DOCUMENT 03 · OCTOBER 2026

WUF

WORLD UNIVERSITIES FOUNDATION

RE-IMAGINE THE UNIVERSITY

The agenda behind the voice.

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BEFORE YOU READ

A VOICE MUST HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY.

Document 02, An Introduction to WUF, told who the World Universities Foundation is: the global voice for academia, open to every university, built on REACT. This document tells what that voice is for.

A voice that only represents is a lobby. A voice that only reacts is an echo. WUF was created to do more than either: to help the world's universities decide, together, what they must become, and then to help each of them get there. That shared direction is the agenda WUF brings to every table it sets. We call it Re-Imagine the University.

The agenda is not a theory written for universities from outside. It is built from the questions their leaders are already asking, it respects the differences between institutions, and it is meant to be argued with. WUF holds it so that no university has to face these questions alone.

02

AN INTRODUCTION TO WUF

Who WUF is: the voice, the mandate, the people it serves and how it works.

03

RE-IMAGINE THE UNIVERSITY

What the voice is for: the shifts universities must make, and how WUF helps them make them.

IN ONE SENTENCE

Re-Imagine the University is the agenda WUF brings to the global table: a shared direction for the world's universities, which each institution follows in its own way and at its own pace.

WHY WUF HOLDS THIS AGENDA

NO UNIVERSITY CAN REDESIGN ITSELF ALONE.

Every university is now asking the same questions: what to teach when knowledge is everywhere, how to use powerful technologies without losing its purpose, how to serve its own community while working with the world. Each one is answering them alone, with its own budget and its own advisers, and often too late.

That is the gap WUF fills. The questions are shared, so the thinking can be shared. The answers differ by country, by size and by mission, so the thinking must be open to every kind of university. And if universities do not set the direction themselves, governments, markets and technology platforms will set it for them.

1 THE QUESTIONS ARE COMMON

One shared agenda saves every university from starting alone, and lets the smallest learn from the largest and the largest from the smallest.

2 THE ANSWERS ARE LOCAL

The agenda gives a direction, never a uniform model. Each university takes the path that fits its land and its people.

3 THE TIME IS SHORT

The changes reshaping universities are structural and fast. A shared agenda lets universities move from reacting to leading, which is the reason REACT exists.

> REACT is how WUF works. Re-Imagine the University is what that work is for.

TWO QUESTIONS

THE FUTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY, AND THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FUTURE.

The agenda begins with two questions that sound alike and are not. The first asks how universities must respond to the world around them. The second asks what kind of institution they must become to shape that world.

WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY?

- Universities must work beyond their own borders, with knowledge and research moving freely between regions.
- Digital tools and artificial intelligence change how learning, research and administration are done.
- Learning no longer ends at graduation. People return throughout their working lives.
- Inclusion, sustainability and service to society move from the margins to the center of the mission.

WHAT IS THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FUTURE?

- Learning becomes flexible and personal, available in modules and online, wherever the learner is.
- Disciplines work together, because the great problems of the age belong to none of them alone.
- Intelligent systems support teaching and governance, and leave people free for judgment.
- Recognized skills sit alongside degrees, so that learners can build their qualifications over time.

The six shifts that follow answer both questions at once. Each describes where universities are today, where they must go, and how WUF helps them make the move.

AT A CROSSROADS

STRONG INSTITUTIONS, PULLED AWAY FROM THEIR PURPOSE.

Universities have never been more capable. Yet many have drifted from the reason they exist. Prestige and rankings reward research output above all, so teaching, the first mission of the university, receives less time, less money and less honor. Students arrive with new expectations, of learning that is personal, practical and connected to the world, and too often leave without the skills their societies need.

At the same time the ground is moving. Knowledge is available everywhere. Artificial intelligence can draft, analyze and explain. New providers offer short, focused learning. Communities and governments ask universities to show what they give back.

None of this means the university is finished. It means the university must be re-imagined by those who know it best, before it is redesigned by those who do not.

Universities must own the changes they need.



1

SHIFT 1 OF 6

FROM

KNOWLEDGE PROVIDER

TO

CULTIVATOR OF WISDOM

When information is everywhere, a university that only transmits knowledge has lost its advantage. Its value now lies in what no machine supplies: judgment, character, the ability to ask the right question and to act well when the answer is uncertain. The university of the future is measured by the wisdom of its graduates as much as by the knowledge they hold.

