

Consultation Meeting
University Council – Executive Board
Erasmus University
February 2nd, 2021

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 Heesen, Jasper Klasen, Joep Schoenmakers, Luca Kriese, Philip van Moll, Wouter van Dam, Younes Assou, Hans van den Berg, Helen Gubby, Dian van Toor, Bianca Jadoenath, Marjan Gorgievski, Ed Brinksma, Frank van der Duijn Schouten, Ellen van Schoten, Ann O'Brien, Lobke van Steenberg.

Absent in the Meeting: Olaf Hornes, Diederik Mosch.

Teams Meeting: 16:30

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01.01 Setting of the agenda

Two points were added to Any Other Business. These points are: the reservation time for the EUR library, and the sustainability awards.

01.02 Setting of the minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were set.

01.03 Announcements

During the Plenary meeting, the UC had a poll on the procedures to follow in the meetings between the UC's Presidium and the EB about the COVID-19 situation. The Presidium will continue as the main discussion partner of the EB in this matter. The Presidium will look into ways to communicate the content of these discussions to the rest of the council in an efficient way.

02 Agenda items consultation meeting

02.01 ICT rules and regulations

The ICT Rules and Regulations are currently being discussed by EUROPA. The UC wants to wait for the comments of EUROPA before issuing a letter with the decision of the council regarding consent. At the moment, the UC feels positively about these rules.

02.02 Recruitment and selection toolkit

The UC is happy with the information received on this point. There are no further questions.

02.03 Opening Academic Years 2021-2022 up and including 2031-2032

The UC has been discussing the topic of the Opening of the Academic Year and the inclusion of the White Week in the university's schedule. After sitting with the policy maker on this topic, it is clear that the White Week policy has been discontinued. The idea was that in the White Week, faculties would be asked to eliminate compulsory education and make diverse activities, including student-Wellbeing related ones. The UC sees value in accommodating a week for these activities. At the same time, the UC acknowledges that it is difficult to promote such a week with diverse schedules in different schools.

The EB considers this issue relevant. Yet, they want to see the letter that the UC will send on this topic to make an assessment. This letter includes the possible establishment of White Weeks per faculty. The EB believes that harmonization in all schools' schedules would bring great results for the educational experience at EUR.

02.04 Proposal Community for Learning and Innovation

The team of the Community for Learning and Innovation (CLI) was present in the last Plenary meeting of the UC to discuss its budget. Some questions were sent directly to CLI, yet there's a question to clarify with the EB: The UC should have the right of consent to the Study Advanced Funds. However, the UC was not asked for consent in the use of the Study Advanced Funds for Proctored exams. *Should the UC have been asked to consent about use of these funds retroactively?*

The EB explained that the decision on giving the money for CLI for proctored exams was taken because of operational matters. The budget was available, the UC had previously agreed on the main pillars of the budget for CLI, and there was a great necessity to invest immediately in enlarging the university's capacity to make proctored exams. Furthermore, the EB explained that the investment was below the benchmark that requires further approval

(which is one million euros, and the investment in proctored exams by CLI was approximately 950,000 euros). In theory, the UC does have consent on these funds, but the EB wants to move forward with this topic. The decision taken was a practical one. Furthermore, the EB explained that the different schools need to pay the follow-up costs of proctoring exams after the initial investment of CLI.

Members of the UC responded by saying that the budget used comes very close to one million. Additionally, it corresponds to a large percentage of the CLI's budget.

Another question rose regarding the use of the Study Allocation Funds for proctored exams. The Study Allocation Funds are meant for initial investments and not for operational expenses. Is paying for the proctored exams an investment or an operational expense? The EB explains that as CLI had to introduce the tools for proctored exams, it can be seen as an investment. However, this point will be revised later.

To conclude, the UC said that they will send a letter inquiring about this topic. The UC will also take a closer look at it through its task force on finances.

