We are not living in an era of change, but in a change of era. With everything around us in flux, how can we confidently say anything about the year 2030? The 4th Industrial Revolution has come with promises of flourishing and prophecies of doom. Irrespective of our positions, we all must rethink our lives and help redesign society. For us, this calls for a reinvention of our university.

One can compare the current revolution to previous industrial revolutions: a flood of changes fundamentally reshaping society, but also with severe drawbacks, particularly in the balance between people and technologies. Right now, we are witnessing a transformation like that. But we are no passive subjects to it: we are its shapers. Join us in exploring what it means to shape 2030.

At the University of Twente, we have a clear mission:

**MISSION**

The University of Twente is here to empower society through sustainable solutions. We choose to be the ultimate people-first university of technology.

This mission summarizes our identity:

**We empower:** we enable society to achieve the goals it sets itself by wise use of science and technology. We contribute to a balanced understanding of scientific and technological developments, and of their impact on the community and the environment.

**We provide sustainable solutions:** we aim for thriving and resilient communities, with an eye for innovation opportunities, with authoritative expertise, and with a keen sensitivity to society’s needs. Resisting the temptations of blind techno-mania as well as romantic nostalgia, we provide sound, scientific guidance.

**We are a university of technology:** our university is a public institution that serves society. We are accountable to society for the ways in which we use our academic freedom. We are responsible for ensuring that the power of science and technology is harnessed to achieve the best possible impact in a changing world. We cherish our rich tradition of combining technical and social sciences in our core areas: Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, Design, Behavioural and Social Sciences.

**Being ‘people-first’ is our choice:** we serve humanity, aware of the interdependencies between people and our planet, and always aiming to make sure that people can count on us. We have delivered technological innovations in the past, and we will be a part of the innovations of the future. We are aware that technologies change society, and that science’s contribution changes with it. We make sure that our people have the time to grow and deliver quality work. We share our talent and resources on campus, in the region, and with the wider world around us. In the choices we make, large and small, the wellbeing of people is our guiding principle.
In the spirit of this mission, we envision a society in 2030 in which we will have learned from the past, and in which we seize the opportunities of technology. In the coming decade, society will face many challenges. It can only hope to overcome these with the full engagement of the scientific community. The UT believes in a focused ambition that involves setting clear priorities in education and research at the touchpoints between these challenges and our own identity. Given the UT’s mission to be a university of technology that puts people first, we direct special attention to three societal themes and the challenges they pose; these can all be framed in a single question: how can we contribute to the development of a digital, fair, and sustainable society between now and 2030?
VISION

2.1 SOCIETY IN 2030: CONTRIBUTING TO A DIGITAL, FAIR, AND SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY

A DIGITAL SOCIETY IN 2030: CONTRIBUTING AND BENEFITTING

The Digital Revolution has been the most life-changing technological innovation of our era. At this very moment, machine learning and artificial intelligence are transforming the way innovations emerge. Given these developments, society has already had to reinvent itself, and so have universities. Our university aims to contribute in two ways to this ongoing transformation. First, our scientific community will contribute by providing revolutionary digital innovations, with special consideration of their long-term implications for all that we value as a ‘people-first’ university of technology. For society, learning new ways to appropriate and interact with technology is vital. Conversely, learning how to develop technologies that match society’s needs, and monitoring the growth of technological intelligence, are essential to helping our society to fulfil its true potential. Second, we will benefit from these technologies as well: digital innovations continually shape and reshape our research and education. As digitalisation progresses, people will need skills tomorrow that do not yet exist today – basic coping skills, as well as skills that can continue to evolve. Therefore, our educational programmes prepare students for ongoing re-education, while also laying a foundation of skills for professional adaptability and personal development, such as critical thinking, creativity, communication and resourcefulness. Our researchers embody the value of lifelong learning. We invite and equip professionals to keep in step – or to keep ahead of – developments, becoming confident, balanced, digital citizens.

