

The U4Society Leadership Programme

Leading Universities in a Global Context

Universities have become increasingly complex, in an environment of greater dynamics and increased uncertainty. The role of university leaders as stewards of complex organizations has become more demanding. The activities of reporting, analysing, measuring, monitoring and evaluating are central concerns at various university levels. The combination of competition among universities and technological, financial, social and political changes has placed new demands on university leaders. This programme focuses on university leadership in this context.

Aims

- Establish joint learning with a focus on strategic leadership
- Foster and develop international leadership networks inside U4Society
- Develop and share expertise and experiences within a trusted environment

Main themes

The following are the main themes that will be explored in the programme:

1. Talent and Diversity – how do we best develop and organize talent and how do we deal with diversity?
2. Identity – what is the role and responsibility of universities in this era and how do we develop and communicate our profile to the external world?
3. Quality and Culture – how do we create high-quality, supportive environments, how do we measure quality and how do we enhance it?
4. Change and Future – how do we understand complexity and how does tackling wicked problems differ from what we were used to?
5. Leadership Spirit and Sustainability – how to find leadership spirit and solutions matching the needs of tomorrow?

Personal and peer learning

In addition to the main themes, there will be space in every session for peer learning. Participants will bring in their own personal leadership challenges and will be able to explore them with colleagues in small peer groups.

The peer learning aspect will play an important role in the programme, which is full of facilitated interaction and with only a few speakers per session, with short and focused inputs.

At the end of each session, there will be short reflection period, with time to collect special requests for the next session. These are accommodated as much as possible, within the scope of the programme.

Set-up

The programme is based on active participation, U4Society expertise and blended learning. It is not a skills training course. It is an opportunity to take time and explore some bigger themes that are of concern to university leaders. It is a chance to reflect and act on personal leadership challenges, triggered by what happens in the programme.

Planning and timing

The programme takes place over a one-year period, with five sessions. Each of the five universities will host the programme on one occasion.

1. Session (Groningen):	14 – 16 April 2021	- Talent and Diversity
2. Session (Ghent):	9 – 11 June 2021	- Identity
3. Session (Uppsala):	15-17 September 2021	- Quality and Culture
4. Session (Göttingen):	19 – 21 January 2022	- Change and Future
5. Session (Tartu):	20 – 22 April 2022	- Leadership Spirit and Sustainability. Joint session with alumni of previous years.

Every session commences on Wednesday morning at 9.00h and ends on Friday afternoon at 14.00h

Each session includes an accompanying social-cultural programme. At the very end of every day, there is some 'free time' for relaxation or attending to personal or work-related duties, before the evening programme starts (and ends no later than 22.00h).

In-between-sessions

Participants are expected to:

- Address a leadership challenge that they have at hand and briefly report back every next session
- Contact a co-participant in between all sessions (buddy-system) to touch base and follow-up on challenges
- Take part in six 100-minute sessions at their own universities to share insights, organized by the coordinator at the home university.
- To contribute to the preparation for the programme as host university for that respective session

Participants

Who can attend? The target group encompasses top-level executives at U4Society universities. A fixed number of 25 individuals participate in the entire programme. Five persons from both academic and administrative levels from each university are selected to maintain a 'high profile' programme aimed at creating new networks and new skills in current leadership issues. Hence, the group is a mix of people from various academic/administrative backgrounds.

Participants are expected to attend the full cycle and take serious notice of the schedule and "in-between-session" responsibilities. Early attrition or missing (parts of) sessions disturbs the dynamic of the groups and reduces the effectiveness of the programme.

Facilitator

The programme facilitator leads the group through the various sessions, and acts like an adhesive keeping everything together. He or she is the 'travel companion' of the group and creates optimal learning situations and provides short leadership inputs. The facilitator and the hosting coordinator prepare each session's programme.

Meeting colleagues outside of the programme

The composition of the group is not based on a specific context-related backgrounds, specialist knowledge or skill-set. It is very likely that you are the only person in the group with your function. If you wish to interact with your colleague at the partner university (e.g. librarian meet librarian, dean of law meet dean of law), this can be arranged (or self-organised) on request. This will be outside the scheduled programme.

Coordinators

Every university has a programme coordinator. They are the 'active listeners' for participants and are well-informed about the programme dynamics. They are your support person at your home university. They will follow up on sessions and host in-between meetings, and act as the link to other coordinators and the lead facilitator. They may function as the communication channel to the university boards. The coordinators also take care of all logistical matters at the home university and when they are hosting a session.

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