

NEW YEAR 2021

GREETINGS FROM THE ICA PRESIDENT

Colleagues

At the start of this New Year I wish you, your relatives and your institutions good health and all success in 2021. In 2020 Covid-19 severely challenged us all and, indeed, has challenged ICA and ICA's Standing Committees in supporting you, our members. I, as I am sure you do, look forward to a return to normality. However, normality may be different from what it used to be; our experience in 2020 can have a positive impact on our university model for the future.



The planned 2020 ICA Rectors and Deans Forum ***2050 How the Earth Survived: the contribution of agricultural and life science Universities through harnessing university engagement to address the megatrends*** had to be cancelled. Instead, many of you attended our first online **ICA Rectors and Deans Forum** which addressed ***Agricultural and Life Science Universities Responding to Covid-19 and the European Green Deal***. There were two interesting sessions, the first looking at the lessons learnt from managing the impact of Covid-19 on education, research and innovation. The second session examined the challenges and opportunities for our universities of the European Green Deal and specifically the Farm to Fork Strategy.

As reported at the ICA General Assembly 2019 the ICA Board wishes to strengthen the engagement of ICA with the European Commission, the European Parliament and other organisations in Brussels. To this end the **ICA Board Task Force** started work in 2020 to advise the ICA Board on how to organise and manage this engagement in the long run. The Chair of the Task Force reported to the online ICA General Assembly in October 2020 on their discussions and will present an implementation plan in 2021. It is the Board's intention, with the agreement of the ICA General Assembly in October 2021, to roll out the implementation of this new mode of operation in 2022.

During 2020 a Working Group has been developing the **Community of Practice for Bioeconomy Education in Europe (CoP Bio-Edu)**. The ICA Board has agreed that this activity should become a committee under the ICA Board, complementing the ICA Board's Network for Innovation in Life Sciences Higher Education (ICA-Edu). The CoP Bio-Edu arranged an online Summer School and participated in the organisation of a Workshop focusing on ***How to Shape Education for a Sustainable Circular Bioeconomy*** at the online Global Bioeconomy Summit last November. The first CoP Bio-Edu Colloquium is planned to be held on Thursday 26 and Friday 27 August 2021.

Looking ahead – events in 2021

In the prevailing conditions of Covid we plan, with some uncertainty, a face to face **ICA Rectors and Deans Forum 2021** to be held on Thursday 21 and Friday 22 October at KU Leuven, Belgium. A face to face meeting is the format valued by our members, but we also prepare for the eventuality of a necessary switch to online delivery. Title: ***The Role of Life Science Universities in Transitioning to Carbon Neutrality and Open Science***. We have picked these topics to discuss the contribution that ICA's Life Science Universities can make to the European Green Deal agenda, also in view of COP26 in 2021.

The postponed ICA-Edu Colloquium from 2020 with the title ***Action to Keep the Entrepreneurial Genie Out of the Bottle: engaging students with sustainable entrepreneurial education in your curriculum*** is planned, also with some uncertainty, to be held from Wednesday 26 to Friday 28 May 2021.

The ICA Board wishes the ICA Standing Committees every success for their events during 2021, as together we support all our members in fulfilling their mission. Hubert Hasenauer (ICA Vice President, BOKU, Vienna) and I look forward to the opportunity of leading ICA in the next three years.

Arthur Mol

President of ICA and Rector Magnificus, Wageningen University & Research