

Minutes Consultation Meeting
University Council – Executive Board
29th June 2022

Time: 16.00 – 18.00

Location: Polak 1-17

Present in the Meeting: Ed Brinksma (Chair EB), Annelien Bredenoord (RM), Ellen van Schoten (Vicechair EB), Ann O'Brien (Secretary EB), Rosan Pittens (Support EB), Hans van den Berg (UC Chair), Sandra Constantinou Juhasz, Sebastiaan Kamp, Yusuf Balci, Friso Roos, Albert Wagelmans, John van Wel, Aleid Fokkema, Max Wagenaar, Patryk Jarmakowicz, Bianca Jadoenath, Natascha Kraal, Jasper Klasen, Timo Zandvliet, Irena Boskovic, Daemon Kregting, Cagla Altin, Lobke van Steenbergen (clerk UC), Oriana Morales Hernández (minutes).

Absent in the Meeting: Nikita Schoenmaker, Robbert Rog, Pi Cheng Hu, Ernst Hulst.

Online Attendance: Emese von Bóné, Georgiana Carp, Zohra Hayat, Simo Azzarhouni.

01 Opening consultation meeting

01.01 Setting of the agenda

The Rector needs to leave earlier today. Thus, some points related to her field of expertise will be tackled earlier in the agenda.

01.02 Setting of the minutes of the previous meeting / action points

The minutes have been set.

- *In the upcoming fall period, the EB will give an update to the UC on lifelong education in relation to the elimination of HOVO.*

This point is ongoing.

- *The EB will inform the UC on the planning of the merger Rotterdams Art Institute in the next consultation meeting*

This point is on the agenda, under announcements.

- *The Executive Board will update the UC in the upcoming Consultation Meeting about the accessibility of information for students to reach for help in cases of sexual violence.*

This point will be discussed under 2.06.

- *The Executive Board will react via e-mail on the questions raised by the UC on the China Scholarship Council*

The EB has provided information about this. There will be a follow-up under AOB.

01.03 Announcements

- *UC member announcement*

Bianca Jadoenath expressed to the EB that she will no longer be a member of the UC as of next academic year, as she will take a position at the CLI.

- *Culture&Campus / Arts institute*

During this fall, there will be a meeting where the Council will have to approve the layout of the merger. At the moment, the EB is working on receiving further external advice on how to deal with the merger. There are a lot of legal technicalities that must be arranged between the institutions,

which require further work. Next week, there will be another meeting of all the parties involved. The EUR got the subsidy from Brussels for this project, which is a positive development for the University.

- *New city government of Rotterdam*

The EB recently met with the new city government of Rotterdam to continue bridging the gaps between them and the university.

- *Convergence*

The new director of the Convergence has recently started. At the moment, there are activities taking place almost every day for the Convergence. There will be a general assembly with all the parties involved in August for the refinement of the plans.

Last month, there was a meeting with the board members and participatory members of the different institutions involved in the Convergence. The UC was invited, but they received no documentation for the meeting. The Board explained that they were not aware of why the UC did not receive this documentation. This should be sent by the Convergence office. The EB explained that the format of the meeting was quite open and will check with the Convergence office why the documentation was not shared with the council.

- *Midterm Report and follow up actions: Future Education.*

The picture of the future of education received by the EB is quite promising. There are a lot of initiatives in the university, and there is a positive outlook on the different activities. There are some remarks on the report, such as how the university could have a better focus and prioritization in its academic activities. The EB expects the future of education will be aligned with the new strategy of EUR.

02 Agenda items consultation meeting

02.01 Erasmus Perspectives

The task force Finance explains that depending on the outcome of this conversation with the EB, the UC will discuss how to proceed with the consent of the Council. The UC has drafted a letter in which they shared their comments on both content and procedure-related points. The UC has not yet received information on the roadmap durability plan – ‘instellingsroutekaart duurzaamheid’. Therefore, consent could be given to the perspectives if this aspect is excluded. It is agreed that this specific part will be carried forward to the next U cycle.

A very important point for the UC is the staff-student ratio of the EUR. This is not only related to the capacity of the university, but also with the capacity of the City of Rotterdam to host students. This point is highlighted by the Council every year. The EB is aware of this issue, and the approach will depend on the new coalition of the Municipality.

Another remark from the UC is related to the increase of the LDE budget without an underlying motivation. The EB will explain this issue in writing, as this is related with financing the trainee program of the LDE. There is a trend of an increase on the budget for the LDE without a clear justification. The EB will answer this more in depth by reading. The EB explains that this is mainly because the EB is financing the trainee program.

Lastly, another remark from the UC was related to the strategy of the EUR on COVID-19. The UC asked how the EB would react in case the situation of the pandemic is extended. The board explains that the EUR is preparing itself with an extensive digitalization program that will be a part of the long-run strategy of the university. Ideally, the education could be as flexible as possible. Also, the ministry asks all universities to develop an institutional plan on how to act in different (Covid) scenario's and this plan will take form during the summer.

Action point: The EB will explain the increasing of the LDE budget in writing.

02.02 HEQA: Budget plan 2022 Student Wellbeing

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The UC is working on a draft letter to give consent to both budgets. The official consent would therefore come to the policymakers in July, even though the budgets were supposed to be consented to before the calendar year started. If the role of the UC is taken seriously, then this bureaucratic issue should be avoided in the future. Therefore, the Council expects to have the budgets submitted by December for all HEQA-related projects. The EB explained that personnel changes might have been the reason why this was delayed. Furthermore, changes in the format of the budget were involved.

02.04 Student charter 2022-2023

The UC has prepared a letter of consent for the Student Charter. The Council has a general remark regarding the Charter. As has often been indicated in several letters regarding various topics, there are many grammatical errors in the English documents. This has been a recurring issue for three years. The UC would appreciate it if documents were checked before they are sent to the Council for consent or advice. It is certainly very sloppy when a document with so many textual errors is published.

