



UNIVERSITÉ
DE GENÈVE

PRESS RELEASE

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The key pillars of the new Rectorate at UNIGE

First woman to serve as Rector of the University of Geneva, Audrey Leuba outlines the key priorities of her early tenure at the helm of the institution. Promoting “Vivre Ensemble”, excellence, and employability will be central to the agenda of the new Rectorate.

The new Rectorate began its four-year on 1st April 2024. Its composition reflects the diversity that characterizes the University of Geneva (UNIGE). As the first woman appointed to this position since the institution’s founding in 1559, Rector Audrey Leuba has assembled a team that encompasses a mix of academic disciplines, genders, and ages. Departments have been restructured to promote collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches on topics such as “Vivre Ensemble”, artificial intelligence, and new methods of knowledge sharing.

First primary focus: “Vivre Ensemble”

“Vivre Ensemble, to which a new department is dedicated, is not just a mere expression; it is a central goal of my mandate with very concrete implications that will allow us to meet the challenges we face and the expectations of our community,” emphasises Audrey Leuba, Rector of the UNIGE. Special effort will be placed on providing childcare facilities and student housing. Addressing all forms of discrimination, student precariousness, and improving working and studying conditions are also part of this “Vivre Ensemble”. “We want to ensure that all members of our community have full access to our premises and services, regardless of gender, culture, origin, visible or invisible disabilities,” explains Edouard Gentaz, Vice-Rector in charge of “Vivre Ensemble”.

These actions will strengthen the sense of belonging to the institution. Short-term measures will consolidate all the services offered to the UNIGE community, including cultural, associative, and sports activities, continue the adaptation of existing buildings, and enhance their integration into the surrounding neighborhoods.

Second primary focus: Excellence

The University must preserve and develop the excellence of its research by stimulating innovation, strengthening its attractiveness and support for researchers, and enhancing its international collaborations, both in Europe and in Southern countries. “The University participates in various strong international academic networks, notably European ones such as the 4EU+ Alliance or the

LERU. Additionally, the partnerships it maintains with institutions around the world offer additional mobility and collaboration opportunities to our students and researchers,” illustrates Stéphane Berthet, Vice-Rector in charge of international and inter-institutional relations.

Its research infrastructure and facilities, at the forefront in many fields, attract highly qualified profiles to Geneva, whose skills benefit the city, its economy, its healthcare system, and its position as a centre of multilateralism. “The challenges we face are complex and require an approach in which the humanities and exact sciences work together for the benefit of society,” insists Sébastien Castelltort, Vice-Rector in charge of research and sustainability.

Excellence also entails excellence in teaching, where the content and form must align with the current needs of society. “We must consider the balance between in-person and distance learning, making a clear distinction between the challenges of teaching and those of assessment. This is essential if we are to meet the expectations of the new generation,” explains Martine Collart, Vice-Rector in charge of teaching. “The University needs to adapt its offering to include less linear pathways, for instance through micro-certifications.”

Finally, excellence includes democratic excellence, which fosters the full participation of community members.

Third primary focus: employability

The ability for graduates to easily enter the job market is a direct reflection of the university’s strong integration into the community. The quality of the relationships maintained with businesses, institutions, professional associations, and international organisations should facilitate the development of integrated internships within the curriculum, recognized for credits. Constant upskilling through lifelong learning, as well as support for non-linear career paths or career changes, are also priorities.

UNIGE, a player in AI-related transformations

The development of generative artificial intelligence is both an immense challenge and a tremendous opportunity for our societies as well as for the University. In this field, the responsibility of an educational and research institution is threefold: to develop AI for the



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The UNIGE Rectorate 2024-2028 (from left to right): Martine Collart, Edouard Gentaz, Sébastien Castelltort, Audrey Leuba, Didier Raboud, Stéphane Berthet, François Bellanger, Juliane Schröter.

High resolution pictures

benefit of science by integrating it with other research domains; to educate and support the community in its adoption of AI tools; and finally, to contribute to critical and ethical reflection on AI. “We must consider its impact on society by drawing on our university’s broad range of faculties and expertise,” emphasises Juliane Schröter, Vice-Rector in charge of digital transformation and AI.

“By providing its expertise wherever necessary, the University can help in the decision-making process. The health and climate crises have shown how much science can contribute to political decision-making,” recalls Audrey Leuba. “Our responsibilities to society are significant. We must contribute to a better understanding of the issues at stake in all their dimensions and develop the tools that society requires.”

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About the University of Geneva

Founded in 1559, the University of Geneva (UNIGE) now ranks among the top 50 universities worldwide. As a versatile institution with international reach, it fully integrates into the international landscape of Geneva while also contributing to the cultural, social, and economic development of the region. UNIGE is a member of the League of European Research Universities (LERU) and the 4EU+ European alliance, with its research quality being internationally recognised. It has been honoured with numerous distinctions, including several Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals. UNIGE hosts nearly 18,000 students from 150 countries across its nine faculties and thirteen interfaculty centres.