

# The University of Tomorrow

Green Paper of Leiden University Green Office



Universiteit  
Leiden



Leiden University  
Green Office

# Leiden University as sustainability forerunner?

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Leiden University can play an important role in solving the climate and ecological crisis. We can innovate, develop knowledge about sustainability, teach scientific insights on sustainability, and ensure that scientific insights on sustainability are used inside and outside the university setting. In addition, Leiden University can be ambitious in making its own business operations more sustainable. What does the University of Tomorrow look like?

## Education

Climate action requires that everyone can apply sustainability knowledge and skills in their field of work. After all, every study programme has a link with sustainability. We need environmental scientists, law students who can write the new environmental law, economists and administrators who can write effective policies, and psychologists who can design behavioural interventions for greener choices.

### At the University of Tomorrow...

- ▷ All students gain the knowledge and experience that links their subject of study to the theme of sustainability;
- ▷ Students work on solving practical sustainability issues within the university and outside of it during their university study;
- ▷ The range of electives, minors, bachelors and masters on sustainability is expanded considerably;
- ▷ Students are stimulated to do their internship at sustainable companies and organisations;
- ▷ Teachers are supported in applying sustainability in existing and new curriculums, where desirable;
- ▷ Sustainability will be integrated in a way that suits the university: decentralized and free.

## Research

Scientific research has enabled us to understand the climate crisis and other ecological problems. Developing knowledge about sustainability issues is not only crucial to understand these crises, but also to formulate solutions.

### At the University of Tomorrow...

- ▷ More research is being done on sustainability themes from different (inter)disciplinary perspectives;
- ▷ The university is using its first flow of funds to stimulate research into sustainability themes;
- ▷ The second and third streams of funding are secured by carrying out socially relevant research into sustainability.

## Making an Impact

Scientific information on sustainability should be easily accessible to all and widely disseminated. In this manner, spreading scientific insights on sustainability can have a significant impact on society.

### At the University of Tomorrow...

- ▷ Scientific knowledge about sustainability is freely presented to decision-makers in governments, companies, and NGOs in simple and multiple languages;

- ▷ Members of the university community present themselves as advocates of science in the public climate debate;
- ▷ The university gives a clear signal that it is taking science seriously by declaring a climate emergency;
- ▷ Staff are encouraged to make an impact with their research;
- ▷ Innovations are being developed that contribute to climate action, such as teleconferencing.

## Operations

The university can be proud of the great progress that has been made in greening its operations. Nowadays, the entire fleet is electric, there is a Join the Pipe water tap in almost every building, and almost no beef is sold in the PURE restaurants and cafés. It shows that the university can be decisive and can take people along in its reforms, but also that the university has a high potential of making its operations more sustainable. Below are several opportunities where the university may become a frontrunner in sustainability, of which some have already been undertaken by other universities.

### The University of Tomorrow...

- ▷ Will be climate-neutral and circular by 2030;
- ▷ Stimulates public transport use (car and air traffic is reduced);
- ▷ Serves only vegan food;
- ▷ Works and studies in sustainable buildings;
- ▷ Has room for nature on grounds and roofs of the university;
- ▷ Grows its own food sustainably for restaurants and cafés;
- ▷ Contributes to a better world with its investments, procurement, and tenders.

## Implementation

Leiden University should aspire to be the most sustainable university in the world by 2030. Sustainability will be included as a top priority in the institutional plan. Students, staff, and externals will be involved in sustainability initiatives. There will be sufficient budget for this transition, which should not increase the workload on staff. The university is working together with other universities to become greener. Leiden University has more than 7,000 employees and 30,000 students. Together we can make a difference.

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