

“As a university, we lead by example. We consider sustainability to be a precondition for everything we do ...”

University of Twente – Shaping 2030

Respected members of the Executive Board of the University of Twente,

Heat waves, fires, and floods throughout the summer of 2021 illustrated the acceleration of climate change and its consequences for nature and mankind. The recent 6th IPCC report supports our personal experience of such extreme weather events by quantitative data, and the conclusion is clear and sobering: despite the commitments laid down in the Paris agreement, global CO₂ emissions continue to grow and remain on track towards a 4°C temperature increase by the end of the century. While climate scientists agree that the current reduction plans are insufficient, concerns are great that even these moderate ambitions will not be met.

According to its strategic plan *Shaping 2030* the UT sees itself as a ‘people first’ university with a strong commitment to sustainability as the basis for a safe and livable environment in the future. As a Dutch public organization, the UT along with other universities is obliged by law to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 49% by 2030. Following its own ambition to lead by example, it has even pledged to become completely carbon neutral by 2030. Scientists4Future-Twente along with all other signatories of this letter are highly concerned that the modest measures currently in place, are inadequate to reach this goal and are probably even insufficient to fulfil the obligations imposed by the National Climate Agreement.

The last pre-corona CO₂ footprint analysis from 2019 reports emissions of 28 kiloton CO₂ equivalent, produced primarily by electricity consumption (52%), student and staff commuting (largely by car: 18%), and business travel (largely intercontinental: 13%). Reducing these numbers by half, as required by law, or even to zero by 2030 will require enormous adaptations within the organization. This process needs an open debate within the university and eventually a clear roadmap with well-defined targets. The signatories of this letter ask the Board of the University to initiate this process immediately and to make clear

- which measures it plans to implement in order to fulfil the legal obligations with average reductions of 7-8% per year in each sector
- how it plans to fulfil its own moral ambition (and decision) to lead by example and reach zero emissions already by 2030

The signatories understand that appropriate measures are hard to identify and to implement. Yet, it is also clear that all other ambitions envisioned in *Shaping 2030* ultimately become meaningless if society fails to address the climate crisis. As proud members of our university, the signatories are eager to help and support the board in finding and implementing suitable measures to make the UT a truly sustainable ‘people first university’.

Let us lead by example.

Enschede, October 2021

Frieder Mugele, Gertjan Koster, Theo van der Meer, Yuri Engelhardt, Jeroen Boerma, Evert Houwman, Vera Barbosa Araujo Soares Sniehotta, Cheryl de Boer, Erik Kemp, ...

and all other signatories