

Marco Sgarbi

> FOR CA' FOSCARI <
Educate · Know · Transform

Program for the Rectorship
of Ca' Foscari University of Venice 2026-2032

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Profile

I was born in 1982 in a small village near Mantua, with just over a thousand inhabitants. My mother is a homemaker, and my father was a plumber. I grew up in a simple, down-to-earth environment where the value of work, commitment, and responsibility were not abstract principles, but part of everyday life. I have an older brother, eleven years my senior, who now works in the company founded by my father. This family story taught me from an early age what it means to build something over time through effort and dedication.

As a child, I dreamed of becoming a paleontologist, discovering dinosaurs, or an astronaut, searching for life beyond Earth. I have always been drawn to knowledge, especially the sciences, and initially pursued a scientific track in school, imagining a future in engineering. However, in my final year of high school, encountering Nietzsche and Wittgenstein radically changed my path. That discovery opened up new questions and ultimately led me to choose philosophy.

I was the first in my family to attend university. I studied at the University of Verona, where I built the foundations of both my academic and personal development. During those years, I met my wife. Our daughter was born shortly thereafter — she is now eight years old — and that experience deepened my awareness of how profoundly university choices can shape the future of new generations.

I am currently a Full Professor of History of Philosophy at the Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Throughout my academic career, I have consistently combined scientific research with a direct commitment to the development of the university as an institution. I trained in leading international research environments, including the Warburg Institute in London, Villa I Tatti – The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, and the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science. I have been awarded highly competitive fellowships, including the British Academy–Lincoln Fellowship and the Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship, and I have been a visiting at the University of Oxford.

I chose Ca' Foscari. I joined Ca' Foscari in 2014 with an ERC Starting Grant and have since coordinated both European and national research projects, bringing in more than €6.5 million in competitive funding to the university. More than any statement, these results reflect a well-established ability to compete in highly selective environments, build research teams, and produce internationally recognized scholarship. I have also contributed to training a new generation of researchers, supervising numerous Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellows,

many of whom now work in research positions in Italy and abroad.

My research has focused on innovative areas such as the history of knowledge, the circulation of philosophy across languages and cultural contexts, and the processes of democratizing knowledge, contributing to reshaping, from an international perspective, the study of philosophy between the Renaissance and the Enlightenment.

Alongside this academic path, I have consistently invested in strengthening the university, taking on institutional responsibilities and working closely with all its components. From 2016 to 2020, as Vice-Rector for Communication, I worked daily alongside faculty and technical-administrative staff, contributing to the definition and implementation of university strategies. Over the past four years, as Chair of the Quality Assurance Board, I have led a complex, cross-cutting effort involving the entire university in the accreditation process. This required technical expertise, coordination skills, and the ability to build trust, and it culminated in an outstanding outcome: the highest possible evaluation for our university. This experience has given me a concrete understanding of the processes that underpin the functioning of a university and has enabled me to engage directly with its development dynamics.

My commitment has always been directed toward the overall growth of the university: strengthening its identity, enhancing its attractiveness, and increasing its ability to compete internationally. In this context, I promoted the LEI project – Leadership, Energy,

Entrepreneurship, driven by the conviction that a more equitable university is also a stronger and more competitive one.

I have long worked with national and European research and higher education evaluation agencies, and I serve on the board of the Madrid Institute for Advanced Study as well as on several academies and scientific institutions, including the Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, the Accademia Galileiana of Padua, and the Accademia Nazionale Virgiliana of Mantua. These experiences have enabled me to develop a comparative perspective on university systems and to understand how quality is built through the integration of research, teaching, organization, and governance.

In my experience, a university grows when research and institutional governance move forward together, and when those who lead understand from within the daily work that makes these processes possible. *I believe in a university that truly places its community at the center: students, faculty, technical-administrative staff, librarians, language instructors, and laboratory technicians.* A university that is not merely a place where knowledge is transmitted, but a living space — a community capable of recognizing the value of every role, nurturing talent, creating opportunities, and building the future. Because the value of a university is never the expression of a single voice, but the result of shared work. It is on these foundations that I wish to build my candidacy, placing at Ca' Foscari's service a path grounded in scientific achievements, strategic vision, and a concrete commitment to the development of its community.

The meaning of a candidacy

*"No man is an island,
Entire of itself.
Each is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less.
As well as if a promontory were.
As well as if a manor of thine own
Or of thine friend's were.
Each man's death diminishes me,
For I am involved in mankind.
Therefore, send not to know
For whom the bell tolls,
It tolls for thee."*

John Donne

With this program, I formally announce my candidacy for the position of Rector of Ca' Foscari University of Venice. I do so with full awareness and with deep respect for the institution that brings us together. My candidacy is the result of careful reflection. I chose first to complete important goals for our University and, above all, to take the time needed to reflect seriously on the meaning and the weight of this step.

Running for Rector is neither a formal gesture nor a decision to be taken lightly. It is a great responsibility — one that concerns the present and the future of Ca' Foscari, its students, and all those who work here every day in teaching, research, knowledge valorization, services, and administration. It is a responsibility that requires listening, balance, vision, and a sense of limits.

I decided to run only when I felt I could do so with full awareness of the task ahead and of the responsibility it entails for all members of our community. **Ca' Foscari is a complex community, rich in differences, expertise, and perspectives. Leading it means, first and foremost, respecting it, caring for it, and placing oneself at its service.** It is in this spirit, and with this sense of responsibility, that I now place my experience and commitment at the service of our University.

I am running to propose a new vision for our University. I am running because I am deeply convinced that our institution stands at a crucial moment in its history — and because I feel a duty to do everything I can to contribute to its future.

I am running because I believe that the University must once again become a beacon of **hope**; a place of **dialogue**, not division; a space of **encounter**, not separation.

I am running because it is increasingly clear that university policies cannot truly change unless we first change the spirit in which we conceive and build them. It is not enough to intervene in rules or tools: what is needed is a shift in paradigm — the ability to change for the better, together, as an academic community. We must move beyond a logic of constant survival and reactive responses to emergencies, and instead open a new phase of renewal and conscious relaunch. A university that lives only by reacting loses the ability to imagine its own future. I believe, instead, in **an international university that shapes and guides change**, that does not chase emergencies but builds direction — a university with a shared vision that becomes a driver of cultural and social development.

Over the years, I have had the privilege of knowing this University from many perspectives — as a faculty member, as Vice-Rector, as Chair of the Quality Assurance Board, and as a citizen. I have seen up close the difficulties of those who feel excluded, the hopes of those who believe in research, and the struggles of those who devote their lives to teaching without always feeling heard.

I have met talented students concerned about their future in Italy; high-achieving students who do not always feel adequately recognized; researchers who struggle to see their work fully valued. I have met early-career researchers forced to fight for space and prospects, and technical and administrative staff who sustain the University's daily life with dedication and expertise, often without proper recognition. To them — to all of you — I want to say that we can, and must, give new momentum to our path. We can no longer allow our energies to be wasted in internal divisions or institutional

rigidity. We cannot accept that the brightest minds in our community feel distant from their own University.

This is why I am running: to defend Ca' Foscari's true vocation — to be a community of thought, of freedom, of courage. *I believe that together we can build a future in which Ca' Foscari is not only a model for the quality of its teaching and research, but also for its ability to generate meaning, to bring people together, and to inspire.* What drives me is a deep desire to serve an institution I love, and to accompany it into a new phase — one in which knowledge can become the language of hope.

Today, the university stands at the center of profound, rapid, and often destabilizing transformations that challenge established models and long-held assumptions. The challenges ahead are significant and concern the future of education, research, academic work, and the relationship between universities and society. In this context, what is at stake is not simply the leadership of a university for a term, but something deeper: how we choose to live, build, and pass on the university in the decades to come.

This election therefore calls us to a collective responsibility. It asks us not only who should lead Ca' Foscari, but what idea of university we want to share and make possible for future generations. I believe that Ca' Foscari can remain — and increasingly become — a place where knowledge meets life, and where Venice is not merely a setting, but the most powerful metaphor of our mission: holding together

differences and resisting the passage of time through the strength of intelligence and culture.

Some may argue that, in the face of present complexity, ideals must yield to reality — that ideas matter less than budgets, and efficiency more than vision. This is an argument that resurfaces in difficult times, when the pressures of daily management seem to leave little room for long-term thinking.

I believe, instead, that good governance cannot exist without a clear sense of direction. The most difficult decisions are not made right by being quick or convenient, but by being guided by a vision that integrates responsibility, expertise, knowledge, and respect for people.

A project that forgets human dignity is never truly solid, because it erodes trust and weakens engagement. A system that works only for a few, or leaves behind the most vulnerable, is not truly effective: it wastes talent, creates distance, and breeds indifference.

The university must be a living community, capable of giving meaning to its choices and of looking ahead. It is this balance between pragmatism and vision that makes an institution strong, credible, and **capable of shaping a better future.**

I truly believe that the future belongs to those who have the courage to imagine it differently — to those who choose curiosity over fear, commitment over skepticism.

Our students are not only the future: they are the present already transforming the world. It is up to them to break down the barriers that still divide people by social background, language, culture, or religion. It is up to them to build a society in which knowledge is truly at the service of freedom. **It is our responsibility, as a university, to accompany them in this journey.**

The university I envision — and for which I now choose to run for Rector — is a just, inclusive, and courageous university. A university that does not exclude, but recognizes the value of every individual. A place where knowledge is never neutral, but becomes a civic responsibility; where research is not only the production of results, but a genuine act of care and attention toward humanity. A university that questions itself, embraces doubt, does not fear complexity, and chooses to stand with those who build, who include, and who strive to improve the world through knowledge.

If you entrust me with this responsibility, I promise that I will never stop believing in the strength of the people who bring Ca' Foscari to life every day. *I will believe that every student, every faculty member, every researcher, every member of the Ca' Foscari community, every shared idea, can be the spark that ignites the light of change.* Because this is how a university grows: together — through people, and through the courage to imagine the future.



Vision

Program for the Rectorship
of Ca' Foscari University of Venice 2026-2032

A multi-campus vision FOR CA' FOSCARI

*“ There are few earthly things more splendid than a university.
In these days of broken frontiers and collapsing values,
when the dams are down and the floods are making misery,
when every ancient foothold has become something of a quagmire,
wherever a university stands, it stands and shines;
wherever it exists, the free minds of men, urged on to full and fair enquiry,
may still bring wisdom into human affairs.
There are few earthly things more beautiful than a university.
It is a place where those who hate ignorance may strive to know,
where those who perceive truth may strive to make others see;
where seekers and learners alike,
banded together in the search for knowledge,
will honor thought in all its finer ways,
will welcome thinkers in distress or in exile,
will uphold ever the dignity of thought and learning,
and will exact standards in these things.
They give to the young in their impressionable years,
the bond of a lofty purpose shared,
of a great corporate life whose links will not be loosed until they die.
They give young people that close companionship for which youth longs,
and that chance of the endless discussion of the themes which are endless,
without which youth would seem a waste of time.
There are few things more enduring than a university.
Religions may split into sect or heresy;
dynasties may perish or be supplanted,
but for century after century the university will continue,
and the stream of life will pass through it,
and the thinker and the seeker will be bound together
in the undying cause of bringing thought into the world.
To be a member of these great societies
must ever be a glad distinction.*

”

John Masfield

Today, the university stands at a decisive crossroads. This is not simply a matter of adapting to change: it is a matter of becoming its protagonists, its pioneers, the custodians of a possible future. We must take a step forward — not out of fear, but with courage; not out of nostalgia for what we once were, but with a vision of what we can become. The challenges before us are real, concrete, immense, and yet this is not a time for discouragement. These difficulties must not lead us to surrender; they must spur us to act. They are proof that the time for merely chasing the present is over, and that the time has come to take the initiative in building a better future. The key to all of this is simple: to move forward together in the same direction, safeguarding our differences while strengthened by a shared vision.

