

PRESENTATION

The Report “*Socio-economic Impacts of Catalan Public Universities and Research, Development and Innovation in Catalonia*” uses various quantitative and qualitative indicators to analyse the contribution these institutions and knowledge networks make to the country’s wealth. In keeping with our commitment to transparency and accountability, ACUP strives to provide an analysis of our university and research system in a way that is both accessible and understandable to everyone.

This is merely a first step, and constitutes the foundation stone in a process that aims to build as accurate a picture as possible of the benefits of having a cutting-edge university and public research system. In this study, we focus on the social and economic benefits, but the numerous advantages for society go far beyond this. To ensure future well-being, we need data which highlights university policies in need of improvement and those which need strengthening.

ACUP already has a distinguished track record of published studies with a finger on the pulse of the Catalan public university system. These include *Indicators of Research and Innovation in Catalan Public Universities* and *Indicators of Training and Teaching*. This report, as in the case of previous studies, is a *work in progress*. Each new edition means improving how indicators are adjusted and implemented, as well as looking for the best way to draw conclusions.

Our aim is to improve how indicators are collected and analysed in order to draw up an even better next edition. A lot of work still lies ahead, particularly in expanding the area of evaluation involving universities, as well as innovation and research agents. Therefore, the various authors of the report propose indicators for both the quantitative and the qualitative data which need to be assessed for inclusion.

In this first approach, at a summary level the *Report* finds that Catalan public universities contribute 1.4% of GDP to the Catalan economy, and generate close to 45,000 full-time jobs. If we incorporate data from the public research system, the contribution to Catalan GDP rises to 1.7%, with over 60,000 jobs generated. This balance is noteworthy, but only a fraction of what universities and research centres return to society.

Year by year, image by image, we can carefully build up a picture of the entire knowledge system in our country. Then we will be able to see that the demands for better university funding, and the response to this, are small in comparison to the enormous positive impact the university system has on the economy and on society. In this regard, any ideas for improvement are warmly welcomed.

Jaume Casals

President of the Catalan Association of Public Universities