

STRATEGY 2018-2021

# Connecting to Advance Society



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# Introduction

Tilburg University was founded in 1927 as the *Katholieke Handelshoogeschool* ('Catholic Business School'), in order to meet the demand from local industries in Tilburg and surroundings for a top-quality academic center to educate their future leaders.

Now, 90 years later, we have established a strong position for ourselves as a university specializing in social sciences and humanities, with a focus on economics, business and entrepreneurship, social and behavioral sciences, law and governance, humanities and digital sciences, and theology. We are world-class in domains such as economics, marketing, finance, and psychology. As a result of the rapid and disruptive developments brought on by the digitalization of society, we are again faced with a challenge similar to that of 90 years ago: can we educate and deliver responsible professionals and leaders to shape tomorrow's digital society?

As in our early days, we build on Catholic social values that recognize that every human being has talents that should be fostered, stimulated, and challenged to grow to its full potential. These values are laid down in our vision on education and *Bildung* entitled "Knowledge, Skills, and Character". In the years to come we will enhance our focus on educating entrepreneurial thinkers.

The Strategy 2018-2021 is the consolidated result of concerted action during the first six months of 2017. During this period, we consulted extensively with both internal and external stakeholders to develop a broadly endorsed vision and strategy for the university's future. A detailed description of the "making of" the Strategy can be found in the appendix. In essence, the stakeholders advised us to connect more directly with society as a whole and to extend our stated mission of Understanding Society, with more impact-oriented activities designed to advance society in addition to reflecting on it. There was also broad support for controlled, sustainable growth in terms of the number of students and for strengthening our profile to become a mid-sized university by Dutch standards.

In order to express and communicate our strategy for the years ahead, we have chosen the format of a One-Page Strategy, with three columns on a single page (see appendix). Our Vision, Mission, and Ambition are outlined in the first column, our main strategic themes in the second column, and the corresponding objectives in the third column.

These elements are included as inlays in this Strategy, which outlines the details of the strategy and the reasoning behind it. It consists of two parts. Part I describes our understanding of the nature of a contemporary university. What is our purpose and how do we wish to rise to the societal challenges presented to us? Part II describes our strategy and corresponding objectives; these are divided into nine main topics.

In order to accomplish our mission and implement our vision, we have formulated ambitions for our three primary processes, i.e. education, research, and impact generation, as well as a strategy and objectives for growth, location, culture and governance, and operational excellence.

It is our conviction that the Strategy 2018-2021 will move Tilburg University into a new era and will provide us with new and challenging prospects that are nonetheless grounded in and reflect our traditional values.

*The Extended Leadership Group*



PART 1



## Our Purpose: Tilburg University's Role in a Rapidly Changing Society

### A Rapidly Changing Society

The debate on the role and the value of universities is as old as universities themselves. Although there is no universally accepted answer, there is a general consensus that universities should position themselves at the center of society and take the lead in understanding and advancing society. To this end, they should continuously engage in debate with society about their position and the best way of propagating the knowledge they produce. Following the classic reading of John Henry Newman's *The Idea of a University* (1852) the following three aspects of knowledge are relevant to the debate on the role of universities:

- 1 knowledge as an end in itself,
- 2 knowledge in relation to learning, and
- 3 knowledge in relation to professional skills.

The ways in which these aspects influence universities is determined by the context in which they occur. Consequently, they change over time.



#### VISION

Society is changing at a fast pace. The social sciences and humanities empower us to understand the challenges of globalization, digitalization, pluralism, and sustainability; to reflect critically on our values and practices; and to contribute to meaningful solutions.



In the current era, universities are part of a rapidly changing society. In 2016, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) published a report on the megatrends that are expected to have significant socio-economic impacts over the next 10-20 years and beyond. These megatrends are as follows:

- 1 The world population is growing, migrating, and ageing;
- 2 There is a water, energy, food, and climate nexus on which the world needs to act;
- 3 The geo-economic and geopolitical landscape is changing, in the wake of globalization and global power shifts;
- 4 Digitalization is changing economies and the way we work;
- 5 Access to wealth, health, and knowledge is changing, creating prosperity and new social structures but also inequality.

These developments bring challenges but also new opportunities, using new concepts, technologies, and systems. In response to these contextual changes, we are reaching out and connecting internal and external communities.

Against this background, we will focus on the challenges of globalization, digitalization, pluralism, and sustainability.

However, this does not mean changing our traditional academic values in order to position Tilburg University as a disruptor. If we are willing to transpose our traditional values into present-day settings, we can develop a compelling strategy for a future-oriented university.

### **The Purpose of Tilburg University**

Our values follow from our history and tradition and can help us take on the challenges of the present. Martinus Cobbenhagen, the founding father of Tilburg University, believed that those who want to understand society need

## **MISSION**

We strive to advance society by deepening our understanding of society. We educate our students with the aim of developing the knowledge, skills, and character they need in order to confront today's challenges. Connected as we are with society, we engage in excellent research for the sake of 'the good life' for all.



to be active in it and conscious members of it. At the time of the university's foundation in 1927, its aim was to equip young people with the tools they need in order to help build the society of the future. This ideal still forms the basis of our educational vision: we educate our students to become TiU-shaped professionals: responsible and entrepreneurial thinkers who are capable of influencing the state of affairs in an innovative way and who can direct the course of a rapidly changing society.

Our core values are: a passion for truth, reliability, connectivity, empathy, inclusiveness, transparency, entrepreneurial thinking and responsibility. These values manifest themselves in our education, research, and impact, across all layers of our organization. They are part of our collective identity.

### Connecting Disciplines

Our profile, with its focus on the social sciences and humanities, means that we reflect on societal developments. Indeed, as a science-driven university we conduct in-depth research in all these fields. In order to anticipate and respond to new societal challenges, we will need to strengthen and broaden our profile. Our current profile covers the following research disciplines: economics, business and entrepreneurship, social and behavioral sciences, law and governance, humanities and digital sciences, and theology. We are seeking to achieve a growing degree of multidisciplinary so as to broaden the horizons of our students and staff. We have a tradition in which economic sciences are organically linked to sociology, psychology, law, theology, and philosophy. The original *Katholieke Handelshoogeschool* did not focus on theoretical economics, but on people's actual behavior in a social context. Starting from this tradition, we have a natural inclination to collaborate beyond the boundaries of disciplines. Team research and team teaching build on this rich tradition. Individual disciplines continue to be important; they form the basis for all of our research and teaching. However, current societal developments require different approaches to be brought together. Only by connecting disciplines can we find solutions to the tremendous challenges confronting society.

