SVEČANA AKADEMIJA OB TRIDESETLETNICI UNIVERZE V NOVI GORICI

EPICenter Nova Gorica, 24. september 2025

Dogodek poteka pod častnim
pokroviteljstvom predsednice
Republike Slovenije dr. Nataše Pirc Musar.

Slavnostni govornik: dr. Igor Papič,
minister za visoko šolstvo, znanost in inovacije.

Nagovor rektorja Univerze v Novi Gorici

prof. dr. Boštjan Golob

Spoštovani predsednik državnega sveta RS, spoštovani predsednik Slovenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti, spoštovani podpredsednik vlade RS, spoštovani minister za visoko šolstvo, znanost in inovacije, kolegice rektorice in rektorji univerz, spoštovani veleposlaniki in predstavniki veleposlaništev v RS, spoštovani župani, državne svetnice in svetniki, državni sekretarji, direktorice in direktorji raziskovalnih inštitucij, predstavniki gospodarskih in kulturnih podjetij in združenj, prijateljice in prijatelji Univerze v Novi Gorici, drage sodelavke in sodelavci,

v prvi vrsti pa cenjena nagrajenka in nagrajenci,

dobrodošli.

Ob inavguraciji pred nekaj leti sem se spraševal, kaj pravzaprav predstavlja življenje neke institucije. Še vedno menim, da je vsaka institucija mozaik vseh ljudi, ki so jo gradili in prispevali k njenemu delovanju in razvoju. Ljudje prihajajo, vsak prispeva svoj košček, ki je edinstvene oblike in barve, in tako se mozaik gradi in bogati.

30 let je za institucijo malo.
Za ljudi, ki so 30 let in več posvetili njenemu razvoju, pa veliko. In brez prispevkov posameznikov tudi institucije ni. Nekateri ti izjemni posamezniki so danes med nami, tudi med nagrajenci. V imenu institucije se jim zahvaljujem za to, da so ji vlili življenje in jo popeljali v zrelo obdobje.

Prav na to intimno zvezo med delom posameznikov in življenjem institucije nas opominja tudi okrasitev pročelja te zgradbe.
Zgradbe, ki stoji tako rekoč neposredno na državni meji, na – v Evropi in širše – edinstvenem območju somestja dveh mest, Nove Gorice in Gorice. Somestnega enotnega urbanega področja, ki se razvija brez vpliva nekdanje ločnice, in področja, ki ga je prepoznala tudi Evropa ter mu letos namenila *naziv evropske prestolnice kulture.*

30 let je za institucijo malo.
Za posameznika sicer ne, a včasih potrebuje toliko časa ali še več, da mu nekateri pojmi postanejo jasnejši. Sam se pogosto, v zadnjem času vedno pogosteje, srečujem z vprašanjem povezave med znanostjo in kulturo.

Kulturo – tudi v povezavi z narodno identiteto – laiki pogosto enačimo le z umetnostjo ali pa kot osnovo narodne identitete poudarjamo izključno jezik. *Nobenega vprašanja ni*, da slovenska narodna identiteta temelji na našem jeziku in na zgodovinskem
loku slovenske umetnosti. Pa vendarle dovolite, da se vprašam: je Valvasorjeva Slava vojvodine Kranjske – delo, ki je slovensko zemljo in narod predstavilo in ukoreninilo v evropskem prostoru – znanstveno delo? Nedvomno vsaj deloma, če ne v celoti.
Ali pa: Primož Trubar je snov za prvo slovensko knjigo, Katekizem, črpal s pomočjo *znanja* nemškega jezika in s *poznavanjem* naukov Martina Luthra in dela Philippa Melanchthona [me.'laŋk.:tona].

Katera koli skupnost, ki se dandanes sooča s pomanjkanjem znanja v svoji sredini, je žal soočena s počasno degradacijo. Pripadniki take skupnosti – če le niso popolnoma izolirani od stikov z okolico in samozadostni – počasi tonejo med ohranjanjem interakcije in posledično svoje vloge v povezanem svetu.
Zato sta znanost in znanje nepogrešljivi del kulture in kot taka sodita tudi med osnovne stebre narodne identitete.

30 let je za institucijo malo.
Za ljudi je to veliko, zato si skušamo zamisliti krajše obdobje v prihodnosti. Napovedi strokovnjakov v obdobju 2028–2037 v Sloveniji predvidevajo letno približno 10.000 prostih delovnih mest, za katera je potrebna visoka izobrazba. V zadnjih letih približno tretjina teh delovnih mest ostaja nezapolnjena – ali če povem drugače: vsako leto imamo za približno 3000 delovnih mest pomanjkanja visokošolskega znanja.

Spoštovani, če znanje, kulturo in narodno identiteto povežemo s temi podatki, mar ne bi bilo pametno posebno skrb nameniti institucijam znanja v Sloveniji? In jim – glede na to, da so te institucije poskrbele za 17.700 študentk in študentov z visokošolsko izobrazbo v letu 2025 ter vsako leto tudi za med 500 in 1000 novih doktoric in doktorjev znanosti – izkazati še večji posluh in zaupanje v njihovo delo?

Toda še preden me predstavniki države pogledajo pregrdo, dovolite, da dodam: v zadnjih nekaj letih, posebej z implementacijo novega Zakona o znanstvenoraziskovalni in inovacijski dejavnosti ter s sprejetjem novega Zakona o visokem šolstvu, je slovenska akademska sfera dobila nov zagon, tudi, a morda predvsem finančnega.

