LEAGUE OF EUROPEAN RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES (LERU)

1. What is the LERU?
LERU stands for The League of European Research Universities (www.leru.org), the association that was founded in the year 2002 to promote research. The League comprises 22 European research-intensive universities that foster teaching quality in the framework of international competitive research.

2. What is LERU’s contribution at a European level?
LERU seeks to advocate research, define science policy and develop better practices through the exchange of its members’ working experiences. The League considers that Europe has lost something of its preeminent position in research at a worldwide level and proposes that European institutions should establish priority measures to regain their presence in research, to acquire new knowledge, to ensure quality education, to reinforce innovation in industry and to increase our society’s quality of life. To do this, the League proposes a grassroots redefinition of European research governance, management and funding, and at the Rectors’ Assembly in May of 2005 it adopted the Leuven Declaration, which expressed LERU members’ support for the creation of the European Research Council (ERC)—in short, a call to European higher educational institutions commit themselves more fully to their investment in research.

3. What about LERU and the worldwide picture?
One of LERU’s prime objectives is that Europe should regain its distinguished worldwide position in research and that its members, the most research-intensive universities in Europe, can combine their efforts to achieve this goal.

4. How is LERU organized?
LERU’s policy development activities are undertaken at the request of its highest decision-making body, the Rectors’ Assembly, and are developed through three main bodies, assisted by the member universities’ rectors, vice-rectors or delegates: the Committees, the Working Groups and the Communities.

5. What tasks are assigned to LERU’s Committees, Working Groups and Communities?
The Research Policy Committee is responsible for various aspects of research policy matters of importance to Europe’s research-intensive
universities and assesses the role universities play in the knowledge economy. The Committee’s reports examine subjects such as universities and innovation or the future of European research, and its recent publications—its position papers—include papers such as ‘Universities and Innovation: The Challenge for Europe’ and ‘The Future of the European Research Area’.

The Working Groups are designed to help develop the League’s research policy. At the time of writing, there is one working group, the Research Career Development Working Group. This group focuses on changing the current model of postdoctoral and contract research at research-intensive universities and examining the policy implications for research and human resource policy-making.

Finally, the Communities are created as a forum in which representatives from all member universities come together to discuss policy or collaborative tasks in certain areas of development. The following communities have been created:

- Doctoral Studies
- Research Careers
- Senior Officers’ Network
- European Research Projects managers
- Directors of Public Affairs and Communications
- Vice-Rectors for Education
- Vice-Rectors for Research
- Social and Behavioural Sciences
- Deans of Medicine
- Technology Transfer Officers
- Community of Librarians

Apart from the activities of the committees, working groups and communities, every year the League organizes a Bright Students’ Conference, which is held at one of the member universities. For the year 2010, and for the first time, LERU will also be organizing its Summer School for its member universities’ doctoral students, to be held at the Universiteit Utrecht (Utrecht University) and the Universiteit van Amsterdam (University of Amsterdam). LERU is also an active participant in meetings and conferences organized by other associations, mainly at a European level.

6. **What does it mean for a university to be a member of LERU?**

Membership in LERU is by invitation and is granted by merit of an institution’s research excellence and its commitment to the exchange of research experience. At the time of writing, LERU has twenty-two
members and the participation of new member universities is evaluated against a broad set of quantitative and qualitative criteria including the university’s research volume, impact and funding, strengths in doctoral training, size and disciplinary breadth and peer-recognized academic excellence. Given such criteria, LERU membership is therefore considered both an honour and a privilege.

7. How is LERU directed?
LERU’s Rectors’ Assembly appoints three of its members to serve as the Board of Directors. At present, the following board members are in office:

Bernd Huber (Chair), President of Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München.

Malcolm Grant, President and Provost of University College London

Hans Stoof, Rector Magnificus of Universiteit Utrecht

LERU also has a Secretary General who is head of office at LERU’s Secretariat (known as the LERU Office), and who is responsible for the League’s daily management. The current Secretary General is Kurt Deketelaere.

8. Why has LERU chosen the UB as its first Spanish university?
In order to be admitted to the League, the University of Barcelona was put to the test of the admission criteria in the area of internationally-consolidated scientific and academic excellence.

9. What will the UB be able to contribute?
In basic terms, the UB will be able to offer its experience and expertise in research, innovation and knowledge transfer and in a series of other LERU-related areas.

10. What is the UB’s greatest strength?
The excellence of its research.

11. What will be expected of the UB?
The UB was selected as a new member of the League on 1 January 2010, but since that time we have already begun to participate in different areas of LERU activity and we hope that our research experience will be useful in the League’s mission to promote research across Europe; in short, to be another contributor in the League’s objective for all its members to work together to define European science
policy and to develop better practices through the exchange of experience.