We must stop looking for what divides us and begin working on what unites us. We must prepare new generations not only to possess solid knowledge, but to think independently, critically, and with awareness. This is the kind of university system I would like to see grow and take root: a university that educates people, not just professionals.

Over the past few years, I have read dozens of strategic plans, and yet I know very well that strategies alone are not enough. They remain empty words unless they are translated into concrete action. What we need is clarity of purpose, not an endless multiplication of tasks. Too often we focus on “doing,” but rarely do we stop to ask who we want to be, where we want to go. That is what truly matters: who we are, what we stand for, and what message we want to leave to the world.

I believe deeply in the university's three great missions — **educate, know, transform** — which are not separate compartments but dimensions of a single commitment to the future. The first is educating new generations: not simply transmitting knowledge, but forming free, critical, responsible minds capable of understanding the complexity of the world and transforming it for the better. The second is research: advancing knowledge, pushing the

boundaries of understanding further — not in order to accumulate results, but to improve humanity, to gain a deeper understanding of ourselves, of society, and of the planet we inhabit. The third mission is the one through which the university acts directly upon the world, transforming society through ideas, practices, relationships, and the cultural and civic impact of knowledge. At the center of all three missions lies a single common impulse: change for the better. A change that is not sterile rupture, but responsibility; not passive adaptation, but conscious choice; not a renunciation of our identity, but fidelity to the deepest meaning of the university as a driver of the future. My vision is that of a Ca' Foscari rooted in history and responsible for the future.

Within this vision there is also a clear goal: *to strengthen Ca' Foscari's prestige and its ability to stand out in a distinctive way on the Italian and international stage.*

Prestige not as a label, but as the natural consequence of serious, coherent, and shared work; as trust built over time; as authority born of the quality of our choices and the consistency between our declared values and our everyday practices.

Making Ca' Foscari a special place means making it a university capable of attracting energy, ideas,

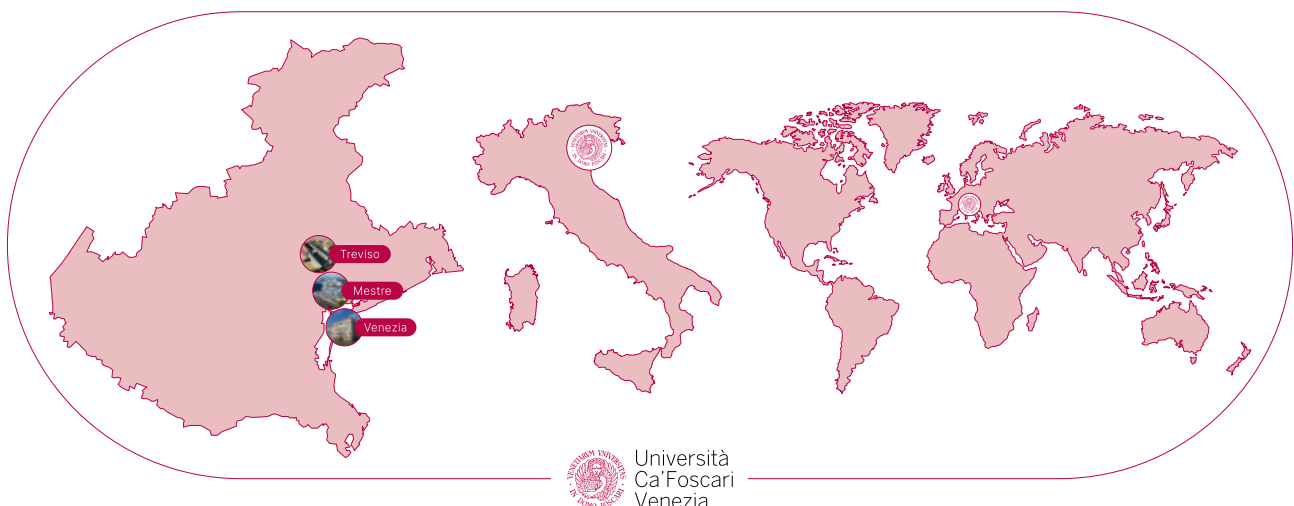
talent, and passion because it offers a vibrant, stimulating, and responsible environment. A university where students find not only a solid education, but a transformative experience; where faculty and technical-administrative staff recognize a space in which their work is valued, listened to, and placed in a position to make a real difference.

Enhancing Ca' Foscari's uniqueness means investing decisively in its distinctive vocations, in its capacity to be a pioneer in the challenges of teaching, research, and third mission, while maintaining an open, critical, and international outlook. Our university has the resources to do this. It has them in its history, in its location, in the plurality of forms of knowledge that run through it. But above all, it has them in the people who make it every day a place of work, study, and thought. It is from this richness that we must find the courage to aim high: to make Ca' Foscari a beacon, a reliable point of reference, capable of guiding, innovating, and opening up possibilities, while remaining faithful to its nature as a public university.

This uniqueness is not only cultural or scientific. It is also geographical and institutional. Ca' Foscari was born on the island, but its history has always been one of openness beyond every boundary. From its very beginnings, its vocation has been openness: openness to languages, cultures, trade, and distant worlds. Venice has never meant closure; it has always been a bridge. So too has our University.

Today, Ca' Foscari no longer exists only on the island. It has grown, expanded, and built new spaces and new relationships. To continue imagining it as a university concentrated exclusively in the historic center means failing to fully acknowledge the transformation it has itself generated and the opportunities that this transformation now makes possible.

For this reason, I believe that one of the most important strategic choices for Ca' Foscari's future is *to fully and consciously embrace the fact that it is a multi-campus university*. By multi-campus university I mean a university that intentionally and coherently organizes its activities across multiple sites, assigning each of them a clear and complementary vocation, without duplication and without implicit hierarchies, but within a single shared project.



This is not about shifting resources from one place to another, nor about diminishing the role of the historic center, but about enhancing each campus according to its specific characteristics, thereby strengthening the university as a whole. Not a dispersed university, but a university that, in the plurality of its locations, finds a more mature form of its identity.

From this perspective, the multi-campus model is not simply an organizational or logistical choice, but the concrete condition through which *Ca' Foscari can establish itself as a true civic university*. A civic university is defined not only by the quality of its research or teaching, but by its ability to be present in the places where needs, transformations, and opportunities are generated. The multi-campus structure makes this presence possible: it allows the university to be at once rooted, recognizable, and active in different contexts, building stable relationships with institutions, companies, schools, and communities. In this sense, Venice, Mestre, and Treviso are not simply distributed sites, but the points through which Ca' Foscari exercises its public responsibility, generating cultural, social, and economic value in the territories where it operates.

This approach does not imply fragmentation or the separate autonomy of the campuses. On the contrary, it requires strong integration among them: shared courses, inter-campus pathways, internal mobility for students and faculty, coordinated services, and common projects. The specialization of the campuses must generate synergies, not divisions, making Ca' Foscari's overall offering both more effective and more clearly recognizable.

It is important to clarify that this perspective in no way implies a shift in balance or a downsizing of the existing campuses. Venice's distributed campus remains the historical, academic, and international heart of Ca' Foscari. It is the place where some of the university's most recognizable scholarly traditions have taken root, where globally connected research networks are developed, and where a fundamental part of university life continues to unfold. Fully embracing the university's multi-campus nature does not mean redistributing what already exists, but strengthening what works and opening up new complementary paths for development. The university's campuses must not compete with one another: they must grow together, enhancing different identities within a shared project.

In the current context — marked by demographic decline, increasing competition among universities, and the expansion of online universities — the multi-campus model can become one of the university's main levers for strengthening itself. A multi-campus university is more flexible. It can reach different student populations. It can offer modes of attendance more compatible with study and work, and it can diversify its educational offering without fragmenting it. It can build deeper and more targeted territorial relationships.

For this to happen, the multi-campus model cannot be left to evolve spontaneously. It must become a conscious choice of governance. This means defining clear vocations for each campus, avoiding unnecessary duplication, ensuring equal quality of services in every context, and building a governance system capable of holding the campuses together within a coherent and shared project. The plurality of locations must strengthen the unity of the university,

not weaken it. Venice remains the university's identity and cultural fulcrum, the place where Ca' Foscari's history and international profile continue to find their clearest expression. Mestre represents a strategic platform for the university's scientific and technological development. Treviso, in turn, represents an opportunity to strengthen relationships with the territory and the productive contexts of the North-East, offering a privileged space in which to experiment with new forms of collaboration between university, society, and the professional world. Adopting the perspective of a civic university implies that each campus is defined not only by disciplinary areas or logistical needs, but by a recognizable civic function. In this articulation, the multi-campus model does not merely distribute activities: it organizes impact. It makes visible and structured the university's contribution to society.



Fully embracing Ca' Foscari's multi-campus nature is not an organizational choice. **It is a choice of vision.** A university that inhabits multiple places cannot limit itself to distributing activities across them: it must consciously design an integrated architecture of functions, vocations, and innovation. Venice, Mestre, and Treviso are not

simply sites. They are distinct platforms through which the university can express its missions in a more articulated and competitive way. Governing a multi-campus university means recognizing that university innovation today depends not only on scholarly content, but also on the strategic organization of space, territorial relationships, and infrastructure. It is not a matter of standardizing, but of differentiating coherently. It is not a matter of separating, but of building complementarity. It is not a matter of multiplying centers, but of strengthening a single identity through multiple recognizable hubs.

The Scientific Campus in Mestre must clearly and visibly assume the role of the university's scientific and technological hub. Its identity cannot be generic or vague: it must be the place of advanced research, structured technology transfer, and stable partnerships with national and international research institutes. Its territorial location, at the heart of an industrial and productive area of strategic importance for Veneto, is not incidental but a competitive advantage. Here, Ca' Foscari can consolidate its scientific vocation not only in terms of academic output, but as a driver of applied innovation capable of generating technological and industrial impact.