### Connecting People

Tilburg University already collaborates intensively with businesses, knowledge institutions, and societal partners- locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. Within this ecosystem, there is a huge need for leaders in the broadest sense of the word: people who take responsibility and who are proactive, entrepreneurial, and introspective, making them ideally suited to help solve societal challenges, both now and in the future.

We also wish to intensify regional cooperation. With the Jheronimus Academy of Data Science, set up in collaboration with the Eindhoven University of Technology, we are in the process of developing the Brainport region into one of the strongest data science hubs in Europe. This will enable us to cater for the growing need for data scientists and to strengthen the link between research and entrepreneurship. Above all, we want to make the Brabant region a spearhead in terms of educating and shaping new generations. The regional cooperation between educational institutions, local authorities and local businesses in the Brabant region envisions the shaping of entrepreneurial, innovative thinkers equipped with knowledge, skills, and character.

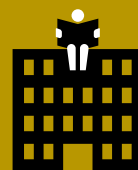
Against this background, our graduates are pro-active and enterprising. Not only will they understand society, they will also advance it, driven by our core values.

### Connecting to Create Growth

We strive for growth in several dimensions: individual and academic growth of our students; professional growth of our staff; growth in societal impact; strengthening of our profile; growth in the connection between students, staff, and stakeholders; growth in regional collaboration; and growth in operational excellence. We aim to grow into a mid-sized university. We want to be a visible, recognizable, and attractive university for our students, staff, and partners, and for society as a whole. We wish to form a lively community that constantly reinvents itself by reflecting on what it means to be a university in contemporary society. We feel connected to society, and are proud of our university and our contribution to society.

#### AMBITION

Tilburg University is science-driven and student-centered. We aim to educate young people to be responsible and entrepreneurial thinkers, prepared to lead society into a new era. Our research should be recognizable for its quality, integrity, and impact on society.



#### STRATEGY

We intend to strengthen and broaden our profile as a branded, international, student-centered, social sciences and humanities university, with excellent and highly visible education, research, and societal impact.







## PART 2



# Tilburg University's Strategy and Objectives

Our core values involve responsibility for the students that are shaped by our institution and responsibility for academic integrity as we strive for truth and trustworthiness in our work. An inclusive understanding of our responsibility requires an international mindset, while the aim to contribute to a sustainable future for people and planet is also an integral consequence of our core values. These four themes are relevant to all our work and all our objectives. Hence, they are addressed here before we turn to the separate elements of our strategy and objectives.

#### STUDENT CENTRICITY

##### *A Combination of Freedom and Responsibility*

Tilburg University operates on the principle of student centrality. This means that students are central to our policy-making and decision-making processes, including the way in which new policy initiatives and educational programs help to improve the quality of education and affect the service level for students. The University will invest effort in making the curricula, setup of the campus and the scheduling student centric.

Our students spend a formative period at Tilburg University in terms of developing their future ambitions. Our aim is to facilitate and support our students' ambitions and to challenge them to take charge of their own development. This is a combination of freedom and responsibility: the freedom and flexibility to decide how to grow, but also the responsibility to live up to the expectations set by the university, society, employers, and clients.

The University recognizes the influence student organizations have in the personal development of students. We acknowledge the role sports play in student development and social life and will continue to invest in sports facilities.

#### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

##### *Creating a Culture of Openness*

We attach great importance to academic integrity. Our principles of good research and teaching are based on reliability, verifiability, impartiality, independence, and responsibility.

In recent years, we have taken many steps to encourage the responsible conduct of research and reduce questionable research practices and research misconduct. We have sought to further raise awareness of the importance of academic integrity at a university-wide level and to set clear behavioral standards. We will continue to do so in the future, with the revised Netherlands Code of Conduct for Academic Practice as our guideline.

We expect all our academics to sign a declaration of academic integrity and we recently adopted a university-wide data management policy which encourages researchers to make their data and research materials publicly available. We are developing a course on academic integrity aimed at all PhD candidates. In addition, we explicitly discuss academic integrity as part of our annual result and development interviews with all academics.

By encouraging debate and offering training, we aim to create a culture of openness in which academic integrity is an integral part of the entire research process. We wish to create an academic community that is aware of the necessity of transparency and which shares and openly discusses the dilemmas inherent to responsible research, also in relation to the increase in performance pressure and contract-based research.

#### INTERNATIONALIZATION

##### *An International Mindset is a Must*

Globalization and increasing international integration are affecting society as a whole. These developments are inextricably linked to contemporary societal issues. We attach great importance to the integration of a global

perspective into every aspect of our organization, not only in relation to education and research, but also in relation to our facilities, support and campus.

We aim to expand our international partnerships and networks to strengthen strategic collaboration and advance student and staff mobility. We will create opportunities for all of our students to participate in an international classroom. This will prepare our students for a labor market that is increasingly globalized.

Internationalization needs also to be viewed in the light of our growth strategy. In this respect, first, we wish to expand our student base by increasing the numbers of international students. Second, we wish to increase our international research funding. We will strengthen our position in international grant acquisition by increased participation in international networks.

An international outlook is integral to our mission of Understanding Society. It is part of our response to a rapidly changing world.

#### SUSTAINABILITY

##### *A Socially Responsible University*

It is clear from the UN Sustainability Goals that the world is facing major sustainability challenges. They include fighting poverty, ensuring health and wellbeing, gender equality, and clean energy, as well as responsible consumption and counteracting climate change and its consequences. An ability to better understand these challenges and contribute to their solution is central to our mission, vision, and ambition.

For this reason, we are committed to sustainability in research and education, in the day-to-day running of our campus, and in the management of our assets. In research, sustainability is about gaining a better understanding of global, regional, and local sustainability challenges, and knowledge development for the benefit of finding solutions. In education, students are made aware of sustainability challenges and are encouraged to think about their own roles now, and as future professionals and leaders of society. On campus and in our asset management, we seek to limit our own negative impact on the environment, and – even better – actively contribute to delivering solutions.



As a socially responsible institution, we are committed to integrity in our governance, as an employer, and as an educational institution. We aim to exemplify professional integrity in our dealings with students and colleagues of diverse backgrounds. We are committed to being a good employer for people with different work capacities, by offering additional assistance when needed and including all in our community. We aim to be a good university for students with limitations and actively assist students with mental health issues.

