

# AUDIT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

Tekijät **Bernard Coulie, Klara Bolander Laksov, Petri Heinonen, Petri Suomala, Signe Tolstrup Mathiasen, Mirella Nordblad & Niina Nurkka. Self-assessment of the University of Helsinki Päivi Aronen, Johanna Kolhinen & Anne Lepistö (eds.)**

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## 2.4 The HEI's examples of successful enhancement activities

### - Korkeakoulun itsearviointi

#### Strategic communication and impact plan

The strategic communication and impact plan supports the implementation of the strategic plan: in autumn 2020, in cooperation with faculties, units, sectors and the rector and vice-rectors, a university-level strategic plan for communication and impact as well as faculty- and unit-specific operative plans for communication and impact were drafted to support the implementation of the UH's strategic plan and its objectives. A collaboratively produced plan that encompasses the entire organisation will enhance the impact of communication and boost transparency and efficiency in the planning of communication. The goal is that the UH becomes an even more influential force in the next strategy period and that its reputation, its image among stakeholders and its social status are further consolidated.

#### DigiHUB activities

Located in the centre of Helsinki, DigiHUB is a coworking space and competence community that promotes the customer-oriented and open development of digital services at the UH. More and more digital services are designed at DigiHUB, where activities are based on an experimental culture with a startup mentality. The DigiHUB facilities are also used collaboratively with the teacher and researcher community. DigiHUB cooperates with similar units at the Yle public

service broadcasting company and the City of Helsinki.

Key tools include mentoring, coaching, the sharing of expertise and collaborative learning. DigiHUB brings together the UH's lean activities and digital roadmap by applying agile methods in carrying out projects associated with the roadmap. DigiHUB is a community composed of service design, analytics and technology guilds open to anyone interested in creation at the UH, as well as a lean leader guild targeted specifically at supervisors and leaders.

## Think Corner

The University of Helsinki's [Think Corner](#) is an arena of open discussion and cooperation open to all, founded on science and research. Think Corner organises accessible talks and thematic events, provides other scientific content and offers co-working facilities on three floors.

Think Corner in its current form was realised in conjunction with the renovation of a former University administration building in 2016–2017. Service design was applied to designing the Think Corner service concept together with future users, the UH community and numerous stakeholders (alumni, decision-makers, Helsinki residents).

Every year, Think Corner produces four extensive programme series presenting the UH's multidisciplinary research themes and current topics. At the Uuden tiedon klubi ('Club new knowledge') events, UH researchers introduce their latest research efforts every month, while recurring lunch sessions at Think Corner offer research-based perspectives on current events. Think Corner events can be attended on site and followed via live streams, through social media channels as well as on YouTube and by listening to podcasts.

At Think Corner, various organisations and members of the UH community can also organise events independently, with support provided by Think Corner's meeting and event services.

Every year, Think Corner welcomes over 600,000 visitors and organises more than 500 events involving over 1,400 guest speakers. The events serve to introduce all disciplines active at the UH, both individually and alongside each other, as a substantial share of Think Corner events are cross- and multidisciplinary.

## Viikki Innovation Platform

Viikki Innovation Platform, a result of the long-term strategic partnership between the UH and the City of Helsinki, launched operations in the beginning of 2021. Viikki Campus boasts a promising co-creation process combining teaching and research in biological sciences, agriculture and forestry, as well as pharmacy and veterinary medicine, with recognised potential to grow into a high-impact innovation environment.

The three-year project will survey business interests and needs as well as research-based

innovations that show promise, in addition to launching a range of development projects and operating models, such as brainstorming hackathons. The starting point is the development of sustainable food chain solutions in the Viikki Food Innovation Lab. The plans also cover the Cultivator programme active in Viikki. The goal is to increase research-based innovation activities by systematically bringing together students, researchers, startups and operators established in the field.

## Partnership pilot

The partnership pilot (2019–2020) was a two-year development project jointly carried out by Research Services, Teaching and Learning Services, and Communications and Community Relations. The goal was to develop new support services (e.g., charting potential, the development of tools and practices for research project leaders and degree programme directors) and determine principles for the utilisation of the new CRM tool in the systematic management of partnerships. The main conclusion of the pilot is that proactive business collaboration requires a new approach from University Services. The businesses conclude partnerships with fewer universities and are looking for multidisciplinary and extensive collaboration (global trend in the 2010s and 2020s, intensifying also in Finland). Businesses also wish to collaborate but are unable to find everything they need from the UH. The development work based on the pilot is in early stages but suggests promising new initiatives for collaboration.