This implies targeted investment in scientific infrastructure, in the strengthening of laboratories, and in the attraction of high-profile research projects. It means systematically developing industrial doctorates and joint research programs with companies and centers of excellence, fostering the creation of shared laboratories and pathways of technological co-development. Technology transfer must not be episodic, but an integral part of the campus mission. Mestre can become the place

where research engages steadily with the productive system, where intellectual property is effectively leveraged, and where deep-tech startups find a natural space for growth in close proximity to university laboratories.

At the same time, it is essential to consolidate stable scientific networks with public and private research bodies, European infrastructures, and innovation hubs, thereby increasing the critical mass of research and the ability to attract international talent. Treviso represents an equally strategic expression of our identity. It is the contemporary embodiment of Ca' Foscari's historic vocation for bringing together economics, languages, and international openness. This identity must not merely be preserved; it must be strengthened through coherent planning and in constant dialogue with the activities and academic traditions that continue to characterize the distributed Venetian campus. Located in one of Italy's most dynamic entrepreneurial environments, the Treviso campus can build a more direct, continuous, and operational model of university-business integration.

The aim is not only to offer high-quality degree programs, but to create a learning ecosystem in which business, languages, and internationalization are an everyday dimension of university life. I intend to strengthen the institutional relationship with the local economic fabric through the creation of a permanent Territorial Advisory Board, composed of representatives of companies, trade associations, the financial sector, and public institutions. Not a symbolic body, but a stable forum for dialogue capable of guiding the development of educational offerings, identifying emerging skills, and building shared projects. Treviso can become an advanced laboratory for entrepreneurial education, integrating project

work with real companies, structured business cases, and supervised consulting experiences into academic pathways. It can foster the creation of student startups through mentoring programs and connections with professional networks and investors. In this context, the linguistic and intercultural dimension remains central and distinctive: in a global economy, language competence is not ancillary, but strategic. Treviso can become a particularly favorable setting for developing educational pathways in which linguistic and cultural skills and knowledge of international economic systems interact in an increasingly integrated way, thereby strengthening the tradition of global openness that characterizes the university as a whole.

At the same time, it is essential to invest in the quality of the student experience. The Treviso campus has the potential to be a compact, livable campus, with greater proximity among classrooms, study spaces, and services. Strengthening residential opportunities, improving learning environments, and creating spaces for social life means building academic community, not merely offering teaching. In addition, Treviso can become a point of attraction for international students interested in a setting strongly connected to the business world, through English-taught pathways, double degrees, and collaborations with foreign universities aligned with the campus's economic and linguistic profile.

If Mestre can strengthen the university's scientific and technological role, and Treviso can offer a space for experimentation in the dialogue between university, languages, economic culture, and international productive contexts, Venice remains the symbolic, cultural, and academic heart of Ca' Foscari, the point of reference for its identity and its global projection. These identities

do not overlap: they complement one another. Together they build a system capable of diversifying its offerings without fragmenting them, optimizing resources, and increasing the university's resilience in a context of demographic decline and growing competition.

This centrality is not static, but dynamic. Venice must continue to evolve as a space of cultural and academic innovation, strengthening its vocation for dialogue among fields of knowledge, civilizations, and disciplines. Here I intend to promote high-profile interdisciplinary initiatives, joint international programs, new forms of advanced teaching, and research projects that leverage the city's unique role as a global laboratory of sustainability, heritage, social transformation, and intercultural dialogue.

A well-governed multi-campus university is not a mere sum of campuses, but an infrastructure capable of looking toward the future. It can reach different student populations, strengthen ties with the territories of Venice and Treviso, and make each campus an active cultural and scientific hub. If guided by vision and innovation, this articulation strengthens Ca' Foscari's identity, expands its territorial impact, improves the student experience, and enhances its competitiveness in the medium term. In this perspective, the multi-campus model also becomes the framework through which Ca' Foscari can make its public presence stable and recognizable. A civic university does not act only through isolated projects or initiatives, but through continuity of relationships and intervention in the territories. The distribution of campuses makes this continuity possible: it fosters dialogue with local administrations, makes collaboration with schools and businesses more accessible, and facilitates the university's participation in decision-making processes and territorial innovation pathways. The point is not to "bring the university outward," but to recognize that the university is already part of the contexts in which it operates, and that its responsibility is to contribute in a structured way to their development. In this sense, the multi-campus model strengthens the university's public function and expands its impact far beyond its traditional boundaries.





Program

Program for the Rectorship
of Ca' Foscari University of Venice 2026-2032

My Program FOR CA' FOSCARI

The challenges facing universities in the coming years are deep and complex. They concern how we conduct research, how we teach, how we attract students and talent, how we ensure financial sustainability, and above all how we remain faithful to the university's public mission in a constantly evolving context. Faced with challenges of this magnitude, it is clear that no response can be effective if it takes the form of a unilateral act or a top-down decision. **The university of the future cannot be built by imposition, but through a shared process.**

The program I propose stems precisely from this conviction. It is not a plan to be applied rigidly, nor a set of ready-made solutions to be imposed on the academic community. On the contrary, it is an open proposal, intended to provide a framework of vision and a set of guiding principles, fully aware that its strength and credibility will depend on its capacity to be discussed, enriched, and embraced by those who live the university every day. It is a program that does not ask for formal endorsement, but for genuine participation.

In an institution as complex and plural as a university, lasting decisions can only emerge from the encounter of different competencies, perspectives, and sensibilities. My program fully respects this pluralism and diversity, grounded in the belief that Ca' Foscari's strength lies precisely in the distinctiveness of its Departments. The role of the Rector and the governance is not to replace the Departments, but to make the exercise of their three missions simpler, more sustainable, and more effective within an increasingly complex environment — by providing conditions, tools, and frameworks that support their work and enhance their choices. I believe in a university that recognizes its specificities, its histories, and its distinctive vocations not as problems to be managed, but as a richness to be preserved and strengthened. **The strength of Ca' Foscari lies in the plurality of its academic communities** — a plurality that must not be compressed, but enabled to coexist, to engage in dialogue, and to reinforce one another. Governing means holding things together: creating the conditions for each Department to fully express its potential within a shared project. A university is truly strong only when none of its parts feels marginal, subordinate, or excluded. This is the idea of the university I believe in: a single community made up of recognized, respected, and valued differences that grow together because they share a common horizon.

For this reason, sharing and building a program together does not mean giving up a vision, but making it stronger by valuing everyone's contribution. It means recognizing that leadership in a university is not exercised through command, but through listening, mediation, and the ability to build trust.

The ideas presented in this program are **not endpoints, but working tools and starting points for reflection** — ideas that must be tested through dialogue and adapted to the diverse realities of the university. The program is therefore grounded in a set of governance principles that allow for an integrated reading of all actions. These are the same principles that have guided my work in shaping the university's quality assurance system in recent years.

- 1 **Governance as the creation of conditions, not the imposition of solutions.** Governing a university does not mean deciding in place of its communities, but creating the conditions for those communities to decide more consciously. The Rector and the governance are not conceived as “superordinate decision-makers” within an already highly constrained system, but as institutional facilitators. It is an enabling, not directive, model of leadership.
- 2 **Attention to decision-making.** The program does not promise quick solutions, but continually emphasizes **how** decisions are made.
- 3 **Data as a shared language.** The use of data as a common informational good. Being supported by data and reliable information allows for a better understanding of reality and enables more transparent and informed decision-making.
- 4 **Recognition of invisible work and distributed expertise.** This is not merely a value statement, but a governance principle that places at the center not only existing professional skills but also their future development.
- 5 **To decide is to explain.** The program clearly affirms that governing is not only about making decisions, but about making them understandable, transparent, and effectively communicated.

At the foundation of this approach must lie a shared set of values: **the quality of teaching, research, and transfer of knowledge; attention to people; inclusion; sustainability; and responsibility toward future generations.** These are the values that can hold together the diversity of the university and transform it into a strength rather than a source of fragmentation.

The program I propose is therefore not meant to be a list of pre-defined decisions, but an invitation to collective construction. An invitation to work together, with a sense of responsibility and service, to face challenges that no one can overcome alone. Only through a shared path, grounded in mutual respect and trust, will it be possible to build a university capable of looking toward the future with awareness, cohesion, and ambition. These proposals are conceived as tools to strengthen the university over time — improving its quality, internal cohesion, and financial sustainability — rather than as rigid or indiscriminate commitments.

Not all actions can be initiated immediately, nor can they all be pursued with the same intensity. They entail different priorities, which must be defined responsibly, taking into account contextual

conditions, available resources, and the university's capacity to progressively increase its revenues, including through development and attractiveness policies consistent with its public mission. In this sense, financial sustainability is not an external premise of the program, but a constitutive dimension of it: many of the proposed actions aim precisely to create the conditions for the university to strengthen its economic base year after year and reinvest it virtuously in its core functions.

The program therefore adopts a logic of gradual implementation and continuous adaptation. Decisions will need to be monitored, evaluated, and, if necessary, recalibrated over time, within a dynamic relationship between strategic vision, dialogue with the academic community, and the institutional responsibility of governance. Only through this balance between ambition, realism, and participation will it be possible to turn proposals into sustainable and shared policies.

The main points of my program are divided into two macro-sections. The first is aimed at defining the university's core missions; the second at creating the enabling infrastructure necessary for those missions to be effectively carried out.

Missions

1. Students at the Center

2. Spaces Shape the University

3. A New Approach to Teaching

4. Promoting the Educational Offer

5. Valuing Research in All Its Forms

6. Tradition as a Foundation for the Future

7. Rooted in the Territory, Open to the World

8. Lifelong Learning as Part of the Mission

Enabling Infrastructure

9. Administration as an Enabling Infrastructure

10. Clear Rules for Resource Allocation

11. The Challenge of Artificial Intelligence

12. Fair Conditions for Studying, Working, and Growing

13. A Strong Administration Built by Valuing People

Before addressing the main points of my program individually, I would like to reflect on the role that a Rector should have today in a public university such as Ca' Foscari.

This vision of the Rector's role does not arise from abstract theory, but from direct and wide-ranging institutional experience. I have worked within the University as Vice-Rector and as Chair of the Quality Assurance Board, in roles that allow one to understand from within the real processes of a university: teaching, research, administration, evaluation, and the use of data. This experience has taught me that governing a university is not based on formal authority or improvisation, but on the ability **to assume systemic responsibility** and to guide decisions toward the common good of the institution as a whole.

We live in a time when the temptation of quick command, immediate response, and seemingly simple solutions is very strong. But the university is not made for the short term. It operates in the long time of education, research, and institutions that span generations. For this reason, in my view, the Rector cannot be the center of the university. The Rector cannot be a solitary decision-maker, nor a distant figure observing from above. *The Rector must first and foremost be an enabling function of service*: a role that brings things together, that makes things possible, that provides direction without imposing uniformity.

The Rector should not replace scientific and teaching communities, but create the conditions for them to express their full potential. This means building working environments that are clearer, more transparent, and fairer. It means reducing what complicates academic life and strengthening what generates quality. Many of the difficulties we experience every day do not stem from a lack of skills or ideas, but from working within opaque processes, layered rules, and unpredictable timelines. Making the university more understandable to those who live it is not a minor organizational matter: it is a profoundly political act, in the highest sense of the term.

