The Impact of COVID-19 on University’s Research Environment and Management

- Challenges
- Best Practices
- Opportunities
NCURA Webinar
The Impact of COVID-19 on University’s Research Environment and Management

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POLITECNICO DI MILANO- About

• Technical University (Engineering-Architecture-Design)
• Large University (45,000 Students- 1430 Faculty Members, 1232 Administrative Staffs)
• 1° University in Italy (in Engineering, in Architecture and Design)
• QS Rankings 2020: 6° in Arts & Design, 7° in Architecture, 7° in Civil & Structural Engineering.
• 1° University in Italy with the largest number of H2020 projects granted (342 projects for 146 million €)
• 12° University at European Level in H2020 Rankings
• 1400 Research Contracts/year
Stefania: My Background

- 2000 - 2006 > Senior Advisor and Head of the Incubator - POLIMI
- **2007-now > Head Manager of the Research Unit - POLIMI**
- Over twenty-five years of experience in the field of Research Leadership and Management
- Since 2016 I have been covering the position of **Chair** of the Advisory Board for the **European Crowdhelix Network**
- In 2018-2019, I have covered the position of Secretary in **NCURA Region VIII Network**
- Since December 2019, I am member of the **NCURA Select Committee on Global Affairs (SCGA)**
BEFORE 23 FEBRUARY, 2020

- RESEARCH OFFICE STRUCTURE

RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

DEVELOPMENT

INVESTMENTS
Strategic implementation plan for focused and structured activities

PRE AWARD

IDEA
Specific support
Identified needs and processes

POST AWARD

PROJECT
Funding management
Process monitoring and adjustments
THE FIRST 2 WEEKS OF COVID....UNTIL 11 MARCH

**Needs**

- Need to be prepared for every situation: Preparation for teleworking staggered according to priorities
- Logistics to optimise smartworking
- Avoid overloaded network problems
- Need to divide work in packages in order to give colleagues the opportunity to be ready to work in the best way
- Need to check activities’ deadlines managed by each staff member
- POLIMI needs to carry out activities (not only teaching) to give a positive message!

**Difficulties**

- Difficulties at European level: derision, lack of understanding, deadlines not postponed
- Not all colleagues are able to work remotely
- Some colleagues were not properly equipped
- Increased stress level and emotional rollercoaster due to uncertainties
- Cancellations at a global level
- Few clear indications for the emergency management

**First step for the office organization**: meetings with all colleagues and then single B2b meetings to organize process steps
11 MARCH – 23 MARCH – NOW

- Daily mail communication by the Rector to analyze the situation and possible solutions
- Monitoring committee established. All colleagues in the Red Zone were contacted and an email address for any notices in use
- Some Departments closed, others converted in order to be compliant with emergency needs
- Specific psychological support was established for critical situations but also for staff facing the difficulty of working at home with children
- Administrative personnel all in teleworking is invited to participate in online training
- PRE AWARD: confirmation request for the postponement of Grants deadlines
- POST AWARD: change in various procedures for audits
THE NEXT WEEKS UNTIL THE SUMMER

- Need to be clear that the **Goal** is to defeat the pandemic virus
- Need to support colleagues who are in stressful situations
- Need to be optimistic and continue to set medium-long term goals
- Try to be ready for better or worst situation
- Wait to plan the Summer Break
AFTER THE SUMMER

➢ Rescheduling of all the activities: Activities foreseen during the Spring to be postponed from the Autumn (Travels, meetings, Conferences...)

➢ Transition from H2020 to Horizon Europe

➢ Funding Agencies need to convert the procedures

➢ More involvement of the Industries and enhancement of technologies related to artificial intelligence

➢ Encourage more Global and International Opportunities
THANK YOU

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