

University Council
Plenary Meeting - November 3rd, 2020
Third Meeting - Second Cycle

Present in the Meeting: Ana Uribe Sandoval, Ben Bode, Ferry Blom, John Piarelal, John van Wel, Natascha Kraal, Sebastiaan Kamp, Albert Wagelmans, Yogi Hendlin, Afrodita Dobрева, Armand Gozé, Bram Hessen, Diederik Mosch, Jasper Klasen, Joep Schoenmakers, Luca Kriese, Philip van Moll, Wouter van Dam, Younes Assou, Hans van den Berg, Anne Zijleman, Helen Gubby, Dian van Toor, Bianca Jadoenath

Absent in the Meeting: Olaf Hornes, Marjan Gorgievski.

Guests: Elmer Smaling

Teams Meeting

Time: 14:00

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1 Setting of the Agenda

The agenda was set.

2 Setting of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Two points have been edited in the minutes. Firstly, further legal argumentation was added to the paragraph on the proposal for personalizing the minutes. And secondly, the phrasing for the Action Plan Student Wellbeing was slightly changed to adhere closely to the timeline understanding of the taskforce.

3 Chair Announcements

- *Role of Secretariat and Guests in Plenary Meetings.*

Some questions about the role of the secretariat and guests in plenary meetings arose during the Presidium. In summary, the Chair has the right to give the floor to guests, visitors, or members wanting to voice their opinion. This right is at the discretion of the Chair. Last year, for instance, Erasmus Pride visited one of the plenary meetings. The Chair gave them the floor during this meeting.

Furthermore, the Chair has the task of arranging the procedure in meetings, ensuring the council exercises its rights and has organized discussions with the EB. It is important to remember that the Chair is an independent entity. He can give unsolicited advice, which is mainly directed to help with the decision making of the council. The Chair also advises the EB on how to approach a topic for its introduction in the council. The same occurs with the Clerks, who can give unsolicited advice for certain decisions. In the same way, the HoKa Clerk can give unsolicited advice regarding HoKa. Whenever the Market and Communications (M&C) officer is hired, they can also give their advice on matters of M&C. Again, the secretariat can give unsolicited advice, but it is up to the council to take this into consideration or not.

- *New EB Member*

Tomorrow the Supervisory Board will make an announcement about the new EB member.

- *Extra trainings and events*

The chair is deeply grateful to the whole council for their presence in the extra trainings and fun activities scheduled in the last two weeks.

4 Presidium Announcements

- Bram has replaced Olaf in the presidium as student representative.
- The agenda for the next cycle is quite busy. Because of practical matters, some topics have been delayed to later cycles. The ventilation of the EUR buildings, as well as the UC seat ISS students are long term topics. One of the members asked for ways of making the decision in what comes in the agenda more collective and transparent. For instance, members could make a priority list in Teams for the selection of topics.
- The App Group Incidents' topic will be discussed in the upcoming cycle. The introduction of what is expected from this topic will come next week.

5 UC Announcements

- Machteld, and the secretariat, are requesting UC members to forward the invites of their taskforce meetings to the UC email. This request emerged for the secretariat to have a better overview of the scheduling of the members' meeting. Hence, the secretariat would be more effective in programming meetings in the calendar that do not disrupt other appointments.
- The Finance Taskforce received the Covid-19 effects' report. This is a 23-page report with the financial effects of Covid-19 in the University. Next Monday, the Finance Taskforce will

discuss this report with Pieter Jellema. Furthermore, the budget plan will be received on Tuesday, 17th of November. The Finance Taskforce will have enough time to prepare two discussions with Pieter Jellema on the budget. Hopefully, this topic will be finalized in the third UC cycle, and will be discussed with the EB on the 8th of December. **Members can be included in this meeting by sending an email to the members of the taskforce.** Wouter already requested to be included in the Budget analysis.