30 let je za institucijo malo.

Pa vendar so tudi institucije v Sloveniji v zadnjih tridesetih letih doživele marsikatero spremembo.

Zavedati se moramo, da je slovenski visokošolski prostor od vstopa v Evropsko unijo ter skoraj hkratne vzpostavitve bolonjskega sistema visokega šolstva popolnoma odprt v Evropo in si z njo deli tudi nekatere izzive. Eden teh je razdrobljenost, zaradi katere evropske univerze težko predstavljajo ustrezno protiutež večjim ameriškim in azijskim institucijam.

Slovenske univerze skupaj s partnericami po Evropi izpostavljamo ta problem z združevanjem v mednarodne mreže, v t. i. evropske univerze. V veliko veselje in čast mi je, da danes med nami gostimo tudi rektorje in rektorice zavezništva evropskih univerz ACROSS, v kateri nas deset članic, vse z obmejnih področij Evrope, skuša skupno obravnavati naše specifične probleme ter pravzaprav vzpostaviti enotno evropsko institucijo, ki bo gostila več kot 110.00 študentov.

Razdrobljenost *moramo* preseči tako na evropski ravni, kot tudi na državni. Le če visokošolske in tudi druge raziskovalne institucije stopimo skupaj, lahko slovenski družbi omogočimo zadostno produkcijo znanja. Le s povezovanjem lahko skušamo doseči, kar nam trenutne danosti – geopolitične, kadrovske, finančne in druge – omogočajo: v Sloveniji vzpostaviti evropsko in širše prepoznan center visokošolskega izobraževanja in raziskovalno-razvojne dejavnosti.

30 let je za institucijo malo.

Zato morda ni presenetljivo, da si Univerza v Novi Gorici že od nastanka po svojih močeh prizadeva za zagotovitev pogojev, ki omogočajo izvedbo in razvoj njenih dejavnosti.
V zadnjih letih smo na Univerzi v Novi Gorici ob pozornem spremljanju

potreb študentk in študentov, sodelavk in sodelavcev ter razvoja našega lokalnega okolja prišli do infrastrukturne strategije, ki je zaenkrat resda le ideja, morda bo kdo rekel celo račun brez krčmarja. A če ljudje ne bi imeli takšnih ciljev, verjetno pred 30 leti univerza ne bi bila niti ustanovljena. Zato nas navdaja izjemen optimizem, ko si zamišljamo čezmejno usmerjen in v mesto odprt, trajnostno naravnan, vsestransko uporaben in ne nazadnje lep fakultetni center v Novi Gorici, povezan z namestitvenimi kapacitetami v Gorici in Rožni dolini. Preveva nas navdih, ko pripravljamo idejno zasnovo raziskovalno-razvojnih laboratorijev in centrov v Ajdovščini, v katerih znanstveniki in študenti bivajo in delajo v izjemno kreativnem okolju – z ramo ob rami s tehnološko prebojnimi podjetji. In ponosni smo, ko razmišljamo o nadaljevanju stoletne tradicije, dandanes pa o znanstvenem pristopu k izkoriščanju tega, kar nam ponuja narava, v dvorcu Lanthieri v Vipavi.

30 let je za institucijo malo.

Zlahka pa v tem obdobju prepoznamo prispevek izjemnih posameznikov k njenemu življenju. Dva od današnjih nagrajencev sta v prej omenjeni mozaik institucije vgradila osrednji bleščeči element. Oba prejemnika naziva zaslužni profesor Univerze v Novi Gorici sta, vsak na svojem področju, pustila izjemen pečat na znanstveni odličnosti naše univerze. Poleg tega sta ji z organizacijskega vidika vlila moč za njeno preobrazbo od začetne Fakultete za znanosti o okolju do današnje polnokrvne univerze s šestimi fakultetami in akademijo.

Univerzo v Novi Gorici – kot vsako sodobno univerzo – v sodobnem svetu globalne znanosti odlikuje nujno potrebno mednarodno sodelovanje. Letošnjo prejemnico in prejemnika naziva častna doktorica oziroma častni doktor Univerze v Novi Gorici, poleg izjemnega prispevka za razvoj in mednarodno prepoznavnost znanstvenih aktivnosti in dosežkov naše univerze, povezuje tudi njun prispevek k razvoju znanosti in inovacij na njunih področjih v celotni Sloveniji.

Vsem nagrajencem izrekam *izjemno hvaležnost* vseh sodelavk in sodelavcev ter tudi preteklih in prihodnjih generacij študentov univerze za njihov izjemni prispevek.

30 let je za institucijo malo.

Toda Univerza v Novi Gorici je v tem obdobju vendarle jasno pokazala, po

kateri poti stopa in kakšen je njen potencial. Izkazala se je s svojo znanstveno odličnostjo in študijskimi programi, ki pomembno dopolnjujejo, bogatijo visokošolsko ponudbo v Sloveniji. Niti malo ne dvomim, da bo v naslednjih *300 letih* univerza dodala nepogrešljiv prispevek pri zagotavljanju znanja slovenski družbi in ohranjanju narodne identitete, odpiranju enkratnega čezmejnega prostora, ki bo v prid študentkam, študentom, prebivalcem in obiskovalcem območja, in kohezijski trdnosti slovenskih in evropskih institucij znanja.

Ob koncu se zahvaljujem vsem sodelavkam in sodelavcem Univerze v Novi Gorici, sedanjim in preteklim, ki so univerzi omogočili prehojeno pot.

