



KU Leuven
Director of the
University Library

Further information for the post of Director of the University Library

KU Leuven

Situated in the heart of Western Europe, KU Leuven has been a centre of learning for almost six centuries. Founded in 1425 by Pope Martin V, KU Leuven bears the double honour of being the oldest extant Catholic university in the world and the oldest university in the Low Countries. In its early days, our university was modelled on the universities of Paris, Cologne, and Vienna. In a short time, it grew into one of the largest and most renowned universities in Europe. Its academic fame attracted numerous scholars who made valuable contributions to European culture. In the sixteenth century the humanist Desiderius Erasmus lectured here. He founded the Collegium Trilingue in 1517 for the study of Hebrew, Latin, and Greek, the first of its kind. The tutor of the young emperor Charles V, Adriaan Cardinal Florensz of Utrecht, was a professor here before being elected in 1522 as the last non-Italian Pope before Pope John Paul II. The philologist, legal scholar, and historian Justus Lipsius taught in Leuven for many years. The mathematician Gemma Frisius helped to lay the foundations of modern science and tutored many famous scientists, including the cartographer Gerard Mercator, whose map projection is still in use, the botanist Rembert Dodoens, and the father of modern anatomy, Andreas Vesalius.





In a later period, the theses of the Leuven theologian Cornelius Jansenius provoked a large and heated controversy both inside and outside the Church. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, KU Leuven was an important training centre for Roman Catholic intellectuals from Protestant countries. At the end of the Age of Enlightenment, in 1783, the chemist Pieter Jan Minckelers discovered the suitability of coal gas for lighting. And in the 20th century, Prof. Mons. Georges Lemaître was the first to propose the theory of the expansion of the universe as well as the 'Big Bang' theory of the origin of the universe.

The KU Leuven is located in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking northern part of Belgium. With the Dutch language's steady rise to renewed prominence, 1968 saw the university split into two independent Leuven/Louvain universities. The French-speaking Université Catholique de Louvain moved to the newly built campuses in Louvain-la-Neuve and Woluwe. The Dutch-speaking Katholieke Universiteit Leuven remained in the historic town of Leuven. Its rich history of nearly six hundred years has provided KU Leuven with its own dynamic international dimension. Today international co-operation is regarded as essential for a modern university. Top-level research is judged according to international standards and implies interaction, co-operation, and exchange, both of researchers and results. As such, KU Leuven is a charter member of the League of European Research Universities and European surveys rank KU Leuven among the top ten European universities in terms of its scholarly output. This academic reputation attracts students from all over the world. Besides exchange programmes, the university has set up a number of international academic programmes aimed both at Belgian and international students. Unlike the regular Dutch-language programmes, the international academic programmes are taught in English.

At present, KU Leuven caters for more than 38,000 students, around 15% of whom are international students from more than 120 nations. In terms of its personnel, there are over 6,000 academic staff, 3,000 administrative and technical staff, and over 8,500 university hospital staff members. With regard to its physical facilities, the university occupies a total area of 1 million square metres and it has a total of more than 26,000 rooms. On the academic side, the university is composed of thirteen faculties, 28 departments, about 70 research units and a large number of research groups. Concerning the medical facilities of KU Leuven, UZ Leuven comprises five hospitals and three affiliated hospitals, with a total of 2,000 hospital beds for the acutely ill.



The University Library

The University Library consists of the Central Library situated in the heart of Leuven, three campus libraries – i.e. the Biomedical Library on the hospital campus at Gasthuisberg, just outside the city centre, the Science, Engineering and Technology Library on the Heverlee campus, also just outside the city centre, and the Kortrijk campus in West-Flanders, as well as seven faculty libraries of the Humanities and Social Sciences Group in the city centre. In addition to the libraries already mentioned, the University Library comprises the University Archive and Art Heritage Collection at the Central Library, the MATRIX library of the research centre for contemporary music, the Library's IT division LIBIS at Heverlee, and the Central Library Services in the Central Library.

The University Library is the proud owner of several historic and important buildings. The Central Library on the Ladeuzeplein itself being the most imposing edifice in Leuven and a protected monument; the Science, Engineering and Technology Library, a recent marvellous renovation and extension of the former Celestine monastery by the renowned architect Moneo; the library of the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, a fine purpose-built library housing one of the greatest theology libraries of the world; and the library of the Faculty of Business and Economics, being an excellent example of a modern utilitarian library. KU Leuven is also developing two important building projects for: learning centres (or study landscapes), respectively in the Leuven City Centre and at the Gasthuisberg Campus.

The University Library had in 2010 a total of 173.3 FTE staff (195 individuals) of which about 12 are funded from self generated income. Students worked a total of 15,451 hours for the library in 2010 and there is an active group of volunteers working in several libraries. Book and hard copy periodical volumes amount to more than 4 million volumes, although that figure is in evolution as the Science, Engineering and Technology as well as the Biomedical Sciences increasingly change over to e-only. Moreover, thanks to a co-operative storage policy between Flemish Universities duplicate hard copy can be relegated. The University Library has access to more than 25,000 electronic journals and databases. The Central Library and the Theology library have major heritage and special collections.