For this reason, I believe that the Rector must above all be the guarantor of the method, even before being the guarantor of solutions. It is not enough to make decisions: **one must make well-informed decisions**. And making good decisions means caring not only about **what** is decided, but about **how** decisions are made. There are no universally "right" decisions in the abstract. There are decisions that are right for a given context, taken responsibly, based on shared data analysis, and respectful of disciplinary differences and the people involved. When the method is sound, even difficult decisions become understandable; when the method is lacking, even correct decisions risk appearing arbitrary.

Within this framework, listening takes on a very precise meaning. For a Rector, listening does not mean relinquishing responsibility or seeking consensus at all costs. It means creating real and structured spaces where voices can emerge before conflicts harden; it means paying attention also to those who speak quietly, to those who struggle, to those who silently sustain the system. A Rector who does not listen loses touch with reality. A Rector who listens without deciding, however, loses credibility. The role lies precisely in maintaining this delicate and necessary balance.

I also believe that the Rector must have an honest relationship with time and with the weight of decisions. Governing a university means knowing how to plan, how to explain, and how to bear the responsibility of choices, even when they are difficult or complex. It does not mean postponing, but neither does it mean reacting in a rushed or anxious way. The strongest decisions are not those that come suddenly, but those that, when they come, are recognized as necessary because they have been prepared, argued, and shared.

The role of the Rector does not end within the university.

The Rector is also the institutional representative of the university externally: within CRUI, in relations with the Ministry, and in daily dialogue with other Rectors. In those contexts, the Rector must act with authority and balance, defending the autonomy of the university, the soundness of its decisions, and the specificity of its choices — without isolation, but also without subordination. Because autonomy is not something granted from above: it is a responsibility that must be exercised and defended every day, through arguments, vision, and institutional credibility.

Another essential task of the Rector is to safeguard the balance between autonomy and responsibility within the university. The autonomy of Departments, disciplines, and individuals is an indispensable value and one of the university's greatest strengths — particularly, I believe, of ours. But autonomy only makes sense if it is accompanied by responsibility toward the university as a whole. Holding these two dimensions together is perhaps the most difficult task of the Rector, and it cannot be achieved through slogans, but through clear rules and mutual trust.



There is also one aspect I consider central and that I would never want to lose sight of: the university lives through its people. Students, faculty, researchers, technical and administrative staff, librarians, laboratory technicians, and language instructors. The Rector is not the boss of these people. The Rector is their institutional representative. *A university truly grows only when those who govern it do not place themselves at the center, but help the community rediscover its own center, recognize its value, and look to the future with confidence and responsibility.*

1. Students at the Center

The university's primary mission is to educate future generations and nurture talent. The university exists first and foremost for its students — not as passive recipients of an educational offer, but as individuals going through a decisive stage of their lives. In recent years, the context in which students choose a university has changed profoundly: demographic decline reduces the pool of potential applicants; international mobility increases competition among institutions; expectations toward universities have expanded, encompassing not only the quality of teaching but also the overall quality of the student experience — services, spaces, and relationships.

At Ca' Foscari, the quality of research and teaching is widely recognized. However, what often determines students' choice, persistence, and success is not only the degree program, but the broader ecosystem of support: the clarity of information, ease of access to services, availability of study spaces, support during difficult moments, and the ability to envision a future after graduation. In a multi-campus university such as Ca' Foscari, these dimensions carry even greater weight.

Putting students at the center means taking on a clear responsibility: **no one will be left behind**, especially at the most vulnerable stages of their journey. It means improving the quality of academic pathways and strengthening the sense of belonging to the Ca' Foscari community.

Actions

1.1 Year-Round Orientation

Orientation cannot be an occasional activity confined to the enrollment period or based on isolated initiatives. If elected Rector, I will commit immediately to:

- › strengthening Ca' Foscari's presence in secondary schools through continuous and targeted initiatives;
- › expanding outreach to technical and vocational schools;
- › involving faculty, tutors, and alumni in presenting academic pathways;
- › providing clear information on workload, career prospects, and available services;
- › identifying early on students at risk of making uninformed choices;
- › offering welcome and transition services for the initial period/semester of the first year.

A continuous, informed, and inclusive orientation process is how we truly build the future.

1.2 No One Left Behind

The regular progression of academic careers is a key indicator of a university's ability to support its students effectively. It is not merely a measure of efficiency, but a reflection of a system that takes care of people: guiding their choices, supporting them in times of difficulty, ensuring the quality and coherence of educational offerings, and creating favorable conditions for continuous and conscious learning. Many dropouts are not due to the difficulty of content, but to isolation, disorganization, and lack of support. I therefore consider it strategic to:

- › establish a Student Success Hub;
- › strengthen academic and methodological tutoring;
- › enhance support services for academic planning and career progression;
- › improve access to administrative services;

- › closely monitor first-year undergraduate and master's student progress;
- › ensure targeted support for working students, international and out-of-town students, and protected categories.

A university that cares for its students builds academic paths that go far.

1.3 Wellbeing as Part of Education

Wellbeing is not a marginal issue — it directly affects academic performance. My commitment is to:

- › strengthen psychological support services;
- › promote initiatives for mental health and prevention of distress;
- › create safe spaces for listening and dialogue;
- › address loneliness, stress, and isolation, especially in the early years.

A university that cares about wellbeing also improves the quality of education.

1.4 From Day One to First Job

Supporting students until graduation is not enough. We must accompany them **from day one through to their first job**, making clear the connection between education, skills, and professional futures. I intend to:

- › strengthen career guidance and placement services;
- › enhance high-quality internships and professional pathways;
- › increase the involvement of alumni and industry partners;
- › promote the development of transversal skills;
- › support student entrepreneurship and social innovation.

A successful transition to employment strengthens the university's attractiveness.

1.5 Knowledge for Participation

Many problems arise from a lack of clear information. It is therefore essential to:

- › make regulations and academic calendars more understandable;
- › improve communication about deadlines and opportunities;
- › simplify administrative language;
- › encourage student representation and participation.

Clear rules, accessible information, and genuine participation.

1.6 A Talent Lab: The International College

Ca' Foscari's International College is a **strategic asset** that I intend to fully develop, in alignment with the vision of a university distinguished by quality, ambition, and its ability to attract talent:

- › strengthen the International College as a symbolic hub of Ca' Foscari's educational excellence;
- › use the College as a permanent laboratory for pedagogical innovation;
- › enhance it as a privileged environment for developing advanced transversal skills;
- › develop it as a bridge between education, research, and the external world.

Where talent grows, the university stands out.

2. Spaces Shape the University

Spaces are not a neutral element of the university experience. Classrooms, libraries, study areas, places for dining and social interaction all directly affect the quality of learning, people's wellbeing, and their sense of belonging to the academic community. In a context of increasing competition among universities and demographic decline, the quality of infrastructure has become one of the main factors influencing students' choices — especially for those coming from outside the region or from abroad.

For Ca' Foscari, this challenge is particularly complex. The University is a multi-campus institution, spread across Venice, Mestre, and Treviso, each with different spatial characteristics, infrastructure needs, and development opportunities. Venice represents an extraordinary yet complex environment, marked by unique architectural, logistical, and environmental constraints, as well as a high cost of living. Mestre offers different conditions, with greater potential for developing spaces dedicated to research, laboratories, and services for the university community. Treviso, in turn, presents specific opportunities to consolidate a student-centered campus, well integrated with the local territory and productive system. In this context, investing in infrastructure does not simply mean "building more," but strategically managing the plurality of locations, making better use of existing resources, and ensuring that spaces are more accessible, more flexible, and better aligned with the real needs of students, faculty, and staff.

Infrastructure must be considered an integral part of teaching strategy and inclusion: without adequate spaces, even the best educational offering risks losing effectiveness.

Actions

2.1 The Right to a Study Space

Ca' Foscari must respond to the growing demand for places to study. In a multi-campus university, the right to education also means the right to adequate study space at every location. The quality of the university experience must not depend on which campus a student attends: Venice, Mestre, and Treviso must all offer dignified, accessible, and consistent study conditions aligned with their respective vocations. I believe it should be a priority for the University to:

- › increase the number of dedicated study rooms;
- › repurpose underutilized spaces into study areas;
- › distribute study spaces more evenly across campuses;
- › ensure accessibility for students with disabilities.

An equitable university is one that provides everyone with the same spaces to grow.

2.2 Flexible Study Hours

Student life does not follow administrative schedules. For this reason, I see it as a duty to:

- › extend library opening hours;
- › ensure evening and weekend access;
- › coordinate schedules across campuses;
- › experiment with extended hours during exam periods;
- › guarantee safety and quality of services.

More time to study means greater opportunities to succeed.

2.3 Efficient Classrooms, Every Day

Today's teaching requires spaces that are adequate, reliable, and aligned with contemporary modes of learning and instruction. To this end, I intend to:

- › progressively equip all classrooms with sufficient electrical infrastructure;
- › ensure the availability of laboratories and IT workstations suited to teaching and service needs;
- › make some spaces flexible to accommodate different teaching formats;
- › integrate environmental sustainability and energy efficiency into infrastructure planning.

Innovating spaces means transforming the way we learn.

2.4 Living the University, Not Just Attending It

Informal spaces are essential for building community. In a multi-campus university, building community means doing so in every location. Academic social life cannot be concentrated solely in Venice's historic center: Venice, Mestre, and Treviso must all be places where students can not only study, but also meet, pause, participate, and feel part of a living community. I consider it essential to:

- › expand and improve dining and refreshment areas;
 - › create spaces for interaction and relaxation;
 - › promote non-commercial social spaces;
 - › integrate indoor and outdoor environments.
- A vibrant university is built on relationships, not just classrooms.

2.5 Optimizing Spaces

In a multi-campus university, space optimization must be approached at the overall institutional level, not at the level of individual campuses. Venice, Mestre, and Treviso cannot manage their infrastructure separately; they must be treated as parts of a single system. Therefore, I intend to:

- › improve coordination in the use of spaces across structures;
- › extend the use of spaces beyond traditional hours;
- › experiment with new models of space management.

Shared spaces, extended timeframes, and intelligent use of resources.

2.6 The University Lives in Urban Spaces

In a multi-campus university, the relationship with the city is not singular but plural: Venice, Mestre, and Treviso are distinct urban contexts, each with its own challenges and opportunities. Governing a multi-campus university means developing a differentiated yet coherent territorial strategy. I intend to:

- › strengthen the relationship between the university and its urban environments;
 - › enhance housing and mobility solutions.
- An open university makes the city more vibrant.

3. A New Approach to Teaching

The quality of educational provision does not depend solely on disciplinary content — which remains the primary responsibility of Departments and academic communities — but also, increasingly, on how that provision is organized in time and space. Rigid academic calendars, concentrated exam periods, and limited flexibility in managing academic pathways can turn even a well-designed degree program into a difficult journey, especially for working students, those living away from home, international students, or those with specific needs.