WHAT CHANGES

- Teaching built around inquiry, problem solving and real application
- Mentoring and coaching beside lecturing
- Ethics and judgment taught in every discipline, not in one course

WHERE WUF STANDS

WUF gathers the practices that develop judgment, makes them available to every university, and supports the professional development of the people who teach.

REACT

EMPOWER

DOMAINS

Excellence in Education
Leadership and Academic Development

THE QUESTION FOR THE TABLE

What should a graduate of 2040 be able to do that no machine can?

2

SHIFT 2 OF 6

FROM

DEGREES FOR THE YOUNG

TO

LEARNING FOR LIFE

The single degree taken once, early in life, no longer carries a career. People will learn, unlearn and relearn many times. Universities that open their doors to every age, with flexible and modular programs that build into recognized qualifications, will become the lifelong home of their graduates rather than a stage they pass through.

WHAT CHANGES

- Short, focused programs that can be combined into qualifications
- Alumni returning for new skills throughout their careers
- Learning online, on campus and at work, recognized in the same way

WHERE WUF STANDS

WUF brings universities together to agree on how flexible learning is designed and recognized, so that a learner's achievements travel with them across institutions and borders.

REACT

TRANSFORM

DOMAINS

Excellence in Education
Effective Recruitment
AI and Digital Transformation

THE QUESTION FOR THE TABLE

How does a university stay with its graduates for fifty years instead of four?

3

SHIFT 3 OF 6

FROM
PRESTIGE

TO
IMPACT

Rankings reward what is easy to count, and research output is easier to count than good teaching or service to a community. Universities have bent their missions to the measures. The re-imagined university restores the balance: excellent research and excellent teaching, valued together, and judged by what they change in the lives of students and societies.

WHAT CHANGES

- Teaching honored and rewarded as fully as research
- Quality understood as a culture, not as compliance
- New measures of value based on impact, inclusion and service

WHERE WUF STANDS

WUF develops independent benchmarks that measure a university's impact on society, and celebrates institutions and educators for the difference they make.

REACT

ADVOCATE · CELEBRATE

DOMAINS

Total Quality
Higher Academic Ranking

THE QUESTION FOR THE TABLE

If a university were measured only by what it gives its society, what would it change tomorrow?

4

SHIFT 4 OF 6

FROM

ISOLATED CAMPUSES

TO

PERMANENT NETWORKS

Most collaboration between universities is short: a project, a grant, an exchange that ends when the funding ends. The challenges of the age, from climate to health to the future of work, are permanent and shared. Universities need permanent networks across regions and systems, through which knowledge, people and ideas move as a matter of course.

WHAT CHANGES

- Lasting partnerships between universities of the North and the South
- Joint teaching and research as a normal part of university life
- A shared voice where global decisions about education are made

WHERE WUF STANDS

WUF is itself the permanent network: a table where every university sits as an equal, and a voice that carries their shared positions into the places where policy is made.

REACT

REPRESENT

DOMAINS

Creative Collaboration
Innovative Research

THE QUESTION FOR THE TABLE

What could your university do with a partner on every continent?

5

SHIFT 5 OF 6

FROM
IVORY TOWER

TO
ANCHOR OF ITS LAND

A university must never be a foreigner in its own land. Its first public is the city, the region and the nation around it: their economy, their health, their heritage, their young people. The re-imagined university works with local government, business and civil society on the problems of its place, and aligns its programs with the needs of its country, while keeping its independence of thought.

WHAT CHANGES

- Research and service focused on local and national challenges
- Learning that combines study with real work alongside employers
- Campuses that are open, sustainable and part of the life of the city

WHERE WUF STANDS

WUF gives universities from every region a stage to show what they do for their communities, and shares what works from one place to another.

REACT

CELEBRATE · TRANSFORM

DOMAINS

University Influence
Sustainable and Smart Campus
Creative Collaboration

THE QUESTION FOR THE TABLE

What would your city lose if your university closed tomorrow?

6

SHIFT 6 OF 6

FROM

TECHNOLOGY BY PRESSURE

TO

TECHNOLOGY WITH PURPOSE

Artificial intelligence and data are entering every part of the university: teaching, research, admissions, finance, governance. Adopted in haste, they can hollow out the human mission of education. Adopted with purpose, they free people for what matters most and make institutions more agile, transparent and fair. The difference lies in who sets the terms.