History

The University Library has had a dramatic history. Plundered during the French Revolution (some of its collections are now to be found in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France), the two World Wars of the twentieth century deeply scarred the library. In 1914, the University Hall with its precious library was set in flames by German troops and 300,000 books were reduced to ashes. Afterwards, an international solidarity campaign with a major American contribution helped construct a new library on the present Ladeuzeplein. Unfortunately, this library was burned down in 1940 during the Second World War and this time only 15,000 of its 900,000 volumes were saved. In 1968, the university library was divided in order to provide the new Université Catholique de Louvain with a library. Thanks however to the energy and enthusiasm of librarians and friends of the library it has been again rebuilt to form a great university library.

Management and governance

The management and governance of the University Library is a complex and evolving matter. From the 1960's until the turn of the millennium there was a vigorous policy of decentralisation resulting in the present network of campus and faculty libraries. Faculty and campus libraries reported to the academic structure of University and Faculties, and only the central services were managed by the Chief Librarian. However, during the tenure of the current Chief Librarian, Prof. M. Collier, the emphasis has been laid on developing an integrated policy for the whole University Library. Since January 2011, the Biomedical and the Science, Engineering and Technology libraries report directly to the Chief Librarian alongside the Central Library, LIBIS and the central services. There is a dotted line from the Humanities and Social Sciences faculty libraries to the Chief Librarian for policy development. With the retirement of the University Archivist in 2010, the University Archive and Art Heritage Department were entrusted also to the University Library. The Chief Librarian reports to the Vice-Rector Research Policy on academic matters and to the Managing Director of the University on administrative matters. Following a reflection document prepared by the present Chief Librarian, it has been decided to position the University Library more prominently as a free standing entity in the University structure with a high level steering committee.



Operationally the University Library is managed by a management team consisting of the Chief Librarian, the campus librarians and the heads of the central services. The team is responsible for developing and implementing an integrated policy for the whole University Library. The General Library Committee advises the Chief Librarian on overarching policy matters. Each Campus Library has its own committee and the Faculty Libraries have various management and advice structures.

During the last five years the 'Association of the KU Leuven' has been developed. This was a result of Flemish Government policy that determined that all colleges of higher education should be associated with one university. Today twelve University Colleges form the KU Leuven Association. The relationship of the Association libraries to the University Library is managed by a council of all the library heads, chaired by the University Chief Librarian. The next three years will be of great importance as all the academic bachelor and master programmes of the University Colleges – as distinct from the vocational education programmes – will be integrated into the University. The University of Leuven will then comprise almost half of all higher education institutions in the Flemish Community of Belgium. A separate but co-ordinated strategic plan addresses this process as far as libraries are concerned.

Strategy

In 2005, the current management structure and a systematic process of strategic planning for the University Library were introduced, resulting in a plan with nine action lines that ran from then until 2009. After evaluation of the plan and the management structure, a new plan for the period 2010 to 2013 has been developed. The latter has a shorter duration period because of the milestone of integration of the University Colleges. The plan (see separate document) has seven action lines. Each action line is the responsibility of a member of the management team of the University Library, or a person reporting to the management team.

The plan lays much emphasis on the further professionalization of the libraries and their staff, building efficiency of use of resources, and of course in today's environment the development of digital resources and digitisation of heritage.



Co-operation

For many years the Leuven University Library has been active in the Flemish Association of Academic Libraries (VOWB) which is hosted at the Leuven Central Library. The Chief Librarian is the secretary of this not-for-profit company. The University Library is a leading member of Elektron, the Flemish e-resources consortium, that operates out of the same office. It has also been active in LIBER, the League of European Research Libraries. Moreover, Leuven has worked for many years with Flemish partners on library automation through its LIBISnet division. During the last five years, however, a vigorous policy of further co-operation development has been promoted. The library has participated in a series of European projects and, more particularly, EDLnet, NEREUS, Europeana1.0, and Europeana Libraries. A new project Europeana Inside will begin in April 2012. The University Library has also been a foundation member of The Flemish Heritage Library, a consortium of the six most important heritage libraries in Flanders which promotes good practice in the field. Leuven leads Flandrica, a major digital project within that framework. The current Chief Librarian is also a member of the board of the Flemish Institute for Audio-visual Archiving (VIAA), which seeks to set up a Flemish digital archive for the heritage sectors. Additionally the library works with the City of Leuven, the province of Flemish Brabant, the Flemish Government and the Flemish Research Council (FWO) on various projects, as well as with partners internal to the university.

