



# Il Rettore

Pavia, 4 April 2020

Dear Colleagues and dear Students,

after more than one month of suspension of academic activities in person and, moreover, a month of concern and very sad events for more than one of us, I wish to renew my feeling of closeness to the entire academic community.

Since the beginning, I have considered important to follow the scientific indications, aimed at safeguarding health. I also wanted to anticipate the restrictive measures because more than one was the evidence that we were entering an unknown, difficult and painful phase.

Moreover, I have never had any doubts in wanting to guarantee the student community every effort so that the impact on the educational path was as minimal as possible, ensuring not only online lessons, but also thesis dissertations and exams, including written ones. I have found great support by our faculties, who committed themselves with passion and competence, even though adapting to new needs was not easy. I know more than a colleague intent on testing and improving news solutions, with a great spirit of service. I think that you, Students, should be proud of the academic body, which I thank warmly for the immediate reaction that has made online lessons available for over 1100 courses: a truly impressive number.

This is the road we will continue to walk, looking at the future, ensuring the development of training and evaluation phases, in the best possible way, always aware and indeed adhering to the motto that the best is the greatest enemy of the good.

I have put myself in your shoes, dear Students, several times and, in general, in those ones of the new generations. I do not deny that the thought of what your future may be was directing and, now more than before, leads our choices. I know of difficult situations, very sad loss of relatives, sick family members and friends, difficulty in concentrating and disorientation. Above all, we want to support you and to sustain you without hesitation. I ask all of you great diligence and collaboration, for example when taking written tests, and I add that we will not leave anybody behind.

Administrative staff, technicians, linguistic experts were also required to implement a new way of working. Smartworking is still in its infancy in our Country, especially in the Public Administration. However, I would like to underline that the emergency itself has shown an increased sensitivity towards the processes of dematerialisation and digitization. It was therefore possible to carry out not only the essential services which have to be provided in presence, thanks to a small number of colleagues to whom our gratitude goes. But the technical-administrative staff has ensured full functionality for the entire "machine" of the central structures and departments, even when operating from home, often in difficult conditions.

Let me look to the future now.

I think that a little paralyzing anxiety is still accompanying many of our thoughts. I would like to win this feeling with all of you, continuing with small but constant steps. I don't have the pretension or arrogance to be able to comfort those who are going through moments of intimate suffering, but I still want to offer to them my closeness and that one of the entire University.



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Unfortunately, we cannot answer several questions yet. We do not know exactly when we will be able to get out of this emergency definitively, nor when we will return to classrooms, labs and halls. But these same uncertainties, perhaps more, were there a month ago.

I ensure that the method of taking decisions, shared in the widest possible way, will continue in the same way, relying on the recommendations of the experts, not choosing any shortcuts, in the interest of the health of the community. We will continue with the spirit of adaptation already demonstrated, choosing innovative solutions for teaching and for the exams; if necessary, we will do it also next academic year. Proud of our tradition, we will smartly search for the most suitable solutions.

It comforts me to think that, even at this difficult time, we have presented 48 research projects to the Government, belonging to all the disciplinary macro-areas, about the treatment and management of the ongoing epidemic, and I know that even some others are in process.

It seems to me that Pavia, through its Hospital Research Centres, as well as with its University, is well proving itself, locally and also at national level. Seriousness and solidarity, assistance and training, targeted research and a spirit of collaboration: these are all elements that have always characterized the community of Pavia. These are the values to which I have referred since the first day so that the Institutions stay united by common strategic lines, despite the physiological distinction of roles and ambitions. Even after the emergency is over and forgotten, this shall be a crucial attitude to maintain.

I conclude by stimulating each of us to a self-critical thought: asking ourselves how much we have used our skills for good in the past and what we would like to do with them in the future. The skills of each of us depend on the ability to progress, collaborate and answer to emergencies.

A warm greeting to you all: come on everybody, COME ON UNIPV!

Francesco Svelto  
Rector of the University of Pavia