



## MOVING TOWARDS THE FUTURE.

### 2021-2022 Academic Year Inauguration Ceremony:

#### Presentation by Dean Prof. Bartolomeo Biolatti.

##### I. Welcome to Pollenzo

Civil and military officers, dear guests, Strategic Partners and Contributing Members, friends of Slow Food,

Dear President and Board of Directors,

Dear colleagues, professors, faculty, and staff,

Dear students,

Welcome to Pollenzo.

Thank you for being here with us today on this important occasion. It is with great happiness that we are about to inaugurate the new academic year of 2021-22.

An inauguration always speaks of the future, of hope, of new horizons. A moment that is particularly meaningful after two years of a pandemic, of fear, of suffering, and of mourning. We cannot forget the huge loss of human life, over 5 million women and men around the world. It is only now, thanks to the sacrifice and hard work of so many, and especially thanks to scientific progress and consequently the success of the vaccination campaign, that we see in front of us real possibilities to return to the ways of life we were once used to; to normalcy. We need normalcy - but a healthy normalcy must not ignore that which has occurred, as if nothing has happened: it must, on the contrary, find the silver lining in even the greatest of tragedies.

Let us get back, then, to believing in the future. The academic year that opens here, therefore, is not meant to be a simple return to the habits of the past, but a moment of a new impetus to interpret the needs and seize the opportunities that the pandemic has also created. Now the world believes in an ecological transition! This is no small feat! We are facing common challenges on the European and global horizons. We at the University of Gastronomic Sciences must be able to provide new generations of gastronomes with the knowledge and skills necessary to be the protagonists, in this new historical phase, of the reconversion of the economic, productive, and social system.

##### II. Speaking of Pollenzo Today

Called to face the challenge of tomorrow, it is good to start by speaking about Pollenzo today. Pollenzo, which with this academic year enters its eighteenth year, is today a small university made up of a large network of thousands of people; a network that unites professors, researchers, students, strategic partners and supporting members, friends and alumni, and the communities of Terra Madre and of Slow Food around the world with whom it joins in a global network.

To speak of Pollenzo today means to speak about research that unfolds in a multi- and interdisciplinary horizon, capable of linking together agronomy, philosophy, chemistry, history, political economy, anthropology, botany, law, ecology, sociology, geography, and food technology: these are just a few examples taken from a long list of disciplines that I have encountered along the way to Pollenzo. And I, as a veterinarian, would add public health, a subject that embraces humans and animals. The pandemic has also taught us how important it is to take care of the health of animals in order to guarantee that of



humans, as well as that of the environment, emphasizing the concept of One Health. The gastronomic sciences are, therefore, a much more complex picture than one of simple culinary data, as some still erroneously believe. This University represents a small but valuable scientific community, steadfast and well-integrated, which has made itself noticed at the national and international level, becoming a part of major research projects.

Very recent examples of this are the Horizon 2020 projects that have just started (Agroecology for Europe, Fusilli, School for Change and Radiant) and the dozens of publications through which Pollenzo's professors have presented and shared their innovative work with the international community over the past year, contributing to the scientific advancement and strengthening of this multidisciplinary area, gastronomy, which Brillat-Savarin defined almost two hundred years ago as "the science of everything that refers to man as he feeds himself."

More generally, to speak of Pollenzo is to speak of a complex and ambitious educational project. UNISG is an institution that over the years has been able to expand its course offerings at all three levels of university education, developing new approaches able to understand the needs of the food sector, which needs, today more than ever, new gastronomes. A recent example is the approval of the L-Gastr program, conceived and developed right here in Pollenzo. Gastronomes, then, are those future professionals who grow and develop here in Pollenzo and who have the faces and smiles of our students and our 3200 alumni, 56% of whom come from outside of Italy, from 95 different countries around the world. They are mostly active in HoReCa (Hotels-Restaurant-Cafés), food distribution, communication, training and food-related activism. In these sectors, many are managers, communication specialists, and buyers. About a quarter of them are business owners, having continued the history of family businesses or having formed start-ups capable of transforming the future trajectories of gastronomy into reality.

Furthermore, to speak about Pollenzo is also to speak about a community of destiny that ties together more than 150 companies and institutions that support our University every day, recognizing the uniqueness of this place and its mission, and are intent on advancing this great project together.

We are therefore talking about a rich cultural experience. I can only be happy to be part of it and offer my contribution as a guide and support. I bring to the University my experience gained as a professional and as an academic in my role as a veterinarian, which has allowed me to collaborate with businesses within the zootechnical sector, with Veterinary Public Health, and with small and large-scale distribution. I offer this community a heightened awareness of pressing issues such as animal welfare and food safety in order to enrich the ongoing debate and further expand prospects for teaching and research.