At Ca' Foscari, as in many universities, difficulties in academic progression are not always linked to the quality of teaching, but to structural factors such as overlapping exams, excessively long recovery times, insufficient exam sessions, and organizational rigidity that undermines continuity in studies. These elements directly affect key indicators: dropout rates, time to graduation, regularity of academic progress, and therefore also the University's funding. Rethinking the structure of educational provision does not mean standardizing or simplifying content, but enabling students to study more effectively, while respecting academic autonomy and quality.

Actions

3.1 Presence and Uniqueness Make the Difference

A university succeeds when it invests in presence and in the uniqueness of its knowledge. I consider it essential to:

- › defend in-person teaching;
- › promote experiential learning;
- › integrate territorial experiences into academic pathways;
- › preserve and enhance “unique” programs.

A strong university is one that protects what makes it distinctive.

3.2 Flexible, Plural, and Responsible Teaching

In a multi-campus university, the organization of teaching must be conceived as an integrated system. Calendars, exam sessions, and teaching loads cannot be designed as if campuses were isolated: Venice, Mestre, and Treviso must function in a coordinated and predictable way. The current organization of teaching at Ca' Foscari is largely the result of structures developed when the University had fewer than 400 faculty members. Today, the academic staff approaches 700, and the educational offering has grown significantly, both quantitatively and in complexity. This evolution has profoundly altered the conditions under which teaching is delivered, leading to increasing compression of teaching periods, more overlaps, and structural difficulty in creating sustainable schedules for everyone. In this context, organizational rigidity is no longer a guarantee of order, but risks becoming a source of stress, inequality, and delays in academic progression. For these reasons, I consider it essential to promote an integrated vision of more flexible teaching, based on the responsibility of degree programs, teaching boards, and Departments, and aimed at improving the quality of the learning experience. In particular, I see it as a priority to:

- › explicitly recognize the diversity of teaching models across campuses and disciplines, valuing differentiated organizational solutions within a shared regulatory framework;
- › initiate a data-driven and shared revision of academic calendars (start and end of teaching periods and exam sessions), without reopening an abstract debate on the structure of the academic year;
- › ensure adequate and effective preparation time between the end of classes and the start of exam sessions;
- › promote a more balanced distribution of teaching and assessment workloads throughout the year;
- › improve access to exam sessions by enhancing predictability, clarity of rules, and organizational fairness.

More flexible teaching does not mean less rigorous teaching, but teaching that is more responsive to the real contexts in which learning takes place.

3.3 New Forms of Teaching to Enhance Our Offer

Now more than ever, Ca' Foscari needs to recognize, support, and enhance the many teaching innovations that already exist, while introducing new ones to strengthen its identity. I intend to:

- › promote challenge-based learning and remote and virtual labs;
- › support interdisciplinary co-teaching;
- › encourage new flexible teaching activities;
- › strengthen bridging programs.

Innovative teaching happens every day, within our courses.

3.4 Sustainability as a Strategic Choice

Better organization of teaching generates systemic benefits. I intend to support degree programs in:

- › safeguarding the sustainability of educational provision;
- › rethinking existing degree programs;
- › designing new, sustainable educational offerings.

Sustainability is the foundation of solid and lasting teaching.

3.5 Teaching as a Professional Skill

Alongside organizational balance and departmental sustainability, it is increasingly important to invest in teaching quality as a professional competence and as a shared institutional responsibility. Contemporary university teaching requires pedagogical tools, educational languages, and methodological approaches that go beyond disciplinary excellence and content delivery alone. I will commit to:

- › promoting continuous pedagogical development;
- › exploring new teaching methods;
- › investing in structures, skills, and people;
- › establishing structured links with the broader education and teaching community;
- › creating a Centre for Teaching and Learning.

Teaching well is a skill that must be cultivated.

4. Promoting the Educational Offer

In a context of demographic decline and increasing competition among universities, the quality of educational provision alone is no longer sufficient to ensure attractiveness. Even excellent universities risk losing students if they are unable to clearly communicate their identity, the value of their programs, and the opportunities they offer. Today, the choice of university is increasingly informed, comparative, and global: students and families evaluate not only course content, but also clarity of information, institutional reputation, international opportunities, quality of services, and future prospects.

Ca' Foscari possesses an extraordinary educational and cultural heritage, unique in the Italian landscape and recognized internationally. However, this richness is sometimes fragmented in its communication, not always easily understandable externally, and not always consistently promoted. Promoting the educational offer means making visible and comprehensible what we already are, strengthening the alignment between the University's identity, students' needs, and its development strategy.

Actions

4.1 A Stable Presence in Schools

Orientation cannot be limited to helping students choose a degree program. It is necessary to establish a stable presence in secondary schools, particularly in territories that are strategic for Ca' Foscari. This presence must also be territorial and differentiated.

Relationships with schools in Venice, Mestre, and Treviso cannot be left to the spontaneity of individual initiatives, but must be part of a coordinated strategy that recognizes the multi-campus model as a driver of rootedness and attractiveness. I believe it is essential to:

- › develop continuous relationships with schools;
- › involve student tutors and alumni more actively in orientation activities;
- › offer targeted disciplinary orientation pathways;
- › identify motivated and talented students at an early stage;
- › counter dropout and uninformed choices.

An orientation system that is rooted in the territory, continuous, and strategic.

4.2 A Clear and Understandable Educational Offer

Many students struggle to navigate courses, curricula, pathways, and requirements. I intend to:

- › simplify how the educational offer is presented;
- › make graduate profiles and career outcomes clearer;
- › improve the quality of online information.

A transparent university makes its value accessible.

4.3 Building a Coherent Communication Strategy

The promotion of the educational offer must be coordinated, not fragmented. In a multi-campus university, communication must clearly convey the complementarity of Venice, Mestre, and Treviso. It is not enough to coordinate messages: we must clearly articulate the specific vocations of each campus, avoiding both homogenization and the perception of hierarchical differences between locations. I consider it essential to:

- › strengthen coordination between Departments and central administration;
- › define key messages aligned with the identity of Ca' Foscari and its Departments;
- › highlight disciplinary specificities without losing overall coherence;
- › use digital channels strategically;
- › monitor the effectiveness of communication actions.

A clear message creates a recognizable university.

4.4 Strengthening International Orientation and Promotion

In an increasingly competitive global context, internationalization represents a strategic lever for the university's sustainability.

Within a multi-campus perspective, internationalization cannot be conceived as a phenomenon concentrated exclusively in Venice. Mestre and Treviso must be fully integrated into the international strategy, each in line with its scientific, technological, and economic vocations.

For Ca' Foscari, attracting international students does not simply mean increasing numbers, but creating credible conditions for access, orientation, and integration. To this end, we will:

- › promote English-taught programs and internationally oriented pathways in a targeted way;
- › develop selective strategies for attracting international students;
- › implement structured and dedicated international orientation services, distinct from but complementary to promotional activities;

- › simplify and ensure consistency of information for international students throughout the decision-making process;
- › strengthen services for reception, support, and academic and administrative integration.

Open to the world, ready to welcome.

4.5 An International University for Everyone

Internationalization is not only about mobility, but about the quality of educational pathways. It will be important, also through the EUTOPIA alliance, to:

- › enhance double degrees and joint degrees, including European Joint Degrees;
- › strengthen the integration between mobility and curricula;
- › involve international students as ambassadors;
- › promote visiting scholars and visiting professors.

An international university is more attractive for everyone.

4.6 People Are Our Message

Success stories speak louder than any brochure. For this reason, I believe it is essential to:

- › involve alumni in orientation activities;
- › highlight the experiences of students and graduates;
- › connect orientation, placement, and alumni networks;
- › strengthen the sense of belonging.

A university that tells the stories of its people tells its true identity.

5. Valuing Research in All Its Forms

We live in an age in which knowledge is growing at an unprecedented pace. Every advancement opens new questions; every answer reveals new layers of complexity. The major **global challenges** — from climate change to technological transformation, from geopolitical tensions to inequality — are not problems with clearly defined solutions already available, but areas in which research must still develop adequate tools for understanding and action. In this context, the role of a university is not only to produce knowledge, but to make visible — and address — what remains largely unexplored.

Ca' Foscari has all the expertise, intelligence, and energy needed to play a leading role in this transformation. The quality of its research, its international vocation, and the plurality of its fields of knowledge provide a strong foundation that must first be recognized and supported. The goal is not to redefine research priorities from above, but to create conditions in which all lines of research — both established and emerging — can develop fully, with equal dignity and appropriate support.

In this perspective, alongside strengthening fundamental research and ongoing trajectories, it is equally important to foster openness toward new and still evolving areas: the interactions between artificial intelligence, language, and society; the redefinition of economic models in a context of climate crisis; new global geographies shaped by hybrid conflicts and complex mobility; the relationship between environmental transition and social transformation; the evolution of democratic institutions in the digital age; and the circulation and transformation of cultural heritage in an interconnected world. The aim is to expand the scope of research by bringing together diverse competencies and supporting paths that cross disciplinary boundaries.

Looking toward the future of research also means recognizing that some of the most important questions have not yet been fully articulated. **A university must therefore create the conditions for such questions to emerge, fostering freedom of exploration and building environments where it is possible to work on still undefined problems.** It is in this ability to anticipate questions, even more than to answer existing ones, that long-term scientific relevance is measured. And this capacity already exists within our community — it must now be recognized, supported, and made systemic.

This drive toward the unknown must be accompanied by a clear public responsibility. Research trajectories — from data use to technological transformations, from environmental policies to cultural dynamics — have profound effects on society. A university must not only produce knowledge, but help guide it toward the common good, strengthening the relationship between research, institutions, and society, and ensuring that its expertise plays an active role in shaping responses to global challenges.

Actions

5.1 Time and Conditions for Research

Research, in all its forms, requires appropriate conditions. I believe it is essential to:

- › protect time for research, especially in the early stages of academic careers;
- › balance teaching and administrative workloads;
- › guarantee sabbatical periods for research;
- › ensure working conditions that support the quality and depth of scholarly work.

A university that protects research strengthens its future.

5.2 Structural Support for Basic Research

It is necessary to ensure that all forms of research are supported and valued consistently. I consider it fundamental to:

- › safeguard basic research that does not yield immediate returns;
- › recognize the value of translational and applied research;
- › promote transformative social research.

A strong university invests in all forms of knowledge.

5.3 Support for Research Projects

The most fruitful research often emerges from the meeting of different worlds. I believe it is a priority to:

- › strengthen support for research design, including in less represented areas;
- › reposition the university within the *Tenth Framework Programme*.

Broad support, strong project development, more competitive research.

5.4 Interdisciplinary and International Research

The most productive research often arises from the intersection of different fields. For Ca' Foscari, I believe it is essential to:

- › promote interdisciplinary projects;
- › strengthen dialogue between Departments and research centers;
- › invest in research infrastructure;
- › enhance local, national, and international research networks.

More dialogue, more research.

