

University Council
Consultation Meeting UC/EB
Erasmus University Rotterdam

Date and Time: 22/09/2022, 15:00 – 17:00h

Location: 0-12 Sanders

Present in the Meeting: **Ivonne Cune-Noten (Chair UC)**, Prof. dr. H. Brinksma (Chair EB), Ellen van Schoten (VP EB), Prof. dr. A. L. Bredenoord (Rector, EB), Sandra Constantinou Juhasz, Sebastiaan Kamp, Max Wagenaar, Nikita Schoenmaker, Jaap Cornelese, Natascha Kraal, Patryk Jarmakowicz, Ernst Hulst, Simo Azzarhouni, Irena Boskovic, Emese von Bóné, Tom van Dijken, Erin van Gestel, Luuk van Tol, Nawin Ramcharan, Veerle Bakker, Erasmus Magazine, Lobke van Steenberg (Clerk UC), Ellie Cercel (Minutes UC).

Digital: Cagla Altin, Georgiana Carp, Rosan Pittens (Secretary EB), Farand Laghaei (Head of department Administrative Affairs).

Absent: Friso Roos, Aleid Fokkema, Albert Wagelmans, Wincey Randoe, Wesley Hennep.

01 Opening

01.01 Setting of the agenda

No adjustments were made to the existing agenda. The agenda was set.

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

The Executive Board will report on lifelong education in relation to the elimination of HOVO and on the audit on knowledge safety in October/November. Therefore, these topics are tabled for the next Consultation Meeting in November. The minutes were set.

01.03 Announcements

- Convergence

There was a meeting with the Convergence board members in August which resulted in a positive evaluation regarding the first two years of the Convergence. The board members wish to continue and intensify the actions of the Convergence. Therefore, it was decided that the budget for the Convergence is increased with *5 million*. The EB is maintaining transparency about this and will give more information.

- Culture Campus and Arts Institute

The EB presented the Culture Campus, which joins Erasmus University, Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences, Willem de Kooning Academie, and Codarts Rotterdam in order to promote the arts. The Campus will open in Rotterdam South, and it will contribute to the social and economic development of the areas as well.

- Midterm strategy

The Ministry of Education created a COVID sector plan, that all universities should fill in / further develop for themselves. The framework contains three scenarios of danger regarding the virus spread (green = low danger, yellow = medium danger, red = high danger). Because of the

framework, there is consistency in policies of all Dutch Universities. The EB was asked by the Ministry to create a strategy based on this framework. This EUR COVID sector plan has been set by the EB and will be on the agenda of the next UC-cycle. The EB is willing to make necessary changes to the plan, based on the advice of the UC.

02 Agenda items CM

02.01 Erasmus Perspectives 2023-2026 (Roadmap durability) – right of consent main elements of the budget

The UC discussed the following topics with the EB: 1) sustainability goals (in general), 2) additional 20 million (roadmap specifically), 3) risk analyses (roadmap specifically).

The UC thinks that the goals set concerning the CO₂ reduction are not realistic considering the current progress. Specifically, the UC is concerned there will be financial consequences due to delays and obstacles in achieving this goal, such as increasing energy costs, and the labour market inflation. The members requested more information from the EB. The EB highlighted that the energy transition plans are a requirement and have been approved, thus no changes to the current goals will be made. However, the EB explained they are prepared to overcome the mentioned difficulties. For example, there is a set budget of 20 million within the investment plan, which allows the EB to adjust (i.e., due to obstacles) during the transition to these goals. The EB further explains that, in case the specific budget (i.e., 20 million) is not sufficient, more funds from the larger investment budget (i.e., 200 million) will be made available to compensate for the obstacles, in the detriment of other areas.

In a previous plenary meeting, it was not clear to the UC what the amount of money the UC was asked to consent with. A separate meeting with the policy makers was set where this was explained to the UC.

The UC would like more transparency concerning these strategies and wishes to see the risk assessment plan. The EB took note of this concern.

03 Any other business

03.01 Ceremony opening of the Academic Year 2022-2023

The UC mentioned there were a few things that in their view went wrong or were different during the ceremony of the opening of the academic year.

Firstly, the official opening was done by the Chair instead of the Rector Magnificus. If the Chair replaces the Rector in the opening the Chain of Office is supposed to be worn. The Chair responded that he was not made aware of these conventions although he was researching them as well. He wishes to look into them further for the future.

