

WEAVING MINDS & CHARACTERS

Strategy towards 2027



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FOREWORD





FOREWORD

Weaving Minds & Characters describes Tilburg University's strategy and what we think is needed to prepare our university for the next centennial. We will soon celebrate our 100th anniversary. Founded in 1927 as the *Roomsche Katholieke Handelshoogeschool*, we have now, almost 100 years later, grown into a flourishing medium-sized university in the humanities and social sciences. By 2027, we will be even more internationally recognized as a leading university in social sciences and Humanities than we are now.

“WE LIVE IN A TIME WHEN EVEN THE CHANGES ARE CHANGING”

We live in a time when even the changes are changing. Researchers speak of the Anthropocene - the era in which the earth's climate and atmosphere are experiencing the effects of human activity - which poses fundamental questions to us in all areas of thought and learning within our academic community. One glaring change is the encroaching significance of **digital technology**, which has fundamental impact on the people and society we seek to understand. Digitalization also offers many new opportunities and challenges that touch the heart of our university's mission: to provide excellent academic education, to conduct outstanding and innovative

research, and to do all this in connection with a society that expects us to contribute to its development.

Over the past few months, **together with many people** from our academic community, we have discussed intensively what is needed in the coming period on the way to our special anniversary year. It was great to see that discussions about larger and smaller questions and challenges resonated within our academic community, often spurred on by contributions from external parties. The deliberation tables with highly motivated colleagues played an important role. There was an intensive connection with strategy formulation in our Schools, and many very informative and inspiring conversations were held with a random group of alumni, students, and staff. There was great enthusiasm, connection, and dedication in formulating the important questions of the future and in seeking ways in which our university can contribute to finding answers to them. There is great commitment to ensuring that, in our university, the right things happen and everyone is given opportunities.

This document is the result of this. It is entitled **Weaving Minds & Characters** and provides direction for the steps we want to take in the coming period: a current vision in which our values are central. Values that are intertwined with each other and with the university. Values that guide our behavior and choices: curious, caring, connected, and courageous.

“WE OURSELVES WANT TO BE THAT VITAL, INCLUSIVE, AND SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY”

Character development and identity have a long tradition at Tilburg University. Here, students and staff should be able to develop into responsible and socially engaged individuals in freedom and mutual solidarity, partly because, during their time at Tilburg University, they can also

actively explore topics such as culture, philosophy, and religion. Character development requires the acquisition of intellectual independence, self-reflection, social and scientific responsibility, critical attitude, moral awareness, and entrepreneurial spirit. Characters are formed in an open dialogue, with sincere and curious attention for each other’s opinions and backgrounds. In this dialogue, we constantly question and challenge each other based on shared values. We are a university that continues to build on its foundations by conducting research in a contemporary and innovative way and by giving shape to academic involvement in social issues. In doing so, we explicitly look beyond the current generation and are not afraid to reflect on difficult dilemmas. We feel responsible for a valuable society, rich in values. We believe in the power of connection.

In determining the Strategy towards 2027, we are guided by the question of what is needed to prepare our university for the future of the next centennial. We know what we consider important, but it is also clear that those things that happen around us have a major influence on us.

Social and technological changes strongly influence the structure of our education, research, and organization. However, we are also critical of the spirit of the times, and we set our own course with our own compass. Amidst all this turbulence, we want to be a university with a safe working and study environment, where staff and students work together and get to know each other and each other’s disciplines out of curiosity. We want to be an **attractive employer**, with an enterprising organization and responsible funding. An employer that takes care of employees and students, fosters their curiosity, and encourages boldness in connection with each other. In doing so, as a university, we ourselves also want to be that **vital, inclusive, and sustainable community**. A community in which we cherish differences.

We opt for a **rolling strategy**. This means that we do not commit ourselves to action plans and programs for the next six years. We are being challenged to set the course in a context in which much remains uncertain. We want to learn from the actions we take, respond to developments, and anticipate changes. This Strategy offers guidance for this and serves as an invitation to Schools, Divisions, and staff to contribute in an engaged way to the further development and realization of the Strategy. So that, in 2027, we are ready for a new century of Tilburg University.

Executive Board and Deans



“THE METAPHOR OF “INTERWOVENNESS”
IS IN KEEPING WITH THE DNA OF
TILBURG AS A TEXTILE CITY”

WEAVING CHARACTER

This strategy is built on four threads: our values curious, caring, connected and courageous. Values that we want to come to life in the many activities we undertake. In **coherence**, our values form strong threads that are interwoven. Within a university, many connections converge, internally with each other, and in addition worldwide, European, regional, urban and with the districts and neighborhoods that surround us. Our strength and ambition reside in the “interweaving” of these connections. These individual threads together form an unbreakable cable.

“OUR VALUES AND ACTIVITIES ARE INTERWOVEN”

We symbolize this visually with the creative work of Tilburg artist Sigrid Calon. In our education building CUBE, you can admire her artwork called **Weaving Character**. In it, the university’s educational vision (knowledge, skills, character) is expressed in an abstract way. It is striking that it also relates to the ideas of the founders of the *Roomsche Katholieke Handelshoogeschool*. Rectors Magnifici such as Thomas Goossens, Frans Weve, Han Kaag, and Martinus Cobbenhagen saw the university as an ‘interwoven’ community of lecturers, students, and alumni. They advocated a broad education, in scientific, social, and Catholic terms.

Weaving Character also symbolizes a creative expression in which our vision’s important “threads” are “interwoven” in our Strategy: the value mix, collaboration, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary, sustainability, ecosystems, complexity (research), artificial intelligence, digital sciences, hybrid working, diversity, disentanglement, to name a few. We show the interwovenness with our Schools’ plans in the text boxes, which appear later in this document.

The metaphor of “Interwovenness” is in keeping with the DNA of Tilburg as a textile city: the textile industry played a prominent role in the creation and development of the city. Calon’s work consists of 30 woven “flags” and is developed in close collaboration with Tilburg University and the *TextielLab*. The flags are based on elements from the university’s logo from which numerous form compositions can be made. This expresses the idea that characters can be formed but vary by nature.

In short, the artwork **Weaving Character** refers to the interweaving of characters, of the university community and its surroundings. Together they form the colorful tapestry of our community.