5.5 Shared Infrastructure, Stronger Research

Research infrastructure is where Ca' Foscari transforms distributed expertise into a shared scientific ecosystem. For this reason, I believe the University should:

- › enhance research infrastructure across Departments;
- › develop an integrated, simple, and equitable strategy for digital infrastructure;
- › strengthen the strategic role of the scientific campus as a central node for research integration.

A shared ecosystem makes research stronger and more competitive.

5.6 Supporting Early-Career Researchers

New generations must be able not only to explore, but also to build bridges with society. I believe it is important to:

- › promote the scientific autonomy of early-career researchers;
- › strengthen doctoral programs;
- › support the development of independent research lines;
- › build career pathways that balance freedom and responsibility.

The future of research is built by investing trust today.

5.7 Communicating Research Value

Part of the fragility of research lies in the limited understanding of its value. I believe it is important to:

- › communicate research in accessible ways;
- › highlight its cultural, social, and economic impact;
- › promote outreach and public engagement activities;
- › engage with schools, institutions, and citizens;
- › defend the public value of knowledge.

Research thrives when it is understood and shared.



6. Tradition as a Foundation for the Future

A university oriented toward the future is not one that severs its roots, but an institution capable of transforming its tradition into a living resource — one that speaks to the present and helps shape the future. In a time marked by acceleration, simplification, and the reduction of knowledge to what is immediately utilitarian, cultivating the humanities, languages, and cultural heritage is not an act of preservation, but an act of vision.

Ca' Foscari was founded and has established itself as a university of languages, cultures, civilizations, and dialogue between different worlds. This vocation is not a secondary aspect of its identity, but a historical and contemporary mission that makes the University unique both nationally and internationally. The centrality of languages — widely spoken and less commonly taught, classical and modern — along with the study of cultural, literary, artistic, and philosophical traditions, represents one of the most significant contributions Ca' Foscari can offer to a world marked by cultural conflict, democratic crises, and the erosion of public discourse.

This program places particular emphasis on this point — not because I come from a humanities background, but because these fields of knowledge are today often exposed to a gradual loss of relevance: disciplines considered “at risk” not for lack of value, but because their usefulness is not immediately translatable into short-term applications. Defending and revitalizing them means affirming that the university cannot be reduced to a space for functional training, but must remain a place of critical inquiry, historical depth, and meaning-making.

Cultivating this tradition means recognizing it as the foundation of critical thinking, global citizenship, and the ability to interpret complexity. It also means renewing it — placing it in dialogue with the challenges of the present (technological, environmental, geopolitical) and making it an integral part of the University's internationalization strategy. In this sense, classical culture, the humanities, and linguistic competence are not alternatives to innovation, but conditions for its quality and responsibility. This perspective also includes attention to inclusive languages and forms of expression — not only as tools of accessibility, but as full expressions of contemporary linguistic and cultural plurality. Recognizing their value means expanding the very concept of language, strengthening the right to communication, and affirming the role of the university as a space of inclusion, mediation, and cultural democracy.

This part of the program clearly states that Ca' Foscari aims to continue being a global university — not through standardization, but through cultural depth, linguistic plurality, and its capacity to mediate between different traditions.

Actions

6.1 The Humanities as a Grammar of the Present

The humanities and historical knowledge constitute a living and structural resource for the development of critical thinking and for understanding contemporary transformations. They provide conceptual, methodological, and interpretative tools essential for engaging with the complexity of today's world, linking past and present and enabling a non-reductive understanding of social, political, and cultural phenomena. In this regard, I propose to:

- › promote the structural value of the humanities and historical disciplines (history, philosophy, philology, literary, linguistic, and cultural studies, etc.) in university education;
- › encourage dialogue between the humanities, historical knowledge, and contemporary fields of inquiry;
- › emphasize the formative role of historical depth in understanding the present;
- › reaffirm the centrality of critical methods characteristic of the humanities in shaping individuals.

A university that invests in the humanities strengthens society's critical thinking.

6.2 Cultural Heritage as a Living Laboratory

Material, artistic, literary, and cultural heritage represents a dynamic field for the production of knowledge and engagement with society. I believe it will be important to:

- › enhance literary, historical-artistic, and cultural studies as frontier research areas;
- › promote and preserve both tangible and intangible heritage;
- › strengthen dialogue with museums, archives, libraries, and cultural institutions.

Living culture, active knowledge.

6.3 Languages as Ways of Inhabiting the World

Languages are fundamental tools for interpreting the world and building relationships between cultures and histories, especially in their less widely spoken forms. I propose to:

- › support the study of less commonly taught languages as a strategic global resource;
- › value linguistic competence as historical, cultural, and political knowledge;
- › promote educational pathways that integrate language, history, and socio-cultural and economic context.

Every language is a different way of inhabiting the world.

6.4 Italian as a Global Language of Culture

Italian continues to play a central role as a language of culture, mediation, and knowledge production in international contexts. I consider it essential to:

- › promote Italian as a language of culture, science, and critical thought;
- › support the teaching of Italian in international contexts;
- › strengthen connections with Italian-speaking communities worldwide, particularly in the Americas.

Promoting Italian means strengthening cultural presence globally.



6.5 Integrating the Humanities into International Strategy

Integrating the humanities into the international strategy means valuing knowledge, languages, and cultures as distinctive elements of the University — capable of engaging with the world and contributing in original ways to major contemporary challenges. It will be important to:

- › make the humanities an integral part of the international strategy;
- › build global academic networks in cultural and linguistic studies;
- › promote international programs in the humanities;
- › challenge the idea that internationalization requires standardization;
- › promote humanism as a global language.

To be international means bringing one's identity into the world.

7. Rooted in the Territory, Open to the World

Ca' Foscari must explicitly embrace the profile of a **European civic university**: an institution that does not view its relationship with the territory as an ancillary or occasional function, but as a constitutive dimension of its identity. This means integrating teaching, research, and third mission in a coherent way around the needs and potential of the contexts in which we operate. Venice, Mestre, and Treviso are not merely campuses: they are the places through which Ca' Foscari creates public value, strengthens social cohesion, supports innovation, and contributes to the quality of collective decision-making. Being rooted in the territory does not mean closing ourselves within the local; it means using this rootedness as a lever for a stronger, more recognizable, and more responsible national and international presence.

Ca' Foscari is deeply intertwined with the territory in which it operates. Venice is not only an extraordinary setting, but also a fragile and complex city, shaped by economic, social, and environmental transformations that require knowledge, vision, and responsibility. At the same time, Ca' Foscari is not only the university of Venice: it is a central actor in the Veneto region, a bridge between the local and the global, a public institution called to generate knowledge, culture, and social impact.

In recent years, the so-called "third mission" has become increasingly important, but it often risks being perceived as a set of ancillary activities or as a fragmented response to external demands. The challenge, instead, is to integrate the relationship with the territory into the overall strategy of the University, making it a driver of cultural, social, and economic development, consistent with Ca' Foscari's identity and the needs of the community.

Strengthening territorial impact does not mean subordinating the university to contingent interests, but recognizing that public knowledge finds its full meaning when it engages with society, helps interpret problems, and contributes to building shared solutions. In this sense, Ca' Foscari can and must be a generative actor, capable of connecting institutions, businesses, the cultural sector, and citizens.

Actions

7.1 Knowledge Transfer

The third mission must not be perceived as an add-on, but as an integral part of the quality of teaching and research. The multi-campus structure represents a strategic lever in this regard: it allows knowledge transfer to be articulated in ways that reflect territorial vocations, avoiding duplication and strengthening complementarities between campuses. The University should:

- › integrate the third mission into departmental planning;
- › recognize and value faculty engagement in these activities;
- › communicate results effectively to society.

Social impact is a form of quality.

7.2 Knowledge in Public Decision-Making

Ca' Foscari must be a stable and authoritative partner for local, regional, and national institutions. In a multi-campus university, this public role must be exercised in a polycentric way. Venice, Mestre, and Treviso are not only university sites, but distinct territorial access points to decision-making processes: Ca' Foscari's expertise must contribute in each of these contexts with continuity and visibility. It will be strategic to:

- › establish permanent forums for dialogue with the Municipality of Venice, the Municipality of Treviso, the Veneto Region, and other public bodies;
- › provide scientific expertise to support public policy-making;
- › contribute to territorial and cultural planning; enhance the university's role in decision-making processes;
- › make visible the impact of Ca' Foscari's expertise on public decisions.

A university that is heard is an institution that generates public value.

7.3 Universities and Business: A Lasting Relationship that Creates Mutual Value

Engagement with businesses must not be reduced to short-term logic. In a multi-campus university, relationships with the productive system cannot be uniform. Venice, Mestre, and Treviso are embedded in different economic ecosystems and require forms of collaboration aligned with their respective territorial vocations. I believe it is important to:

- › develop structured partnerships with the productive sector;
- › promote knowledge transfer;

- › create high-quality internship and training pathways;
- › support social and cultural innovation; ensure that all collaborations are consistent with the University's values.

A university that engages with its territories builds sustainable development.

7.4 Foundations and Philanthropy as Partners in Public Value

Foundations represent an important resource for supporting cultural, scientific, and social projects. In a multi-campus university, the public value we offer to foundations is not generic — it takes shape in different and complementary territorial contexts. Venice, Mestre, and Treviso offer three distinct ecosystems in which philanthropy can support research, education, and impact in coherent and recognizable ways. I will commit to:

- › strengthening stable relationships with local, national, and international foundations;
- › developing long-term projects;
- › enhancing the cultural and social dimension of research;
- › supporting scholarships, infrastructure, and impact-driven initiatives;
- › ensuring transparency and coherence in collaborations.

Stable relationships, long-term projects, shared impact.

7.5 A University that Brings Cities to Life

In a multi-campus university, "the city" is not a single entity. Venice, Mestre, and Treviso represent different urban contexts, each with its own social, cultural, and economic dynamics. A university that brings cities to life must be able to engage with this plurality not

episodically, but through a coordinated and differentiated strategy that recognizes the vocations of each territory and connects them. The University should:

- › promote cultural initiatives open to the public;
- › enhance historical and artistic heritage;
- › strengthen relationships with other institutions;
- › contribute to the cultural vitality of the city.

A vibrant university makes for vibrant cities.

7.6 The Foundation as a Driver of Growth, Innovation, and Sustainability

The Foundation must be equipped with its own distinctive mission and a clear capacity for initiative. It must operate with flexibility, responsiveness, and the ability to invest in areas that a public university, by its nature and constraints, cannot fully cover. For this reason, while the Foundation must remain aligned with the University's overall strategy, it should not be limited by it. It must have its own multi-year strategic plan, capable of identifying priority areas, generating resources, activating partnerships, and developing high-impact initiatives. I therefore commit to:

- › strengthening coordination between university governance and the Foundation, defining clear guidelines and shared accountability mechanisms;
- › ensuring strategic coherence without limiting the Foundation's capacity to innovate, experiment, and operate in new contexts;
- › supporting the Foundation in its role of attracting resources, relationships, and opportunities.

The Foundation is already an ecosystem. Now it must become a strategy.



