

## A survey on the advancement of the Strategic Program Excellence Initiative at the Jagiellonian University



JAGIELLONIAN  
UNIVERSITY  
IN KRAKÓW



RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY  
EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE

**What evidence can be provided for early cultural change within the university, following selection in the first round of IDUB (e.g. acceptance of an enhanced and widely held ambition to perform cutting edge research)? Which measures have been undertaken to date for creating, supporting and maintaining an atmosphere and attitude of change and positive development throughout the institution? (2000)**

- the principles of the Program at JU (called ID.UJ): interdisciplinarity, internationalization, integration and innovation, were widely accepted by active researchers who are willing to participate in various activities within the Program;
- the purposes and opportunities of the Program have been communicated by the University authorities during numerous meetings with academics, and through online platforms and in social media;
- the Program's management structure has been developed – including the Program's Coordination Unit, Coordinators, Steering Committees and Executive Committees at the level of priority research areas (POBs), as well as coordinators of central actions (Gates, Research Ecosystem Coordinator, Education Ecosystem Coordinator, Future University Lab Coordinator). The structure is designed to overcome departmental divisions, as well as to act across scientific fields to generate interdisciplinary cooperation;
- the atmosphere of positive development was reached in the process of recruitment of experienced and young researchers, scholars and administrative officers who are responsible for implementing the Program at JU;
- a significant part of the University community was involved in shaping the strategies and aims of seven priority research areas;
- one of the most important achievements of the early stage of the Program was the change in the way of thinking of a substantial group of academics – as seen through their involvement, the outcomes of their work and the opinions they express – who focused more on interdisciplinary collaboration rather than individual research within one discipline of science. We can observe symptoms of a broader cooperation among hard sciences, medical sciences, and SSH.

RESEARCH UNIVERSITY  
Excellence Initiative  
Jagiellonian University

Furthermore, some research-supporting actions (e.g. open-access funding) are already coordinated at the level of POBs rather than individual Faculties.



JAGIELLONIAN  
UNIVERSITY  
IN KRAKÓW

**How is the implementation of the plan proposed by the university being governed? Who are the leaders of the implementation process? What are the measures for internal monitoring of progress in implementation of the plans? (1500)**

- since early 2020 the plan has been implemented on three levels: by the authorities (Coordination Unit, Office of the Program), at the central level (Coordinators of research and education ecosystem development, Future University Lab, Gates), and at the level of POBs (five vertical and two horizontal);
- the Coordination Unit is responsible for monitoring the general implementation of the plan and direct supervision of central activities, and is supported by the Office of the Program, which serves as the coordination center of administrative activities at all POBs;
- the Coordination Unit is developing a custom-made online information system which shall facilitate monitoring of the Program progress (advanced IT system with extensive functionalities supporting the implementation of tasks, electronic workflow, monitoring and reporting, and integration with other systems in use at JU);
- Coordinators of the central activities are implementing mechanisms facilitating research (an online information system for streamlining research is being developed), education programs (new formats and tools), strategic planning (Future University Lab), as well as integrated knowledge transfer, social engagement and socially responsible popularization of science (Gates);
- POBs enjoy autonomy – major decisions are made by bodies consisting of Faculty managers and scientists (Steering Committees), and are implemented by POB Coordinators and Executive Committees, consulting independent experts.



RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY  
EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE

RESEARCH UNIVERSITY  
Excellence Initiative  
Jagiellonian University

**What measures has the university undertaken to disseminate and promote the plan among the academic community? (1000)**

- JU launched Program's website (<http://id.uj.edu.pl>) and prepared various channels of communication regarding the plan's implementation (e-mails, social media, newsletters, meetings with representatives of the academic community);
- the main administrative role in promotion of the plan among the academic community is played by the Office for the Strategic Program Excellence Initiative at the Jagiellonian University (Office of the Program);
- the principles of the Program were presented to the assemblies of all 16 Faculties and extra-Faculty centers, as well as to students during special meetings;
- the executive bodies at the central level of the Program and at the level of POBs are tasked with promoting more directly the principles of the Program, as well as particular, gradually starting actions among the academic community;
- JU authorities (Rectors, Deans, Heads of Institutes and Centers) are also involved in distributing the information pertaining to the Program.