- A member raised a question on the consent for the whole budget. They want to know if consenting on the University's budget means to consent on the HoKa budget. Another member pointed out that these are different money streams, and that this is probably not the case. However, this question will be posed to the EB in a separate HoKa meeting.
- A member requested the inclusion of the Agenda and Minutes of the Plenary Meetings to the Teams' environment. **The secretariat will see the possibilities of including the documentation on this platform.**

6 Covid-19 Taskforce

The Covid-19 Taskforce is working on three letters to send to the EB, so that they could be discussed extensively with them in the future. The letters are aimed at putting some pressure on the EB's response to Covid-19. The letters will request a "hopeful" deadline of response from the EB, and they will also be mentioned in the Presidium meetings with the EB.

- *First Letter*

The first letter, which is a draft, has been sent to the EB. This letter addresses three topics: a BSA reduction to 45 credits, and extra-round of resits for third-year students, and the use of a pass/fail system for examinations.

Some members had concerns about the drafting of this letter. The points of the letter brought a discussion on the permanent or temporary nature of the proposal for a BSA reduction. This topic is being discussed in the Ministry at the moment, and a lot of opinions differ on the matter. Furthermore, there are questions on the relation between Covid-19 and a pass/fail systems. It was explained that this system is already incorporated in some schools, such as ESPhil, and that it helps with reducing stress for students. Additionally, it was clarified that the EB cannot force this system on the schools, but it would be a good idea if they recommend its use.

Considering the different opinions about this letter, **the UC members were invited to email their concerns to the Covid-19 Taskforce before next week Thursday at 12:00 noon**, so that the letter can be adjusted accordingly and discussed in the next plenary meeting. The idea is that the final version is send next week Tuesday to the EB.

- *Second Letter*

This letter aims to address the physical education on campus and the priority choices for spaces on campus. The taskforce believes that the priority order should be as follows: (i) exams, (ii) physical spots for studying, (iii) lecture facilities. This letter is being drafted and has not been sent.

- *Third Letter*

This letter will aim to address the use of proctoring exams. The taskforce believes that proctoring should only be used as a last resource. This point will also be discussed in the next meeting.

7 BBR-EUR 2021

There were some questions on the topic from Joep and Sebastiaan. In the last two working days, they have received answers about it. However, these answers require further clarifications. There is not enough information on this point at the moment. For instance, there is unclarity on the procedure for personal data processing, as it is not practically feasible as stated. Furthermore, it is unclear how the termination of contracts or the procedure of immediately firing someone work.

Besides the unclarity of certain points, the document has substantive errors. As it is at the moment, the taskforce explains that this document should not be consented. The vote for consent should come after sufficient answers are provided. An extension on the consent may be requested otherwise. This point will be mentioned to the EB in the consultation meeting.

Joep and Sebastiaan will share the questions and answers or the email exchange about the questions with the rest of the council in Teams & Planner.

8 Appointment Deans Procedure

To summarize, the taskforce working on this topic approached all Faculty Councils and Deans for feedback on the new appointment procedure. Seven faculties gave their input. The taskforce took into consideration all of these perspectives and met with the policy maker from HR to convey them. The replies from the HR officer were quite simple. HR asked that the UC provides them with a letter explaining the main issues of the new procedure, and solutions to the issues. Hence, this letter is being drafted at the moment. The letter will be discussed in the next plenary meeting.

Some of the points of advice include more clarifications in what a “faculty community” is. Additionally, it has been pointed out that there’s limited representation of students and staff from lower-hierarchical positions in the appointment of deans. Furthermore, it seems that the FCs are contacted after the decisions are made when re-appointing a Dean, instead of before. Therefore, the positioning of FCs in the re-appointment of a dean is unclear.

The HR officer explained that the policy needs to be open and flexible so that it can be feasibly executed. Although the UC agrees on this, the taskforce believes that the appointment is way too flexible at the moment and that more clarity is still needed.

In summary, the appointment procedure has some remarkable gaps, and it is considered to be very incomplete.

9 Blended Working

The taskforce met with the policy makers and had a very effective meeting. At the beginning, the framing of the policy was quite negative, and many things were to be improved. Both EUROPA and the UC gave their input. The latest version of the policy was updated on October 28th, and was shared in the Planner. The taskforce is very content with this latest version, and just some minor comments on the phrasing of points are to be addressed. The taskforce has advised the council to give a positive advise on this new policy.