8. Lifelong Learning as a Core Mission

The world of work, professions, and knowledge is no longer structured in linear stages. A degree is no longer an endpoint, but a step within continuous learning pathways that accompany individuals throughout their lives. In this context, the role of the university cannot be limited to initial education, but must extend in a structured way to lifelong learning, professional development, and skills reskilling.

Within this framework, Ca' Foscari can take on a distinctive role in the national landscape by developing an integrated model of postgraduate and lifelong learning that strategically connects European policies, local production systems, and the university's public mission. In a context such as that of the Veneto and the North-East — characterized by a high density of advanced SMEs, integrated industrial supply chains, structured corporate academies, and a strong international orientation — university-based lifelong learning can become a strategic lever for supporting economic competitiveness, social innovation, and territorial cohesion.

From this perspective, lifelong learning must be fully integrated into the University's strategy and recognized as part of its overall educational mission. It should not be conceived as an ancillary activity or a parallel market, but as a structural dimension of the contemporary university, aligned with Ca' Foscari's core values: scientific excellence, interdisciplinarity, international openness, and social responsibility.

Actions

8.1 A Center of Excellence for Lifelong Learning and Career Transitions

The Challenge School can increasingly become a key instrument supporting Departments in strengthening Ca' Foscari's lifelong learning offer. In this perspective, I consider it important to:

- › strengthen the positioning of the Challenge School in areas aligned with the University's expertise;
- › develop high-quality executive master's programs and advanced courses;
- › ensure high and recognizable teaching standards;
- › promote flexible formats compatible with professional life;
- › enhance the Ca' Foscari brand in postgraduate, lifelong, and executive education.

In a multi-campus university, lifelong learning cannot be organized as an offer concentrated in a single location. Venice, Mestre, and Treviso represent different economic and professional contexts, each requiring training pathways aligned with their specific territorial development trajectories.

8.2 Certified Skills and Flexible Pathways

The future of education also lies in short, certifiable, and stackable learning pathways. For this reason, it will be increasingly important to:

- › develop recognizable and transferable micro-credentials;
- › integrate short courses with traditional degree programs;
- › promote personalized learning pathways;
- › respond rapidly to emerging labor market needs;
- › ensure academic quality and institutional recognition.

A university that innovates its learning pathways makes education more accessible and dynamic.

8.3 Co-Designing Education

Lifelong learning must be built through genuine dialogue with the external world. Ca' Foscari is committed to:

- › co-designing training programs with businesses and public administrations;
- › identifying real needs for upskilling and reskilling;
- › offering training in both technical and transversal skills;
- › valuing participants' professional experience;
- › building long-term relationships, not just one-off courses.

Effective education begins with listening.



9. Administration as an Enabling Infrastructure

In recent years, Ca' Foscari has made significant progress in strengthening its planning, monitoring, and control tools. The University now has a solid governance architecture, control systems, and an increasing availability of data on teaching, research, personnel, finances, and services. However, this wealth of information is often fragmented, distributed across different dashboards, and not always equally accessible to Departments and structures.

At the same time, faculty, researchers, technical-administrative staff, and students increasingly perceive a gap between administration and the everyday reality of academic work. In this context, the risk is not only inefficiency, but also the loss of a shared vision and the growing difficulty of making informed strategic decisions.

The goal of this section is to transform Ca' Foscari's administration into an enabling infrastructure — one that not only manages processes effectively, but actively supports the academic community in decision-making, by providing clear, integrated tools based on reliable data. A university that aims to be responsible, participatory, and non-authoritarian must use data to understand, guide, and improve.

Actions

9.1 A New Organizational Model: From Offices to Processes

In a multi-campus university, organization cannot be conceived as a sum of offices located in different sites, but as **an integrated system of processes spanning Venice, Mestre, and Treviso**. Moving from an office-based to a process-based model also means shifting from a localized logic to a network-based one.

This involves initiating a review of the central administration's organization, oriented toward the University's actual processes, overcoming overly compartmentalized approaches. The actions include:

- › mapping key workflows;
- › identifying overlaps in activities;
- › redefining responsibilities in a clear and transparent way;
- › improving coordination among offices involved in the same processes.

The aim is to make administration more integrated, predictable, and understandable for its users.

9.2 Simplifying Processes to Improve Quality and Efficiency

Through structured dialogue with Departments and administrative units, the most time-consuming and complex processes (such as course activation, assignment management, research projects, and reporting) must be identified.

For each process, it will be important to:

- › eliminate redundant steps;
- › standardize procedures and deadlines;
- › clarify roles and response times;
- › reduce documentation to what is strictly necessary.

An efficient university frees up time for what truly matters.

9.3 Simplifying Departmental Planning

Departmental Development Plans must not be mere formal requirements, but living strategic tools. I will commit to:

- › strengthening alignment between departmental planning and the University's strategic direction;
- › using these plans as a basis for resource allocation and recruitment;
- › providing structured feedback to Departments;
- › shifting from a rolling planning model to a mandate-based strategic framework.

This strengthens autonomy, while also reinforcing shared responsibility.

9.4 Shared Data for All

I consider it essential to develop an integrated university-wide data warehouse, accessible — at different levels — to central governance, Departments, and administrative structures. This system should coherently gather data on student pathways, teaching and educational offerings, research and evaluation (VQR), personnel, finances and sustainability, as well as services and infrastructure.

The data warehouse should:

- › overcome the fragmentation of data across separate dashboards;
- › ensure transparency, timeliness, and reliability;
- › enable Departments to conduct independent analyses;
- › support strategic planning, departmental programming, and evaluation.

A university that shares data governs its future more effectively.

9.5 Libraries as Strategic Infrastructure

Ca' Foscari's library system is not an ancillary aspect of university life, but one of its key strategic infrastructures. I consider it essential to:

- › structurally integrate libraries into the University's three missions;
- › ensure equity and coherence within the multi-campus model;
- › highlight and enhance the expertise of library staff.

A university that invests in libraries invests in knowledge.

10. Clear Rules for Resource Allocation

In a context of structural underfunding of the university system, the allocation of internal resources is never a purely technical matter: it is a deeply political choice, because it shapes behavior, defines priorities, and affects the level of trust between the University and its Departments. At Ca' Foscari, as in many universities, resource allocation models have gradually evolved in response to increasingly stringent external constraints — FFO, standard cost, VQR, staffing plans — but this process has sometimes led to a perception of opacity and distance.

Today we clearly know that three main factors have a decisive impact on the University's financial sustainability and funding: on the one hand, the number and quality of student enrollment and progression; on the other, the quality of research as measured by the VQR; and finally, the rising cost of personnel. Ignoring this reality would weaken the entire institution. At the same time, however, reducing allocation models to a purely performance-based logic risks penalizing structurally different disciplines, exacerbating imbalances, and turning competition into fragmentation.

The challenge, therefore, is to build clear and understandable models that encourage virtuous behavior, take disciplinary differences into account, and strengthen departmental responsibility — without turning resource allocation into a competition over who receives more.

Actions

10.1 Revising Models to Reflect Real System Drivers

Initiate a shared revision of the FUDD model and the allocation of staffing points so that they more clearly and transparently reflect the factors that genuinely affect Ca' Foscari's financial balance. I consider it essential to:

- › value enrollment trends and the capacity to attract students;
- › reward continuity and regularity in student academic progression;
- › recognize the contribution of students with international experience;
- › value both the quality and quantity of outputs eligible for VQR evaluation;
- › take into account the ability to attract competitive research funding.

An equitable university is one that truly recognizes what matters.

10.2 Making Allocation Criteria Clear, Stable, and Understandable

A good model is only effective if it is understandable. The University will commit to:

- › making resource allocation criteria public;
- › clearly explaining the impact of individual indicators;
- › ensuring stability of models over time.

This enables Departments to plan, invest, and take real responsibility for their strategic choices.



10.3 Calculating Teaching Needs First at the Departmental Level

Teaching needs must reflect the actual conditions of programs and structures and should be developed on two levels. Therefore:

- › needs will first be calculated at the departmental level (level 1);
- › the University will intervene at a second stage to ensure overall coherence and sustainability (level 2);
- › Departments will be granted greater autonomy to invest in areas considered strategic.

A strong university is built on more autonomous and responsible Departments.

10.4 Introducing Mechanisms for Balance, Support, and Development

Not all Departments start from the same conditions. To avoid distortions, I consider it essential to:

- › introduce support mechanisms for departments facing difficulties;
- › prevent performance-based logic from turning into exclusion.

The goal is to grow the University as a whole, not just selected parts.

11. The Challenge of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence represents one of the most profound transformations of our time. It is reshaping how we work, teach, learn, produce knowledge, and make decisions. For a public university such as Ca' Foscari, its adoption must be guided, understood, and integrated in a way that is consistent with the values of academic autonomy, freedom of thought, and social responsibility.

Given its interdisciplinary identity and strong presence in the humanities, languages, economics, and scientific fields, Ca' Foscari has a particular responsibility: not merely to “use” AI, but to interpret it, analyze its ethical, cultural, and social implications, and educate students who can engage with intelligent technologies without being governed by them. At the same time, AI offers a concrete opportunity to reduce bureaucratic burdens, improve process efficiency, and free up time for what truly matters: teaching, research, and care for people.

It is essential that the expertise distributed across Departments be brought together within a steering committee capable of fostering reflection and promoting best practices in this area.

Actions

11.1 AI for Streamlining Administrative Processes

AI should serve as a tool to improve everyday work. My goal is to:

- › identify repetitive and time-intensive administrative processes;
- › experiment with AI tools to automate standard tasks (formal checks, data extraction, document completion);
- › improve access to administrative information;
- › reduce response times and procedural uncertainty;
- › continuously assess the impact on people and on the quality of work.

The goal is a lighter administration, not a more impersonal one.

11.2 Integrating AI into Teaching

AI is not a discipline in itself, but a cross-cutting theme that affects all fields of knowledge. For this reason, I believe we should:

- › integrate AI, where appropriate and beneficial, into existing curricula without imposing uniform models;
 - › promote interdisciplinary approaches across sciences, humanities, economics, and languages;
 - › foster AI literacy and critical skills in the use of AI tools;
 - › rethink assessment and examinations from a formative perspective;
 - › develop ethical guidelines for the use of AI in teaching, research, and administration.
- AI as a tool for understanding, not just for use.

11.3 Supporting Interdisciplinary AI Research

Ca' Foscari can become a reference point for the critical study of AI. The University, also in collaboration with qualified partners, should:

- › promote interdisciplinary research projects on AI;
- › strengthen dialogue between STEM fields and the humanities;
- › support participation in national and international funding calls;
- › value the contribution of early-career researchers;
- › enhance the University's scientific visibility in this area.

A university that studies AI interdisciplinarily helps shape its future.

11.4 Training Faculty and Staff for Responsible AI Use

No innovation is possible without widespread competence. For this reason, I consider it essential to:

- › offer continuous training programs on AI;
- › support faculty and technical-administrative staff in adopting AI tools;
- › create communities of practice and knowledge exchange;
- › avoid prescriptive and one-size-fits-all approaches;
- › value existing expertise within the University.

