



HONORARY RECTOR – RECTOR AD HONOREM –
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NOVA GORICA

PROF. DR. DANILO ZAVRTANIK

At its meeting on 8 December 2021, the Governing Board of the University of Nova Gorica decided that the title of Honorary Rector – rector ad honorem – of the University of Nova Gorica will be awarded to Prof. Dr. Danilo Zavrtanik for his outstanding merits for the establishment, development and operation of the University of Nova Gorica, and for his significant contribution to the development of the scientific, artistic and pedagogical activities at the University in his capacity as Rector.

Prof. Dr. Danilo Zavrtanik took over the management role of the School of Environmental Sciences when it was founded in autumn 1995. From the very beginning of the institution's operation, he presented to his colleagues the vision that this was the beginning of the establishment of a higher education area in the Goriška region with a strong international reputation. Under his management, a strong nucleus of internationally engaged top scientists was formed in a few years, who quickly established a solid research foundation in various fields, especially in natural sciences, and made it possible to establish the Nova Gorica Polytechnic, whose internal structure was already identical to that of a university. With clearly defined principles, he continuously worked to ensure that his colleagues, who were rapidly increasing in number, focused their work on scientific excellence and international comparability in research, teaching and the arts. With his integrative management style, he was able to attract collaborators from a wide variety of scientific fields, thus enabling the creation of research units in the fields of wildlife and the humanities, from which new pedagogical programmes emerged, and thus laying the foundations for the creation of the University of Nova Gorica in 2006, of which he became the first Rector.

This is how we got the first real research university in Slovenia. As Rector, he has insisted that the lecturers in the study programmes are first and foremost top scientists, thus also consolidating a high level of excellence in the pedagogical field. The period since the University of Nova Gorica was founded to the present day has been characterised by growth in the number of staff, the number of study programmes, and the number of research fields. The development of research and other infrastructure has also been important. His close links with the local community have enabled the University of Nova Gorica to operate today in nearly 10,000 m² of state-of-the-art research laboratories and multimedia lecture halls, and to lease the prestigious Lanthieri Mansion in Vipava for

several decades. He is also the initiator of the University of Nova Gorica Foundation and the Primorska Technology Park.

His insistence on strict quality criteria has also led to the University of Nova Gorica becoming recognised by international university quality assessors. For many years, the University has been ranked among the top 150 universities in the world in rankings that take into account the size of a university; in Slovenia, it has always been ranked first. Under the management of Prof. Dr. Danilo Zavrtanik, the University of Nova Gorica has become an equal member of the Slovenian Rectors' Conference, and is also a member of all major regional associations of rectors' conferences. It is a signatory to a number of international bilateral and multilateral agreements with related institutions around the world, and maintains an international character internally, with almost 30% of its academic staff and almost 50% of its students coming from abroad.

During his management of the University of Nova Gorica, the Rector, Prof. Dr. Danilo Zavrtanik, has established an internally solid, forward-looking, internationally renowned institution of higher education, which is an important marker of the Slovenian higher education, research and artistic space.
