

DECLARATION OF SALAMANCA

IV INTERNATIONAL RECTORS' MEETING

uni>ersia 2018

“University, Society and Future”



Family photo at the inaugural act of the 4th Universia International Meeting of Rectors 2018

The **4th Universia International Meeting of Rectors** was held on the 21st and 22nd of May 2018 in Salamanca, on the 8th centenary of the University and with the theme "University, Society and the Future." It allowed over 700 rectors and academic representatives from 26 countries to come together and think about **21st Century Universities** at a time of extensive changes and in terms of their key role in social development.

Over the two days, attendees could participate in 13 round tables on strategic themes such as training and learning in the face of the impact of digital transformation; the transfer of knowledge; R+D+i on the horizon of 2030; the fostering of entrepreneurship; and the employability of university graduates,

among other subjects. This made manifest the great responsibility that universities have in this context.

The effects of the technological revolution are already here and many sectors are feeling their impact. Higher Education is no exception and various technological and social trends have the potential to **transform the educational and operational model** of universities.

A main priority is for educational leaders to not only know about this revolution but also to lead it, anticipating changes in the paradigm, based on the dominant new realities.

The debates held in Salamanca 2018 pointed out a few especially relevant **actions and programmes** for universities, including: making innovative educational methods more flexible and applying them; re-thinking the organisational, administrative and sustainability processes; alliances, courses and certifications with businesses from various industries; new and alternative certification models and integration with global platforms; hybrid forms of education, training programmes and the updating of the workplace, within the framework of education that is adapted to students' needs and which takes place throughout a lifetime; new qualifications, especially those related to computer sciences, artificial intelligence, data science and technology; and a greater emphasis on humanistic education, as well as on students' transversal skills.



Ana Botín, President of Universia and Banco Santander



President Ana Botín visits 'El Cielo de Salamanca' with the King of Spain, Felipe VI, and the President of the Republic of Portugal, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, among others



Ana Botín accompanied by volunteers at the 4th Universia International Meeting of Rectors 2018

Universities are historically synonymous with the generation of knowledge and with the essential, irreplaceable pillars of **scientific progress**. Research and the training of researchers must continue to be one of the identifying traits of universities. However, the way in which research is conducted has changed and universities must adapt to this.

On the one hand, nowadays, there are other organisations, both public and private, that are active agents in research. Universities must **interact and collaborate** with them.

On the other hand, society must recognise that university research brings values on the local and regional scale in which a university is located, as well as on the global scale, in a reality in

which knowledge has no borders. They use their resources and autonomy for study, with freedom and in the service of the general interest, resolving the problems which affect and preoccupy society.

Universities must make an effort to **inform and explain** what they do, why they do it and what they do it for. Therefore, research must be open, participative and collaborative, thus obliging universities and researchers to review the paradigms of finance and evaluation. Lastly, research must be **interdisciplinary** and address all subjects, paying special attention to a harmonious and sustainable balance between technological and scientific progress, especially that which is most disruptive, and human values.



Leila Janah, Founder of Samasource, María José Alonso, Professor of the Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Technology Department of the University of Santiago de Compostela, and Pam Fredman, President of the International Association of Universities, during the opening conference of the 4th Universia International Meeting of Rectors 2018



Attendees during the inaugural act of the 4th Universia International Meeting of Rectors 2018

The debates held over universities' contribution to social and territorial development made manifest the existence of deep-rooted inequalities in our societies, Universities reflect these inequalities and cannot eliminate them on their own, but they can and must be an important part of the solution by being examples of **equality and diversity**, and by acting as agents that transform the economic and social system.

They therefore need to strengthen their collaboration with different sectors of society, including among others, private initiatives, local communities, the media, the political class and non-governmental

organisations, in addition to other universities.

They must also make a strategic reflection on the **Sustainable Development Goals**, within the framework of university policy concerning social collaboration. Said policy must necessarily include aspects of access, equality, internationalisation and an innovative and entrepreneurial spirit. Consequentially, it is essential to practice **self-reflection**, to constantly search for good practices and new ideas, and to have a desire to adapt and change, so as to be able to continue making significant contributions to social and territorial development.



His Majesty King Felipe VI at the opening act of the 4th Universia International Meeting of Rectors 2018

In conclusion, this context of accelerated and constant change, as faced by our society in its knowledge of transcendental challenges such as equitable and sustainable growth, requires universities to be capable of not only adapting to change but also **leading it**.

This necessitates the configuration of their own institutional strategy so as to play a relevant role in the construction of a better future, both for the communities in which a university is located and for the whole of society. Within this, decisive factors will be **alliances between universities** and collaboration with other agents - all with the common objective of improving peoples' quality of life. The irreplaceable duties of universities are and will continue to be the development of critical, ethical and competent citizens; the creation, transmission and transfer of knowledge which enables the aforementioned challenges to be addressed; and to **defend the role of education** as a decisive tool for the future of people and territories.

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