WE ARE BEING
CHALLENGED



WE ARE BEING CHALLENGED

We are being challenged. By our staff and students. We are ambitious and want to be and remain a good and pleasant university. Therefore, we all reflect on what it actually means to be a good university and what it requires of our students, staff, partners, and society in this day and age. Our **response to the pandemic** shows that we were able to adjust our education and research thanks to the enthusiastic efforts of many. The feeling was reinforced among many that we were doing something new, together, that will continue to be important in the future; new combinations, new possibilities. To prepare our students for the future. What is striking is their optimism, curiosity, commitment and sense of community. There is reason for optimism: our Schools, institutes, professors, researchers, lecturing staff, students, and alumni are more motivated than ever to shape our university, of which they are the vital cores.

“WE ARE FACING SOCIAL CLIMATE CHANGES”

We are being challenged. In a world in which both inside and outside of the university penetrating and therefore fundamental questions about the **future of society** are being asked. Themes such as sustainability, digital society, peace and security, migration, democracy and the rule of law, social cohesion, economic and social development, healthcare, and the role of Europe are of vital importance to both science and society. It is a time of major changes. We are confronted with a change in our **physical climate** and with poorly understood forms of **social climate changes**. Pressing issues are emerging. Breakthroughs in scientific knowledge are created by new research possibilities, driven by digitalization, and affect not only science but also society. A society that we want to continue to understand and contribute to as a university.

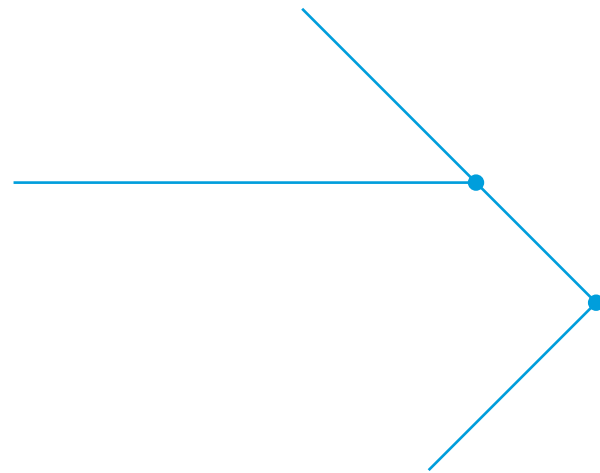
Tilburg University employees and students want to be at the forefront of finding answers to the many complex social changes respond to the many changes we are facing. We also want to set an example in the **sustainability** of our campus and our activities based on our responsibility to society.

We are being challenged as an institution of higher education and research. We have to calibrate our way of working in light of new opportunities, such as **digitalization** and the **wide availability of data** and challenges such as the need for **cyber security**, but also take action against the high workload of staff and students. Competition will continue to grow, especially as new parties join us, enabled by technological developments in (global) digital education and broad access to data. We expect changes in the regulations regarding funding, the loan system, and internationalization. We will need to respond more quickly to those changes, especially to be able to partially steer them ourselves.

We want to inspire, equip, and invite our employees and students to ensure that their talents can fully blossom. This requires **more variety** in career paths and sustainable employability. To keep the quality of our education and research high and relevant, **more collaboration** is needed, preferably **interdisciplinary**. This sometimes requires leaving the safe comfort zones of our own disciplines. However, this also offers opportunities to be extra curious and to explore new methods and techniques for understanding society. All this requires the ability and willingness to know and acknowledge each other's talents, to create connections and encounters, to stimulate a sense of community, and to offer an attractive work and study climate. **Diversity**, inclusion, and a safe working and study environment (social safety) are essential but not self-evident yet.

We are being challenged. The increasing shortage and new demands on the labor market require a sharp focus on attracting and retaining **talent**. We also need to think about how we can be an attractive employer and how we can foster a pleasant and inspiring academic working climate. We ask all employees to work on **personal leadership** through self-reflection, self-awareness, flexibility, and taking responsibility for their own development.

We are being challenged. We want to educate students to be responsible individuals and leaders of the future. Leaders who reflect on **fulfillment** and their roles as human beings in society. Thinking about this has been in our university's DNA since the early years. This thinking is nourished by the **Catholic tradition** in which we are rooted and want to remain loyal to in an open way. It may inspire and challenge our research and education in the search for relevant answers. Thinking about and believing in the importance of **human dignity**, which has inspired us from the very beginning, helps us to give our university and our science their own and critical positions in this changing society, also in our time. Therefore, we translate this challenge into an extensive opportunity for **dialogue and debate** within our academic community. The values that we explicitly refer to as being ours in the following chapter play an important role in this.



“THINKING ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN DIGNITY HELPS US GIVE SCIENCE ITS OWN CRITICAL POSITION”



VALUES WE
WANT TO
WORK WITH

VALUES WE WANT TO WORK WITH

In the run-up to this Strategy, we have, in dialogue, identified four values that we want to make central to the way we think and act at our university. These values will enable us to tackle the rapidly changing and challenging world and will guide our strategic choices in the years ahead. They inspire and set standards for the responsible people with character that we educate and wish to be. Values guide our actions, our choices, our individual and collective responsibilities, and our future. They are rooted in a long tradition and indicate what it means to be part of Tilburg University. We want to “live up to” our values.

THE VALUES WE STRIVE FOR ARE:

- **Curious.** **We want to be curious.** We are essentially curious and always in search of new and fundamental knowledge and insights. We believe in the importance of fundamental and free research and want to invest in it. We are interested in the still unknown, and we realize the importance of collaborating with other disciplines. We are curious about the new possibilities that digitalization offers us to study people and society.
- **Caring.** **We want to be caring,** respecting each other and our environment. We draw strength from our differences. Human dignity and sustainability are the basis for our decisions and our actions. We fully realize that the position of the weakest in society are very vulnerable and that the ecological issues are enormous. They require us to take responsibility for keeping society and the earth livable for the generations to come.

- **Connected.** **We want to be connected** with each other, with society, with other disciplines, and other cultures. We embrace variety and multiple perspectives and recognize and value each other. In our work and our studies, we learn from other disciplines. We stand for the connection between research and education. Our knowledge finds its way into the regional, national, and international ecosystems to which we are linked.

- **Courageous.** **We want to be courageous** in thought and action. Critical, independent, and decisive: the academic spirit and the independence of academic education and research are essential values in this. We dare to go against established views. We trust each other, challenge each other, and give each other space, also to make mistakes and learn from them. We have the courage to deviate.

These core values form the basis for how we treat each other. They permeate all policies, whether in education, research, leadership, or the design of our organization.