Akademija umetnosti Univerze v Novi Gorici je pred nekaj dnevi na ogled postavila dela svojih študentk in študentov z naslovom "Mi smo tu". Temu lahko dodam le še: "In tu bomo ostali."

Address by the Rector of the University of Nova Gorica,

Prof. Dr. Boštjan Golob

Esteemed President of the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia, Honourable President of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Distinguished Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, Revered Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Colleagues, University Rectors, Ambassadors, Respected Mayors, State Councillors, and State Secretaries, Directors of Research Institutions, Representatives of Economic and Cultural Enterprises and Associations, Friends of the University of Nova Gorica, Dear Colleagues and Staff,

and first and foremost, Honoured Award Recipients,

welcome.

Upon inauguration several years ago, I pondered what actually constitutes the life of an institution. I remain convinced that every institution is a mosaic of all the people who have built it and contributed to its operation and development. People arrive, each contributes a piece, their unique shapes and colours, and thus the mosaic grows richer.

Thirty years is but a brief time for an institution.
Yet for those who have devoted to its growth for thirty or more years, it is profoundly significant. No institution exists without the dedication and contribution of individuals. Some of these remarkable individuals are here with us today, some even honoured among today's award recipients. On behalf of this institution, I extend my deepest gratitude for breathing life into it and for guiding it into maturity.

The adornment of this very building's facade reminds us of the intimate connection between the work of an individual and the life of an institution. The building standing almost directly on the national border. This conurbation, exceptional both in a European and a global context, brings together the neighbouring cities of Nova Gorica and Gorizia. A cohesive metropol-

itan region developing beyond the legacy of former divides. This area has been recognised by Europe itself, honoured as a *European Capital of Culture* this year.

Thirty years is but a brief time for an institution.
For an individual, it certainly is not. Yet occasionally, this amount of time — or even longer — is needed for concepts to crystallise clearly. Increasingly, I find myself reflecting on the relationship between science and culture.

Laypersons often equate culture solely with the arts or, when considering national identity, focus exclusively on language. *It is beyond dispute* that the Slovenian national identity is founded upon our language and the rich historical arc of Slovenian art. If I may at this point pose a question: Is Valvasor's *"The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola"* — a work that introduced and anchored the Slovenian land and nation within the European sphere — a scientific work? Undoubtedly, it is at least partly, if not predominantly, so.
And consider also this: Primož Trubar's material for the first Slovenian book, Catechismus (Catechism), was drawn from his *knowledge* of the German language and his *understanding* of the teachings of Martin Luther and the works of Philipp Melanchthon [me:'laŋk.to:n].

Any community that today faces a scarcity of knowledge within itself is, alas, beset by gradual decline. Unless utterly isolated and self-sufficient, such communities gradually lose interaction with the interconnected world, and lose their role in an.
Hence, science and knowledge are indispensable parts of culture and, as such, represent fundamental pillars of national identity.

Thirty years is but a brief time for an institution.
For individuals, it is considerable, and so we attempt to envisage a shorter period ahead.
Expert prognoses expect approximately 10,000 job vacancies annually in Slovenia between 2028 and 2037, all requiring higher education. In recent years, about a third of these vacancies remain unfilled. To put it another way, there is an annual deficit of approximately 3,000 individuals with the higher education qualifications required for these positions.

Esteemed guests, if we therefore draw a correlation between knowledge, culture, and national identity and these statistics, would it not be wise to

devote particular care to institutions of knowledge in Slovenia? Considering that our institutions are responsible for educating 17,700 higher education students in 2025, and annually confer between 500 and 1,000 new PhDs in science, should we not show even greater attentiveness and trust in their work?

Before the representatives of the state cast a stern glance, allow me to add that in recent years, especially with the implementation of the new Scientific Research and Innovation Activities Act and the adoption of the new Higher Education Act, the Slovenian academic sphere has received renewed impetus, including a financial one.

Thirty years is but a brief time for an institution.

Yet these past three decades have brought many changes to institutions in Slovenia.

We must recognise that since Slovenia's accession into the European Union and the near-simultaneous introduction of the Bologna higher education system, our academic space has become wholly open to Europe, sharing with it certain challenges. One such challenge is fragmentation, which hinders European universities from effectively counterbalancing larger American and Asian institutions.

Slovenian universities, along with partners across Europe, address this by forming international networks, the European Universities initiative. It is my great pleasure and honour to welcome today among us the rectors of the European university alliance ACROSS, which comprises ten members from European border regions, collaboratively addresses specific challenges, and essentially establishes a unified European institution hosting over 110,000 students.

Fragmentation *must* be overcome not merely on a European, but also on a national level. Only by joining forces can higher education and research institutions enable sufficient generation of knowledge for Slovenian society. Only through cooperation can we capitalise on the current geopolitical, staffing, and financial conditions and establish, in Slovenia, a centre of higher education and research and development activity recognised across Europe and around the world.

Thirty years is but a brief time for an institution.

Therefore, it is perhaps unsurprising that from its inception, the University of Nova Gorica has endeavoured to create conditions conducive to the development of its activities.

In recent years, we have attentively monitored the needs of our students and staff at the University of Nova Gorica, as well as the development of our local environment, arriving at an infrastructural strategy that is, admittedly, merely an idea at present — some might say a castle in the air. Yet without such aspirations, the university would likely not even have been founded thirty years ago. We are therefore filled with profound optimism as we envision a cross-border-oriented, city-integrated, sustainable, versatile, aesthetically pleasing faculty centre in Nova Gorica, linked with accommodation facilities in Gorizia and Rožna Dolina. We find inspiration in crafting conceptual designs for research and development laboratories and centres in Ajdovščina, where scientists and students live and work side by side with technologically pioneering companies in a truly creative environment. We take pride in continuing a century-long tradition at Lanthieri Mansion in Vipava, now with a scientific approach to harnessing nature's gifts.

