

Break-out session 2: Possibilities and future of global knowledge collaboration and forms of collaboration of national systems

How can we turn shared challenges into shared strategies?

What visionary goals could we pursue together — that none of us could achieve alone?

What kind of collaboration would make the next generation of rectors inspired?

Denmark

⇄ Universities face various challenges: budget constraints (how to achieve more with limited resources); understanding society's needs; political volatility; students' mental health, their fears, a highly vulnerable generation.

Better collaboration between universities from different countries helps make oneself more heard. We could, for example, discuss the teaching of niche or specialized fields together. It would also be beneficial to share our strategies and best practices.

Suggestions for the next generation of rectors: maintain openness to diverse viewpoints and engage a wide range of stakeholders (including students) in decision-making.

Estonia

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1. Encourage each other to be different. Take responsibility for bildlung, breaking the silos, speeding up things. Addressing the tax payers!
 2. Create a rector/future rector exchange program.
 3. If ranking are to be used, they must be transparent and fair.
 4. We need to change a lot, but keep our role

Finland

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1. Collect examples of how university leaders have responded to complex situations.
 2. We suggest adding a reflective session to the conference, where rectors can share recent challenges and learn from each other's experiences.
 3. In global cooperation, justice should never mean 'just us'.
 4. We need to move beyond a nation-centered view of talent and approach it collectively, Nordic-Baltic, European level.
 5. We need to reflect on whether some of our long-held views still match today's realities — for instance, China is no longer merely applying foreign knowledge, but increasingly driving innovation and still actively pursuing global partnerships.
 6. While the legal frameworks, values, and norms that protect us are essential, they can also slow us down. We need to work together in to find ways to accelerate innovation, apply new technologies more swiftly, and retain the talent that drives change.
 7. Is there a way for the Nordic-Baltic academic community to help shape a shared long-term vision — one that encourages governments to align short-term political strategies with broader goals?
 8. How can we lead a cultural shift in research — toward more regional and global collaboration on critical themes?
 9. As university leadership becomes more complex — often shaped by financial pressures and managerial expectations — we need to rediscover space for visionary thinking. Creating small groups of rectors for regular peer dialogue could help us lead more strategically, both individually and together.
 10. We are exploring a shift to a 5+3 or 6+3 leadership term model for future rectors, moving away from the current 5+5 or 4+4 arrangements.

1. The challenge of trust in society in large
2. Values and principles
3. Stakeholder management, make HEIs are open and relevante. Communication important
4. Important to talk about this in an international context

Key words: Trust, Open, Inclusive, curiosity

⇒ **1. How can we turn shared challenges into shared strategies?**

AI: The conditions for teaching, learning, research and innovation are being changed. Share knowledge, experiences and impact analysis from different universities and countries. Diversity is a strength. We need to know each other strategies. **We learn together!**

2. What visionary goals could we pursue together – that none of us could achieve alone?

The political goals: Institutional autonomy and academic freedom. We need a united voice advocating for higher education and research. Explain the unique value of academia contribution to society. **We are stronger together!**

3. What kind of collaboration would make the next generation of rectors inspired?

Support structures: collegial networks, international mentoring programs, senior leadership and rectors' programs. Deep immersion into another university. **You are not alone!**

1. Key Point 1 Trust in Universities

In an age of false news and disinformation, universities must strengthen trust by communicating knowledge and research differently, more clearly and accessible to all

2. Key Point 2 Security Issues

We as universities have the responsibility to address security issues. To analyze societal and military threats. Humanities and social sciences must participate in this work.

- 3. Key Point 3** The NUS Rectors' Conference is a good example of collaboration to inspire rectors. It shows the importance of networking and learning from each other.

1. We are all here and we have similar conditions and face similar problems. Foster a sense of community among universities. Thanks to our similar way of thinking we can easily work together to solve problems as well as inspire each other. **We are similar enough to move forward but different enough to be inspired.**
2. Even more involved universities, taking care of graduates and topping up previous education, pushing for research-based thinking in the society. **Science for policy for innovation.**
3. Turning the Nordic-Baltic region into an academic haven should be the goal. Branding the region through our strengths. Make it easier to move around, change programs, exchange programs and so on.

1. We share similar challenges and policies in Nordi-Baltics. We need to share experiences even more intensively between the boards, chairs and thematic groups of the rectors' boards.
2. Sharing action plans for example for crisis management: documents and speaking.
3. International alliances are a way to build valuable international collaboration. In some small fields, this is also a way to gather critical mass for quality.
4. We should better support each other and articulate together the value of freedom of academy and arts and international collaboration in our societies in the Baltic-Nordic region.

5. The changes in societies and policies are quick at the moment. Universities base on the long- term knowledge and give stability. Universities can and must facilitate discussion about what kind of societies we want to build (for example AI development).
6. Role of human creativity is increasing in our societies and the universities have a major role in this.