JAGIELLONIAN  
UNIVERSITY  
IN KRAKÓW



RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY  
EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE

RESEARCH UNIVERSITY  
Excellence Initiative  
Jagiellonian University

**What are the main measures taken by the university to improve the quality of university governance and management, including quality-enhancing organizational changes? (1500)**

- we are aware that IDUB has given us an opportunity to discuss and implement organizational changes within JU, but these changes have to be correlated with the existing structure of the University. In addition, the CoVid-19 pandemic, as well as the processes of elections of the new university authorities, have resulted in postponing the strategic decisions and have relegated the need of management changes to a lower priority. Despite that, we have been able to introduce the system of the Program management which involved the authorities of the university, leading researchers, promising young scholars, members of the University administration, as well as the students;
- creation of the Office of the Program allowed the unification and coordination of the central activities, and the actions undertaken by POBs. Systematic online and offline meetings with the priority

research area Coordinators helped to manage the Program and support POBs which faced obvious administrative and substantive challenges in the first months of the Program's functioning;

- blueprints and framework regulations for the actions designed in the Program have been developed; they can be flexibly adopted at the level of POBs to reflect the specific nature of the research problems dealt with by them;
- we are in the process of adopting new managerial approach to the collaboration with regional businesses and social and cultural institutions, seeking innovative formats of those common undertakings.

**What are the main administrative measures taken by the university in the Priority Research Areas (POBs) including focusing and integration of research teams? What additional sources of research funding dedicated to POBs have been secured to date following success in the IDUB competition? (1500)**

- the first measure was to create managing bodies for each POB: Steering Committees, Executive Committees and Coordinators, consisting of university (Faculty) managers, administrators and, particularly, leading researchers with experience in grant-seeking and interdisciplinary, international collaboration;
- the above-mentioned bodies consist of individuals working at different Faculties and fields of science; in this way, institutional barriers are easier to overcome in the day-to-day collaboration;
- the POBs governing bodies enjoy a significant amount of autonomy, taking and implementing the most important decisions in line with the general principles and goals of the Program;
- POBs were tasked with developing details of their own strategies, according to the principles of internationalization, interdisciplinarity, integration and innovation; these documents, assessed by independent experts and revised, will serve as blueprints for the development of POBs, as well as form an important contribution to the new University strategy;
- Coordinators of the POBs are promoting cross-POB projects to enhance cross-disciplinary research and introduce wider perspectives for already ongoing research programmes;



JAGIELLONIAN  
UNIVERSITY  
IN KRAKÓW



RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY  
EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE

RESEARCH UNIVERSITY  
Excellence Initiative  
Jagiellonian University

- basic funds of the University are treated as an integral part of the excellence development strategy; their connection to the Program can be traced in the financial procedures.



JAGIELLONIAN  
UNIVERSITY  
IN KRAKÓW

**What consideration has been given to inter-institutional collaborations within Poland to enhance, for example, research that crosses traditional disciplinary boundaries? What progress has been made regarding establishment of a federation or merging with other institutions from the region, especially in case of universities which received relevant recommendations? (1500)**

- the idea of a federation with other Universities in the region was announced before launching of the Program, but due to the fact that there are now two Excellence Initiative Universities in Krakow, it is possible that the negotiations concerning creation of a federation will be taken up again in the next few months. Such a federation would definitely go beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries, as the other University is the Krakow University of Science and Technology (AGH); it has also been considered to form the federation including the Institute for Nuclear Physics of the Polish Academy of Sciences. The decision regarding this strategic issue will be taken by the new authorities of the involved institutions;
- exchange of information between some of the universities enjoying the benefits of IDUB initiative has been started, e.g. on the level of vice-rectors for research meetings (University Research Committee of the Polish Universities Rectors Conference), as well as between Polish universities participating in the European Universities initiative.



RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY  
EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE

RESEARCH UNIVERSITY  
Excellence Initiative  
Jagiellonian University

**What measures have been undertaken to identify, train, and support the next generation of international-quality researchers?**

**How implementation of the IDUB plan contributed to enhancement of doctoral training, including recruitment to doctoral schools? (2000)**

- the collaboration between four Doctoral Schools and POBs has been introduced, resulting in preparation of new interdisciplinary PhD programs in English designed for international-quality candidates;
- furthermore, a few priority research areas have been actively supporting the recruitment process to Doctoral Schools by funding scholarships for the best candidates, thus giving the opportunity to expand the number and quality of PhD scholars at JU;

- two important doctoral programs are being developed in collaboration with partners from the UNA EUROPA University Alliance: one devoted to cultural heritage, the other – to public health; these programs will be launched in 2021 and supported from both, European resources and from ID.UJ.



