inhibit him.

The program that I describe in more detail below is the choice of the second alternative. All this with the following aims:

- An individual (three-year) development plan for everyone will be established.

- We will preserve the traditional educational and research contents of the faculties and add new ones, in accordance with the spirit of the times and the needs of the domestic and international environment. We will place the subject of artificial intelligence in the common foreground - let the study and education of artificial intelligence become the research and educational content that will connect all members of the university internally (with each other) and externally (with the economy).
- We will add an appropriate share of private funding sources to the above-average growth of public funding sources based on a paid international study and applied research
- In order to be able to offer students the best experience, special attention will be paid to the renovation, restoration and modernization of educational and research equipment - and in particular it will be ensured that all members of the university will have the same opportunities for this modernization.
- In order to maximize the efficiency of administrative processes, special attention will be paid to the modernization of the administrative infrastructure, which should become as integrated as possible, but also dislocated at the same time.
- We will not only control the quality of our education and research, but we will actively develop it in parallel with the growth of the volume of financial assets.

My work will ensure the equal inclusion of everyone and a respectful attitude towards everyone.

Matjaž Novak

Koper, April 2023