Thirty years is but a brief time for an institution.

Yet within this time, we can clearly discern the profound contributions of exceptional individuals. Two of today's honoured recipients have embedded a shining core element into the aforementioned mosaic of this institution. Both recipients of the title of Emeritus Professor of the University of Nova Gorica have, in their respective fields, left an indelible mark on our university's scientific excellence. Moreover, through their leadership, they empowered its transformation from the Faculty of Environmental Sciences into a fully fledged university with six faculties and an academy.

The University of Nova Gorica — like every modern university — thrives in the global scientific world through indispensable international collaboration. This year's honoured Doctor Honoris Causa recipients, alongside their exceptional contributions to the development and international recognition of our university's scientific activities and achievements, are also distinguished by their contribution to the development of science and innovation in their respective fields across Slovenia.

To all honourees, I express the *utmost gratitude* for their extraordinary contributions on behalf of the entire university community — colleagues, faculty, and staff, as well as past, present, and future generations of students.

Thirty years is but a brief time for an institution.

Yet the University of Nova Gorica has clearly demonstrated its course and its potential. It has proven itself through scientific excellence and study programmes that complement and enrich Slovenia's higher education landscape. I harbour no doubt that the next *300 years* will see the university continue to be indispensable in

providing knowledge to Slovenian society and to preserving national identity,

to opening a unique cross-border space benefitting students, residents, and visitors alike,

and to the maintaining the cohesion and strength of institutions of knowledge, both Slovenian and European.

Allow me to close by thanking all present, as well as former colleagues of the University of Nova Gorica, for making the journey thus far possible.

Just days ago, the University's Academy of Arts proudly exhibited the works of its students under the title "We are here." To this I add only, "And here we shall remain."


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1995 - 2025
UNIVERZA
V NOVI GORICI

Častni nazivi Univerze v Novi Gorici

zaslužni profesor
prof. dr. Gvido Bratina

zaslužni profesor
prof. dr. Mladen Franko

častna doktorica
prof. dr. Carole Mundell

častni doktor
prof. dr. Joachim Mnich

Zaslužni profesor Univerze v Novi Gorici – professor emeritus – prof. dr. Gvido Bratina

Senat Univerze v Novi Gorici je na seji dne 14. maja 2025 sklenil, da naziv zaslužni profesor Univerze v Novi Gorici – professor emeritus – prejme prof. dr. Gvido Bratina za izjemen znanstveni prispevek na področju dvodimenzionalnih materialov in organskih polprevodnikov, s katerim je uveljavil Univerzo v Novi Gorici kot odlično raziskovalno institucijo v svetu, ter trajen pečat, ki ga je pustil pri uvajanju novih študijskih programov in razvoju univerze kot celote.

Dosežki profesorja Bratine na področju izobraževanja in raziskovanja so številni in raznovrstni, rezultati njegovih raziskav na področju dvodimenzionalnih materialov ter organskih polprevodnikov pa so prispevali k napredku znanja v svetovnem merilu. Raziskovalne izkušnje je pridobival v slovenskem in mednarodnem akademskem prostoru, pa tudi v industriji. Nad organskimi polprevodniki se je navdušil na podoktorskem usposabljanju v ZDA in pridobljeno znanje zelo uspešno prenesel na raziskovalno skupino Laboratorija za fiziko organskih snovi Univerze v Novi Gorici, ki ga je vodil. Med pomembnejšimi odkritji, pri katerih je sodeloval, je razkritje mehanizma prevodnosti naboja v mešanicah dveh ali več različnih organskih polprevodnikov. Sodeloval je tudi pri odkritju hitrih organskih fotodetektorjev, ki imajo velik dinamični razpon in so zgrajeni na osnovi organskih polprevodniških nanožic. Od leta 2010 se osredotoča na področje elektronskih lastnosti grafena in drugih dvodimenzionalnih materialov.

Za Univerzo v Novi Gorici sta temeljnega pomena tudi njegov prispevek k uvajanju novih študijskih programov ter vodstveno delo v vlogi dekana Fakultete za aplikativno naravoslovje in prorektorja za raziskave in umetnost, ki pušča trajen pečat na dejavnostih univerze. Profesor Bratina je pripravil in 11 let vodil podiplomski študijski program Karakterizacija materialov, 13 let je bil dekan Fakultete za aplikativno naravoslovje, kjer je vodil pripravo in izvajanje študijskega programa *Instrumentacija* ter vodil prenovo *Instrumentacije* v Aplikativno fiziko v okviru bolonjske reforme študijskih programov.

S tem je postavil temelje današnje Fakultete za naravoslovje, ki se danes lahko pohvali že z več kot 50 diplomanti. Leta 2009 je postal prorektor za raziskave in umetnost ter kot prorektor deloval do leta 2022. Kljub številnim vodstvenim obveznostim je prof. Bratina redno poučeval na vseh študijskih stopnjah in bil priljubljen predavatelj med študenti. Bil je mentor več dodiplomskim in magistrskim študentom ter osmim doktorandom.

Profesor Bratina je leta 2009 prejel priznanje primorski um za uspešno uvajanje vrhunskega znanja v prakso na področju organskih polprevodnikov, leta 2018 pa Preglovo nagrado za izjemne dosežke v znanosti.

