

Academic Leadership Journey

Brilliant scientists. Bold, human leadership.

Science thru Colours - an immersive leadership journey exclusively for professors

Academic excellence may earn you a chair. It does not automatically prepare you to lead people, shape a culture or navigate the complexity around your research. Built on years of work in universities and research institutes, this journey helps professors lead with greater clarity, courage and impact - without losing what makes them uniquely themselves.

The leadership questions we explore

What is your leadership story?

- Understand the preferences, strengths, blind spots and triggers that shape how you lead
- Read other people more accurately and broaden the range of colleagues you can work with
- Articulate the difference you want to make - and let that purpose guide your choices

How do you make conversations move?

- Respond with intention instead of reacting on impulse
- Combine candour with respect: clear, direct and never unnecessarily cautious
- Recognise unhelpful interaction patterns and change the conversation while it is happening
- Set expectations, give feedback and address tension before it becomes conflict

How do you turn ambition into ownership and action?

- Choose consciously when to manage, coach, lead or create
- Delegate responsibility without simply redistributing tasks
- Create the conditions in which people take initiative and make sound decisions
- Connect everyday work to the scientific contribution your group wants to make
- Claim your leadership mandate - whether or not hierarchy gives it to you

How do you challenge people and help them thrive?

- Recognise your default leadership style and expand beyond it
- Adjust challenge, support and autonomy to what each colleague needs
- Build an environment where highly skilled professionals can grow - even beyond you
- Coach people whose expertise may exceed your own, while strengthening motivation and commitment

How do you build a team that does not depend on you?

- Create continuity in research groups where people, priorities and funding keep changing
- Unite the team around a purpose that is clear enough to guide choices
- Distribute trust, ownership and leadership across the group
- Put in place just enough structure - and make direct, respectful dialogue the norm

How do you lead beyond your own research group?

- Navigate organisational dynamics without losing your integrity
- Build common ground across interests, disciplines and institutional boundaries
- Strengthen the relationships and networks that make collaboration possible
- Make your expertise and contribution visible - with purpose, not self-promotion

A journey designed to make learning stick

Your real work is the curriculum

No generic leadership course. We select a small number of powerful frameworks and immediately put them to work on the situations that matter to you: your team, your conversations, your dilemmas and your ambitions.

Before the residential programme, an individual intake gives you space to clarify what you want to change and which recurring situations deserve attention.

Your cases shape the conversations, exercises and experiments throughout the four days. The result is learning that feels relevant from the first hour - and can be applied the moment you return.

Six to eight weeks later, an individual integration conversation helps you turn insight into personal leadership practices that last.

A discreet peer group across universities and disciplines

Being among professors only changes the depth of the conversation. Participants recognise the responsibility, ambiguity and pressure behind each other's cases. Different universities and disciplines bring fresh perspectives, while the confidential setting makes room for unusually honest exchange.

Four immersive days - and the space to think differently

From 2 to 5 February 2027, you step away from the constant pull of academic life. The residential setting creates rare continuity: time to slow down, test new behaviour, learn from peers and let insights deepen in the conversations between sessions.

Carefrontation: support that does not avoid the difficult questions

We create enough trust for genuine exploration - and enough challenge for movement. We act as a mirror, name what may remain unseen and offer practical tools to widen your choices. The aim is not to turn you into someone else, but to help you become more deliberate, versatile and effective as a leader.

Practical information

Participants

A carefully composed group of **10 to 16 professors**. The programme is conducted in **English**.

Venue



Open Huis in Staden, near Roeselare in West Flanders: a quiet, characterful sheep farm devoted to ancient and rare breeds. Its indoor spaces and garden invite both focused group work and personal reflection.

Dates

2-5 February 2027. Individual intakes take place in December 2026 and January 2027; integration conversations follow six to eight weeks after the programme.

Investment (excl. VAT)

- **€1,600** for the four-day programme, individual intake, integration conversation and all learning materials
- **Early-bird fee: €1,450 when registering by 30 November 2026**
- Approximately **€600** for accommodation and catering

Registrations

Ready to give your leadership the same attention as your science? Contact **Herwig Deconinck** at **herwig@truecolours.be** or **+32 (0) 498 11 26 50** to reserve your place or explore whether this journey is right for you.

