

Team Solve's Responses to Incoming Questions After the Debates

- **In today's economic situation, parts of NMBU's agricultural sector, including its leased facilities and students, are in a difficult position. For example, animal species are being phased out and practical subjects are being cut to save money. What is the position of the rectoral teams regarding livestock studies and the role of domestic animals at NMBU? Will you preserve these despite the challenging financial situation?**
 - In a time of increased focus on national preparedness and food security, NMBU's traditional academic fields are, if possible, even more important. These are also largely unique areas in a national context and are important for NMBU's position in the higher education sector. We aim to **revitalize and strengthen agricultural sciences, veterinary sciences, and the green industries of the future** within food and bioproduction. Livestock studies and research on our main livestock species play a central role in this and will be strategically very important to preserve.

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- **How will you ensure interdisciplinarity and enable the university to tackle sustainability challenges in new ways—across teaching, research, and societal engagement?**
 - Team Solve has significant experience in sustainability work and interdisciplinarity, and this will heavily influence our priorities during the rector term. As a background, it's worth noting that Solve served on the [National Committee for Agenda 2030](#) in the higher education sector from 2018–2021, and led the work on the report "[SDG-Quality in Higher Education](#)", which highlights the importance of incorporating “sustainability competencies” into academic programs. These sustainability competencies were also central in an interdisciplinary NMBU application (see P360:22/01455-17) for a **Centre for Excellence in Education (SFU)** that Solve and Elin spearheaded in 2022. Interdisciplinary competence is one of these skills, and together with Elin Børrud, Solve also wrote the internal memo “**Interdisciplinarity and Interdisciplinary Competence at NMBU**” (see P360:20/01772-1).

We will build on this work to promote interdisciplinarity in our core activities. Some examples:

- In **education**, we will use a sandbox innovation system to pilot new cross-cutting courses at NMBU. With greater flexibility and modularization in academic programs, such cross-disciplinary subjects can more easily be incorporated into study plans.
- In **research**, we are currently exploring the possibility of developing a new **AI-based service** for coordinating researchers and research environments for major national and international funding calls—particularly those related to sustainability challenges. This service may also support other benefits, like easier coordination of interdisciplinary teaching expertise and societal engagement.

A key element is that the **relevant research NMBU is already strong in will be brought forward and connected in new ways** to gain renewed strength and relevance. This ensures that our interdisciplinary initiatives have meaningful content and a viable foundation—for example, for major center applications.

- **What are the rector candidates' positions on the current and future use of tenure track positions ("innstegsvilkår") as a path to hiring academic staff at NMBU?**

- The **tenure track system** has a relatively short history at NMBU, and there have been some initial issues that were thoroughly discussed in the Research Committee (FU), but we believe several of these have now been addressed.

We believe the system has **positive potential benefits**, such as: Longer job security for researchers, A more predictable and stable career path, opportunities to build pedagogical skills and gain project management experience

All of these factors increase the chances of obtaining a **permanent academic position** and reduce the risk of ending up in a long series of temporary project contracts. We are therefore **positive about continuing the tenure track system** and aim to conduct a new evaluation in a few years.

- **Transformation at NMBU – Revised Mandate (from the University Board meeting on 06.03.2025): Additional challenges currently not included in the savings needs are covering previous years' deficits for some faculties and units, as well as significant backlogs in maintenance and upgrades of buildings and infrastructure such as machinery, equipment, and ICT. Other potential cost increases and needs in special areas also come on top of this. As far as I know, this adds up to many billions of NOK (for NMBU's properties alone, the estimate is between 4 and 5 billion NOK). How do you plan to address these additional challenges?**

- This is, of course, a **major challenge**, and we must first address the short-term financial issues and ensure that we regain **economic flexibility** to allow for setting aside funds for maintenance and upgrades of our properties. Next, we need to look into the **possibility of divesting/selling property**, something that has already started. Property use is both costly and unsustainable, and the NMBU Board has defined **goals for space efficiency**, as expressed in the campus plan. We must revisit the campus plan to find **new ways to reduce costs and space usage**. In the past, NMBU has received funding for building upgrades through **"outside the budget" allocations** in the revised national budget. For example, this enabled the renovation of the historic Urbygningen a few years ago. We must, of course, **continue our efforts and political advocacy** to secure more such projects.

Together with the new University Director, we will enter into a close dialogue with the **Director of Properties** to make well-considered priorities in this area.