“VALUES INSPIRE AND SET STANDARDS FOR
THE RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE OF CHARACTER WE
EDUCATE AND ASPIRE TO BE”




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CURIOUS: WE WANT TO BE CURIOUS



We want to be curious. The university community is curious by definition. This applies to all employees, students, and alumni and for our researchers in particular. The pursuit of high quality is central to our commitment to research and education. Those who study at Tilburg University can educate themselves to become knowledgeable, self-confident, and committed academics, who want to understand society and play a role in it.

“ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND DATA SCIENCE ARE IMPORTANT BUILDING BLOCKS FOR INNOVATION IN RESEARCH”

We stimulate curiosity through our unique educational profile in which three core concepts are central: **knowledge, skills, and character**. We want Tilburg University students and alumni to distinguish themselves from those of other universities because in their education much attention is paid to intellectual independence, a critical attitude, scientific and social responsibility, and entrepreneurship. They are thus well equipped to further develop their talents, increase their knowledge, and contribute constructively to society.

DIGITAL SCIENCES FOR SOCIETY

We want to be curious. **Digitalization** in society is an enormous engine for innovation. Digitalization offers opportunities to do things smarter and differently, or to do totally new things. Of course, there are questions. For example, the question of how we standardize the ownership and availability of an ever-increasing quantity of personal data. How do we ensure that our data is properly protected? How do we prevent digitalization from taking place at the expense of important values such as equality, and democracy?

Digital sciences and **social sciences & humanities** are, in our view, inextricably interwoven, and this has a direct impact on how we conduct our research, design our education, and are socially relevant. It is impossible to think of technology in isolation from the social and societal context that both generates and uses its applications. This interwovenness will also change our university's profile: studying people and society can no longer be done without a profound knowledge of the fundamental interaction between (digital) technology and society. From our ambition to research society and make it better for citizens and businesses, it is necessary to integrate technological (digital) sciences in research and education.

Strategy 2027 Tilburg School of Humanities and Digital Sciences and Tilburg School of Social and Behavioral Sciences

TSHD and TSB focus on the further development of digital sciences, with strong roots in the humanities and social sciences, and on the further development of humanities and social sciences with digital sciences.

The collection and analysis of data, and their contribution to new knowledge, are changing rapidly. Research **methodologies and techniques** are developing at a fast pace and are not failing to affect our Schools and disciplines. From theology to econometrics, from psychology to law: in both the object and methodology of research, digitalization is going to determine scientific activities and thinking more than ever. This not only creates risks but also offers great opportunities. It is our ambition to be at the forefront of this innovation of fundamental and applied research. Digitalization provides new opportunities to study society: the digital Durkheim works in Tilburg. We also want to be an internationally authoritative university in social sciences & humanities and broaden the portfolio of research methodologies and techniques within our fields of science.

Digitalization also permeates the content of our education and what we offer students. We are, therefore, going to offer a **basic course in digital sciences** for every student, possibly an **interschool** program in which all Schools contribute a perspective on digital sciences (and thus make this attractive to all students). The basic knowledge extends beyond a specific programming language; it also concerns models and concepts behind such a language or the technology in a more generic sense, and ways of thinking (computational thinking). Digitalization and its effects will become part of the broad philosophy education and formation that every student already receives.

We see that the development and generation of data is no longer the exclusive domain of science. For scientists, the focus is increasingly shifting from “developing data” to “**accessing and unlocking data**.” We have a good relationship with Centerdata and sometimes our own longitudinal research. We want to strengthen this further. We will better equip our scientists to work with high-quality data by investing in a large-scale infrastructure for research data (including a data platform and, where necessary, a biobank). We are going to make greater use of our Research Data Office for this purpose.

Strategy 2027 Tilburg School of Social and Behavioral Sciences

We want to enhance the research environment for developing, sharing, and applying digital sciences methods by investing in an infrastructure that supports data-intensive research.

Our ambition is to use our knowledge of the scientific fields of digital sciences and social sciences & humanities to solve social issues. This comes together in the new **platform Digital Sciences for Society**. In this way, we are strengthening the profile of Tilburg University and social sciences & humanities as well as our portfolio in the field of digital sciences. More than before, we are seeking to collaborate with public and private partners. We also involve our good collaboration in Mindlabs and in the Jheronimus Academy of Data Sciences (JADS). We are setting up a **Digital Competence Center** to make the available knowledge and expertise more readily available to each other.



“WE ARE GOING
TO OFFER A
BASIC DIGITAL
SCIENCES COURSE
FOR EVERY
STUDENT”

LIFELONG DEVELOPMENT

We want to be curious. In a fast-moving society, we see more than ever the task of continuing to develop and share knowledge, to remain curious throughout life. **Lifelong Development (LLD)** is our fourth core task (next to research, education and Impact). We do this together in our academic community. In the coming years, we want to significantly increase the share of postgraduate education. Digitalization enables us to offer globally recognized niche courses, certainly to our alumni but also to new target groups that are sometimes literally far removed from the university.

In Tilburg you can graduate, but you are never done studying. The alma mater continues to nurture you. We strive for a distinctive, competitive, and coherent range of lifelong development possibilities with which we give substance to our social task to share knowledge and generate impact. **Lifelong development activities** are in line with our disciplinary research strengths and the interdisciplinary social themes with which the university creates a distinct profile. Market demand not only determines the optimal range of activities but also the continuous interaction between inside-out and outside-in, between research drive and social need.

“LIFELONG DEVELOPMENT WILL BE OUR FOURTH CORE TASK”

We support our lecturers, Departments and Schools in being active in lifelong learning. We reorient the relationship with **TIAS Business School** to that end. The campuses in Tilburg, Den Bosch, and Utrecht offer ample opportunities to do so, as does the collaboration with the TU Eindhoven in TIAS. We also benefit from the experience gained with JADS. It is our ambition to provide the Brabant ecosystem with new knowledge. We are part of Midpoint Brabant, Brainport, but also the rest of the world can count on us. We are going to discover and serve a world.

We see **Lifelong Development** not just as an educational activity but also as a special service for those who need specific support. Think of student orientation and career development, student-centered learning paths, modular curricula, digital learning platforms, and target group-oriented marketing. To ensure its embedding, Tilburg University is working towards a unit that supports and directs the development, production, and marketing of LLD initiatives in close collaboration and coordination with the Schools and TIAS.

