



Inauguration Ceremony of the 2024-2025 Academic Year
Commemorating the 25th Anniversary of the University of Foggia
Address by the Representative of the Technical, Administrative, and
Library Staff
Maria Laura Salvatore

Distinguished Rector, guests, civil, judicial, military, and religious Authorities, esteemed Deputy Rectors and Heads of Department, Director General, Faculty, dear Colleagues, Students, Ladies and Gentlemen, I extend my most cordial greetings to you all.

It is with profound emotion and sincere gratitude that I take the floor on behalf of the technical, administrative, and library staff on this occasion of great significance, as we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the founding of our University.

Twenty-five years of existence, as highlighted by the Rector, represent a significant milestone - one achieved through periods of prosperity as well as moments of great challenge. These challenges have been confronted and overcome thanks to the enduring strength of our core values which now, more than ever, define us as a Community and provide guidance as we navigate a future fraught with profound uncertainties.

In this context, the concept of “care” emerges as a fundamental principle, not only shaping our vision for the future, but also influencing society and the essence of human existence. It serves as the unifying thread that can guide our efforts toward fostering innovation and building a more just and sustainable world.

Innovation does not simply entail the creation of something new; rather, it involves doing so by prioritizing collective well-being over individual interests, while maintaining a deep respect for human dignity and our shared heritage. In this context, care emerges as the fundamental value that transforms the uncertainty of the future into

an opportunity. It compels us to take responsible stewardship of the future, promoting progress that leaves no one behind and becomes emblematic of resilience, solidarity, and hope.

Care is a value that silently permeates every aspect of our lives, touching both the individual and collective spheres. As an academic community, we are privileged and responsible for promoting a culture of care that extends beyond the boundaries of our roles and offices, radiating outward to society and the surrounding territory. Our capacity to care for others reflects our shared humanity.

In an increasingly complex and fragmented world, marked by a series of interconnected crises across political, social, cultural, economic, and climatic domains, and, above all, by a pandemic-like multidimensional fragility, care, in its social dimension, emerges as a powerful response to the pervasive individualism and the numerous challenges of our time. Care involves recognizing the inherent dignity of every individual, dismantling barriers to inclusion, eradicating discrimination, and fostering authentic, supportive relationships that value and embrace diversity as a fundamental principle.

Within the University, this translates into the establishment of an environment where all individuals, regardless of their roles, perceive themselves as integral to a collective endeavour. It involves prioritizing not only academic excellence, but also the well-being of each individual. As technical, administrative, and library staff, we often serve as the first point of contact - welcoming, listening, and guiding. This privileged position enables us to serve as custodians of tangible care, manifested through seemingly small gestures that have a profound and lasting impact.

Whether it involves providing administrative support to design new degree courses, securing funding to implement research projects, facilitating access to library resources, establishing agreements to regulate partnerships, activating international mobility programs, organizing events and cultural initiatives open to the community and the region, or ensuring the availability of safe and functional services and spaces, every action we take is part of a larger mosaic. It is precisely this synergy between the different components of the University and between the University and the surrounding territory that makes care a central and transformative value.

In this context, the recognition of competencies, respect for professional roles, continuous investment in training and professional development, career progression, as well as the acknowledgment of voting rights within the Board of Directors and the

enhancement of the weight of the vote in the selection of the Rector, represent essential elements of attention and care toward a group - the technical, administrative, and library staff - that makes a distinctive contribution to the achievement of common goals. Our daily commitment serves as a concrete manifestation of professionalism and dedication, which must be steadfastly supported through initiatives aimed at the organizational modernization of the administrative apparatus. The latter should strike a balance between the complexity of processes, the increasingly onerous nature of workloads and associated responsibilities, and the urgent necessity to foster a motivating, meritocratic, and rewarding work environment.

At the same time, it is essential to address with determination the issue of understaffing, both in relation to teachers and students. Indeed, additional human and financial resources are crucial to support those who, despite limited economic and professional recognition, ensure a high quality of teaching, research, and collaboration with local businesses, companies and organizations.

In these first 25 years of activity, we have achieved significant milestones. Starting as a small university in 1999, emerging from the University of Bari with only 61 technical-administrative staff members, we have grown to become a medium-sized institution, with 357 technical, administrative, and library staff, of whom 336 hold permanent positions. However, we remain acutely aware that our path is far from complete. The technical, administrative, and library staff are resolutely committed to advancing along the path of development and growth that we began together on August 5, 1999, with the same professionalism, passion, and sense of belonging that has always distinguished us.

It is precisely with a gaze directed toward the past, yet looking forward with courage and confidence to the future, that we celebrate this important anniversary, expressing our heartfelt gratitude to the Rector, Prof. Lorenzo Lo Muzio, to the Rectors who preceded him, and to all those who, in these first twenty-five years of our University's history, have supported and guided its path, contributing to the achievement of the ambitious milestones of which we are so proud today.

We wish to extend our sincere gratitude and appreciation to Dr. Teresa Romei, who recently concluded her tenure as Director General, and, of course, to warmly welcome Dr. Sandro Spataro, the new Director General, offering him our best wishes for success in his new role. We are confident that he will provide steadfast support to the entire university community with the utmost competence, professionalism, and integrity.

Additionally, we extend our profound gratitude to the various organizations, institutions, associations, professional bodies, businesses, and all the stakeholders in the region with whom we have established strong, collaborative relationships. Their contributions have played a pivotal role in the growth and consolidation of our academic institution, both nationally and internationally.

In conclusion, allow me to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you - students, faculty, and colleagues - for the commitment, collaboration, and trust with which we, day after day, nourish this Community. A Community to which I, along with other colleagues, became a part of just over a year ago, but one that I have felt, from the very first months, to be a great family.

Happy 25th anniversary to the University of Foggia, happy anniversary to all of us, with the hope that this milestone marks the beginning of a new and positive phase, in which the value of care may serve as an ideal horizon, inspiring and guiding us toward a brighter future.