We are committed to gender equality and inclusiveness. As an active member of the worldwide Scholars at Risk network, we help to protect scholars facing grave threats to their lives, liberty, and wellbeing. We do so by arranging temporary research and teaching positions, so that they can pursue an academic career in safety.

Sustainability is not a predefined and isolated ambition, but is part and parcel of every aspect of our strategy. We aim to develop and implement a sustainability plan that reflects our identity, vision, and mission and addresses the challenges we face.

## 2.1 Education



### EDUCATION

We offer excellent, innovative education aimed at preparing students to become the leaders of the future by focusing on knowledge, skills, and character building.

We operate in an environment that is changing at a fast pace. A changing society needs professionals and leaders who can respond to change, find solutions to challenges, and shape its future. We believe that we have a responsibility to educate leaders in the broadest sense: whatever their position in society, our graduates will take responsibility and aim to make a difference. We strive to achieve this goal by implementing our vision on education, which includes an international perspective, innovation, lifelong learning, and excellent staff.

#### Vision on Education

Our academic curriculum prepares students for a role as *TiU-shaped professionals*. Our students are equipped with state-of-the-art academic and professional knowledge, 21st-century skills, and expert skills in their specific field of study. Our educational programs also shape their character: they include elements such as self-reflection, resilience, and a strong sense of responsibility, as well as an awareness of the ethical implications of their thoughts and actions. Our vision on education is defined by this specific combination of knowledge, skills, and character.

We wish to educate students who are able to analyze complex societal problems and who, as independent thinkers, can operate as part of teams devising innovative solutions. Our students are able to cope with the complexity that is inherent to this type of problem. In order to analyze complex societal problems, our students learn to apply the art of slow thinking: a slow, deliberative, and logical way of thinking that prevents rash decisions based on prejudice, instinct, or emotion. They are educated and trained in evidence-based decision making, e.g. decision making that is based on data.

Our curriculum gives a prominent place to the pursuit of our core values, which is one of the reasons why ethics and philosophy are an integral part of

all our educational programs. Our graduates are not only experts in their field of study, they also possess communication skills enabling them to interact with specialists in a wide range of academic disciplines. They excel at cooperating, while their capacity for critical, independent thought prevents them from blindly concurring with ostensibly obvious conclusions.

We strive for excellent education, which encourages a wide range of students to develop their own skills and talents. We focus not on excellence as such, but on high-quality education to enable our students to excel.

These are the core elements of the Tilburg Education Profile, with its focus on skills, blended learning, and small-scale classes. Our education is geared towards the students' needs and aimed at exploring, as well as connecting, engaging and activating. Small-scale classes, a balanced student-staff ratio, and personal mentoring ensure that our students graduate as *TiU-shaped professionals*. We will continuously aim to find the right balance between multidisciplinary and small-scale classes on the one hand, and a balanced workload for our lecturers on the other. The quality and content of our curricula will be tested on a regular basis to guarantee high quality standards.

### International Perspective

From an international perspective, the current requirements of academic disciplines and the job market play a role in the design of our educational programs. Students must be able to work on complex global problems in international teams consisting of people from a variety of cultural backgrounds and disciplines. To this end, students are trained in cross-cultural skills. In addition to learning the classics in their fields, they acquire state-of-the-art knowledge disseminated by an international community of scientists. This is why we are eager to receive academics and students from abroad and also to offer students an opportunity to spend time abroad during their studies. Our alumni are global citizens who bring a broad, international perspective to their work that is valuable regardless of the size and location of the organization that employs them. Although we aim to support our students in meeting the demands of the international labor market, programs aimed specifically at the Dutch labor market – such as Dutch Law – may require a different and tailor-made approach.

### Labor Market Outlook

Education should prepare students for life after graduation. More specifically, preparation for the labor market is crucial. All our curricula therefore include labor market orientation. Given that skills such as interviewing, undertaking

assessments, and networking are keys to success in the current-day labor market, these 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills also form part of every program. Finally, the mobility window offers every student an opportunity to gain practical experience by facilitating internships without study delay. We will work hard to ensure that international as well as Dutch students will have a good starting point on the labor market.

### **Educational Innovation**

The far-reaching digitalization of society, combined with the increasing diversity of our student population, requires the pursuit of innovation in our teaching methods. In order to educate professionals and leaders of the future we provide education that accommodates both the expectations of the new generation of students and the needs of the job market.

We intend to set up a “Tilburg University Education Innovation Lab” to serve as a catalyst for the transformation of our teaching and learning. This transformation will be based on the following guiding principles:

- Student centricity: a focus on the learning needs of students.
- A multidirectional approach: a focus on learning from fellow-students and on co-creation by lecturers, students, mentors, and alumni.
- A customized learning experience: a focus on adaptive learning, enhanced choices, personal development plans, and personal coaching to increase the impact of academic knowledge and skills.
- Collaborative learning: learning in teams to prepare students for the job market.

These guiding principles also apply to the digital enhancement of our education, which we will implement by means of the Digital Education Enhancement Program (DEEP). This program is designed to achieve:

- 1 Enhanced learning: the digital enhancement of personal learning and development.
- 2 Enhanced collaboration: the creation of a modern, networked learning community.
- 3 Enhanced support: digital educational logistics and support that nurture *TiU-shaped professionals*.

The human dimension and human interaction is at the core of our educational vision. We use ‘scalable teaching concepts’ and make sure that students and lecturers are given the opportunity to build a personal relationship, which is essential for the transfer of knowledge, for practicing skills, and for building character.

## **Lifelong Learning and Professional Learning**

A rapidly changing society requires lifelong learning. The combination of digitalization and demographic trends in Europe creates countless opportunities for us in the field of lifelong learning and obliges us to step up our efforts in this respect.

We offer professional and lifelong learning programs aimed at both commercial and non-profit organizations seeking to increase the value of their human capital. The goals of these programs are to integrate insights from various fields at Tilburg University, to offer a collaborative atmosphere, and to create opportunities for participants to share, enrich, and deepen their professional experience and knowledge. They offer participants a combination of new opportunities and career benefits. They also boost the attractiveness of our regular Bachelor's and Master's programs by strengthening the links with our alumni community and long-term partners in the business community, as well as with other organizations.

We actively seek opportunities to expand our programs, building on the strengths and reputations of our Schools, as well as on our strategic innovation themes aimed at societal impact. We tailor our programs to fit the needs of our alumni and partners and, where possible, seek to engage them in collaborative projects or lifelong learning communities, thus offering a platform for expanding networks and career opportunities.