10 Report Ombudsperson EUR

There were a lot of questions about the report. The ombudsperson will reply by email for the extra-questions that UC members sent to her. Somewhere in mid-november, an extra meeting of 1 or 1.5 hours will be arranged with the ombudsperson. This meeting will be outside of the formal meetings of the UC. Hence, it is not a mandatory meeting.

Some questions will be asked to the CvB regarding the position of the ombudsperson during the consultation meeting.

11 HoKa Investments Report September

The report is clear for the entire council. There was only one question about the fact that the report expressed an impact of Covid-19 on the 2019 budget. This was unclear, as Covid-19 only started to have an impact at the university during the Spring of 2020. However, some HoKa projects started in 2019 and lasted until 2020. These projects, with a budgeting dating back to 2019, were affected by Covid-19 and were therefore included in the affected budget. After this clarification, there were no more further questions on the matter.

12 HoKa Student Wellbeing

The HoKa Workgroup members involved with Student Wellbeing have been analyzing the topic from both a content and a procedural perspective. They have been enquiring about how the procedure for advising and consenting this project has worked historically from a UC perspective. The Workgroup members explain that before moving on to in-depth content discussions about the theme, they need to be certain about the steps that have been made up until now. Fully understanding the background of this topic is taking some effort. This Thursday, two Workgroup members will have a meeting with the legal department, the HoKa Coordinator, the Chair of the UC, and the Rector of the University to clarify the historical and current legal background of the topic. This topic is taking more time than previously expected to be discussed for consent with all UC members. The EB is aware of this, and they are understanding about it.

On the matters of content, the Action Plan of Implementation for Wellbeing includes five projects: (i) student support functions and lecturers, (ii) the student living room, (iii) the R U OK out there? platform and e-helpline, (iv) a wellbeing APP, (v) and the evaluation of these projects. The Workgroup members expressed concerns over the expected outcomes in the short-term from the project. There is more emphasis on long-term effects over short-term results. Additionally, they explain that there is a lack of “demand” analysis in the APP, and they are uncertain on whether students would actually make use of this platform. Lastly, they explain that the KPIs are not qualitative enough, although there is a possibility to re-define them.

From a practical point of view, the Workgroup members expressed that the document they received for the Action Plan has missing appendices. Additionally, the document presents the new budget stipulated for this plan, but it does not show the changes in comparison to the previous budget. Furthermore, because of missing elements in the document, it cannot be consented as it is. **Luca will therefore send an email to the project lead and the HoKa coordinator about these two points.**

13 Evaluation Electoral Pilot

The legal department has been asking some questions about what is being presented for the electoral system. Considering that the EB wanted to change some points about the system, they will present a proposal with the majority of the points that the UC put forward. They also had some positive feedback about the input given by the UC. This proposal will be similar to the election procedures at Leiden University. The proposal presented to the council will not include the changes in the statutes; this is because the changes of the statutes require a lot of work. Hence, if there's a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority on the council's vote, the legal department will proceed with the writing of the statutes.

The proposal will come either at the end of this week or next week, and the council will then discuss and vote on it. This will not be a final proposal, but rather a vote to see if the council would vote in favor of the plan after the drafting of the statutes.

14 Proposal Minutes

Last meeting, there was a point to personalize (de-anonymize) the minutes. The proposal included an opt-out system to the personalization. Considering that the council has had the time to think about this proposal, a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority vote took place during this meeting. Before the vote, there were some arguments for and against the proposal.

The main arguments for the proposal consisted on the point that the council has a moral and legal obligation to personalize the minutes. It was explained that this approach was not extreme in any way, as members could opt-out from this system. Additionally, confidential information would also not be personalized. This proposal is about transparency to the constituents about the ideas of the members of the council.

The main counter-arguments expressed that the point of the minutes is not to highlight individual contributions, but rather, the general decisions of the council. Anonymized minutes create a calm environment where a lot of discussion can emerge, and then the summary of the discussions can be presented. Minutes are meant for institutional memory purposes, instead of individual records. Furthermore, the minutes present a more open recount of the meetings, and personalizing them could be problematic when taking points out of context in the future.

