



Il Rettore

Pavia, 10 December 2020

Dear Colleagues and Dear Students,

in a year like this, I feel a strong desire to thank and congratulate the whole Academic Community, but thinking - first of all - to those ones who have passed away because of the pandemic: colleagues, relatives and friends.

We entered the emergency at the end of February, adopting step-by-step measures, organizing everything for a period that has gradually extended. The decisions in the University were immediately oriented towards safeguarding health, with particular attention to the weakest ones. At the same time and with every means available, we have guaranteed lessons and exams, avoiding any interruption.

Credit should be given to all professors, administrative and technical staff and linguistic experts for changing the way lessons are prepared, supported and offered. I also want to underline the speed with which the classrooms for video recording were set up, starting from zero and with not too high costs.

At the beginning of this academic year, we managed to promote mixed-form teaching for only a few weeks, and I think it was essential for all students, to whom my dearest thoughts go. Their behaviour in recent months has been admirable. A great commitment to adapt to a much more difficult and anonymous use of content. A great respect for all health measures to combat the spread of the virus. A very collaborative spirit.

What I have manifested in almost all public speeches, I wish to repeat it in this very wish as well: I hope that this unfortunate health emergency will allow us to focus attention on the new generations, as a priority for the country. Today, we cannot deny it, it does not happen. Even in recent months the finger has been pointed too much towards the shortcomings and carelessness of young people, but their sense of responsibility was largely evident.

In this dramatic year, however, the University's attention to its own development and future has not stopped, neither toward the opportunities that have shown.

Among our latest initiatives, it is worth mentioning the participation in a call for tenders for university buildings which brought us a co-financing of 6.6 million Euros: this will allow us to cover part of the costs foreseen for our priority interventions (a new pole of Pharmaceutical Sciences, the Cloister of San Felice, turrets and façade of San Tommaso, Weber classroom).

We made a second request and we are awaiting the outcome. If favourable, it will allow us to launch equally important interventions, including new classrooms and the Political-Legal-Social Area Library in our property (former Mondino).

Other resources, made available by the Lombardy Region, amounting to € 4 million, will be allocated in part to the University network infrastructures, in part to support the innovative and remote teaching of the Departments (also by strengthening the Laboratories used in teaching).

On several occasions, me too, I had complained about a decrease in the fund for projects of significant national interest (PRIN). Now it should be noted the positive fact that the draft budget law allocates significant sums precisely to the PRIN: 180 million euros in 2020; 250 in 2021; 300 in 2022. We have to participate in the calls massively. It is a great opportunity to see our basic research recognized and thus to trace new paths.

For some time, we have been expressing the need for a greater presence of highly innovative companies in our area: the applied research activities of our Departments would benefit from this, together with the internship opportunities for students and work offers for our graduates. To this end, we are developing a project, shared with the institutional actors of Pavia, which will see the light next year. Together with the infrastructure to host companies, we plan to create a university research Centre dedicated to technological innovation, which the Lombardy Region intends to fully support, from a financial point of view.

Further good news could come soon: it will be my care to promptly notify the whole community.

I am convinced that by continuing with the commitment and confidence shown in such a difficult year, we will be able to look to the future with realistic optimism.

To all of you and your family the best wishes for happy holidays and, above all, a happy new year. From my heart.

A warm greeting.

Francesco Svelto
Rector of the University of Pavia