

Cooperation with industry into practice - Geert De Lepeleer

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1. Profile and prerequisites

- Faculty of Engineering Technology – close link with the work field
- Focus on applied research
- Flanders is a well developed industrial country with strong focus on research and investments
- Flanders has actually “a war on talent”, surely in technical professions.
- KU Leuven has a strong central research unit (LRD) helping researchers at all levels: from bilateral cooperation agreements up to setting up spin-offs, patents,

2. Why?

- Employability: cooperation with industry increases the employment chances of the graduates.
- Curriculum remains up to date and in line with the evolution of the work field.
- It opens opportunities for scientific research: extra income by employment chances for additional staff and infrastructure
- Free “indirect” publicity for your university in a competitive educational world.
- Ideal opportunity for creating a strong “alumni” network.

3. How?

1. Master thesis

The master thesis of our final year students is in general in a company or in cooperation with a company.

Contact persons in the company are mostly alumni.

2. Guest lectures/ professors from industry

Evolution during last twenty years: increasing demand of industry to discover talent.

3. How ?

3. Job fair for final year students

Annual event on campus – increasing interest from industry

4. Lifelong learning: offering retraining courses to staff from industry: for individual companies and for branch organisations

Example: Volvo-Lean Learning Academy-Food Safety

5. Contractual research upon demand:

Automation problems for Arcelor Mittal, cybersecurity prevention, staff scheduling for hospitals, scheduling for transport companies, waste management in cities, improvement of performance of equipment bought by industry and donated to university

3. How?

6. Facilitating “networking events”

Example: Green light Flanders, Beer congress,

7. Scientific cooperation in applied research:

- European projects but also projects supported by Flemish government:

Example: circular building, reduction of plastics in packaging,

- Direct cooperation: Phd student grants paid by industry

3. How?

8. Cooperation with industry embedded in curriculum of student:

- Training of soft skills/competences of final year students by HR managers of big companies – How to write an excellent CV, what is teamwork in a company?
- Promoting of entrepreneurship and interindisciplinary (“Factory of the future”)
- Company visits
- Attendance of the “Day with an Engineer”

9. Elaborate excellent contacts with external stakeholders: chambers of commerce, branch organisations, local authorities. Will lead to return on investment

Example: research project on renovation of the city of Ghent .

4. Conclusion

- Cooperation with industry offers a lot of chances for the universities and its students.
- From the first step to a snowball effect: a long way but
- TRY IT !
- Learning by doing

CONTACTS

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