## **Excellent Staff**

We will continue to support our academics and encourage them to develop their skills and professionalism so that they can assist and guide students in their learning processes. Our academic teaching teams must be able to teach students the art of fast and slow thinking, provide them with real-life case studies, develop international awareness, reward creativity and moral awareness, encourage self-criticism, cultivate inquisitiveness, and practice effective communication. Innovation is vital to enriching our education. We therefore stimulate and support our lecturers in exploring, using, and sharing innovative education methods.

Keeping the professional knowledge of our lecturers constantly up to date requires a habit of lifelong learning. We will implement a system of continuing professional development that will train our academics to become innovative entrepreneurial lecturers. We strive for 100% of our lecturers to attain the University Teaching Qualification (UTQ) in 1,000 days. In the UTQ special attention will be paid to digitalization. In addition, a Senior Teaching Qualification track will be developed.

Academic careers remain largely research-oriented. We wish to bring about a culture shift toward a greater appreciation of performance in teaching. We want our junior and senior academics to have balanced careers, and to perform well in teaching as well as in research and societal impact. To enable them to do so, we will formulate criteria for balanced academic careers and we explore the possibilities for permanent education for lecturers. We aim to explicitly pay attention to the structural improvement of our education and to rewarding those involved in education. We expect our top researchers to be involved in education as well.



### EDUCATION OBJECTIVES

- 1 Implement our Educational Vision and Education Profile in all Bachelor's programs.
- 2 Develop and implement the Digital Education Enhancement Program (DEEP).
- 3 Increase the appreciation for education and enhance the quality of education and lecturers.
- 4 Develop professional learning and lifelong learning offerings.

## 2.2 Research

### RESEARCH

Tilburg University excels in both monodisciplinary and multidisciplinary research.



We are a science-driven university operating in a changing societal context. The social sciences and humanities – which shape our profile – are key disciplines in understanding the ‘wicked problems’ we face as a result of current megatrends such as globalization, digitalization, and growing inequality. Research in these fields helps us to understand society, to reflect critically on norms, values, and habits and to find meaningful solutions for the issues we face.

#### Scientific Profile

Faced with increasingly fierce scientific competition, we need a clear profile and scientific strengths with sufficient critical mass. A shift in funding opportunities – from government funding to European and regional funding, as well as closer cooperation with businesses and social organizations – requires a shift in acquisition strategies. This shift is also necessitated by the emphasis on excellence and the adoption of scientific and societal impact as prerequisites for funding. The sharper focus on multidisciplinary innovation requires initiatives that transcend individual Schools. Finally, the emphasis on thematization – both nationally and in a European context – requires a clearly-defined research agenda.

#### Connections across Disciplines

Major societal issues can be resolved only by working together across the boundaries of disciplines, institutions, and geography. While the increasing connectivity and complexity of the challenges we face open up new areas of research, they also necessitate a multidisciplinary approach. We are therefore planning to invest in international collaborations and consortia and have chosen three impact themes inspired by the Dutch National Research Agenda:

- Empowering a Resilient Society
- Enhancing Health and Wellbeing
- Creating Value from Data

Each theme has its own aims, networks, and dynamics. All three stimulate both university-wide collaboration and collaboration among and within the Schools. The greatest added value lies in cross-overs between and within the three themes.

### **Solid Disciplinary Foundations**

We will continue to stimulate and cherish top research talent. We wish to continue to be recognized for our excellent research. We will step up our efforts to showcase our academic work. We want our top researchers to be recognized as leaders and innovators in their fields. The quality of our fundamental research in the social sciences and humanities is of the utmost importance and forms the foundation for a strong position in multidisciplinary research.

As a research-based university, our scientific strengths provide the basis for excellent education and a powerful societal impact. The current societal challenges match our research profile. In other words, we are ideally suited not only to make an important contribution to meeting the societal challenges of our time, but also to playing a prominent role in setting the national and European research agendas. We aim to unlock this potential by connecting institutions, innovation regions, and agendas so as to create synergies.

### **Opening up Academia**

In a digital society, publicly-funded research should be published open access. Open science will have a massive impact both on society and on research practices. By sharing data, software, and materials, and by engaging in transparent peer review, researchers engage in a dialogue with society and raise the impact of their research. By sharing research findings – with other researchers and with society as a whole – researchers provide the building blocks for future research and the advancement of society. Students can use these building blocks to learn about the process of discovery. Businesses can use them to create innovative tools and add value to society. Citizens can participate more easily in the academic world if these building blocks are openly accessible. Moreover, academic findings will become more reliable and accurate. Open science is essential for preserving people's faith in science. Open science enhances our social visibility and our credibility by strengthening our position in national and international rankings. We wish to play an important role in the further development of open science as a member of the Association of Dutch Universities (VSNU).

### **A Future-proof PhD Community**

We attract international, talented Research Master's and PhD candidates. They are trained to become academics who can add value, both inside and



beyond the university, and who can help find solutions to global societal challenges. We maintain high quality standards for our PhD trajectories and supervision, and we expect active involvement from all PhD supervisors.

Our Graduate Schools offer our PhD candidates a research environment based on academic dialogue and collaboration with outstanding facilities that enable them to thrive. In recent years, our PhD community has become increasingly diverse. To accommodate this diversity our Graduate Schools are working together to ensure transparency in procedures, offerings and facilities. To prepare our PhD candidates for a future in academia or elsewhere, we are developing a framework for doctoral training, focusing on the same elements as our educational vision: knowledge, skills, and character.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 5 Increase cooperation in national and international research consortia.
- 6 Develop activities to stimulate Open Science.



## 2.3 Societal Impact



### IMPACT

We will seek to advance society by expanding regional cooperation and by focusing on a number of challenging, strategic themes, including: Empowering the Resilient Society; Enhancing Health and Wellbeing; and Creating Value from Data. All three are reflected in our overarching theme of the Digital Society. These themes will increase our societal impact as well as the visibility of that impact.

In order to maximize our contribution to society, we aim to set up a broad Impact Program, focused on the following three themes:

- Empowering a Resilient Society
- Enhancing Health and Wellbeing
- Creating Value from Data

This program will be open to all academics, whom we invite to contribute. The impact themes contribute to the societal challenges resulting from the megatrends as defined by the OECD. They also contribute to the agenda of the Digital Society, i.e. the goal that Dutch universities have set themselves to support the world in forging effective connections between digital technology, people, and societies. Project results contribute to the visibility, reputation, and appeal of Tilburg University. The societal impact of these projects helps to advance society. In addition, our lecturers will also actively seek connections with society in their teaching.