A member of the Council asked whether it is possible to reject documents if they have various grammar/legal errors. It was explained that this would be too drastic. The EB is taking note of this issue and will work on decreasing issues of language for the future.

02.05 Institutional Tuition fees 2023-2024

A task force of the UC is currently working on a letter of advice regarding this topic. The Council has some concerns on the increase of the fees. Firstly, the increase of the fees may be too high for potential students. Thus, it would be adequate to use some increase of the money to support those students that need a waiver in their tuition. Secondly, the UC hopes that the increase in fees will help to maintain the quality of education in the future. Thirdly, the Council has heard the reasons from the policymakers to increase the fees, and it appears that it is mainly due to a branding issue. Some members of the Council disagree on this being a useful or fair branding strategy.

The Board explained that they understand the reasoning behind the policymakers working on these changes of the institutional fees. They added that the reasons are not mainly a branding issue. Instead, they need the funds to maintain the quality of education. The Board, as well as E&S, are investigating ways to deal with the waiver of students that require it, as it is a complex matter. The Board also explained that the tuition fees for programs that scored low on the NSA survey will not receive an increase of tuition fees.

02.06 Lower tuition fee 2022-2023 for Ukrainian students

The tuition fees have been lowered for Ukrainian students in the upcoming academic year. The Council has two main questions regarding this action. Firstly, given that an exception has been made for the Ukrainian students, how does the EB want to proceed if this situation continues for a few more years? And secondly, how does the EB view this exception in relation to students who have (similar or other) unfortunate positions due to international disasters?

These questions were discussed within the UNL last week, but more research is needed to answer them. The Ministry has been coming along on compensating the EUR with the lowering of fees of Ukrainian students until at least the end of the academic year. The university feels that the compensation is an obligation to take considering the circumstances of these students. The responsibility of the university considering world circumstances is difficult. The EUR would like to support students from different backgrounds, but there is not enough financial means to do so. However, this question will continue to be explored with the ministry. Thus, the Board cannot answer these questions at the moment. The EB will maintain the Council updated in case there is more information coming from the ministry.

02.07 Student wellbeing

There are a lot of target groups that need to be reached for support in order to tackle issues of wellbeing (such as mental/physical disabilities, sexual harassment, legal matters). The EUR website contains information for student psychologists, student advisers, career advisers, confidentiality counsellors, and personnel for people that need help.

However, the help on the website is not enough, and the EB has been working on expanding their reachability on these sensitive matters. The EUR signed a manifesto against sexual violence. The D&I is working on a strong program to prevent sexual violence during Eureka week. The Rector explained that the reachability of support for students is better. The E&S and HR departments are working on a student counter to deal with issues of social safety on campus, to give even more opportunities for students to come forward. Furthermore, the EB is working on by-stander trainings on issues of social safety. Lastly, the Board is directly working on a plan for the accessibility of Campus, which will be shared with the UC as soon as it is ready.

Some further concerns on this topic were expressed by the UC. A member of the Council asked whether these measures could also be taken to reach staff members of the EUR. Additionally, it was expressed that student counsellors can only provide five sessions for those students that need it. If they are not helped within those five sessions, they are referred to another professional for a “severe mental illness”. Nevertheless, some students may need more sessions and not necessarily have such medical diagnosis. This can send a wrong message to students and employees looking for help. There are no answers for these concerns as of now.

The HR department met with the task force. A student counter will be formed, which will be a physical desk on campus for serving issues of student wellbeing. The idea is to open this counter for 2023. However, the specifics of the desk are not available at the moment. Furthermore, the EB expressed that they are making progress on including people with both physical and learning disabilities. They have expanded the number of student psychologists and are monitoring the situation on whether more psychologists are needed.

03 Incoming documents

There were no incoming documents in this meeting.

04 Any other business

04.01 Follow-up China scholarship

The EB explained that the policies related with this scholarship are the same as the ones with international partners. The EB will keep the UC informed in the policies related to it, and the timeline. It is a complicated subject to deal with as the EUR would like to stimulate knowledge exchange. At the same time, the University wants to keep its Erasmian values. Soon, there will be an audit on knowledge safety within the university, which is a main concern in relation to the external links of the EUR. The EB will provide an update on the matter.

Action point: The EB will provide an update on the audit on knowledge safety in autumn 2022.

04.02 Funds available for participatory bodies

The government is making more funds available to make sure that participatory bodies work properly. By law, it is necessary to have someone in charge to ensure that the compensation of these bodies makes sense. Academic affairs representative has already set a session with the UC on what are the priorities for compensation. The Council is happy with the support received in this task. The UC has observations on the compensation for participatory bodies, which will be discussed in the upcoming agenda point.

04.03 Compensation for Participatory Bodies

The UC made a proposal to different participatory bodies at the university in order to change the compensation policies at a central level. The FC of ESE did not fully agree for the proposal, and thus, the EB explained that it would not be smart to move forward. The UC has been working on this change for a long period of time. It seems unfair that many faculties have a positive outlook on the proposal, and the ESE has a veto because there is no full consensus.

The EB explained that if there is only one FC not in favour of this proposal, then the Board could have a conversation with the faculty. However, the UC explained that the problem is not from the input of the FC from ESE. Instead, the issue is that this should be a general change for the university, and a benchmark of sufficient compensation is needed across faculties. It is odd that some participatory members could have more opportunities than others, and this should not be a decentral decision.

05 Closing

Both the UC and the EB thank each other for a year of cooperation and constructive exchange in the consultation meeting. The EB thanks the current Chair of the Council for his work in the last three years and looks forward to working with the new Chair in the upcoming academic year.