At its session held on 14 May 2025, the Senate of the University of Nova Gorica resolved to confer the title of Professor Emeritus of the University of Nova Gorica upon Prof. Dr. Gvido Bratina, in recognition of his outstanding scientific contributions in the field of two-dimensional and organic semiconductors, whereby he firmly established the University of Nova Gorica as an excellent research institution on the global stage and had a lasting impact through his role in the introduction of new study programmes and the overall development of the university.

Professor Bratina's achievements in education and research are extensive and diverse. His research findings in the area of two-dimensional materials and organic semiconductors have significantly advanced knowledge internationally. He has acquired research experience within Slovenian and international academic milieus, as well as in industry. His enthusiasm for organic semiconductors was sparked during his postdoctoral training in the United States, whereby he successfully transposed the acquired expertise to the research team at the Laboratory for Physics of Organic Materials at the University of Nova Gorica, of which he was in charge. One of the key discoveries he contributed to is the charge transport mechanism in blends of two or more different organic semiconductors. He was also involved in the development of rapid organic photodetectors characterised by a wide dynamic range, constructed on the basis of organic semiconductor nanowires. Since 2010, his research has concentrated on the electronic properties of graphene and other two-dimensional materials.

His contributions to the University of Nova Gorica are also of fundamental importance, namely the introduction of new study programmes and his leadership roles as Dean of the School of Applied Natural Science (n.b.: now called the School of Science) and as Vice-Rector for Research and the Arts, positions in which he has left a lasting imprint on the university's activities. Professor Bratina established the postgraduate study programme Materials Characterisation and led it for eleven years; he served as Dean of the School of Science for thirteen years, during which he steered the development and implementation of the Instrumentation study programme and oversaw its reform into Applied Physics within the framework of the Bologna Process. He thus laid the foundations for the present School of Science, which today boasts more than fifty graduates. In 2009, Professor Bratina was appointed Vice-Rector for Research and the Arts, a position he held until 2022. Despite numerous leadership responsibilities, he regularly taught across all academic levels and was a popular lecturer among students. He has supervised several undergraduate and master's students, as well as eight doctoral candidates.

In 2009, Professor Bratina received the Primorski Um Award for successfully translating cutting-edge knowledge into practice in the field of organic semiconductors, and in 2018, he was honoured with the Pregl Award for outstanding scientific achievements.

Zaslužni profesor Univerze v Novi Gorici – professor emeritus – prof. dr. Mladen Franko

Senat Univerze v Novi Gorici je na seji dne 14. maja 2025 sklenil, da naziv zaslužni profesor Univerze v Novi Gorici – professor emeritus – prejme prof. dr. Mladen Franko za izjemen prispevek k vzpostavitvi in poznejšemu razvoju Univerze v Novi Gorici, še posebej pri vzpostavitvi pedagoške vertikale in znanstvenoraziskovalne dejavnosti na področju znanosti o okolju, ki združuje in izobražuje raziskovalce iz Slovenije in tujine.

Profesor Mladen Franko je s svojo večdesetletno predanostjo univerzi sooblikoval identiteto in rast naše ustanove – od njenih prvih zametkov, prve mednarodne podiplomske šole v Sloveniji, nato Politehnike Nova Gorica pa do današnje Univerze v Novi Gorici, ki je v vseh teh letih postala uveljavljen član čezmejnega, slovenskega in evropskega akademskega prostora.

Bil je pomembna osebnost pri vzpostavitvi okoljske znanstvene vertikale na naši univerzi, ki danes združuje in usposablja raziskovalce iz Slovenije in tujine. Soustvaril pa je tudi temelje drugih, danes samostojnih raziskovalnih in pedagoških enot na Univerzi v Novi Gorici, ki so vzniknile iz okoljske znanstvene osnove in so danes pomemben del univerzitetne raziskovalne in pedagoške odličnosti.

Opravljal je številne vodilne funkcije na Univerzi v Novi Gorici in jih spretno prepletal z raziskovalnim in pedagoškim delom. Izjemen pa je tudi njegov prispevek v usposabljanju novih znanstvenikov. Njegova bibliografija vključuje kar 16 mentorstev doktorandom in šest mentorstev na magistrski ravni. Predano je mentoriral tudi študente na dodiplomski ravni.

Vse od ustanovitve Univerze v Novi Gorici pa do leta 2022 je deloval tudi kot prorektor za izobraževanje, dolga leta tudi kot vodja največjega in najstarejšega laboratorija na univerzi – Laboratorij za vede o okolju in življenju. Bil je tudi dekan Fakultete za znanosti o okolju in direktor podiplomskega progra-

ma Znanosti o okolju, profesor in nosilec številnih predmetov, obenem pa je vodil in bil vključen v številne nacionalne in mednarodne projekte znanstvene in pedagoške narave. Prejel je tudi častni doktorat Azerbajdžanske državne kmetijske univerze.

Bil je pomemben snovalec doktorskega in magistrskega programa Znanosti o okolju ter poznejših različic dodiplomskega in magistrskega študija na tem področju. Pomembno vlogo je imel tudi pri oblikovanju številnih drugih študijskih programov ter pri zagotavljanju pedagoške odličnosti. Njegov prispevek k razvoju znanstvene in pedagoške infrastrukture na področju okoljskih znanosti in ved o življenju na Univerzi v Novi Gorici je res izjemen.