### Partnerships to Advance Society

We seek to create a structure and culture that stimulates collaboration and co-creation at local, regional, national, and international levels. This entails connecting our own activities with those of other educational institutions, with the business community, government bodies and civil-society organizations, and with our alumni, both in the Netherlands and abroad. We invite entrepreneurs to set up businesses on campus or to establish virtual connections with us.

We will invest in intensifying the connections with our partners, with co-creation, reciprocity, and a shared responsibility for the impact of results as the starting points for collaboration. We aim to forge longer, multi-year partnerships that provide a seedbed for innovative, multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary

research, and involve substantial numbers of dedicated researchers and PhD candidates.

The Tilburg University Society plays a central role in expanding our networks and collaborations.

### **Entrepreneurship and Social Venturing**

Tilburg University is aiming for a leading role in social venturing on a national level. We stimulate impact generation and entrepreneurship through education, by involving students in complex societal challenges and by helping them to develop the necessary skills to find potential solutions. With our honors program, which will be open to excellent as well as to highly-motivated students, as a starting point we aim to develop an ecosystem of social ventures. In our honors program, students work on 'wicked problems' in interdisciplinary teams, developing their professional skills and engaging with society. They will be stimulated to start social ventures, which we aim to expand through alumni involvement and impact funding. Through our entrepreneurship education, our involvement in the Brabant Start-Up Alliance and our focus on social venturing, we support and facilitate students who wish to become entrepreneurs. In light of our identity and core values, we strive to combine an entrepreneurial spirit with critical reflection on society and the goal of actively contributing to society.

#### **IMPACT OBJECTIVES**

- 7 Stimulate coherence and cooperation among the research programs and increase our societal impact and the visibility of that impact.
- 8 Stimulate cooperation with partners in order to advance society.



## 2.4 Growth



### GROWTH

We wish to become a mid-sized university through controlled growth, with excellence and quality as prerequisites.

We strive for growth in several dimensions: growth in the sense of individual, academic, and professional growth, for our staff and students; growth in the sense of innovation of our education; growth in the sense of connection between disciplines, and a strengthened academic profile; and growth in the sense of highly visible societal impact.

We also wish to grow in size; from a relatively small to a mid-sized university. An increase in size and scale will enhance our visibility and recognition, enabling us to expand both our academic and our societal impact. The urgency for growth also springs from certain national trends. Government funding for our primary processes is on the decline, while we need at the same time to guarantee the quality of these processes.

We wish to grow on two fronts, i.e. in student numbers as well as in funding, while at the same time maintaining our high-quality standards in research and teaching.

### Preparing for Growth

Excellent research, education, support services and facilities are prerequisites for growth. Our goal is maintain and improve our overall high quality and to monitor this using the relevant national and international rankings.

We acknowledge that we have already seen a growth in student numbers and that this has led to capacity problems and an increased workload for both our lecturers and our support staff.

We will prepare for growth by evaluating the real estate plan earlier in time than originally planned (see also 2.5 Location) and by investing in operational excellence (see also 2.7 Operational Excellence). In accordance with the princi-

ple that structure follows strategy, the Budget Allocation Model will be revised to facilitate that the Divisions grow in tandem with the university budget, in order to accommodate this growth. To guarantee a staff-student ratio that fits our Educational Vision, we will also invest in additional lecturers where necessary.

### **Opportunities for Growth**

There is momentum and potential for us to grow. In the first place, this is because our overarching mission – Understanding Society – and our academic output relate explicitly to most of the leading contemporary challenges: globalization, digitalization, pluralism, and global environmental challenges. We educate our students not only to understand society, but also to advance it. This appeals to the next generation of students.

### **Growth in Student Inflow**

We will seek to achieve controlled and sustainable growth by increasing the student population at all levels, i.e. pre-Bachelor's, Bachelor's, pre-Master's, and Master's, and in terms of all provenances, i.e. Dutch, other European, and non-European. We aim to do so while maintaining high quality standards in our educational programs.

Whether we develop into a mid-sized university (i.e. with a market share of 6-8%) will also depend on how much the other Dutch universities grow. Demographic trends mean that a substantial increase in the number of international students will be required in order to achieve this growth. Growth will also come from professional degree students (HBO) who complement their studies with an academic master. The greater interest in lifelong learning creates further opportunities for growth.

Recruitment success depends heavily on our having a competitive and attractive program portfolio that enables us to appeal to a broader and more diverse group of students. New initiatives will need to be taken in this respect. They must be financially sound and based on market prospects. These initiatives will reflect the Schools' disciplines and may be taken by individual Schools, in the form of partnerships between Schools, in collaboration with other universities and knowledge institutions, or through cooperation with external partners.

Operational excellence and student centricity are critical success factors. Corporate branding is needed to enhance national and international awareness and recognition. Our position in international, well-respected rankings –

such as the Times Higher Education World Ranking, the QS World University Ranking, and the Academic Ranking of World Universities – will also influence our appeal, especially to international students. Finally, digitalization will be a focal point in the development of our educational programs.

### **Growth through Research and Contract Funding**

While personal grants will continue to play an important role, more and more funding will come from European Commission and NWO consortium grants and partnerships, both corporate and otherwise. This is also important in light of our societal impact agenda.

In any event, competition for grants will become much more intense, and significant investments in time and capital will be needed to guarantee success. We know from experience that research consortia survive beyond the duration of any particular research project and are effective platforms for obtaining follow-up funding. Strong consortia also influence future research agendas at an early stage. Indeed, success breeds success. We must therefore play a more visible and pivotal role in consortia and invest in pre- and post-award support for leading such consortia.

We will invest in our competitive position in terms of research and contract funding. Scale is necessary to create a flywheel effect, both internally and externally. Concerted action – across Schools and in collaboration cooperation with external partners – is necessary to create sufficient mass in order to access large-scale funding opportunities. Visibility and branding are preconditions for growth. Continuity is important in this regard and should not depend on a small number of authoritative researchers. We will therefore invest in the recruitment and development of research talent and stimulate grant acquisition through conscious and structured propagation of success.

### **Growth through Philanthropy**

A committed donor community is an integral part of the strong link with society that we envision. Raising the level of funding from philanthropy is important because it provides additional resources for education and research. More importantly, philanthropy programs strengthen our stakeholders' engagement with the university and boost our social impact. Every gift matters, whether small or large, and whether from organizations or private individuals. These programs give students, alumni, and friends of the university an opportunity to contribute to our societal impact and make a difference.