Strategy TIAS School for Business & Society

We are gradually working towards a modular curriculum within the education portfolio, whereby in the future, participants will be given the opportunity to design (parts of) their own curriculum based on composition, sequence, and entry moment. To realize this, TIAS will invest in its digital infrastructure in the coming years, and we have already started redesigning our program and curriculum structure.

LABOR MARKET AND SOCIETY ORIENTATION

We want to be curious. Research among Bachelor's students (Bachelor Outflow Survey, Tilburg University, 2021) shows that **labor market orientation** is very important. Therefore, we want to strengthen the connection with and orientation on the labor market, and we will establish a **mobility window** in all our programs with three variants: an international experience, an interdisciplinary emphasis, or labor market orientation. It will be possible to do an internship or practical assignment.

Strategy Tilburg School of Catholic Theology

Under the motto Understanding Society, the School of Theology displays a focus on the problem of philosophical fragmentation and questions of identity. It pursues “religious literacy” and aims to deliver alumni whose expertise on religion contributes to policy makers, the media, NGOs, and the sectors of education and care.

The Executive Board is curious about student input in decision-making. For this reason, we are planning to add a **student assessor** to the Board. The student assessor will bring the student perspective to Executive Board meetings and will act as a bridge between the student assessors in the Schools, the student organizations, and the student parties in the University Council. The Executive Board also attaches great importance to input from the societal field. Therefore, a Societal Advisory Board will be established to advise the Executive Board on issues concerning the social embedding of the university.

“WE WILL INVITE A STUDENT ASSESSOR TO JOIN THE EXECUTIVE BOARD”

BLENDED LEARNING IN THE TILBURG EDUCATIONAL PROFILE

Tilburg University offers a varied, coherent package of degree programs that equip students with knowledge, skills, and character, based on our **Educational Vision**. This Educational Vision will be maintained in the coming period, and we will try to integrate it even better into the degree programs.

We will continue to renew our **portfolio of study programs**, taking a critical look at our existing range and identifying opportunities to improve quality. We continue to maintain education in core disciplines, and these have a permanent place in our range of programs. However, in renewing our portfolio, we also follow the lines of the Strategy. That is why we stimulate programs that arise from collaborations between Schools and are interdisciplinary.

Strategy 2027 Tilburg School of Humanities and Digital Sciences

TSHD wants to play a central role in the development and implementation of blended learning with didactically sound combinations of physical and online education. We see blended learning as a way to give shape to the core principles of the TEP (Tilburg Educational Profile).

In the **international classroom** we strive for better connection between our Dutch and international students. In some cases, they still have too little contact with each other. While that very contact makes an independent contribution to the quality of our study programs. Internationalization is not a goal in itself, so institutional tuition fees must cover the full cost. Waivers are an exception and only to boost the quality of the study program.

“WE WILL DEVELOP A COMMON PLATFORM FOR INNOVATION IN EDUCATION”

The pandemic has forced universities to offer education online. Online education can enhance the quality and flexibility of our education in some cases, but we cherish the added value of campus education. We deploy digitalization with the aim of further improving the quality of our education. The **Blended Learning model** allows students to acquire much of the required knowledge and insights by guided independent studying, alone or in groups, and at the time and place of their choice. The contact moment on campus can then be used for deepening the dialogue between students and lecturers, learning to apply knowledge, and reviewing the most challenging parts of the subject matter. The improvement of the (academic) quality of education is paramount here: we ensure that blending does not become blurring.

We recognize and value the importance of education and will support the lecturers even more than now in the design and implementation of their education and offer them opportunities to use innovation to strengthen their education and further develop their professionalism. We will do this by means of a common **platform** in which the positive experiences gained with the Digital Education Enhancement Program (DEEP) can be continued. This platform, which provides support locally in the School, gives shape to the collaboration of various Divisions and Schools (professionalization, support, innovation, and research).



A photograph of three people walking along a dirt path in a forest. On the left, a woman in a green sweater and blue jeans holds a tablet. In the center, a woman in a bright yellow coat walks. On the right, a man in a blue denim jacket and black pants holds a notebook. The scene is overlaid with a white geometric pattern of lines and dots. The text 'CARING: WE WANT TO BE CARING' is positioned in the upper right area.

CARING:
WE WANT
TO BE CARING

CARING: WE WANT TO BE CARING

We want to be caring. We want to understand and study society (Understanding Society) but also contribute to solving complex social issues. That is what drives us. One of Tilburg University's founders, Martinus Cobbenhagen, believed that anyone who wants to understand society must be actively and consciously involved in it. These ideas still form the basis of our university. We want our students to be on the edge of their seats.

Our university community is made up of responsible thinkers and doers. The education, research, and our initiatives for social significance have meaning for a valuable society. A society where everyone can participate and lead the good life.

“WE WANT TO PLAY A ROLE IN THE FIELD OF SUSTAINABILITY, CARE, WELL-BEING & HEALTH, AND IN THE ISSUE OF INEQUALITY”

Tilburg University also promotes emancipation, which is why we have traditionally offered ample opportunities for graduates from universities of applied sciences to transfer to Master's programs. Many do, and often excellently. We are proud of that. We ensure that they can continue to follow the **pre-Master programs**. A **part-time Master's** is being considered. We want to communicate this route even more clearly to young people who, due to their background, do not automatically make the step to university.

A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

We want to be caring. This means that Tilburg University offers students and staff a place to develop academically and personally, in an inclusive and diverse community that encourages students to think about and discuss the challenges they and society face. A community where we know and value each other.

Strategy 2027 Tilburg School of Catholic Theology

As a small-scale School, TST not only emphasizes Recognition & Rewards and careful interaction with one another, but it also continues to expand its expertise in the field of spiritual care, in collaboration with other disciplines.

Within Tilburg University we strive for a socially **safe environment** based on openness, integrity, trust, and transparency, elaborated in the connected leadership philosophy. We continuously engage in dialogue, listening to each other and being open to each other. The opinion of others sharpens our own thoughts and encourages (self-)reflection, so that, together, we may arrive at better insights. We encourage collaboration based on diversity, within our university, nationally, and internationally. Where collaboration does not go well, an **ombuds officer** can mediate. An inclusive organization makes optimal use of the talents and expertise of all employees.

This means, among other things, that initiatives regarding **diversity and inclusion** will be continued and will be given a broader perspective in the coming years. In addition to gender, this includes characteristics such as nationality, ethnicity, color, sexual orientation, social background, age, people with special needs, and religion or philosophy of life. Awareness and enhancement of our intercultural knowledge and skills contributes to realizing an inclusive way of thinking, communicating, and acting.

