

The logo features the text 'OBSERVATORY' in a red serif font and 'MAGNA CHARTA UNIVERSITATUM' in a grey serif font. To the right is a colorful, illuminated manuscript-style graphic with large, stylized letters in green, yellow, and red, surrounded by intricate floral and scrollwork patterns.

OBSERVATORY

MAGNA CHARTA UNIVERSITATUM

Magna Charta Universitatum 1988 and 2020

same key principles; new relevance
and new challenges

Dr Sijbolt Noorda
Magna Charta Observatory
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between 1988 and 1999 a crucial alignment and association of European universities took shape, often labelled 'the Bologna Process'

important milestones were the Magna Charta of 1988 and the Bologna Declaration of 1999

leading to the formation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European University Association (EUA)



why this mattered & still matters

as the expression of the common will to collaborate across borders based upon shared ambitions and *values* *)

**) Important and lasting beliefs or ideals shared by the members of a culture about what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable. Values have major influence on a person's behavior and attitude and serve as broad guidelines in all situations*

a new edition was produced
in 2020

- to reinforce and update the 1988 version in view of changed contexts & challenges:
 - now reflecting *worldwide* practice and support
 - being more *inclusive*: including academia at large and the entire chain of education
 - explicitly mentioning specific key *responsibilities*, in addition to the freedoms advocated by the 1988 statement

why and what for?

- *advocating* academic freedom and autonomy is one part of the story
- the *responsibility* part is equally important and maybe even harder to do
 - how to best use and benefit from these freedoms
 - how to implement these uses and benefits
 - supported by and realized by the entire academic community (rather than top alone)

why do values matter for universities?

- they're informing and steering *profile setting*:
what kind of institution do we want to be,
serving which interests and why?
- e.g. in education focus on individual
excellence or rather on inclusiveness, or both

why do values matter for universities?

- they're *quality markers*
- e.g. like integrity in research operations and fairness in educational process

why do values matter for universities?

- they're *foundational principles* of institutional self-understanding and positioning in society
- e.g. autonomy and academic freedom, in the interest of scientific as well as societal development

why do values matter for universities?

- they're guiding us in (inter)national *relations*
- e.g. with whom to collaborate in which ways and for what purpose or how to cope with (cultural) diversity, including value varieties



shared values and ambitions

so identifying, discussing and sharing core values is important to any university

and noticeably so in times of *political turbulence, competing claims and internal fragmentation*

which values are we talking about?

- the answer to this will be *different* in different places at different times
- so identifying your university's core values is a first task

which values are we talking about?

- usually we recognize as core values:
- *enabling* values like autonomy & academic freedom
- *operational* values like integrity & fairness
- *social* values like social responsibility & equity



shared values and ambitions

which values are we talking about?

- in addition to these, country or profile *specific* values may be subscribed to
- like supporting national unity, embracing diversity, providing life support to students



shared values and ambitions

- *the Magna Charta Universitatum 1988 expressed some key values and principles like independence and academic freedom*
- it is crucial to understand that these were *not* meant to serve as selfish privileges, but rather as foundations for responsible universities that wish to serve their communities by contributing to the well-being and development of our societies

- *to meet the needs of the world around research and teaching must be morally and intellectually independent of all political authority and economic power*
- *university life as a workplace of research and a meeting ground for teachers and students is to be governed by freedom, openness to dialogue and rejection of intolerance*
- *<http://www.magna-charta.org>*



the 2020 Magna Charta Universitatum

- *global* challenges require *worldwide* collaborations
 - the European alignment since 1988 has attracted keen interest and support worldwide
 - almost 1000 universities have signed the MCU, roughly covering all continents
 - with some marked exceptions

the new MCU background

- Higher Education and Research have proliferated around the globe; numbers have increased enormously; so has variety
- such successes have attracted interventions of all sorts: political as well as economic powers in many places wish to make sure their interests are being served (in ways not always respecting university autonomy and individual freedoms of scholars and students)

the new MCU some highlights

- against the backdrop of these challenges it was felt that we needed a fresh expression of core values and principles as well as responsibilities
- *“The dramatic changes outlined above require the global academy to identify responsibilities and commitments that the signatories agree are vital to universities around the world in the Twenty-First Century. That is the reason for this new declaration.”*

the new MCU some highlights

- *“Universities acknowledge that they have a responsibility to engage with and respond to the aspirations and challenges of the world and to the communities they serve, to benefit humanity and contribute to sustainability.”*

the new MCU some highlights

- *“Intellectual and moral autonomy is the hallmark of any university and a precondition for the fulfillment of its responsibilities to society. That independence needs to be recognised and protected by governments and society at large, and defended vigorously by institutions themselves.”*

the new MCU some highlights

- *“As they create and disseminate knowledge, universities question dogmas and established doctrines and encourage critical thinking in all students and scholars. Academic freedom is their lifeblood; open enquiry and dialogue their nourishment.”*
- *“Universities embrace their duty to teach and undertake research ethically and with integrity, producing reliable, trustworthy and accessible results.”*

the new MCU some highlights

- *“Universities have a civic role and responsibility. They are part of global, collegial networks of scientific enquiry and scholarship, building on shared bodies of knowledge and contributing to their further development. They also are embedded in local cultures and crucially relevant to their future and enrichment. While they are immersed in and connected with global developments, they engage fully with and assume leading roles in local communities and ecosystems.”*

the new MCU some highlights

- *“Universities are non-discriminatory spaces of tolerance and respect where diversity of perspectives flourishes and where inclusivity, anchored in principles of equity and fairness, prevails. They therefore commit themselves to advance equity and fairness in all aspects of academic life including admissions, hiring and promotion practices.”*

the new MCU some highlights

- *“By signing the Magna Charta Universitatum 2020 universities declare their commitment to the original declaration and to upholding and advancing the Principles, Values and Responsibilities stated above, to strengthen the role of universities in the preservation of the planet and promoting health, prosperity and enlightenment around the world.”*

proclaiming and signing
aren't enough

- *proclaiming* principles and ideals is not the same as *living up to them*
 - so monitoring the actual situation worldwide has become an important issue (Academic Freedom Index; project of EHEA Rome 2020)
 - at the same time individual universities should engage in identifying, discussing and implementing core values in their own institution to make sure they are a lived reality (Living Values project MCObservatory)

shared values and ambitions

- *what are the benefits of reviewing institutional values and how they are lived?*
- benefits, as well as the inevitable challenges inherent in this process, will depend on the starting point and particular circumstances of each university. Ultimately and ideally, shared values **enable a university to enhance its performance in teaching, learning, and research and strengthen its sense of community.**
- in addition, the exercise helps to demonstrate to the outside world why the university makes certain decisions and which values it hopes to instil in its graduates.