Research and grant programs financed through our philanthropy programs create relationships with engaged donors. They not only strengthen the bond between donors and the university, but also enhance the relationship between the donors themselves, creating a positive community.

## GROWTH OBJECTIVES

- 9 Increase the total student population through controlled and sustainable growth.
- 10 Increase the flow of funds.



## 2.5 Location



### LOCATION

The campus is the living heart of the Tilburg University community, complemented by a limited number of strategically chosen additional locations and connected to the city of Tilburg.

Today, everyone is linked to each other in one way or another, online and offline. Our modern and high-quality campus supports connections among students, academics, support staff, and stakeholders, at both international and national levels. A vibrant campus is conducive to our branding, visibility, and impact on society.

We will enhance our campus so that it is bursting with energy, life, and activity; so that it has an international feel, and is a place where students, staff, and guests can meet, study, conduct research, and work together, and where lifelong learning thrives. Our open-minded and tolerant university is a community of people who interact and exchange ideas. The possibility of meeting people from the Netherlands and abroad face to face, gives students and staff alike an opportunity to develop social and work related connections and build a network.

Paradoxically, the digital transformation of teaching is intrinsically bound up with personal encounters. We have a living campus with a strong international feel and top class facilities. It is a place where students can live, study, and work together. Our campus is a unique selling point in order to attract top-level Dutch and foreign staff and students. To accommodate our growth ambition, we will develop a new real estate vision and we will invest in property where required.

### Living Campus

Our campus is a meeting place for members of our academic community and our stakeholders, offering them opportunities to interact with each other. A lively, green, and dynamic campus (plus additional sites in Tilburg, Utrecht, and Den Bosch):

- is a source of inspiration for visitors and a breeding ground for new ideas,



- insights, business, and social initiatives;
- lays the foundations for professional and informal networks around knowledge domains;
- is a great way to stimulate inclusivity and the integration of Dutch and international students and staff.

An enhanced campus will strengthen the unity and commitment of staff members, encouraging staff to stimulate and challenge one another. Social cohesion enables the transfer and deepening of knowledge. Our compact campus enables students and academics to meet each other easily and naturally.

### **Strategic Locations**

Our sites will act as dynamic hubs, and will be equipped with ever more facilities and benefits. Education, research, and impact also occur at various strategic locations in Tilburg and the surrounding area, including the Jheronimus Academy of Data Science in Den Bosch, the Spoorzone in Tilburg, and in Utrecht. Future plans may possibly involve the opening of new sites, on the condition that they form an immediate response to opportunities in terms of research or educational programs and projects. New sites will be considered if they are logical, natural, and promising, and if the proposal is financially sound. Any satellites will share the same atmosphere and will be an integral part of the university community.

We have both physical and digital sites. We have physical sites in Tilburg, Utrecht, and Den Bosch, but we should not forget communities such as the Alumni Chapters abroad, the Friends of Cobbenhagen, digital communities such as Facebook and LinkedIn, and Brainport and Midpoint. These are all virtual meeting places.

We will consider setting up a virtual campus if it is beneficial to our internationalization or growth strategy. A virtual campus consists of online courses or programs in which academic studies are undertaken either partially or wholly online, often with the assistance of lecturers. A virtual campus has easily accessible technical solutions for group work and group consultation.

### **Our Green Campus**

We are proud of our green campus and intend to safeguard it. Which we believe is a unique selling point. We attempt to reduce our own environmental impact by focusing on sustainability, thus increasing both the social and ecological value of our campus. Energy conservation, the use of sustainable energy

sources, the creation of more green spaces across campus, and the sustainability of business travel and commuting will be key elements in our Strategy for the next few years.



### LOCATION OBJECTIVES

- 11 Develop and strengthen our living campus.
- 12 Make sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility a focal point for Tilburg University.

## 2.6 Culture and Governance

### CULTURE AND GOVERNANCE

We have an open and diversified culture of excellence which is based on trust, connection, inclusivity, and joint responsibility for the university as a whole. We will adjust our governance to enhance further growth: the Executive Board and the Deans together form the university's leadership. They work together in developing new initiatives and realizing joint strategic ambitions.



We have a culture of openness and inclusion. We work together on the basis of trust and responsibility. At the same time, we unite people of all nationalities and backgrounds who work together to achieve our common goals. We embrace this diversity and stimulate integration. In the coming years, we will focus strongly on inclusion and the creation of equal opportunities for all of our staff and students. We live up to our aim of Understanding Society by acknowledging that not all citizens can adapt to the growing complexity of society at the same pace. We are committed to being a good employer for people with different work capacities by creating customized jobs, offering extra assistance where necessary, and creating greater opportunities for them to participate in our community.

We all work together on shared goals. We wish to be an excellent university, visible and active in the areas of education, research, and societal impact. To achieve this, we – academics, students, and support staff – need to be enterprising and proactive, and support and strengthen each other. All of our staff are self-conscious and intrinsically motivated to achieve results which help to understand and advance society. We recognize potential and seize opportunities. We actively look for connections, both inside and outside the university. We are team players and work together to achieve results. We feel a shared responsibility for the university. We aim to shape a culture and working environment that makes our staff members proud to be a part of this university.

### Leadership and Governance

Leadership and governance complement the cultural aspects of our organization. The university is run by the Executive Board and the Deans of the Schools. They work together on new initiatives and the realization of our strategic ambitions. This leadership team cooperates on a functional basis. Specific

strategic topics may be assigned to individual members of the team, irrespective of the hierarchical structure.

This team is complemented by an extended leadership group consisting of the Vice Deans for Education and Research, the leaders of the university's impact program, the Managing Directors of the Schools and Divisions, and the university's Secretary General. The extended leadership group is responsible for creating a working environment in which everyone can excel.

The Deans are strategic managers, steering the ambitions of the Schools in the right direction. The School's managing directors play an operational role, managing day-to-day affairs.

Governance is attuned to the goals we wish to achieve. If the university grows substantially, we will adapt the governance structure in line with our needs.

### **Human Capital Development**

In the coming period, we will focus on the development of our human capital; in other words, on the development of our staff. We will seek to develop four aspects of our human capital:

- 1 leadership competence;
- 2 career development;
- 3 talent management; and
- 4 mobility.

Our staff should continue to learn, so that they are well equipped both for their current tasks and for future developments, either in or beyond their current posts. We will therefore work to promote sustainable employability, and will emphasize the ongoing development of our staff.