12. What can the UB expect from LERU?
The value of being able to exchange experience and expertise with benchmark European universities is obviously very important for the UB, in different fields of research and also in terms of research organization and management. LERU’s activities are also concerned with aspects of teaching and management which will be particularly useful for the UB’s researchers and teachers, and its technical officers and managers, and all this will contribute even further to strengthening our university’s reputation, visibility and credibility. The LERU comprises the very best universities in Europe, universities renowned for their research-intensive activity, and through them UB personnel will be able to become involved in a variety of initiatives including thematic publications, EU assessment (and initiatives beyond the EU) in specific areas, such as VIII FP, as described above.

13. Why did the UB want to join?
We see this as a unique opportunity to be part of a group of institutions that are renowned for the excellence at a European level; an honour and a privilege to share ranks with LERU’s current members:

- Universiteit van Amsterdam
- Universitat de Barcelona
- University of Cambridge
- University of Edinburgh
- Albert-Ludwig Universität Freiburg
- Université de Genève
- Ruprecht-Karls Universität Heidelberg
- Helsingin Yliopisto
- Universiteit Leiden
- Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
- Imperial College London
- University College London
- Lunds universitet
- Università degli Studi di Milano
- Ludwig-Maximilians Universität München
- University of Oxford
- Université Pierre et Marie Curie - Paris 6
- Université Paris-Sud 11
- Karolinska Institutet Stockholm
- Universität de Strasbourg
- Universiteit Utrecht
- Universität Zürich

14. What will the UB gain from its involvement?
The UB sees this as a good opportunity to exchange opinions on the university system with Europe’s most important universities. It also believes that such an association can only benefit the university’s activities in research, teaching and management.

15. Is there any association like LERU dedicated to university activity in the social sciences or in humanities?
Indeed, LERU also deals with these academic fields and there are LERU groups already working in these fields in such areas as assessment criteria design.

16. What’s on today’s program?
LERU highest-ranking officers are here today to coordinate the UB’s working day in a series of different activities. The objective is to establish the university’s collaborative activities in the League and for the League’s officers to give us an overall picture of the areas in which we will be able to participate. The meeting will also help to provide a space in which specific proposals can be made and the opportunity for all of us to reflect together on the most important issues facing the European university community today. Finally, the objective is also to bring together a profile of the UB’s own strengths and features and for the UB to be able to showcase these to other LERU members.

17. Do the other members already know the UB? At the end of the day, what impression of our university will they take away with them?
The UB is already familiar with many LERU members and this is one of the reasons why they have invited us to participate. As the first in a series of meetings, we at the UB sincerely hope that the impression they will take away with them is a good one.

18. Who will be representing the UB at the League?
The following members of UB personnel will be playing a key role in the UB’s representation:

- Rector Dídac Ramírez Sarrió
- Senior Officer and UB Representative to LERU, Conxita Àvila

The following members of UB personnel will be playing a key role in the UB’s representation in LERU communities and working groups:

- Vice-Rector for Teaching and Science Policy M. Teresa Anguera, for vice-rectors for education
- Vice-Rector for Research Jordi Alberch, for vice-rectors for research
- Rector’s Delegate for Planning and Forecasting Gemma Rauret, in Doctoral Studies
• International Research Projects Manager Ignasi Sánchez, in European Research Projects managers

• Press Office Manager Helena Gaya, for directors of public affairs and communications

• Dean of Faculty Elisenda Paluzie, of the Faculty of Economics and Business, for Social and Behavioural Sciences

• Dean of Faculty Francesc Cardellach, of the Faculty of Medicine, for deans of Medicine

• Director of the Bosch i Gimpera Foundation Technology Carme Verdaguer, for technology transfer officers

• Vice-Rector's Commissioner for Information and Documentation Systems Carina Rey, for Community of Librarians

19. How did the UB first make contact with LERU?

The first contacts were made in 2005 when Màrius Rubiralta was UB Rector, but at this time the University was still not able to join the League. Then, in 2007, LERU announced that new members would be considered and this began a period of intense activity between the League and the UB’s Vice-Rector for Innovation Josep Samitier (also subsequently UB Rector), which finally lead to UB’s candidature status. The UB finally joined the League in 2009, under Rector Dídac Ramírez

20. What would be the most important aspects of the UB’s involvement in the League?

The most important aspect of the UB’s involvement is that it is the first university in Spain in scientific production, and a major player in the area of health sciences. Its Faculty of Economics and Business is also one of the most important faculties in the country, bringing together a total of almost 15,000 people in students, teaching and research staff and administrative and service staff. And economics and business is precisely one of the areas addressed by the League in a specific working group.

Finally, it should also be said that the UB shares with the University of Milan a distinguishing geographic feature, in that the two institutions are the first two league members on Europe’s Mediterranean front.