A FAIR SOCIETY IN 2030: MAKING HUMANS MORE HUMAN

Putting ‘people first’ includes all people. We will do whatever is necessary to eliminate societal divides that bar certain individuals, or groups, from access to new technologies, the skills to use them, equality of opportunity, inclusiveness, health and well-being. Technologies have a proven capacity to widen divides, so for a fair society we counteract this tendency. Together with society, we design technologies wisely, so that they add value to people’s lives, and empower them. In the way in which we organize our research and education, we stimulate a culture of personal development, enabling staff and students to make a valuable contribution to society. Through our work, we want to foster both ambition and social equality.

A SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY IN 2030: WELLBEING WITHIN THE ECOSYSTEM

In an era in which unsustainability has become the biggest threat to humanity, we create viable solutions. It is our mission to respond to societal needs by developing sustainable, proactive measures to support our planet and the people to which it is home. As a university, we lead by example. We consider sustainability to be a precondition for everything we do, while our diversity fosters adaptability and resilience. Recognizing the value of human capital is the single most important key to the long-term well-being of students and staff, and to the effectiveness of our organization. Centring our education, research and organization on people and sustainability gives us the kind of edge that does not eclipse others but includes them – an authority that speaks for the good of all. Society increasingly recognizes the difference we make through our work, and eagerly joins us in our efforts to create a liveable world for future generations.

In order to have maximum impact on society in 2030, we must become a different type of university to the one we are now: an open, connected, personalised, and sustainable ecosystem with a signature style of working. In pursuit of this ambition for 2030, we can build on the work carried out in the context of our Vision for 2020. Back then, we identified four guiding principles that we still cherish: internationalization, impact, synergy, and entrepreneurship. We have achieved many
of the goals we set ourselves in these areas. So, we will continue in what we have already mastered, and stretch ourselves where we need to adapt. Here is an impression of what this will look like.

2.2 THE UNIVERSITY IN 2030: WHAT OUR UNIVERSITY WILL LOOK LIKE

In 2030, we will be living in a digitally mature society – an open world that continues to change. Those involved in creating and managing technologies will have new responsibilities, serving society sustainably, as developers, analysts and improvers. We will have grown in our role of helping society to deal wisely with technology. We will be open, actively engaged in dialogue on the origins and effects of technology and digitalisation, collaborating in networks designed to bring out the best in people. Our own people – scientists, students and facilitators alike – will be problem solvers with a recognizable way of working. They will spend their time wisely. They will be able to quickly adjust to a rapidly changing, and often unpredictable, environment. They will be confident, considerate, and driven by curiosity to explore new ways of developing, harnessing and collaborating with the best technologies. Many people will come to us for guidance: to learn what the future of technology means for society, and what the future of mankind requires from technology. Our community will be inclusive and diverse, comprised of people with a rich variety of experiences, backgrounds and identities. At all levels, we will be actively and structurally engaged in personal development.

The form and shape of our university by the end of the decade will be the result of much experimenting between 2020 and 2030. During this time, we will have learned what it means to continuously reinvent ourselves, our research, our teaching, and the very nature of entrepreneurship and innovation.

Our campus, including both virtual and physical locations, will be a network of living labs and meeting places - places where students have reliable and transformative learning experiences. In 2030, our physical locations will not be limited to one campus in Twente, but we will be present at multiple strategic sites. These will all be centres of innovation, social exchange and networking, offering a safe and open environment to those who study, work, gather and live there. With new types of students, as well as public and private organizations, populating these places, our infrastructure will provide flexible spaces for new ways of collaborative working.

We will set priorities and build a mind-set around all that we think is important for becoming this envisioned university by 2030. In every area, we must distinguish what matters most in realizing our vision and rise above our current selves. For one thing, this means we must restructure our entire organization, centring more emphatically on our significant strengths. At the same time, we must have the courage to make bold revisions where needed, to develop latent strengths, and to explore new territory. This is part of what it means to live in a transformational epoch: you are part of it, whether you like it or not, and the choice you have is to be either the pilot or a passenger. We can make choices that influence the transformation of society. If we refrain from choosing, the choices made by others will sweep us away. Therefore, we must cultivate a mind-set geared towards an attitude, in which we ourselves are at the helm.