### III. Looking Towards the Future of Pollenzo

This day speaks of Pollenzo and begins a new journey of growth, building upon the solid foundation laid by my predecessor, Prof. Pieroni, whom I thank for his work, together with the University community. In this journey we will follow the trajectories indicated by our Board of Directors, which will see us committed in the coming years to each of the University's missions and which will call upon us to expand educational initiatives, to strengthen research, and to promote ties with partners and civil society.

The key words of our University and its contribution in the field of gastronomic sciences are: sustainability and resilience, planet, people and prosperity, culture and creativity in thought and action. We need to give concrete answers to an increasingly wide audience of young people interested in becoming creators of the future of food: for this reason a new Master's degree course will be launched, aimed at the understanding of international food cultures and food policies. In addition, the current Master's degree course will be revised and modified to better embrace the themes of sustainable development and corporate responsibility. In addition, in the next academic year, we will launch a new cycle of Doctoral studies, after the one that has just ended, in collaboration with the University of Turin



and other international universities. It will be called "Eco-gastronomy, Science and Food Cultures." My provenance from the University of Turin facilitated the launch of this first project in the tight timeframe we had available. We now wish to engage with the other two universities in Piedmont to identify common grounds for collaboration and to help build the necessary critical mass. In the next few years, finally, we will establish a new Bachelor's degree course, even more focused on the major themes of ecological transition and the challenges for the realization of a new humanism based on culture and science.

The University will continue along the path of sharing knowledge also through new and different tools, not necessarily considered within the traditionally recognized realm of academics. We will develop new tools for scientific dissemination and professional training, such as MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) and Summer and Winter Schools, to meet the specific needs of companies and institutions that turn to Pollenzo to become protagonists of the future of food.

On the research side, we want to continue the path we have undertaken with even greater vigor, starting with basic research and expanding our participation in scientific projects both national and international in scope, thanks also to the newly created Sustainability and Circular Economy Laboratory. And finally, we want to relaunch the strategic projects of the Granaries of Memory and the Ark of Taste.

Along this path, we will not move alone, but together with partners, other universities, Slow Food and friends of UNISG, strengthening our relationships at the national and international levels. Our University desires to be increasingly at the center of a wide network of researchers and partners focused on food in all of its aspects. To this end, we will soon give life to a new and innovative international scientific society, aimed at the diffusion and development of gastronomic sciences.

It is clear that, in order to reach this ambitious horizon, Pollenzo will need new forces to integrate and strengthen its teaching and research staff, as well as new spaces through which to pursue its educational and scientific mission. These needs will be placed at the center of the new Strategic Plan, with the goal of building a solid and structured roadmap that will allow for the precise planning of the objectives I have briefly mentioned.

#### **IV. Today's Guest**

If, then, the 2021-2022 Academic Year is the beginning of a journey towards the future, there could be no better support than the presence, which sincerely honors us and gives us great strength, of one of the most important creative minds in the world, a master of design that is both visionary and practical, the Honorable Senator Renzo Piano. In his career, he has been able, like very few other great architects of the 20th and 21st centuries, to give new shape and soul to iconic places. To mention only three achievements, among countless other projects: the Georges Pompidou Center in Paris, the Old Port of Genoa and, again in Genoa, the San Giorgio viaduct. These are pieces that work on memory, inscribing themselves in the present and projecting themselves into the future. In the same way, in our own small way, and certainly without possessing the genius of Renzo Piano, we would like to contribute to the achievement in Pollenzo, in the field of gastronomic sciences, of something similar: because food is the interweaving of memory, present, and future. I would therefore like to thank the Honorable Sen. Piano for having chosen and been able to be with us today to accompany us from the beginning of this journey.

#### **V. The Inauguration**



Università di Scienze  
Gastronomiche di Pollenzo

University of Gastronomic Sciences of Pollenzo

Strong in our past, strong in our community, strong in our relationships, and in our knowledge and skills, but also thanks to consistently new suggestions that great personalities, rich in humanity, vision and practicality such as Maestro Renzo Piano, can give us, I am therefore certain that we will know how to best interpret the challenges of the future, which today might return to manifest themselves in all their potential after almost two years dominated by fear and uncertainty.

Strong in this conviction, I declare the 2021-2022 Academic Year of the University of Gastronomic Sciences of Pollenzo open.