



**POLITECNICO**  
MILANO 1863

Dear Students, dear Colleagues,

The Fall season brought the dreaded second wave of the pandemic.

A phase marked by painful choices, which we knew we had to take, even if we hoped we could avoid them. Not easy decisions, that tiredness and disappointment make difficult to share and understand.

These days many people are wondering why Politecnico stays open in a delicate moment for Milano and its surroundings.

I will be straightforward: our University wanted to start the semester with strength and enthusiasm, based on the belief that the university constitutes an important presidium from the educational and social point of view; that education is based, first of all, on interpersonal relationships, on the action of socialization and on exchanges in presence.

We have planned to do this, we have set up safe spaces. We asked our professors to enter the classroom every day from September 14 to today, even on Saturdays, modifying schedules and habits.

Unfortunately, it is useless to deny it, the virus runs within our lives and therefore also in our community. Currently, there are about 150 people in isolation, infected or having being in contact with Covid patients. I myself have experienced this situation within my family. I know what it means to feel a sense neglect, questioning the presence of the health care institutions. To feel discouraged at the sight of a family member affected by the disease and wondering, over and over again, how it could have happened, where we were not careful.

But beside our fears and weaknesses, there is an institution that we have the honour to serve and attend. Beside fear, there is the sense of duty. For this reason, Politecnico is open today as it has been in the darkest times of its history.

Politecnico di Milano is a place of science, culture and research. It is a place of education, and education is a constitutional right we cannot forget. It also plays a role in social relationships which make our students grow non only in disciplinary terms but also as persons. Today, our campuses are also a safe place where rules to avoid contagion are strict and respected.

For these reasons I believe that our classrooms, our laboratories, our libraries must stay open and accessible.

Probably in a few days the health authorities will ask us to switch to remote teaching entirely. We will be ready to do it, respecting the role of the institutions. We will be ready to switch all teaching at distance, to further reduce presence, to do our duty to respect public health decisions. We will be able once again to demonstrate our sense of responsibility.



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On that day we will ask ourselves if it was worth trying to keep the university open till the very end. I can anticipate today that the answer is yes, in a convinced way. We gave freshmen the opportunity to be in contact with a new reality, to know professors and classmates. We allowed students of the final years to complete their degree or doctoral work. We did it with caution, with constant monitoring of the evolution of the situation.

That day will not be a defeat, but only another dark moment within a terrible year that we will face united as we have been in these last months, waiting to return to better times.

With my best wishes to you and your families

Ferruccio Resta  
Rector of Politecnico di Milano