Action Points: The UC will send a letter inquiring about the consent of Study Advance Funds in regards to proctored exams and CLI. The EB will revise whether the CLI allocation of funds for proctored exams count as an investment in the light of the Study Advance Funds.

02.05 Compensation UC work

In reviewing the amount of work in the last two years, there are questions in the UC on whether the compensation is sufficient for its members. There's a task force looking at how much time members are spending on their Council duties. The EB takes this point seriously. A conversation on this point will follow between the UC and René Karens.

02.06 Decision on BSA by EB

The UC is drafting a letter to enquire regarding the BSA at EUR in the long term (excluding COVID-19 times). The EB will receive this letter soon.

02.07 Student Associations' Allocation Model and Person of Contact

The taskforce working on this topic has been in discussions with student organizations. They want to help these organizations in working with students at EUR. One of the tools to do so is to appoint a person of contact dedicated to student organizations. At this moment, there are three people from E&S working with student organizations, but the current structure is fragmented, and these workers have other duties. Last year, a letter was sent to the EB recommending the creation of this position, but no response was given on the matter. Would the EB be open to creating such a position?

The EB explained that a letter was drafted last year to create the position of a person of contact for study associations, but it was not sent. The EB is willing to look at the possibility of creating this position, and they will come back to the UC on the topic very soon. Furthermore, the EB says they will need help from the UC to have better contact with study organizations and how to best strategize in the communication with student organizations.

-02.08 Corona/ COVID-19 affairs:

Alternatives to proctoring & 2nd camera

General point of view of the UC on the use of proctored exams and the second camera.

The UC believes that proctored exams should be avoided as much as possible. They acknowledge that proctored exams are needed for some examinations, but calls the EB to look for alternatives when possible. Nevertheless, the UC sees a lot of problems with the introduction of a second camera in proctored exams. The main problems are related to practical and technical issues, as well as mental stress and anxiety as a result of this decision. Hence, the UC asked several questions to the EB regarding this decision:

- *Is this decision proportional to the issues that arise without the second camera in proctored examinations?*

The EB agrees that proctored exams should only be used as a last resource. However, they see a large threat to the validity of exams if the second camera is not implemented, as the system with one camera can be hacked. As they are aware of a possible hack, they think that the best decision is to put the validity of exams as a priority. The second camera was introduced in the form of a pilot in two schools. There were some issues with it, but it was feasible to implement it. As of now, only one faculty (ESL) has requested to postpone the use of a second camera by a week. The reason is the fact that they have to make two exams for large cohorts of more than a thousand students and they want to get more familiar with the system.

- *Can the UC get results from the pilot that the EB made on the second camera? The UC has information that TU Delft made a pilot with a similar system and then decided to opt for an alternative that did not include a second camera.*

The feedback that has been given as of now regarding the second camera is mainly regarding the stress of students. However, they have also heard from schools that this system could be acceptable. They want to reduce the number of examinations with proctored exams, and alternative examinations are welcomed. If the UC has any suggestions of an alternative technical tool to the second camera, the EB will consider these.

- *Considering that the EB believes they cannot safeguard the validity of diplomas without the use of a second camera, would the EB discredit the validity of other universities' diplomas, such as Leiden and Delft?*

The decision of implementing a second camera comes from EUR's own responsibility. The EB does not believe that because other universities are not implementing this measure, EUR should not do it. Furthermore, the board believes that this is the right step as the possibilities of fraud without the second camera are real. If they neglect the possibilities of fraud, there could be major consequences about it in the future.

- *How will the EB provide a camera or smartphone to students that do not have one?*

The EB does not believe it is their responsibility to provide a second camera for students. However, they do offer to all students with special circumstances the opportunity to come to campus to take their exam. Special considerations and options will be studied for these students.

- *Is the EB open to the use of other software that does not require a second camera?*

The EB is open to look into alternative software options as long as they don't present this issue. However, it is their understanding that the fraud is possible with all software that does not use a second camera.