Our **PhD researchers** form an important and vulnerable group within our community. In the coming years, we want to focus on **well-being**, including **work pressure**, social safety, the successful completion of the PhD program, and education for PhD researchers. We enable PhD researchers to obtain their **University Teaching Qualification (UTQ)**. Furthermore, we reinforce the training of supervisors of PhD researchers.



Strategy 2022-2027 Tilburg School of Humanities and Digital Sciences

TSHD is going to facilitate and encourage sustainable research. Sustainable research and education conducted and offered by intrinsically motivated scientists increases the vitality of Departments and the School. They would like research time and education time to be more in balance. This would ensure the quality of research and education as well as the well-being of the staff.

We continue our efforts to promote mental well-being for all. We pay more attention to **student well-being**. There is a clear vision, and several activities have been started and support set up regarding prevention and detection, but we can do better. In the coming period, we make time and space for additional initiatives together with students.

We want to be caring. With our values we strive to embed **Recognition & Rewards** and **Connected Leading** in the realization of the desired (cultural) change. Recognition & Rewards and Connected Leading are brought together under the heading **Use (y)our Talents**: a vision of talent development aimed at all employees. We invest in talent management and development, with a focus on promotion policy but also on horizontal development. What we have built up with Connected Leading, we will maintain and expand. We integrate elements of Recognition & Rewards, offer extra support in team development, and pay attention to diversity, inclusion, and social safety. For scientific staff, we are developing models for career paths that integrate the various domains-education, research, social impact, leadership, and team spirit.

Strategy 2027 Tilburg Law School

TLS is committed to the efforts to implement the Recognition & Rewards philosophy within the university and School. This offers opportunities for individual colleagues and makes us stronger as a collective.

We each excel in our own (professional) field and consult each other. The different talents complement each other, so that we achieve our goals as a team and as individuals. We consider **talent** over the full career span and have an eye for the different phases in a career. From the perspective of sustainable employability, we develop a policy for all our staff regarding continuous development. For our lecturers, offering education as well as conducting research is the norm.

We stimulate a culture of continuous **feedback, reflection, and open dialogue** and coach managers to engage in this dialogue. We promote collaboration in (interdisciplinary) teams, across the boundaries of organizational units, in which everyone contributes based on their own roles and talents. We strive for diversity in teams and exploit the diversity and complementarity. We recognize and value team players. We hold ourselves and each other responsible and call each other to account for our behavior. Managers play an important role in realizing this culture change and in facilitating and stimulating collaboration within a team.

“WE BRING RECOGNITION & REWARDS AND CONNECTED LEADING TOGETHER UNDER THE HEADING USE (Y)OUR TALENTS: A VISION ON TALENT DEVELOPMENT AIMED AT ALL EMPLOYEES”

Special attention is given to the secondary school **teacher training** programs. It is important that we deliver academically trained teachers who inspire secondary school pupils with high quality education and guide them towards an academic education. Given the labor market, there is every reason to invest heavily in collaboration with partners such as OMO, Fontys, and Avans, and possibly with other universities in the south of the country.

We want to be caring. We want to work on the continuous development of our staff and develop a policy on (international) staff mobility within and outside the academy. We facilitate not only vertical but also horizontal development and mobility. We have an eye for different career paths. When developing models for career paths for scientific staff, we take a switch into account during their careers. We coach **managers** to have a good and honest conversation.

To strengthen the social bonds and community spirit among employees, we are going to renew the **onboarding program**. Right from the start, new employees are introduced to our four core values, Tilburg University’s culture, and (online) collaboration in teams. A good introduction ensures that the new employees bond with colleagues and our university community. During the onboarding both the social, functional, and organizational aspects of working at Tilburg University are addressed.

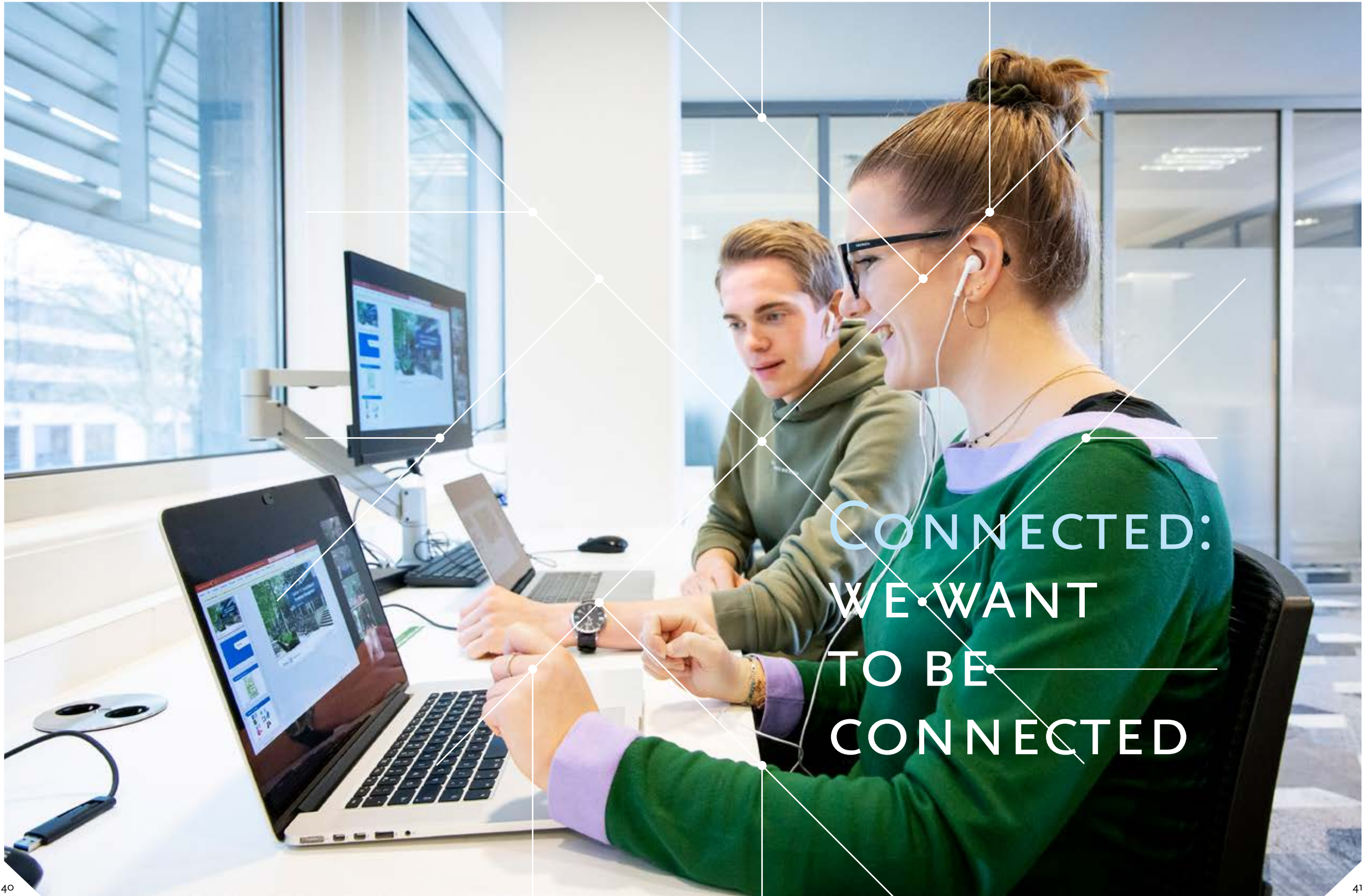
“ONBOARDING: RIGHT FROM THE START, NEW EMPLOYEES ARE INTRODUCED TO OUR FOUR CORE VALUES”