2.3 GETTING IN SHAPE: OUR MINDSET

PIONEER: EXPERIMENT OVER EXPERTISE

Big challenges call for bold solutions. We believe these bold answers can be found through experimenting, pioneering, innovating, risk-taking and venturing. With this in mind, we will redefine the essence of entrepreneurial thinking and acting. It is our ambition to inspire new generations of students and researchers by pushing our university’s renowned entrepreneurial attitude to new
levels. We will set new standards for industrial and societal collaboration with maximum student involvement. We will pioneer new forms of education that, in turn, will inspire and empower students and staff to experiment. We will constantly test the limits of technology, science and design through new synergies between scientists, designers, industries, R&D, universities, governments and citizens.

INCLUSIVE: TALENT OVER TYPOLgy
Our thriving, talented community of unique individuals is our most crucial asset in serving society. Personal empowerment means made-to-measure conditions for everyone: conditions designed to help them grow, through recognizing, developing and rewarding their individual talents. We will seriously invest in well-being, talent development and transformational leadership in teams, among staff and students. Our people will take charge of building open communities that foster inclusion. Recognizing, attracting, developing and retaining talent will be an important, even fundamental, requirement. We will optimize all conditions within our networks so that talented individuals of all ages and backgrounds can drive their own development, as well as that of their peers. Bearing in mind that each talent is unique, we will develop a highly personalised way of giving each talent the best possible support and input.

LEAD: COURAGE OVER CAUTION
Tackling challenges requires leadership. It is our belief that leaders of change are needed to inspire and guide our technological society. Leading change requires us to go where the action is, and where the challenges are. We deliver solidly equipped leaders of technology-driven change. Our people are frontrunners who understand complex processes of transformation. They lead the public discourse on the societal and ethical consequences of change. We guarantee that our students, staff and alumni have the know-how to improve society in a responsible way. We lead change, because merely contributing is not enough. You will find us in the front lines.

OPEN: COMMUNITY OVER CAMPUS
True collaboration is essential for our mission as the ultimate ‘people-first’ university of technology. Being a networked organization enables us to maximize our impact and reach our goals. We are reliable and ambitious partners in dedicated networks. Science is teamwork, so we engage in connected communities. Be it locally or globally, physically or virtually, we strive to connect with people and their needs and wishes. We cherish the power of our alumni network, leveraging it for the advancement of science, and for addressing societal challenges. We continuously accelerate the development of the Twente region and beyond, right across the Dutch-German border. Our own thriving community is our most crucial asset in achieving our mission. Together with local communities and partners, we assess societal needs and interests, and use these insights to build our programmes. Our people are part of a major, thriving and open ecosystem, in which we connect both locally and globally, guided by shared standards of excellence and responsibility as socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable partner.

TRUSTWORTHY: RESPOND OVER REPORT
We believe trust makes us adaptive, sustainable and resilient. We guard our compliance with the highest standards of integrity, seeking always to honour the trust given to us. Confidence in ourselves and our colleagues is crucial: it enables us to navigate with speed, power and precision. In our behaviour, we are responsible, transparent, and geared to continuous improvement. We aim for lasting contributions and knowledge dissemination by focusing on team performance and team science. Our leaders have faith in those who are learning and vice versa. Reliable, smooth organizational processes free up space and time for us to innovate and experiment elsewhere. In our way of working, we seek to minimize control and maximize trust.
SERVANT: STUDENT OVER SYSTEM
Students are the next generation of researchers, leaders and citizens. We believe student-centeredness is key to their growth, professionally as well as personally: it supports students in finding and fulfilling their future roles.

Rules, structures and regulations are helpful means, but not ends in themselves. We are committed to empowering students to reach their potential, leading active lives on and off campus. We do this by being student-centred. We offer students relevant and innovative personalised education that meets their needs and maximizes their involvement. In all their learning processes, we integrate unique experiments and extensive practical experience in companies and institutions. In turn, students inspire us, and our partners, with their fresh perspectives and boundless energy. They deliver new insights and actionable solutions. Our learners, from young adults to experienced professionals, have on-demand access to education, along with the best facilities to support their learning. In education, proximity is our guiding principle: we are where our students are.