WHAT CHANGES

- Clear principles for the use of artificial intelligence in learning and research
- Data that helps leaders decide, with transparency and accountability
- Open and modern ways of sharing knowledge with the world

WHERE WUF STANDS

WUF helps universities agree on shared principles for new technologies, so that universities, not vendors, decide how they serve education.

REACT

TRANSFORM

DOMAINS

AI and Digital Transformation
Smart Academic Publishing
Smart and Strategic Governance

THE QUESTION FOR THE TABLE

Who should decide how artificial intelligence is used in your university?

FIVE STEPS

WHERE ANY LEADERSHIP TEAM CAN BEGIN.

The six shifts are a direction. The five steps are a way to start, open to a university of any size, in any country, with any budget.

1 JOIN A PERMANENT NETWORK

Build lasting partnerships with other universities, with government and with industry, and act on shared challenges together.

2 LEAD THE DIGITAL CHANGE

Adopt artificial intelligence and data on your own terms, to improve learning and decision making.

3 OPEN THE DOORS TO LIFELONG LEARNING

Offer flexible programs for every age and every stage of a career.

4 BREAK DOWN THE SILOS

Make work across disciplines the normal way of teaching and of solving problems.

5 COMMIT TO SOCIETY

Place sustainability, inclusion and service to your community at the center of every program and every decision.

A COMMON DIRECTION, NOT A UNIFORM MODEL

A small college may begin with one step, a large university with all five. What matters is that each university moves, and that none moves alone.

REACT AT WORK

HOW WUF TURNS THE AGENDA INTO CHANGE.

Each word of the WUF mandate has a part to play in re-imagining the university. Together they make the agenda more than a statement.

R

REPRESENT

Carries the shared positions of universities, on teaching, technology, recognition and service, to the tables where policy for education is set.

E

EMPOWER

Provides the data, frameworks and professional development that let a university act on the six shifts, whatever its means.

A

ADVOCATE

Defends the time, funding and freedom universities need to change on their own terms, and argues for new measures of value.

C

CELEBRATE

Recognizes the universities, leaders and educators who show the way, so that their example travels.

T

TRANSFORM

Accompanies universities through the change itself, from the first step to the fifth, and shares what works across regions.

> The agenda gives WUF its purpose. WUF gives the agenda its reach.

EVERY UNIVERSITY, ITS OWN PATH

THE SMALLEST UNIVERSITY CAN LEAD.

Re-imagining the university is not a privilege of the wealthy. Often the opposite is true. A young university in a fast-growing country, without old structures to protect, can adopt the six shifts faster than an institution with centuries of habit. A regional college that already lives with its community may be ahead on the fifth shift before the agenda is written.

That is why WUF holds the agenda for all 35,000+ universities and not for a few. The more than 80 percent of the world's universities that have never had a seat at the global table are not only the ones who most need the conversation. Many are the ones with the most to teach it.

> **THE WUF PRINCIPLE**
>
> Ecosystem over elitism. Every university contributes to the agenda, and every university benefits from it.



THE RE-IMAGINED UNIVERSITY

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE.

When the six shifts take hold, a university looks different to everyone who meets it.

THE STUDENT	Learns to think, judge and act, through real problems and good mentors, and leaves able to keep learning.
THE WORKING PROFESSIONAL	Comes back again and again for new skills, recognized wherever they go.
THE TEACHER	Is honored for teaching, supported to grow and free to innovate.
THE LEADER	Decides with good data and clear principles, as part of a network of peers across the world.
THE COMMUNITY	Sees its university at work on its problems, its economy and its future.
THE WORLD	Hears universities speak with one voice where the future of learning is decided.



WITH US

RE-IMAGINE THE UNIVERSITY WITH US.

The agenda is open. WUF invites every university, and everyone who shapes the future of universities, to add to it.

1

Tell us how your university is changing, and what it has learned on the way.

2

Bring the question your leadership team is struggling with. It is very likely shared by others.

3

Join the conversation at W-U-F.org and on LinkedIn, or write to info@w-u-f.org.

> The university matters too much to humanity to be re-imagined by anyone but universities, together.

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