

PRESS RELEASE

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HEC Paris, NAOS and Heart Leadership University announce the creation of the NAOS Lab for Leadership to rethink leadership in a world facing profound change

- HEC Paris, NAOS (the founding company of Bioderma, Institut Esthederm and Etat Pur) and the educational and scientific non-profit organization Heart Leadership University **announce the launch of the NAOS Lab for Leadership.**
- Backed by financial support from the Jean-Noël Thorel Foundation totalling **€4 million over three years**, this new laboratory aims **to become a European benchmark for fostering leadership that meets the challenges of our time.**
- The NAOS Lab for Leadership will be dedicated to **research, pedagogical innovation and the dissemination of new leadership practices and frameworks** tailored to economic, technological, ecological and geopolitical shifts.

Rethinking Leadership in a Changing World

The laboratory aims to foster the development of leadership frameworks and practices for the 21st century. The major challenges of exceeding planetary boundaries, increasing inequalities and the meteoric rise of artificial intelligence

raise profound questions about the future of our economies and our humanity, as well as the way we make decisions, govern institutions and train future leaders.

The NAOS Lab for Leadership bridges academic research, trend forecasting and pedagogical innovation. Its goal is to bring to light, study and equip a form of “lucid leadership” rooted in intuition, empathy, courage, critical awareness and discernment in the face of complexity and uncertainty.

“As part of its New Responsibilities strategy, HEC Paris aims to help redefine the very essence of leadership training by balancing academic rigour with transformative practices and societal impact. It is now essential to reconcile academic excellence with leadership based on intuition and empathy,” notes Eloïc Peyrache, Director General and Dean of HEC Paris.

“The crises currently unfolding across our world cannot be solved by the same leadership models that helped create them. In response to the unchecked, limitless expansion of artificial intelligence, I have chosen to transfer all shares of NAOS to the Jean-Noël Thorel Foundation, a philanthropic entity dedicated primarily to unlocking human potential. By establishing the NAOS Lab for Leadership, we aim to cultivate a new generation of leaders guided by emotional intelligence. I am profoundly convinced that this will offer immense value to those who undergo this training, and to recruiters seeking leaders with the courage to follow their hearts and challenge today’s economic models and power structures,” explains Jean-Noël Thorel, entrepreneur and founder of NAOS.

A Lab at HEC to Structure Teaching, Research and Outreach

The NAOS Lab for Leadership will be under the academic direction of Professor [Brad Harris](#), Associate Dean of MBA Programs at HEC Paris. Through an approach that bridges academic rigour, experimentation and practical application, the NAOS Lab for Leadership is part of an action-research and trend-forecasting

initiative. It will draw on the expertise of the HEC Paris faculty, Heart Leadership University, business leaders, experts and committed partners.

The Lab will structure its activities around three pillars:

1. Research

- Producing and sharing research on emerging leadership models, identifying the skills and profiles that are both vital and sought-after in tomorrow's world
- Exploring the roles of intuition, courage, and empathy in decision-making, specifically within an AI-driven landscape
- Examining the intersection of leadership, artificial intelligence, governance and organisational change
- Modernising the leadership frameworks used by businesses and recruiters

2. Education

The NAOS Lab will develop a range of flagship pedagogical initiatives:

- Designing and launching a bespoke certificate program
- Embedding "Intuition & Leadership" modules into existing curricula, including the Executive MBA and other degree-awarding programs
- Developing innovative educational formats that are immersive, hands-on and transformative

3. Influence

- Deploying assessment tools and studies designed to decode the complexities of contemporary leadership
- Disseminating research and frameworks to corporations, senior executives and the wider academic community

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About HEC Paris

Founded in 1881 by the Paris Chamber of Commerce, which remains its majority shareholder alongside the HEC Foundation, HEC Paris is a leading European business school with the ambition to make a positive impact on both business and society. Its mission is driven by a unique “Think, Teach, Act” approach, aimed at fostering a more inclusive, sustainable and prosperous world.

With 167 research professors from around the globe, HEC Paris produces and shares cutting-edge knowledge with over 5,000 students from more than 130 countries. Its campus serves as a true laboratory of innovation and dialogue, fully engaged with the world’s diversity and global challenges. Guided by its five founding values—Excellence, Curiosity, Entrepreneurial Spirit, Diversity and Responsibility—HEC Paris offers a comprehensive portfolio of programs designed for tomorrow’s leaders: Bachelor’s, Grande École, Specialized Masters, MSc, Summer School, MBA, Executive MBA, TRIUM Global Executive MBA, PhD and a wide range of executive education programs for managers and senior leaders.

About NAOS

Inspired by life and driven by the heart, NAOS—the founding company of BIODERMA, INSTITUT ESTHEDERM and ETAT PUR—is owned by a non-profit endowment fund dedicated to unlocking human potential.

By creating this philanthropic entity, Jean-Noël Thorel chose to separate capital ownership from decision-making power, shielding NAOS from the financial pressures of shareholders. This move has made research independent of the business itself, allowing it to continue pioneering new paths in human care. By divesting himself and donating all his shares, Thorel sought to propose a new corporate model designed to foster the conditions for change.

As an Organisation with an Altruistic Purpose, NAOS places the PERSON (heart, body and mind) at the centre of every decision: from fostering the growth of its 3,600 employees and the design and development of products (useful innovations), to the unique bond shared with over 150,000 healthcare professionals. www.naos.com

About Heart Leadership University (HLU)

Heart Leadership University (HLU) is a non-profit organization with a dedicated educational and scientific mission. Founded in 2021 and supported by the Jean-Noël Thorel Foundation, its mission is to shed light on global challenges and empower leaders to act with impact, alignment and lucidity in the face of uncertainty. HLU achieves this by developing a leadership discipline that harnesses intuition, empathy and courage in strategic decision-making. HLU operates through educational programs, research initiatives and the dissemination of resources.

www.heartleadershipuniversity.org