Innovation

In the 1970's Leuven was in the forefront of library automation as partner in the Dobis-LIBIS system. Although the technology has changed since then, Leuven remains at the head of a large network of institutions using the current generation of systems, namely the products of Ex Libris. The latest innovation in this regard is the Leuven Integrated Archive System (LIAS), which offers a complete digital aggregation, archiving and preservation service combining Aleph and Rosetta from Ex Libris and ScopeArchiv for archive management. These systems are all in use in the European and Flemish projects mentioned above and are aimed at the libraries, museums and archives markets. LIBIS also manages the university repository of academic output under the name of LIRIAS. The University Library is busy with developing Open Access support offering not only technical services but also a first-line advice service on authors' rights and digitisation. It also participates in LibQual the international benchmarking exercise. The new Europeana Inside project will produce a connection tool to streamline aggregation from Ex Libris systems into Europeana.

Resources

In 2010 the total library budget, central and decentral, was 16 million euro, of which 9 million was for personnel. Of the 7 million not on personnel, 5.4 million was spent on collections and 1.6 on other costs. Of the 5.4 million on collections 2.75 was spent on e-resources. In his reflection, the current Chief Librarian has remarked that not only the library expenditure is lower than average expenditures among comparable international university libraries, but also the staff expenditure is proportionately higher. The University's senior management has recognised this dual problem and has determined to address it via the high-level steering committee mentioned above.

During the last two years the amount of self generated income has risen significantly thanks to externally funded projects and the support of the Friends of the University Library.



Job description

The KU Leuven, one of Europe's leading universities, is looking for a Library Director to succeed the present Chief Librarian, Professor M. W. Collier, who retires in the summer of 2012. The KU Leuven Library is a large and complex organisation including campus libraries, faculty libraries, electronic library services, archives and art collections. The job of Library Director provides the challenge of combining the management of important traditional and heritage collections with an ultra modern approach to e-resources and digitalisation of library materials. The Library's IT division LIBIS provides a wide range of services to a network of institutions throughout Belgium and beyond. KU Leuven has also a network of University Colleges offering academic and professional programmes. The libraries of these Colleges form part of the wider network of the University Library. Moreover, the Library participates in a range of Flemish, Belgian and international co-operative activities.

As the Director of the University Library, you are directly responsible for the Central Library, the Biomedical and the Science and Technology libraries, the central library services, LIBIS, MATRIX (heritage library for contemporary music), the University Archive and Art Heritage Collection. You supervise the faculty libraries in the Social Sciences and Humanities in collaboration with the Faculties.

Responsibilities include

- Development and implementation of an integrated policy for library and information services across all levels of the University Library, in respect of the structure of the University Library.
- Strategic supervision of all libraries and services of the University Library.
- Promotion of best practices based on benchmarking.
- Financial management and probity of budgets (approx. €16 million per year).
- People management for the library staff, including best practice and recruitment.
- Leading innovation, winning external projects and ensuring successful implementation.
- Promotion of co-operation within the KU Leuven and with external entities and organisations.
- Representation of the University Library in national and international settings.
- Representation of the KU Leuven in key organisations such as the Flemish Council of Academic Libraries (VOWB), the Flemish Consortium for e-resources (Elektron), the Flemish Heritage Library (VEB).



Personal profile

- You have already worked at senior management level
- You have excellent management, communication and diplomacy skills to take the University Library forward in its complex and rapidly changing environment.
- You are able to develop and implement an inspiring vision for library, information, archive and heritage services in the coming decade.
- You have a proven ability to think strategically, to communicate a vision, to motivate people and to elaborate plans.
- You are experienced in implementing changes and driving improvements in delivery and service quality.
- You are highly competent in financial and people management. You have a good track record in winning resources, managing innovation and successful delivering of projects.
- You are knowledgeable and active in national and international professional affairs and networks.
- You have personal integrity, resilience, creativity and energy.
- This job requires a wide academic background. Experience in an academic library setting is highly valued. You have knowledge about heritage policy and co-operation with museums, archives and the audio-visual domains.
- You are competent in Dutch and English. Competence in French is an asset. The post is also open to non-Dutch speakers, who would be required to achieve near native competence within three years.

Offer

We offer a permanent position in the senior director grades. The salary is in line with the responsibilities. The title and position of extraordinary professor (buitengewoon hoogleraar) may be considered if the postholder has the appropriate academic profile.

Appointment process and how to apply

The Library Director will be selected by an international selection committee.

The position is advertised on the university's jobsite, in online and print media, and through professional network /contacts.

Applications should consist of a full CV accompanied by a brief covering letter addressing the criteria in the person specification. These can be sent to ineke.debrue@kuleuven.be. The deadline for applications is May 6th.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited for a formal panel interview on May 31st or June 4th.

The selection process will be finalised with an assessment exercise.

Further information can be obtained by contacting Professor P. Marynen (+32 16 32 40 64 or peter.marynen@doc.kuleuven.be).