- *To make the period of the second camera as short as possible, what is the EB's first priority?*

These are very uncertain times. It is not easy to answer this question as the EB does not know what the future entails.

- *Can the EB share an official statement with the reasoning behind the use of a second camera with the UC?*

Yes. This statement will be shared with the UC.

- *Other universities have made spaces available for students off-campus to take their exams. Has the EB looked into these possibilities?*

The EB will look into alternatives to other spaces in the city. However, they already tried to make a deal with the Municipality of Rotterdam for off-campus exams and studying. This deal was not possible because of the uncertainty that came with the lockdown in December.

- *It seems that we have lost track of the wellbeing of students. More than 30,000 students are impacted by the implementation of a second camera in proctored exams. It is understandable that guaranteeing the validity of diplomas is important, but this is a great burden on students. Is the EB aware of this great impact on students?*

Yes. The EB is aware of this. During this time, we are all impacted (staff, management, students, the whole community).

- *What will happen in one year's time when we look back at this decision? Is there sufficient evidence that students commit fraud without a second camera?*

The EB believes that they are taking the right decision and that the security of the diplomas in one-year time is important.

- *Could the EB picture themselves as a student having to place a camera surveilling you while trying to perform in an exam? In this case, would the EB members be against this decision?*

The EB explained that this is a difficult position. But that from their perspective as board, this decision needs to be taken.

- *ESL has postponed the implementation of the second camera for a week. Would the EB be open to postponing this decision at other faculties?*

No. This decision has been taken as a special consideration due to a request from ESL. All other schools are on board with the decision.

- *Is the EB willing to reevaluate the second camera implementation?*

No. Some schools are already on board. However, the EB is open to alternatives that tackle the issues present in proctored examinations without a second camera.

- *Would EB be willing to meet within 10 days with the UC to discuss this policy?*

Yes. In that time, more information will be available from several schools on the implementation of the second camera.

The EB concludes that they understand that it is the duty of the UC to make a point about the use of the second camera. They will be in conversations with schools, and would be in favour of finding an alternative to this measure if possible. They also want to acknowledge the importance of the wellbeing of staff members in regard to this decision.

Furthermore, the Chair of the UC concludes that there is some common ground in the discussion: all the stakeholders agree that proctoring should be taken as a last resource. Additionally, both parties agree on joining a discussion within 10 days to talk about these concerns.

A member of the UC expressed at the end of the meeting that they will look, alongside other student members, to take legal actions against the university based on privacy concerns. This statement is not representative of the UC, but rather individual actions from certain UC members.

Action Point: The EB will share an official statement with the reasoning for implementing second cameras in examinations with the UC.

03 Any other business

03.01 Tuition fee internationals

The UC will send an email to the EB inquiring about the possibility of reimbursing international students their tuition fees so that they pay the same as their EEA peers.

03.02 Travel Expenses 2019 Executive Board

A letter with questions regarding the travel expenses has been sent to the EB. The UC awaits answers from the EB on this topic.

Action Point: The EB will respond to the UC on their inquiries on the EB Travel Expenses 2019.

03.03 Library Reservation Time

This topic has been previously discussed through different channels. Yet, no changes have been made to the reservation time for spots at the EUR library.

03.04 Sustainability Awards

The sustainability taskforce of the UC wants to stimulate innovation at EUR regarding sustainability. They look forward to possibly cooperating with the EB on this topic.

04 Closing

Action Points of the Meeting

- 1. The EB will share an official statement with the reasoning for implementing second cameras in examinations with the UC.**
- 2. The UC will send a letter inquiring about the consent of Study Advance Funds in regards to proctored exams and CLI.**
- 3. The EB will revise whether the CLI allocation of funds for proctored exams count as an investment in the light of the Study Advance Funds.**
- 4. The EB will respond to the UC on their inquiries on the EB Travel Expenses 2019.**