The vote took place: 13 votes were against this proposal, 8 votes in favour, and 1 blank vote. Hence, this proposal has been rejected by the council. The proposal would have needed 14 votes in favour for a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority.

15 Action Plan Psychological Work-pressure

There will be a meeting with Roos Schelvis soon to discuss the plan. This point is therefore still in the agenda.

16 Ventilation EUR Buildings

The taskforce is asking for new documents. For now, they know that the university used the counselling of “Prime Advice”, but the advice can change. The old provisions about ventilation are probably not safe anymore due to Covid-19. They have already received a document from the Van der Goot building, but other buildings are missing.

Furthermore, there was advice given on ventilating the rooms 10 to 15 minutes at the end of each session, but it was not feasible to implement. The taskforce is receiving more updates about the matter, and will continue making announcements on it in the following meetings

A member explained that they are exploring the possibility of outdoors’ learning. This type of learning was implemented historically during pandemics to continue with education. This was considered as a nice suggestion and will be noted down for the Presidium UC/EB conversations.

17 Studying with a Disability

The officer that required help for this topic was in contact with the UC. There are no urgent matters anymore on this topic. There will be a new team for studying with a disability appointed in December. Therefore, the new team can be contacted in January.

18 Incident APP groups

This topic will be introduced next week with its expectations.

19 Incoming Documents and Letters (Safeguarding Diversity at EUR)

The point of the letter is to ask for a better complaint system. It is important to know when and where to reach when there is a problem. Considering the recent conversations with the ombudsperson, this entity could be linked to the procedure.

The letter does not include procedures in place for sensitivity training for diversity, which is needed. Furthermore, it was said in the letter that all schools have diversity officers, but in reality this is not true. Additionally, the officers are hired for just .1 or .05 FTEs. The letter says that they are working on diversity in managerial positions, but there’s a long way to go for equality in this rubric. Perhaps it would be ideal to go back to the conversation about quotas, even though this seems like a rigid system. Other points, such as neurodiversity in studying, need to be considered in this reply.

Ana, with the help of Jonh (W), Yogi, and Afrodita will draft a letter to respond to all of these points.

20 Any other Business

- *Urgent Request RSM HoKa Committee*

A UC member was contacted by the RSM HoKa Committee with an urgent request. The Committee submitted a budget for 2021 with a top-up due to the increase of students. However, they want to stress for a sense of urgency and transparency to the Corporate Planning and Control team. Hence, this topic will be mentioned to the EB to see if they can intervene to aid the RSM HoKa Committee.

- *Position of the EB in the personalized minutes*

A UC member explained that they wanted to know how the EB perceived the personalization of the minutes. This member expressed that they are concerned about the notion that some fellow colleagues voted against the proposal due to the fear of backlash in their personalized comments. Some other members expressed that they do not believe the votes against the proposal were based on this fear, and rejected the idea of bringing this point to the EB. Finally, another member expressed more concerns on the topic of backlash from personalized comments, and they consider that this point has been raised more than once in previous UC plenary discussions.

- *Wellbeing Week*

A UC student member explained how the Student Wellbeing Week has started, yet only a few students are joining. This member expressed that they would have liked to join this event, however, the heavy loads of education at the university do not allow them to do so. This is very contrary to the intentions of this event, as it is meant for students to improve their mental health and lower their stress levels. This point was raised in order to reflect on the high levels of workload that are put for students at the university.

- *UC Statement on Academic Freedom*

Considering the recent events happening in France regarding violence against a teacher, a member of the council wanted to enquire if it is possible to send a public message on behalf of the UC standing alongside academic freedom. Due to the limited amount of time to discuss at the plenary meeting, it was decided that **Philip drafted a message about it in the Teams platform about this subject**. The message will be discussed among UC members in this chat.

- *Extra Study Spaces - Municipality of Rotterdam*

The University has been in contact with the Municipality of Rotterdam to find off-campus spaces for working groups, lecture halls, and exam spaces during the pandemic. A member of the UC explained that they would like to hear from the EB about any updates on the matter. This point will be brought forward during the consultation meeting with the EB.