Secondly, the academic hymns were not properly aligned with cortege entry, the professors were not mentioned as customary in the official welcome, and the exit ceremony was neglected. The Chair took note of these remarks and explained them as products of technical difficulties or changes due to COVID regulations.

The EB will keep the concerns of the UC in mind for future opening ceremonies.

03.02 Update sector plans

The EB gave an update on the state of affairs regarding the sector plan. This topic was discussed before the summer.

The University obtained an increase of 50 million euros every year, as of last year, as part of the Coalition agreement. The EB decided to divide the funds in 3 instruments: 1) starting grand, 2) incentive grand, 3) sector plans.

The starting grand takes a total of 20 million euros. It states that every new assistant professor (i.e., starting work in 2022) can get a starting grant valued up to 300.000 euros. Depending on the most benefiting situation, the receiving professor may decide how to divide this amount, e.g., by appointing a PhD student, or by forming a research team.

The incentive grand is divided into departments or groups with the highest workload. The decision on the rules of engagement of dividing this amount is for the deans of faculties, and applicable from *2022 onwards*.

The sector plans are structural investments into academic research within university sectors in the Netherlands: SSH (i.e., social sciences, humanities, welfare, wellbeing, and digitalisation) and STEM (i.e., medical plans). Although at the moment the rules and conditions regarding the spending of the money are not yet communicated, the EB will start spending the money, so the money won't be lost this kalender year. A committee formed by the Ministry of Education will assess our plans to decide on the rules and conditions of this spending. The committee consists of senior professors that will provide input into plans, topics, content, and relevance of the plans.

Following this presentation from the EB, the UC members had several remarks. Firstly, the UC members would like to receive these plans. The EB has taken note of this request and will provide it. Secondly, the UC remarked that the plans could be used to further strengthen the University's inclusion and diversity plans, e.g., when dividing the starting grand towards female employees.

Action point: the EB will provide a document with more details on the three investments to the UC.

03.03 Update increasing energy costs in relation to the Erasmus Perspectives

The UC would like to know what actions the EB takes with regards to the rising of energy prices and inflation costs in relation to new buildings and renovations on campus. These worries are also in relation to the Erasmus Perspectives. During the meeting, the EB provided an outline of energy spending and inflation rates.

In terms of heating, Erasmus University is limited to Eneco, the sole provider for the city of Rotterdam. The plans estimate the heat fees on a yearly basis, and for the upcoming year the EB expects to pay 800.000 euro. This estimate is included in the plans for Erasmus Perspectives.

In terms of electricity, Erasmus University collaborates with the Consortium and buys it from a shared supplier. Next to a 50% rising volume noted in 2022 (i.e., a fixed amount), the EB estimated an additional 300.000 euro. The EB considers this estimate sufficient for the EP plans.

In terms of inflation costs for buildings, the EB has made arrangements for the current constructions. The costs are being estimated to the best of their knowledge. The Board has

taken measures to take into account the rising inflation in relations to the renovations in Tinbergen.

In addition, the EB is interested in reducing the energy bill by looking at additional measures. For example, solar panels were installed. The EB does not expect financial compensation for energy and electricity costs, due to recent grants. Furthermore, the EB is aware of the need to actualize plans in relation to the economical situations.

In conclusion, the EB notes that the short-term big risks are covered by their current financial plans and is aware of updating their plans in future situations. The EB encourages the UC to come with new ideas and actualize plans. This topic can be tabled for future Consultation Meetings.

03.04 Viewpoint EB on international students

The UC members asked the EB for statements regarding these two points: 1) the growth of the international student groups, in light of a recent news statement made by the UvA; and 2) the law that states education should be provided in Dutch, when it comes to international students. The EB made the following remarks.

Firstly, the EB recognizes a problem of student growth in general, not of international student growth in particular. To be precise, the University grows every year by 4-5%, but the fastest growing programs are the Dutch-taught programs. Moreover, only 35% of newly enrolled students are International. The EB expressed that the housing issues concern all students, regardless of nationality. The EB is aware of this and wishes to stabilize the enrollment numbers by engaging with instruments that allow a more acceptable and controlled growth rate. The EB gives several examples, such as different numerus fixus requirements depending on demand, such as language, or content (e.g., restrict enrolments in the clinical psychology program, the largest cohort).

Secondly, the EB does not agree with the statements by UvA, that focused on international growth.

The UC members had further questions to address on this matter. However, due to time restraints, these have been tabled as a main agenda point for a future CM.

Action point: the discussion is tabled for the next CM.