Na Univerzi je vedno deloval kot akademik v najširšem pomenu – soustvarjal je strukture, ki omogočajo raziskovalno in pedagoško odličnost ter prispevajo k nacionalni in mednarodni prepoznavnosti UNG. Bil je med tistimi, ki so z vztrajnim in predanim delom gradili samostojno, ugledno univerzo, vpeto v slovensko in svetovno akademsko skupnost. Svoja znanja, izkušnje in povezave je nesebično prenašal na mlajše kolege.

Njegova znanstvena radovednost, strokovna doslednost in pripadnost univerzi so pripomogle k temu, da danes številni njegovi sodelavci zasedajo vodilne položaje doma in v tujini. Kot mentor in sodelavec je s svojim zgledom spodbujal ne le strokovno rast, temveč tudi etičnost, spoštovanje in predanost skupnemu znanstvenemu cilju.

At its session held on 14 May 2025, the Senate of the University of Nova Gorica resolved to award the title of Professor Emeritus of the University of Nova Gorica to Prof. Dr. Mladen Franko for his exceptional contribution to the establishment and subsequent development of the University of Nova Gorica. His work was particularly instrumental in the creation of the pedagogical vertical and scientific research activities in environmental sciences, bringing together and educating researchers from Slovenia and abroad.

Through several decades of dedicated service, Professor Franko has helped to shape the identity and growth of the institution—from its origins as the first international postgraduate school in Slovenia, through the Polytechnic of Nova Gorica, to the present-day University of Nova Gorica, which has be-

come a recognised member of the cross-border, Slovenian and European academic community.

He was a key figure in establishing the environmental science vertical at the university, which now unites and trains researchers from Slovenia and abroad. He also helped to lay the foundations for other, now independent, research and teaching units at the University of Nova Gorica, which originated from the environmental science base and today represent an important part of the university's research and pedagogical excellence.

Professor Franko held numerous leadership roles at the University of Nova Gorica, skilfully combining them with his research and teaching duties. His contribution to the training of new scientists is remarkable. His bibliography records the supervision of sixteen doctoral candidates and six master's students. He has also been a committed mentor to undergraduate students.

From the founding of the University of Nova Gorica until 2022, he served as Vice-Rector for Education and, for many years, led the largest and oldest laboratory at the university—the Laboratory for Environmental and Life Sciences Research. He was also Dean of the Faculty of Environmental Sciences and Director of the postgraduate programme in Environmental Sciences. As a professor and course leader, he taught numerous subjects and participated in a wide range of national and international research and teaching projects. Professor Franko received an honorary doctorate from the Azerbaijan State Agricultural University.

He was the principal architect of the doctoral and master's programmes in Environmental Sciences, as well as subsequent versions of the undergraduate and master's curricula in this field. He played an important role in designing numerous other study programmes and ensuring pedagogical excellence. His contribution to the development of the scientific and teaching infrastructure in environmental sciences and life sciences at the University of Nova Gorica is truly exceptional.

Throughout his career at the university, he has served as a dedicated academic in the broadest sense—co-creating structures enabling research and teaching excellence and contributing to the national and international recognition of the UNG. He was among those who, through persistent and dedicated work, built an independent and reputable university that is firmly embedded within the Slovenian and global academic community. He has

generously shared his knowledge, experience and professional network with junior colleagues.

His scientific curiosity, professional rigour and commitment to the university have contributed to many of his colleagues now holding key leadership positions at home and abroad. As a mentor and colleague, he led by example, encouraging not only professional growth but also ethical behaviour, respect and dedication to a shared scientific mission.

Častna doktorica Univerze v Novi Gorici – doctor honoris causa – prof. dr. Carole Mundell

Senat Univerze v Novi Gorici je na seji dne 14. maja 2025 sklenil, da prof. dr. Carole Mundell prejme naziv častna doktorica – doctor honoris causa – za dolgoletno plodno znanstveno raziskovalno sodelovanje z raziskovalci in raziskovalkami iz Centra za astrofiziko in kozmologijo Univerze v Novi Gorici ter za izjemne zasluge pri njihovi uveljavitvi v mednarodnem raziskovalnem prostoru.

Prof. Carole Mundell je mednarodno priznana astrofizičarka, ki raziskuje črne luknje in izbruhe sevanja gama. Od leta 2023 je direktorica za znanost Evropske vesoljske agencije ESA.

Prof. Mundell je diplomirala na Univerzi v Glasgowu, doktorirala na Univerzi v Manchestru in bila podoktorska raziskovalka na observatoriju Jodrell Bank v Združenem kraljestvu in na Univerzi Maryland v ZDA, kjer je proučevala fiziko supermasivnih črnih lukenj in njihovo vlogo pri razvoju galaksij.

Leta 1999 se je vrnila v Združeno kraljestvo in na Univerzi Liverpool John Moores ustanovila raziskovalno skupino, ki je orala ledino pri uporabi avtonomnih teleskopov za takojšnja opazovanja izbruhov sevanja gama, najmočnejših eksplozij v vesolju. Tam je leta 2007 postala redna profesorica. Njena raziskovalna skupina – v kateri so že takrat sodelovali tudi slovenski raziskovalci in raziskovalke – je istega leta prejela nagrado Times Higher Education za raziskovalni projekt leta. Prof. Mundell je prejela tudi prestižno nagrado Royal Society Wolfson Research Merit Award.