### **Vision on Leadership**

Changes in our internal and external environment demand a clear vision on leadership. Externally, we face the challenge of greater competition for funding and academics. A huge digital transformation is also underway. In order to cope with fiercer competition, we need to achieve closer cooperation between departments and across Schools and Divisions. We need to increase the diversity of our leadership so that we can respond to the digital transformation and internationalization of the university. There is also a need for greater openness and transparency, with leaders engaging in open dialogues throughout the university, and giving credit or critical appraisals where due. Those who take on leadership roles also need recognition and support.

To this end, we are developing a leadership philosophy, entitled 'Connected Leading'. This philosophy focuses on unifying leadership, encouraging all of our staff – not only those in management positions – to take personal responsibility, emphasizing the importance of the entire organization, and appreciating the qualities of individual employees and the strengths of teams.

Connected Leading is built on the following three pillars:

- 1 Purpose: what do you stand for?
- 2 Organization: how do you manage your unit?
- 3 People: how do you interact with others?

Elements such as sense-making, leading change, clarifying responsibilities, role-modelling, encouraging and holding each other accountable, and connecting and collaborating all play an important role in this.

To support our current and future leaders in line with these three pillars, we are developing a program to facilitate management development, preparing staff for leadership roles a number of years before they take up their posts. We make sure that our staff are given opportunities to develop in accordance with their aspirations, and we guarantee good leadership for the university.

### **The Human Dimension**

We are aware of the fact that we have set ourselves ambitious goals and that we ask a great deal from our staff in order to achieve them. We attach great value to the involvement of our staff. The challenge is to achieve a balanced workload for all of our staff. We will develop and implement an action plan focusing on individual, departmental, and organizational initiatives and solutions, taking account of the circumstances of each department, within the Schools and the Divisions. We aim for a balanced approach with respect to performance and wellbeing aimed at long term viability for all involved in our thriving community.

## **CULTURE AND GOVERNANCE OBJECTIVES**

- 13 Promote diversity and inclusivity; aim for greater gender equality and promote the integration of international and Dutch staff and students.
- 14 Implement a leadership competency development program.



## 2.7 Operational Excellence



### OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Tilburg University operates on the principle of student centrality. University Services provide s excellent support, in partnership with the Schools.

Our primary processes are supported by our support staff. Excellent support is essential if we are to fulfill our ambitions. Our support staff must be well-equipped to perform at a high level. The size of our support staff will be adjusted in line with the changing nature of our primary processes.

We recognize and value the contribution of our support staff, which is indispensable. We also value the autonomous professionalism of our support staff and stimulate them in developing the related skills and competences.

We need to have outstanding support services if we are to offer excellent and innovative education and to excel in both monodisciplinary and multidisciplinary research. The Divisions that make up University Services provide all the necessary support processes and act as partners for the Schools in ensuring the success of researchers, lecturers, current and prospective students, and management.

#### **Service-mindedness and Efficiency**

University Services works in close cooperation with the Schools in developing a transparent service map for all of their stakeholders. This calls for a mindset that places students and academics center stage, as well as a way of working together across the different Divisions.

Service delivery instills trust: get it right the first time, deliver on time, and do it for an excellent price. Trustworthiness and client satisfaction are key, as is the need to balance costs, endeavor, and added value. This calls for an operational excellence approach, based on the efficient management of processes at a fair cost. This in turn requires a transparent way of working with a limited range of services and customer expectations managed accordingly. Services are harmonized, with an efficient process design. Where tailor-made services

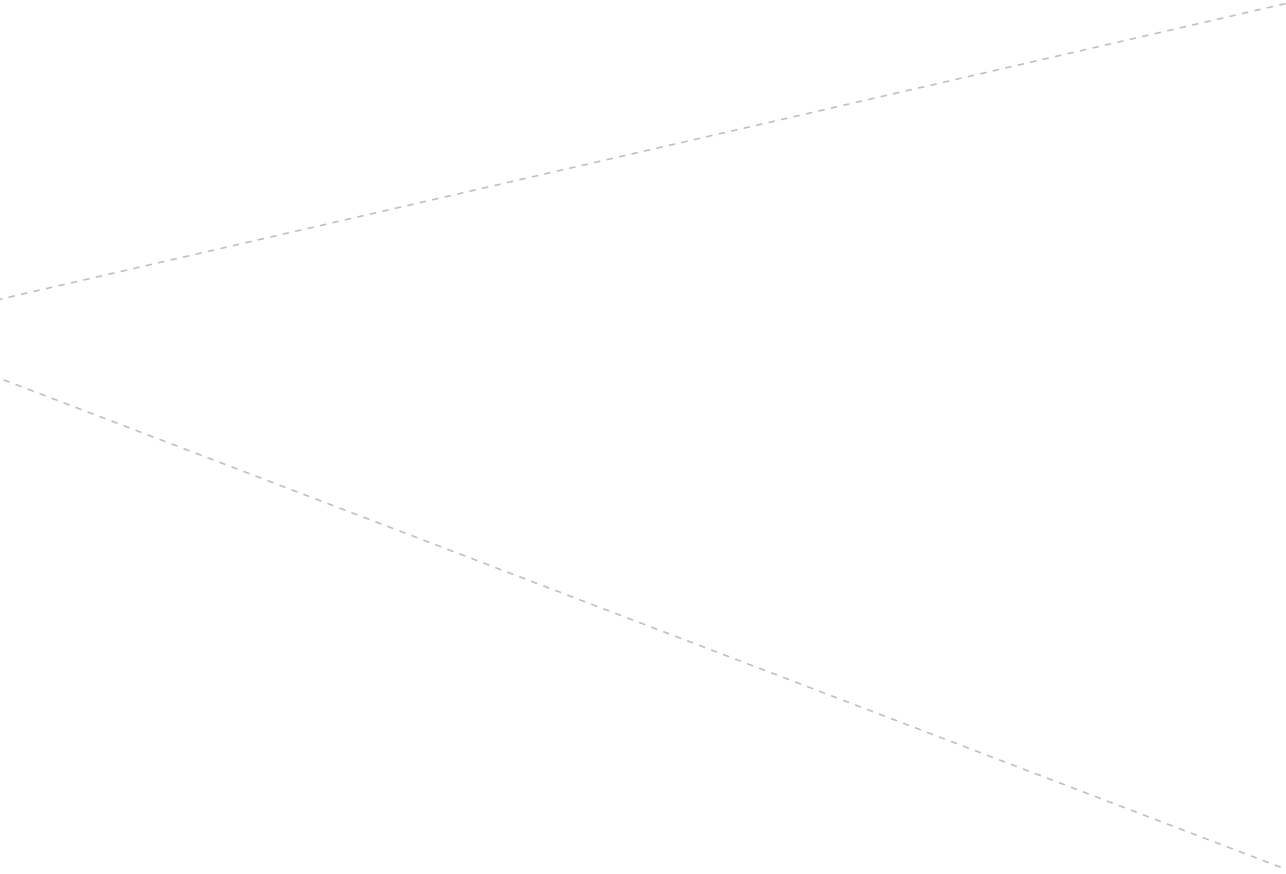
are required, the possibilities and alternatives, will be examined. Services are delivered in proximity to the primary processes, thus creating added value.