HEALTHY CAMPUS AND HOUSING

We want to be caring. In the context of **Healthy Campus**, we provide a campus where healthy behavior is made easier by a good range of healthy foods and sports facilities. We are exploring opportunities to strengthen nature management and conservation. We create a campus that stimulates and facilitates a sense of community, encounters, connection between students, and collaboration in interdisciplinary teams.

We want to be caring. Finding good affordable **housing** for students is becoming increasingly difficult. Although student housing is not formally our responsibility, we feel it is. Given the major shortage, we will be even more actively involved in quickly realizing the supply, and we want to bring the covenant agreements in line with our growth expectations. We are investigating whether investing in student housing ourselves can help to increase the realization pace. We have agreements with the major parties in Tilburg to increase the supply. For the period 2020–2024, the goal was to realize 1,900 housing units for students; we will recalibrate this goal based on the latest growth figures. **Student housing** is not only an urgent quantitative task, but also one of quality, suitability, and location in relation to a changing student population. It is desirable to develop units that promote this as well as a wider range of housing units with communal areas or units where congregation is facilitated. In terms of pricing, the top end of the market now seems well provided for in the city; actions should now be focused on people of modest means.

“INVESTING IN STUDENT HOUSING OURSELVES POSSIBLY HELPS TO INCREASE THE REALIZATION PACE”



CONNECTED:
WE WANT
TO BE
CONNECTED

CONNECTED: WE WANT TO BE CONNECTED

We want to be connected. Connected to our environment, connected within our university. The university is a network of connections and ex officio connected to multiple environments, such as to our colleagues within the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (UNL) and fellow universities in Europe and elsewhere in the world. We cherish connections with the NWO, KNAW and with the province of North Brabant, the region In Midpoint Brabant, our city Tilburg, and with various alliances supported by our scientists within and beyond our national borders.

We intensify the collaboration with the Elisabeth-Tweesteden Hospital (ETZ). Within TIAS School for Business and Society and Brainport, we work together with the Technical University in Eindhoven, and are proud of our joint activity within JADS in 's-Hertogenbosch.

External connections require connections on our campus: always fueled by the desire to conduct better research through collaboration, to provide better education, or to better serve society, for example, through postgraduate education. Two focal points stand out: a stronger commitment to European connections and a greater commitment to connections between disciplines.

We want to be connected. We can be even more meaningful if we allow strong disciplines to work together on an interdisciplinary basis. In this way, knowledge will add up to outcomes for issues that matter. In our steering, we take differences into account and stimulate collaboration. We provide frameworks and direction, and within these frameworks we give space and trust to the professionals within our community.

Strategy TIAS School for Business & Society

To realize its strategic priorities, TIAS considers it essential to pursue closer interschool collaboration with the Tilburg University Schools. To this end, in the future, we will focus on inspiring collaboration in research activities that are characterized by a strong social character, and which fit seamlessly into the TIAS's business & society signature.

“STUDYING PROBLEMS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF MULTIPLE DISCIPLINES”

Perspectives from different disciplines provide a broader understanding of a subject. If **multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research** is to be truly groundbreaking, a solid basis in strong disciplinary research is needed. This basis forms the core of our university, and we want to strengthen it further. More **collaboration between disciplines and Schools** is needed: also breakthroughs in fundamental knowledge require surprising connections.

Strategy 2027 Tilburg Law School

The complexity of social issues requires teamwork, both within the academic world and beyond. TLS is committed to collaboration within and between the Signature Plans, with other Tilburg University Schools and with sister faculties within and outside the Netherlands.

Under the motto of “broad prosperity,” we combine strong disciplines and specifically focus on three interdisciplinary research themes: 1) the **sustainability transition**, 2) **inequality**, and 3) **health and well-being**, which we link integrally with our research. These broad social themes are not unique, but we study them with a clear Tilburg signature, namely from four **change-creating mechanisms**: legislation and regulation, markets and organizations, society and citizens, and technology and data.

Thinking about broad prosperity also benefits from critical reflection on apparent certainties and self-evident truths. We realize that, as a society, we are faced with profound choices but see that it is not easy. Some interpret our time as a time of dawdling. To stimulate independent groundbreaking thinking, we are exploring whether interdisciplinary research on imperative and far-reaching decision-making can contribute to the Academic Collaborative Center Broad Prosperity.

A substantial part of the budget for education and research is made available to **interschool programs**. We opt for a clear program and adapt our allocation of resources and working methods accordingly. Together with the Schools, we aim for a percentage of at least 10% interdisciplinary research across the entire scope of the university.

We want to be connected. **Team science** is becoming increasingly important and standard practice in our research areas. Research teams with different specialties and from different locations work together to tackle contemporary research questions. However, current valuation systems and profiles are not always suitable for recording or rewarding the contributions of individuals to team science projects. We make new agreements about this within Recognition & Rewards.