Leta 2015 se je pridružila Univerzi v Bathu, kjer je bila ustanoviteljica Oddelka za astrofiziko in vodja Oddelka za fiziko. Leta 2018 je postala prva ženska glavna znanstvena svetovalka na britanskem Ministrstvu za zunanje zadeve in združenje Commonwealth ter prva mednarodna znanstvena odposlanka v Uradu za zunanje zadeve, združenje Commonwealth in razvoj, kjer je delovala do leta 2021, ko je bila izvoljena za predsednico britanskega Znanstve-

nega sveta. Maja 2023 je postala direktorica za znanost Evropske vesoljske agencije.

Prof. Mundell od leta 2002 neprekinjeno sodeluje s slovenskimi astrofiziki in astrofizičarkami in je objavila številne znanstvene članke v soavtorstvu z raziskovalci in raziskovalkami iz Centra za astrofiziko in kozmologijo Univerze v Novi Gorici (CAC UNG).

Pomembno je prispevala k večji mednarodni prepoznavnosti CAC UNG leta 2016, ko je UNG organizirala prvi simpozij Mednarodne astronomske zveze (IAU) v Sloveniji z naslovom *New Frontiers in Black Hole Astrophysics*, natanko eno leto po prelomni, z Nobelovo nagrado nagrajeni prvi neposredni detekciji gravitacijskih valov, nastalih ob zlitju dveh črnih lukenj. Prof. Mundell je s svojim strokovnim znanjem pomembno prispevala k temu, da je CAC UNG dobil to prestižno priložnost, in je delovala kot predsednica Znanstvenega organizacijskega odbora simpozija.

Prof. Mundell je bila članica številnih nacionalnih in mednarodnih strateških in nadzornih odborov, med drugim upravnega odbora Britanskega sveta za znanstvene in tehnološke zmogljivosti (STFC) in panelov Evropskega raziskovalnega sveta (ERC) za področje Vesolje. Na UNG smo bili počaščeni, da je bila – vse do prevzema sedanje funkcije – članica upravnega odbora našega evropskega projekta SMASH, katerega osrednja tema je uporaba strojnega učenja v znanstvenih raziskavah, vključno z astrofiziko.

Ne nazadnje, prof. Mundell je glasna zagovornica enakosti in raznovrstnosti v znanosti, vrednot, ki sta zelo pomembni tudi na UNG.

At its session on 14 May 2025, the Senate of the University of Nova Gorica decided to confer the title of Honorary Doctor – Doctor Honoris Causa – of the University of Nova Gorica on Prof. Dr. Carole Mundell for her long-standing and fruitful scientific collaboration with researchers at the Center for Astrophysics and Cosmology of the University of Nova Gorica, as well as for her outstanding contributions to their international recognition in the global research community.

Prof. Carole Mundell is an internationally renowned astrophysicist who researches black holes and gamma ray bursts. Since 2023, she has been the Director of Science at the European Space Agency.

Prof. Mundell graduated from the University of Glasgow, obtained a PhD at the University of Manchester and had postdoctoral fellowships at Jodrell Bank Observatory, UK, and the University of Maryland, USA, studying the physics of accreting supermassive black holes and their role in galaxy evolution.

In 1999, she returned to the UK and founded a research group at the Liverpool John Moores University, pioneering the use of autonomous telescopes for real-time follow-up observations of satellite-discovered gamma ray bursts, the most violent explosions in the Universe. There, she was promoted to full professor in 2007. That year, her team – which already included Slovenian researchers at that time – won the Times Higher Education Research Project of the Year Award. She was also awarded the Royal Society Wolfson Research Merit Award.

In 2015, she joined the University of Bath, where she was the founding Head of Astrophysics, and Head of the Department of Physics until she became the first woman Chief Scientific Adviser at the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 2018 and first Chief International Science Envoy in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office until 2021, when she was elected President of the UK Science Council. In May 2023, she took up duty as the Director of Science at the European Space Agency.

Prof. Mundell has been collaborating with Slovenian astrophysicists continuously since 2002 and has co-authored many research papers with colleagues in the Center for Astrophysics and Cosmology at the University of Nova Gorica (CAC UNG).

She helped to significantly enhance the visibility of the CAC UNG in the international astronomical community in 2016, when the UNG was organising the first International Astronomical Union Symposium in Slovenia, entitled *New Frontiers in Black Hole Astrophysics*, exactly 1 year after the ground-breaking and Nobel-prize-winning first direct detection of gravitational waves from merging black holes. Prof. Mundell's expertise helped the CAC UNG win this prestigious opportunity and she also shaped the programme of the symposium by acting as the Chair of its Scientific Organising Committee.

Prof. Mundell has served on a range of national and international strategic, oversight and science funding bodies, including the governing council of the UK's Science and Technology Facilities Council and the European Research Council 'Universe' grant panels. At the UNG, we were honoured that until she took up her current post, she served as a member of the Governing Board of our European SMASH project, focusing on the use of machine learning methods in scientific research, including astrophysics.

Last but not least, Prof. Mundell is a vocal advocate for equity and diversity in science, values, which are of great importance at the UNG as well.

Častni doktor Univerze v Novi Gorici – doctor honoris causa –

prof. dr. Joachim Mnich

Senat Univerze v Novi Gorici je na seji dne 14. maja 2025 sklenil, da prof. dr. Joachim Mnich prejme naziv častni doktor – doctor honoris causa – za izjemen prispevek k razvoju fizike visokih energij v Sloveniji, tudi na Univerzi v Novi Gorici, za uveljavitev slovenskih raziskovalcev na tem področju v mednarodnem prostoru ter za prispevek k razvoju eksperimentalne fizike osnovnih delcev.