Quality and costs need to be monitored in order to manage processes in an effective and efficient way. Targets, responsibilities, and governance must be clear to everyone involved. To this end, we will adopt a university-wide instrument for continuous improvement.

### OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE OBJECTIVES

- 15 Develop a student-centered and academic-centered service mindset.
- 16 Harmonize support processes and ensure efficient process design.
- 17 Develop strong partnership between the Schools and University Services.







# Summary



## VISION

Society is changing at a fast pace. The social sciences and humanities empower us to understand the challenges of globalization, digitalization, pluralism, and sustainability; to reflect critically on our values and practices; and to contribute to meaningful solutions.



## MISSION

We strive to advance society by deepening our understanding of society. We educate our students with the aim of developing the knowledge, skills, and character they need in order to confront today's challenges. Connected as we are with society, we engage in excellent research for the sake of 'the good life' for all.



## AMBITION

Tilburg University is science-driven and student-centered. We aim to educate young people to be responsible and entrepreneurial thinkers, prepared to lead society into a new era. Our research should be recognizable for its quality, integrity, and impact on society.



## STRATEGY

**Profile** We intend to strengthen and broaden our profile as a branded, international, student-centered, social sciences and humanities university, with excellent and highly visible education, research, and societal impact.

**Education** We offer excellent, innovative education aimed at preparing students to become the leaders of the future by focusing on knowledge, skills, and character building.

**Research** Tilburg University excels in both monodisciplinary and multidisciplinary research.

**Impact** We will seek to advance society by expanding regional cooperation and by focusing on a number of challenging, strategic themes, including: Empowering the Resilient Society; Enhancing Health and Wellbeing; and Creating Value from Data. All three are reflected in our overarching theme of the Digital Society. These themes will increase our societal impact as well as the visibility of that impact.

**Growth** We wish to become a mid-sized university through controlled growth, with excellence and quality as prerequisites

**Location** The campus is the living heart of the Tilburg University community, complemented by a limited number of strategically chosen additional locations and connected to the city of Tilburg.





**Culture and governance** We have an open and diversified culture of excellence which is based on trust, connection, inclusivity, and joint responsibility for the university as a whole. We will adjust our governance to enhance further growth: the Executive Board and the Deans together form the university's leadership. They work together in developing new initiatives and realizing joint strategic ambitions.



**Operational excellence** Tilburg University operates on the principle of student centricity. University Services provide excellent support, in partnership with the Schools.

## OBJECTIVES

### Education

- 1 Implement our Educational Vision and Education Profile in all Bachelor's programs.
- 2 Develop and implement the Digital Education Enhancement Program (DEEP).
- 3 Increase the appreciation for education and enhance the quality of education and lecturers.
- 4 Develop professional learning and lifelong learning offerings.



### Research

- 5 Increase cooperation in national and international research consortia.
- 6 Develop activities to stimulate Open Science.



### Impact

- 7 Stimulate coherence and cooperation among the research programs and increase our societal impact and the visibility of that impact.
- 8 Stimulate cooperation with partners in order to advance society.



### Growth

- 9 Increase the total student population through controlled and sustainable growth.
- 10 Increase the flow of funds.



### Location

- 11 Develop and strengthen our living campus.
- 12 Make sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility a focal point for Tilburg University.



### Culture and governance

- 13 Promote diversity and inclusivity; aim for greater gender equality and promote the integration of international and Dutch staff and students.
- 14 Implement a leadership competency development program.



### Operational excellence

- 15 Develop a student-centered and academic-centered service mindset.
- 16 Harmonize support processes and ensure efficient process design.
- 17 Develop strong partnership between the Schools and University Services.

## The Making of...

The making of the Strategy 2018-2021 consisted of three phases: a divergence phase, a consolidation phase, and a convergence phase.

### Divergence

During the divergence phase, we consulted a broad audience of external and internal stakeholders in the form of targeted activities. These activities were guided by a set of seven strategic dimensions that were used to structure discussions of the university's future. During consultation meetings, external stakeholders were asked to reflect on the seven dimensions. Some 300 alumni and 50 representatives of the university's strategic partners participated in four meetings held in different locations in the Netherlands.

The consultation process with staff and students was based on the Speech2025 concept. Teams of university-wide representatives were asked to express their views on the future of the university by delivering a speech on stage on a freely chosen topic related to the seven dimensions. During the final Speech2025 event, 25 teams gave presentations in a four-hour plenary session in the university's main auditorium.

### Consolidation

The information collected was carefully analyzed in relation to the seven dimensions. A statistical analysis was also performed to elicit major keywords. A set of testimonials was derived expressing relevant insights in the form of striking phrases. The meeting minutes and raw material from the external stakeholder events are available on the Strategy website ([www.tilburguniversity.edu/strategy](http://www.tilburguniversity.edu/strategy)). The highlights of the Speech2025 presentations are available as a booklet, and the full texts of the speeches are available on the Strategy website. The statistical analysis is available as a separate document.

### Convergence

The strategic themes and direction of the strategy were determined during meetings of the Executive Board with the Deans and the extended leadership group. The University Council and the Board of Governors were also consulted. The first convergence took the form of a One-Page Strategy stating the main topics. Finally, details and substance were added, resulting in this Strategy 2018-2021.



# Sources

## Sources for the divergence phase:

- Seven Dimensions for a New Strategy
- Trends & Insights and underlying reports (see bibliography)
- Speech2025
- Key notes and minutes of strategy sessions with alumni and external stakeholders
- Minutes of meetings of Leadership Group (April 4, 2017 and May 15, 2017)
- Principles & Objectives (May 10, 2017)
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