“BREAKTHROUGHS IN KNOWLEDGE CALL FOR SURPRISING CONNECTIONS”

Together with our partners, we want to strengthen our social relevance. This takes place in part within initiatives that we provisionally refer to as **Academic Innovation Hubs**. In such arrangements, our researchers and students work together with strategic partners in co-creation on solutions to major social issues. We are currently exploring this in the areas of social energy transition, inclusive labor market, and digital health. These hubs and themes give substance and contribute to broad prosperity, aimed at achieving a society with equal opportunities and employment, a sustainable living environment, and sufficient economic growth. Digitalization - human centered and accessible to all - also plays a crucial role in all hubs.

Strategy 2027 Tilburg School of Social and Behavioral Sciences

TSB commits itself to the efforts within Tilburg University to strengthen the collaboration between academic and external partners in research. Therefore, TSB wants to invest in setting up academic collaboration centers.

“TOGETHER WITH OUR PARTNERS, WE WANT TO STRENGTHEN OUR SOCIAL IMPACT ”

We want to conduct research into methodologies of interdisciplinary research, and therefore, on the occasion of our next anniversary, we will establish a **chair of Interdisciplinary Studies**, which will also nurture an associated platform. High-quality interdisciplinary research from all over the world will be published on this open science site. Together with the Board of Deans, the chair will give shape to a **Tilburg Platform of Interdisciplinary Studies**. The chair will be launched during an international conference on our ambitions in the field of interdisciplinary research and education.

RESEARCH NETWORKS

We want to be connected. Over the past strategic period, we have invested in establishing a **grant support** office, but more is needed. More than other universities, we depend on income from tuition and government funding. We are committed to a differentiated external funding strategy. With a differentiated approach to **service delivery**, looking at the profile of the researcher and research groups, we want a better alignment with grant support. We combine the basic expertise (knowledge of funding programs and the conditions of calls) with tailor-made advice. For example, collaborative grants require knowledge of the research lines and obstacles for the coordinator must be identified and resolved, together with the Schools. It is important to learn from successes and to share knowledge and experience throughout the organization, not only through grant support but also among scientists.

We are going to **participate more actively** in national and international research networks by identifying important opportunities for Tilburg University researchers and by unlocking information about awarded grants, awards, and knowledge and experience.

“WE WILL ESTABLISH A CHAIR OF INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES AT OUR NEXT ANNIVERSARY”

The acquisition of grants and other **external resources** will form an important part of our appointment and promotion requirements. This includes the recognition and support of the work involved in the preparation, for example, in terms of range of tasks and in Recognition and Rewards. In this way, we will be working toward a situation in which more and more PhD researchers are funded from external sources and the share of our resources from the second and third money streams has grown significantly.

Strategy 2022-2027 Tilburg School of Economics and Management

We continue to proactively support our departments in identifying opportunities and developing proposals for obtaining research grants.

We deploy **fundraising** as part of a differentiated external funding strategy. We will identify opportunities for fundraising and how these resources can strengthen our research agenda. In this way, we identify the themes and research lines for which fundraising offers a promising perspective.

JOINT VENTURES

We want to be connected. We collaborate with **local and regional parties and networks**. We do the same in a European context with our partners in the European University ENGAGE network. We want to expand the (social) entrepreneurship of our employees and students in the Tilburg Spoorzone, and we continue to support them with our **IQONIC** entrepreneurship program. We reinforce the culture of collaboration with companies, (regional) governments, societal parties, citizens, and other stakeholders. Effective participation in ecosystems requires steadfast choices and policies, the creation of the right conditions, and good coordination, not only with parties in the ecosystem but also between levels at our university.

For us, the **Tilburg Municipality** is an important partner. Together we want to contribute to the further development of the city. This takes shape in a collaborative agenda where themes such

as student housing, culture & inclusion, and the knowledge district are included. Together, we will also invest in the city by doing research in the neighborhoods. To this end, we are setting up a joint research program.

“CONNECTIONS AND ENCOUNTERS ARE ESSENTIAL”

GREEN AND LIVELY CAMPUS

We are connected. Our **campus** is a vibrant and green environment; a safe and open environment. To work together effectively and to know and acknowledge each other's talents, connections and encounters are essential. Because the physical meetings during the coronavirus pandemic have strongly decreased, we have become even more aware of the value of the **community feeling**. To some extent, we will take the campus home with us. We want to continue to meet each other in a community where we work and study in a more hybrid manner. We are committed to developing a hybrid green campus for larger groups of students, staff, and alumni, where we focus even more than now on **encounters and dialogue**.

We are going to start programming **cultural events on campus** in the evenings and at weekends again to reinforce encounters with our surroundings/neighbors. We will examine what additional facilities are needed for this. We feel a special responsibility for art, culture, and the stimulation of a broad education. This happens, for example, at Studium Generale.

Hybrid working can be more pleasant and sustainable for individual employees. This requires that teams consciously choose what they can do remotely and when they can meet on campus. Physical meetings at work remain important, for example, to enable the chance exchange of ideas. A campus that invites people from different disciplines, Departments, and Schools to meet each other. In the context of social cohesion, we will continue to use and maintain our digital communities for students, staff, and alumni.

The **campus development** in Den Bosch, Utrecht, and Tilburg (center) must be in line with our working methods and quality standards. Blended education, interdisciplinary research, hybrid working, and entrepreneurship will be facilitated. We are investigating the possibility of shared research facilities, if necessary, in a new building.



COURAGEOUS:
WE WANT
TO BE
COURAGEOUS

COURAGEOUS: WE WANT TO BE COURAGEOUS



We want to be courageous. Being courageous means setting goals that may raise the question: are they realistic? However, noblesse oblige, investing in an academic spirit requires room for entrepreneurial thinking, for the possibility of exploring avenues with questions that sometimes remain questions for a very long time. In a world where much is changing, we cannot enter the future with only a rear-view mirror. The road ahead is also full of uncertain bends. Everyone must then have the courage to make decisions, to write proposals that forego existing paths for now. That is a university's *raison d'être*: to explore new paths from an independent spirit.

By 2027 we will be **internationally recognized** as a leading university in the humanities and social sciences. This is reflected, among other things, in the noticeably increased success in winning, for example, prestigious grants such as a *veni, vidi, vici*, an ERC-grant or a Spinoza Prize. It is also expressed in the realization of a higher position in the (educational) rankings that are relevant to us, achieving an excellent evaluation in visitations or by being of significance to society together with social partners. The reputation of our university will therefore have been further strengthened by 2027.

Being courageous also means **coloring outside the lines** where necessary and taking responsibility where formally there is none. We work based on trust rather than control. We dare to give students more opportunities in education and thus contribute to a broad education. We are bold to invest heavily in the student-staff ratio.