Profesor Joachim Mnich je direktor raziskav in računalništva v Evropski organizaciji za jedrske raziskave CERN v Ženevi. Je eden vodilnih strokovnjakov in strategov na področju fizike visokih energij v Evropi in svetu.

Iz fizike, specifično fizike osnovnih delcev, je doktoriral leta 1987 na univerzi v Aachnu. Leta 2000 je prejel naziv profesorja in se usmeril v delo pri pripravi polprevodniškega detektorja sledi za prihodnji eksperiment CMS na Velikem hadronskem trkalniku. Leta 2009 je bil takratni direktor inštituta DESY v Hamburgu imenovan za generalnega direktorja CERNa, prof. Mnich pa ga je nasledil na njegovem mestu. Leta 2021 je bil imenovan na sedanje mesto direktorja za raziskave in računalništvo v CERNu.

Področje fizike visokih energij, ki se je do danes razširilo na področje astronomije in astrofizike, predstavlja zametke Centra za astrofiziko in kozmologijo Univerze v Novi Gorici. Aktivnosti centra izhajajo iz dolgoletnega sodelovanja slovenskih znanstvenikov Instituta Jožef Stefan in Univerze v Novi Gorici v CERNu. Pozneje so se aktivnosti slovenskih fizikov razširile tudi na inštituta DESY v Nemčiji in KEK na Japonskem. Na področju visokih energij raziskovalci univerze sodelujejo pri eksperimentu Belle in Belle II na Japonskem, v observatoriju CTA na Kanarskih otokih in observatoriju Pierre Auger v Argentini. Pri slednjem projektu je pomembno podporo naši univerzi dodal še eden od častnih doktorjev Univerze v Novi Gorici, Nobelov nagrajenec prof. James W. Cronin. Strategiji univerze sta ohranjanje odlične znanstvene kakovosti na področju astrofizike in tudi povečanje števila študentk in študentov na študijih Fizike in astrofizike na 1. in 2. bolonjski stopnji.

Prof. Mnich je dolgoletni podpornik in prijatelj slovenskih raziskovalcev na področju fizike visokih energij. Mirno lahko rečemo, da brez njegove podpore slovenskim raziskovalcem, sodelujočim na inštitutih DESY in CERN, tudi razvejane dejavnosti Centra za astrofiziko in kozmologijo naše univerze ne bi bilo. Njegova podpora je kulminirala letos s polnopravnim članstvom Republike Slovenije v CERNu, za katero si je vrsto let prizadeval tudi častni rektor Univerze v Novi Gorici, prof. Danilo Zavrtanik. Osebna vloga in avtoriteta prof. Mnicha na področju fizike visokih energij sta pripomogli, da imamo slovenski raziskovalci v številnih mednarodnih kolaboracijah znatno vidnejšo vlogo, kot bi nam jo pripisali glede na splošne finančne in kadrovske zmožnosti Republike Slovenije.

At its session on 14 May 2025, the Senate of the University of Nova Gorica decided to confer the title of Honorary Doctor – Doctor Honoris Causa – of the University of Nova Gorica on Prof. Dr. Joachim Mnich for his exceptional contributions to the development of high-energy physics in Slovenia, including at the University of Nova Gorica, for advancing the international recognition of Slovenian researchers in this field, as well as for his role in the progress of experimental elementary particle physics.

Professor Joachim Mnich is the Director for Research and Computing at the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Geneva. He is one of the leading experts and strategists in the field of high-energy physics in Europe and worldwide.

He earned his PhD in physics, specifically in particle physics, in 1987 at Aachen University. In 2000, he was awarded the title of professor and focused his work on the development of a silicon tracking detector for the future CMS experiment at the Large Hadron Collider. In 2009, when the then-director of the DESY institute in Hamburg was appointed Director-General of CERN, Professor Mnich succeeded him as the director at DESY. In 2021, he was appointed to his current role as CERN's Director for Research and Computing.

The field of high-energy physics, which has now expanded to include astronomy and astrophysics, marks the origins of the Center for Astrophysics and Cosmology at the University of Nova Gorica. The activities of the Center stem from longstanding collaboration between Slovenian scientists at the

Jožef Stefan Institute and the University of Nova Gorica with CERN. Later, the work of Slovenian physicists also extended to the DESY and KEK institutes in Japan. In the field of high-energy physics, researchers at the University of Nova Gorica participate in the Belle and Belle II experiments in Japan, the CTA Observatory in the Canary Islands, and the Pierre Auger Observatory in Argentina. In the latter project, significant support for our university was also provided by another honorary doctor of the University of Nova Gorica, Nobel laureate Professor James W. Cronin. The University's strategy is to maintain a high level of scientific excellence in astrophysics and to increase the number of students enrolled in the Physics and Astrophysics programmes at both the first and second Bologna cycle levels.

Professor Mnich has been a long-time supporter and friend of Slovenian researchers in high-energy physics. It is no exaggeration to say that without his support for Slovenian scientists working at DESY and CERN, the extensive activities of the Center for Astrophysics and Cosmology at our university would probably not exist. His support culminated this year with the full membership of the Republic of Slovenia in CERN – a goal that has also been long pursued by the honorary rector of the University of Nova Gorica, Professor Danilo Zavrtanik. Professor Mnich's personal role and authority in the field of high-energy physics have contributed to the fact that Slovenian researchers now play a significantly more visible role in numerous international collaborations than might be expected based on the financial and human resources of the Republic of Slovenia.