



POLITECNICO
MILANO 1863

Dear Students, Dear Colleagues,

I come back to you after a few days of silence to inform you of what the University is doing in these weeks in anticipation of the start of the next semester. A difficult task due to the need of taking decisions and make choices, in the absence of certainty.

I believe, however, that on one point we all agree: the value of the university is in interpersonal relations and that the relationship and exchange between professors and students, between colleagues and students, is not replaceable. This concept is crucial for our community and underlies all universities as an essential element in the growth of knowledge.

In recent weeks, facts have questioned this value. The pandemic has isolated us, emptied our classrooms, study spaces, libraries and laboratories.

And today, as the virus pandemic slows down, several divergent considerations are emerging. I am referring to the numerous requests to set up new, fully telematic universities, owned by financial funds. I am thinking of the policies adopted by some regions and universities aimed at encouraging the return of non-residents students to their home. Or again, I look at those institutions, some prestigious, which have decided to keep everything at a distance for the next academic year.

The scenario is not easy to read, and it is difficult to forecast predictive actions. One thing, however, is certain and agreeable: we must defend the value of teaching in presence, in safety of course, but in the classroom. Let's not empty Politecnico. Many of you have contacted me, expressing doubts and fears. Positions justifiable and understandable. I assure you, however, that the work we are carrying out follows the path of absolute responsibility.

We are planning the next semester because we don't want to be found unprepared, no matter what will happen. We are developing a strategy that can provide teaching in presence, in full compliance with all the constraints imposed by public health. We will monitor, day after day, the trend of the pandemic: common sense and reasonability, which have guided us until now, will allow us to understand what direction to take.

Let's not forget that we were among the first to prepare for distance teaching when the cases of Coronavirus were limited to a few dozen: when the contagion exploded, we were ready. We have been preparing for graduations and distance examinations, in the event that in June and July we will not be able to return to class. And I'm afraid it will be so, since the data in Lombardy improve, but they still leave many uncertainties.

Having said that: Politecnico is ready.

The organization that we are preparing and foreseeing for September, which I have proposed to the Senate and of which I assume full responsibility, will ensure that we can say to our students to return, safely, to Milano and to the Politecnico campuses. To return to live our community without fears. A plan studied, however, to be switched, even during the semester, if the epidemiological situation requires it. Even so, we want to be ready. We had difficult months, physical and psychological fatigue begins to be felt. I am aware that other solutions could be simpler, from an organizational point of view: no decision, in full emergency, was taken lightly and no choice will be made without thinking, as a first thing, to the health and safety of all.



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This crisis will change our society, of course. We are going through a historic moment on which the fate of university education and research depends. I am convinced that our community still has as much energy, creativity and expertise to deal with this moment as strong and united as it has always been.

Best regards

Ferruccio Resta

Rector of Politecnico di Milano