“BEING COURAGEOUS MEANS COLORING
OUTSIDE THE LINES WHERE NECESSARY”

FLEXIBILITY IN EDUCATION

Students are given the opportunity to shape the broad education within their studies. We want to make it easier to take **courses at other Schools and universities**, to do practical internships, to do fieldwork, and to work in a student team on the realization of groundbreaking products. More flexible learning pathways become possible. Barriers to this will no longer exist in five years' time.

STUDENT-STAFF RATIO

In recent years we have grown into a medium-sized university with more than 20,000 students. We aim to maintain this size in the coming years. Stabilization in **student numbers** gives us the opportunity to better secure small-scale education and quality. Due to the growth, we have experienced that our **student-staff ratio** has lagged behind. Attracting and retaining good quality staff to facilitate this growth has proven to be a major challenge. We can describe this task as a courageous one.

“FUNDING HAS NOT GROWN SUFFICIENTLY IN
TANDEM TO REDUCE THE WORKLOAD”

Compared to the number of students, our university staffing rate is low. In the coming period, we want to adjust this. Together with the Schools, we will start an ambitious program to improve the student-staff ratio. We will invest jointly. The expectation is that this will enable us to reduce the workload of our staff and improve the education of our students. **Funding** has not grown sufficiently in tandem to reduce the workload and maintain the necessary interweaving of education and research. To this end, we must abandon the often-cautious budget policy and dare to invest in the expansion of scientific staff.

SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE

We want to be courageous. We take our responsibility regarding climate change. To this end, we are setting very ambitious goals and structurally embedding sustainability in our business operations. We are aiming for a top 10 position in the Green Metric University ranking. We want to reduce the **CO₂ footprint** of our business trips to zero by 2027, and we are aiming for a rapid reduction in the use of fossil fuels. We are also thinking about generating as much energy as possible ourselves and only purchasing and catering the most sustainable products. Our central campus will thus become an incubator for sustainable climate, ecology, and energy solutions. Sustainability is also reflected in our research and education.

“OUR CAMPUS BECOMES AN INCUBATOR FOR SUSTAINABLE CLIMATE, ECOLOGY, AND ENERGY SOLUTIONS”

We want to develop the **University College** to become more of a joint program of all Schools and the Executive Board. By opting for a strong connection to the **Sustainable Development Goals**, we will make this program sustainable in terms of both content and organization. Our ambitious goals in this respect will be further elaborated in a Sustainability Plan 2027. We are returning to sustainability as part of the “character” in our Educational Profile. The mindset of tomorrow’s leaders whom we prepare for the future at Tilburg University is nourished from a broad sustainability perspective.

CAREER PATHS AND POSITIONS

Attracting and retaining talent will determine the success of our university in the coming years. Attention to **talent development** and the creation of a pleasant academic working environment are crucial in this respect. For academic staff, we are developing models for career paths that integrate the various domains of education, research, social impact, leadership, and team spirit. The distinction between support staff and academic staff is blurring and we no longer want to use it. Where job profiles obstruct us instead of being helpful, we will let go of them.

Strategy 2022-2027 Tilburg School of Economics and Management

We retain and attract (international) top talent by ensuring:

- a strong research climate;
- an inclusive and hospitable work environment;
- facilities to support them and their families in building a life in the Netherlands

UNTANGLE AND UNBURDEN

We want to be an attractive organization, where lecturers and students can focus on what is really important and are not unnecessarily bothered with work that is primarily intended for administration and control. We are setting up an “**untangle and unburden**” program to improve all our employees’ equipment by basing our approach on trust instead of control, reducing the compartmentalization between organizational units and designing processes more efficiently. We want to eliminate a third of our internal rules and procedures. We tackle the frustrations and time-consuming activities on the work floor and see where we can **deregulate** processes. For each new or existing rule, it must be demonstrated why it is necessary and which rules can be abolished as a result. This requires above all: listening carefully to each other and not letting our people be overshadowed by systems, however useful and necessary they may be.

In the **provision of services** to our clients, we contribute ideas and apply the principle of “yes, unless.” We standardize where it brings opportunities also to reduce the workload and the burden. More attention will be paid to the design and support of our core processes: more in harmony and commonality so that more freedom and flexibility arise. The financing of education, for example, offers more possibilities for flexibility and variety. We will practice with internal budgeting that removes the obstacles to offering education that transcends Departments or Schools and to conducting interdisciplinary research. We will have to break down these barriers if we are to take real steps forward in our Strategy.



“WE WANT TO
IMPROVE THE
STUDENT-STAFF
RATIO TOGETHER
WITH THE
SCHOOLS”

We want to make university-wide, joint Education and Examination Regulations (EER), which will go into effect starting in the academic year 2023-2024. This will also give us the opportunity to enable innovative forms of education. Where customization contributes to our objectives, this will of course remain possible. Examination Boards are challenged to work with our lecturers and academic directors on new ways of recording the results of learning processes: *learning committees*.

CYBERSECURITY AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

To make good choices and manage them effectively, we are focusing on further improving **security** and **modernization information systems**, in the first place, by starting an integrated program to secure and modernize the current systems and organize them more effectively. In addition, we will join the universities in their joint endeavor to **improve internal control information** by gaining more insight into the costs of the primary process of education, research, and impact. The development of learning analytics is important in this regard. With more insight into the effect of the design of these processes on quality and efficiency, a better discussion is possible and thus a better budget, control and accountability.



GETTING STARTED

TILBURG UNIVERSITY

Goed schrijven is herschrijven en
herschrijven en herschrijven




30

GETTING STARTED

Tilburg University is an academic and therefore ambitious community. We have much to be proud of but also see that we are being challenged to further strengthen our position. This requires the ability and courage to make choices, even in an environment where much is changing and still unclear. Because if you do not dare, you do not win. We realize that a lot is asked of people. We take due account of that, but we are convinced that the course we are setting for the coming years and are bringing to effect in further decisions will be supported by the committed efforts of our people. This is essential, otherwise we will miss the boat in the next centennial. We believe that most of the values outlined are already internalized; if not, we can master them in the coming period.

This Strategy serves as an inspirational narrative, focusing on our values and providing **direction** for the steps we want to take. The Strategy is concrete in parts with clear objectives, and more descriptive in others in terms of the goal to be achieved. The intentions in the Strategy are ambitious and require a thorough and careful approach to implementation. In addition to these main points, the **design** of the relevant subjects is worked out in more detail in so-called implementation memos.





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