

Tomorrow is now

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Future orientation helps us prepare for future challenges and opportunities. Future orientation is a long-term and systematic orientation towards tomorrow through, for example, the use of scenario work. In addition to a long-term approach, responsiveness to changes in the operating environment and the changing needs of target groups is needed.

Locating the essential information needed to perceive the future amidst an information overload is challenging. Even the use of artificial intelligence as a tool may create a feeling of uncertainty as to whether we have all the essential information and whether we have overlooked something important. Competence, experience and understanding help us to navigate the information overload and to notice when artificial intelligence is hallucinating. In turn, discussion and interaction enrich information and expand our own understanding of what is essential and what is not.

We have a need to believe that tomorrow will be better than the present. This so-called belief in progress has been tested in recent years. The pandemic, wars, disasters and surprising twists in global politics shake our faith in a better future. As uncertainty increases, building the desired future today helps to maintain faith in a better tomorrow.

With the world rapidly changing and long-standing structures and operating models breaking down, it becomes increasingly important that higher education institutions are able to provide new skills, understanding and new solutions. While we in higher education – and certainly the rest of society – feel the need to run faster to stay still, we also have the means to respond to challenges brought by the rapid change. Teaching meta skills, future-oriented career guidance, continuous learning and producing

solutions to societal challenges are good examples of the tools that higher education institutions can use to make future orientation a reality.

The development of digitalisation, artificial intelligence and other new technologies will open new opportunities that we cannot even imagine yet. It is important that higher education institutions invest in increasing and developing competence as well as RDI activities now, so that we can seize these opportunities and build a sustainable and prosperous society.

The Lapland University of Applied Sciences (Lapland UAS) is looking toward the future while focusing on sustainability and responsibility. Through strategic choices, it actively contributes to solving global challenges. The northern dimension is strongly reflected in the Arctic university's strategy and operations.



Image. Lapland UAS strategy

The themed articles in this issue of the Lumen journal will provide a taste of the work carried out by the competence flagship programmes of the Lapland University of Applied Sciences. The articles provide perspectives on the way Lapland University of Applied Sciences builds and perceives the future. Contributions reflect on the future and hopefully offer new ideas for building the future – already today.