A university that invests in people makes innovation possible.

11.5 AI as a Tool for Inclusion and Accessibility

If properly governed, AI can reduce barriers. It is necessary to:

- › use AI tools to improve accessibility of learning materials;
- › support students with specific needs;
- › enable personalized learning pathways;
- › reduce inequalities in access to information;
- › ensure that innovation does not create new forms of exclusion.

Innovation is meaningful only when it is inclusive.

12. Fair Conditions for Studying, Working, and Growing

The quality of a university is not measured solely by its scientific indicators or its international reputation, but by its ability to ensure fair conditions for everyone to study, work, and grow. For this reason, my program places equity at the center as a fundamental infrastructure of academic life: the right to education, equal opportunities, work–life balance, respect, and inclusion are not sectoral policies, but structural dimensions of Ca' Foscari's institutional quality.

Reducing inequalities — economic, gender-based, organizational, and cultural — does not mean standardizing pathways, but removing the obstacles that prevent talent from fully emerging. In a complex and costly city like Venice, and within a social context marked by new vulnerabilities, the university has a clear public responsibility: to reduce the inequalities that hinder access, continuity, and success in academic careers — without lowering standards, but by making merit truly attainable.

The following actions outline a concrete and measurable commitment to strengthening the right to education, addressing gender inequalities, supporting the balance between life, study, and work, and promoting a widespread culture of respect and inclusion. This is not about adding new bureaucratic burdens, but about consistently aligning the University's organizational, financial, and cultural choices so that Ca' Foscari becomes ever more a place where people truly matter — and where equity becomes a driver of quality, trust, and future development.

Actions

12.1 Strengthening the Right to Education

The first major inequality among students is often economic, particularly evident in a costly city like Venice and within a university community with many commuting students. I believe it is essential to:

- › create a stable university fund to support eligible students who do not receive financial aid;
- › introduce targeted measures for commuting and working students (transport, essential services, flexible payment options);
- › promote the use of Open Educational Resources.

A fair university is one that makes education accessible to everyone.

12.2 Addressing Gender Stereotypes in Educational Pathways

Inequalities often begin before university. It is the university's responsibility to help reduce them by:

- › encouraging female students' access to STEM fields;
- › involving faculty and students in awareness-raising initiatives;
- › monitoring the effectiveness of implemented actions.

An equitable university expands freedom of choice.

12.3 Supporting Work–Life Balance

Inequalities are often the result of material conditions. I will personally commit to:

- › promoting work–life balance policies for both students and staff;
- › supporting flexible working arrangements;
- › ensuring attention to situations of vulnerability;
- › promoting services that support parenthood;
- › preventing indirect penalties in career progression.

Work–life balance is a condition of equity, not a privilege.

12.4 Promoting a Culture of Respect, Sustainability, and Inclusion

Policies alone are not sufficient without cultural change. For this reason, I believe Ca' Foscari must strengthen initiatives already in place, such as:

- › promoting training on equity and inclusion;
- › combating discrimination and harassment;
- › ensuring safe spaces for listening and dialogue;
- › supporting cultural and scientific initiatives on these themes;
- › reducing the gender gap;
- › strengthening a sense of shared responsibility.

An inclusive university is a place where everyone can grow.



13. A Strong Administration Is Built by Valuing People

The day-to-day functioning of a university depends to a large extent on the work of technical-administrative, scientific, library, and language support staff (CEL). At Ca' Foscari, administrative staff play an essential role in ensuring continuity, service quality, and support for teaching, research, and students, within a context marked by increasing regulatory, evaluative, and organizational complexity. In recent years, however, the growth in responsibilities and workload has not always been matched by adequate recognition in terms of professional development, career pathways, and the enhancement of skills.

In this context, it is essential to explicitly recognize the specificity and value of the different staff roles: laboratory technicians, library staff, and language instructors, all of whom contribute directly to the quality of teaching, research, and services. An effective policy of recognition must take these differences into account, avoiding one-size-fits-all approaches.

If no structural action is taken, the risks are twofold: on the one hand, demotivation and the erosion of human capital; on the other, the University's increasing difficulty in managing ever more complex processes without a strong, competent administration that is supported in its development. Valuing all those who contribute to the functioning of the university is therefore a necessary condition for the overall quality of the institution.

This section of the program is grounded in a clear conviction: a university that invests in the people who make it function every day is a more just, more efficient, and more credible university.

Actions

13.1 Planning as a Form of Respect

It is important to ensure structured and transparent pathways for both economic and vertical career progression, as well as internal mobility. Career advancement should not be perceived as exceptional or discretionary events. I will therefore commit to:

- › planning salary progression and, where applicable, vertical progressions in a regular and predictable way;
- › ensuring clear, transparent, and shared criteria;
- › valuing experience and accumulated skills;
- › recognizing the professional specificities of different roles (laboratory technicians, library staff, language instructors), including in evaluation and promotion criteria;
- › avoiding disparities between structures;
- › communicating clearly the timelines and procedures;
- › promoting internal mobility.

Growth based on clear criteria, not exceptions.

13.2 Continuous and Qualifying Staff Training

The complexity of processes requires continuously updated skills. I believe it is necessary to:

- › strengthen the provision of continuous training;
- › develop training programs aligned with the real needs of administrative units;
- › enhance digital, linguistic, and project management skills;
- › integrate training with professional development;
- › formally recognize acquired competencies.

Training is not a cost, but a strategic investment.

13.3 Recognizing Those Who Make Complexity Manageable

Technical-administrative staff possess crucial knowledge of how the University actually functions. For this reason, I believe our University should:

- › structurally involve technical-administrative staff, language instructors, library staff, and laboratory technicians in organizational improvement and decision-making processes;
- › recognize their proactive and project-oriented role;
- › promote participation in working groups, task forces, and cross-functional teams;
- › value their contribution to the management, interpretation, and use of data;
- › systematically integrate administrative staff into planning, evaluation, and quality assurance processes.

A university that listens to its staff governs change more effectively.

13.4 Improving Organizational Wellbeing and Quality of Work

The quality of services depends on the quality of work. This applies to all staff categories, including those often less visible but essential — such as laboratory technicians, librarians, and language instructors — who operate in specific contexts sometimes marked by unique organizational challenges. It is therefore necessary to:

- › monitor workloads and organizational stress;
- › prevent burnout;
- › promote work–life balance;
- › support flexible and smart working arrangements;
- › ensure respectful and inclusive working environments.

A university that cares for its people improves itself.



In Summary

Program for the Rectorship
of Ca' Foscari University of Venice 2026-2032

In Summary

Please note that this is the shortened version of a longer and more detailed program in Italian, which you can find on my website: www.marcosgarbi.it

This program is based on a clear conviction: I know where it is possible to intervene and in which direction to move, and I also know that meaningful transformation requires time, method, and continuity. Time, however, is not a resource we can afford to waste. This urgency should not push us toward rushed decisions or improvised solutions; on the contrary, it calls for vision, responsibility, and coherent choices. For this reason, I present here, in a concise and essential form, the core of my program.

1. If you study

This project starts from a simple but radical idea: the university is not just a place you pass through, but an important part of your life. What does this mean in practice?

- › Greater attention to the quality of everyday experience, not just curricula: study spaces, open libraries, meeting places, psychological wellbeing.
- › A university that supports you throughout your entire journey, from initial orientation to the transition into work or research.
- › Fewer unnecessary organizational obstacles: more flexible calendars, more exam sessions, pathways designed also for those who work, commute, or face complex situations.
- › A lived internationalization: welcoming environments, clear services, real integration.
- › Recognition that you are not the abstract “future” of the university, but its concrete present.

In other words, what I propose is a university that does not simply ask you to endure, but actually helps you succeed. The idea is to help you do something simple but not obvious: **study — rather than struggle against the complex mechanisms of the university**. If courses and services are well organized, you can focus on solid knowledge and real skills, instead of becoming an expert in paperwork by your second year. When the system is smooth, you graduate sooner — not because exams are made easier, but because no one wastes six months of your time over issues that have nothing to do with learning. More coordination means services that actually respond, tutoring that doesn't send you in circles, and guidance that you don't discover only after graduation. And afterward? Finding a job becomes easier, because a university that functions well is taken more seriously outside as well. In short: less wasted time, more learning, more future. Not magic — just organization.

2. If you teach, do research, and produce knowledge

This project stems from the awareness that academic work has become more complex and more fragile, and that it must be protected if it is to remain free and of high quality. What does this mean for you?

- › A clear defense of research autonomy, including fundamental research, without opposing it to applied research where appropriate.
- › An approach to evaluation that does not reduce the value of work to metrics alone, but recognizes disciplinary differences and diverse trajectories.

- › An administration that supports your work, reducing bureaucracy that takes time away from teaching and research.
- › Governance that uses data to understand and improve.
- › Attention to generational renewal, career sustainability, and working conditions.

The university I envision is one that expects a great deal from you, but also takes responsibility for ensuring that you have the conditions to do your work well. My program works because it does something that is not particularly flashy, but very effective: **it makes the university function**. Clear processes, integrated data, and increased automation mean less time wasted on bureaucracy and more time for research and teaching — which is not exactly a minor detail. There is also a positive side effect: when teaching, student progression, and research are well tracked, the University gains more funding and more staffing capacity. The end result: more resources, less daily stress. Not revolutionary, but definitely better.

3. If you keep the university running every day

This project recognizes a fundamental truth: without your work, the university simply does not exist. What does this mean in practice?

- › Staff are not “invisible support,” but a central part of the University's quality.
- › Clearer and more predictable paths for professional development, training, and recognition.
- › Greater involvement in decision-making processes, especially regarding organization, data, quality, and services.
- › Clearer processes, less fragmentation, fewer emergency-driven dynamics.
- › Genuine attention to organizational wellbeing, workloads, and respect for individuals.

I want to propose a university that stops taking your commitment for granted and recognizes it as a strategic resource. The goal is not to ask you to hold on for another year. It is to stop pretending that burnout is “a spirit of service.” Confusing processes, constant urgency, and invisible work lead to only one outcome: structural exhaustion. And that is not a strategy. Clear procedures mean fewer last-minute demands and less shifting of responsibility. When work is traceable and processes are transparent, the people who sustain them become visible — and things no longer appear to happen by chance. And then there is the issue no one dares to name: careers. If your work remains invisible, no one progresses. If, instead, work is recognized, measurable, and shared, opportunities for development become real — not just rumors in the hallway. In short: less pressure to endure, **more professional dignity, and more future**. Not daily heroism (thank you!). Just work done well and properly recognized.

Ultimately, for all of us

This project does not speak to rigid categories, because many people belong to more than one: they study and work, they teach and conduct research, they are part of the university today and remain part of it tomorrow as alumni. The thread that ties everything together is one: a university that does not renounce its humanity — a university that is more just, more inclusive, more capable of making decisions, more capable of caring, and more capable of building a future together with the people who bring it to life.

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