JAGIELLONIAN  
UNIVERSITY  
IN KRAKÓW

**What progress has been made to date in implementing human resources development programmes and in recruitment of researchers (whether Polish citizens or not) from universities outside Poland? (1500)**

- several POBs have already announced open calls for university positions within the *New Blood* action. The calls will be open to both, Polish and foreign scholars. The candidates will be assessed by their academic record and potential, in the light of the 4\*I principle (the ability to carry out research which is interdisciplinary, international, innovative and integrated);
- several POBs have prepared calls for *Jagiellonian Chairs*, *Jagiellonian Fellowships*, as well as for shorter research stays of the quality researchers from abroad at JU. First competitions for such positions are going to be announced in September and we expect to recruit foreign researchers in the next few months. Similarly, some POBs are to open calls for young scholars (*Young Labs*) who could actively participate in joint research with our academics. It is difficult to assess the potential success of these future calls given the current uncertain pandemic situation;
- the UNA EUROPA University Alliance has launched a prestigious program of *UNA Chairs*. One such chair (in sustainable development) will be financed through ID.UJ;
- together with UNA EUROPA partners we are working on creating a common HR strategy, which shall meet the highest standards and apply new solutions (e.g., incorporating the principles of well-being and sustainability, open science, citizen science, etc. into the common HR framework). This coincides with JU's continuing work connected with implementing principles of the HR Logo.



RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY  
EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE

RESEARCH UNIVERSITY  
Excellence Initiative  
Jagiellonian University

**What specific steps have been taken and what progress in implementation of the plan has been made to date to enhance international engagement (e.g. research collaborations with foreign universities or research institutes)? (1500)**

- the first months of implementation of the IDUB plan at JU focused on creation of a proper structure and system of management. Therefore, it was difficult to assume that after eight months from launching the Program we would achieve the purposes of internationalization. However, it is important to acknowledge that JU is the European University and a member of several university networks, having many strategic partners all over the world. We believe that ID.UJ will strengthen that collaboration and give us an opportunity to open our research interests to new regions (e.g. partners/networks in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Balkans);
- the particular strength of the JU international collaboration, strongly linked to ID.UJ, is our partnership with 7 leading European universities (Bologna, Paris 1, KU Leuven, Complutense Madrid, Free University in Berlin, Helsinki and Edinburgh) within the UNA EUROPA University Alliance. UNA EUROPA has 5 strategic focus areas: OneHealth, Cultural Heritage, Sustainability, European Studies and AI&Data Science, which to a large extent coincide with the thematic scope of ID.UJ's POBs. The Alliance works towards creating a pan-European environment for cutting-edge research, highest quality education, social engagement and knowledge transfer. Many of these activities are supported through ID.UJ. In particular, the UNA EUROPA Future University Lab is a joint unit of UNA EUROPA, in large part supported from ID.UJ as one of its key actions.

**What kind of changes has the university initiated in the education system on undergraduate and graduate level? (1000)**

- first steps towards a new educational ecosystem have already been taken by the recently selected Education Ecosystem Coordinator. She has conducted a number of consultations and prepared a general strategy for new educational formats and tools;
- we have recently announced the possibility of making online classes available within UNA EUROPA; these courses will start in October;
- one of the main purposes of ID.UJ is involving students in research projects conducted by JU scholars. Most of POBs have created



JAGIELLONIAN  
UNIVERSITY  
IN KRAKÓW



RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY  
EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE

RESEARCH UNIVERSITY  
Excellence Initiative  
Jagiellonian University

regulations enhancing closer collaboration between research and education;

- we modified undergraduate and graduate programs by expanding the methodological part of the curriculum, creating tutorial modules, developing scholarship programs and giving the students opportunity to participate in social engagement programmes;
- together with UNA EUROPA we are developing new educational and mobility formats to create an innovative ecosystem for the future of European higher education.

**The worldwide impact of measures and limitations introduced as a consequence of the COVID19 pandemic should be taken into account in the implementation planning, and institutions should be driven by the will to maintain strategic development as planned. The good use of digital means of communication has a crucial role to play. Thus, universities should see to it that they are up to this challenge. What actions have been taken by your university in order to reduce the negative impact of the pandemic on the implementation of the university development strategy? (2000)**

- the University has quickly changed its functioning to the online mode, what can be noticed in both, education and research activities. The online tools used by the academia have been improved, allowing the community to participate in scientific debates, conferences and seminars, and to conduct properly the didactic process;
- the pandemic slowed down the possibility of fast and effective implementation of the Program, but due to the engagement of its leaders, all important meetings concerning the strategy, administration, activities and implementation of the Program were held in an online mode enabling the continuation of its realization;
- we have also implemented the *SocietyNow!* program conceived as a quick and flexible reaction to the pandemic crisis. The goal was to provide a framework for developing expert opinions and preparing bigger research projects related to the social consequences of the pandemic. In the open call, 80 applications have been submitted and 21 projects have been funded from the ID.UJ budget. Also 8 mini-grants have been awarded for preparing online material popularizing those scientific issues which are closely connected to the pandemic.



JAGIELLONIAN  
UNIVERSITY  
IN KRAKÓW



RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY  
EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE

RESEARCH UNIVERSITY  
Excellence Initiative  
Jagiellonian University