

**University Council
Consultation Meeting UC/EB
Erasmus University Rotterdam**

Date and Time: 02/02/2023, 15:00 – 17:00

Location: Polak 1-17

Present in the Meeting: **Ivonne Cune-Noten (chair)**, Prof. dr. H. Brinksma (Chair EB), Prof. dr. A. L. Bredenoord (Rector, EB), Ann O'Brien (Secretary EB), Sandra Constantinou Juhasz, Sebastiaan Kamp, Max Wagenaar, Nikita Schoenmaker, Jaap Cornelese, Natascha Kraal, Patryk Jarmakowicz, Aleid Fokkema, Ernst Hulst, Simo Azzarhouni, Albert Wagelmans, Irena Boskovic, Emese von Bóné, Tom van Dijken, Erin van Gestel, Luuk van Tol, Nawin Ramcharan, Wesley Hennep, Wincey Randoe, Veerle Bakker, Friso Roos, Erasmus Magazine, Lobke van Steenberg (Clerk), Ellie Cercel (Minutes).

Absent: Ellen van Schoten (VP EB), Georgiana Carp, Cagla Altin.

01 Opening consultation meeting

01.01 Setting of the agenda

The agenda was set.

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

The minutes of the previous meeting were set.

01.03 Announcements

- *OccupyEUR*

The EB announced they are in the process of evaluating the events of the occupation with the internal forces operations and with COT (Leiden). The evaluation with the police forces is about to be finalised, following contact with the Chair of the police department and a discussion with the municipal council. COT is an institution specialised in dealing with crisis management that was contacted to make an objective and factual evaluation of the situation, which will take about 2 months. The EB would like to involve a few councillors as part of the evaluation process and will thereby contact the UC when that will be necessary. Finally, the EB maintains they will share the reports of the evaluations with the UC when they are available.

- *Representation UC*

The UC received the consent of the EB to obtain images of the CM with the goal of sharing them online on the UC social media platforms in order to attract more attention to the activities of the UC.

- *Statement on Climate Situation*

The EB will communicate a statement in the upcoming week declaring a state of climate emergency. Following this, a series of dialogues on campus sustainability will be organised addressing issues such as what the statement means, how it will influence research, and what impact will this have on our campus. The first event will be organised in a few weeks. Due to the nature of the topic, the EB recognized having had difficulty organising the dialogues, thereby requesting the expertise of an independent party. It was found that the opinions of the members on campus are polarised; therefore, the focus is on creating a safe space where people can express their opinion and learn from each other. The UC remarked there is danger in the

academic discussion being gone due to creating too safe of a space and wished to encourage the organisers not to limit the discomfort of the discussion. The EB agreed to encourage a confrontational discussion taking place in a safe debate. The UC expressed concern that disagreement can lead to inertia and advised the EB to take a leadership stance on the matter. The EB agreed on showing leadership.

- *Dean RSM*

Prof. dr. Ansgar Richter, dean of RSM, decided not to opt for a second mandate; this was decided in consultation with the EB and the Executive Board of RSM. As of 1st of February 2023, Prof. Richter was released from most of his tasks as Dean of RSM, and a replacement as acting Dean was selected. Meanwhile, the procedure for the official succession will follow soon.

02 Agenda items consultation meeting

02.01 Smarter Academic Year

Due to the wish of the UC to be involved early in the process, The UC received documents of the incipient stages of this project. These are still confidential. As a result, the discussion on this agenda point followed a closed meeting procedure and members outside of the UC and EB were requested to leave temporarily. However, since the documents are confidential and not the in-depth discussion, the minutes will be made publicly available.

The EB explained the background of this project. A year and a half ago, a report entitled *Smarter Academic Year* gave an overview of the number of work weeks at every Dutch university; EUR scored the longest academic year. Also, universities with good international reputations have fewer work weeks than EUR. Internal research identified differences between and within schools, with EUR having 27 different academic calendars. Given reports of students and staff experiencing high work pressure and the wish of increasing interdisciplinarity at EUR, the EB saw an opportunity to begin this project. Furthermore, funds were made available from the minister for a national pilot exploring this, in parallel with two other Dutch universities. Within Phase I of the pilot, Bureau Turner made a report for which they took 5 months and organised interviews with up to 60 staff and students at EUR. Also, meetings between a sounding board and a project group were organised in which the risks and opportunities of this project were discussed, that were also included in the report. This report was shared with the UC during this cycle. Phase II of the pilot will continue in the following 5 months and will follow the exploration of shortening the academic year, expanding the minor period in BA3 to 30ECTS, aligning the BSA norm changes, and experimenting with innovative types of examination. The EB expects that, at some point changes in the curricula will also be taking place. In conclusion, the goal is to have less pressure, more space for professors to prepare courses and more space for students to choose.

The council shared a few questions and remarks following this introduction.

- *If the same requirements of the staff are maintained while the year will be shortened, how are professors going to handle the extra workload?*

The EB envisions a smarter working method, not a shorter academic year.

- *If there is no break in the year to implement the new ideas, how will the support staff handle the workload?*

The EB recognised their omission and took note of the question.

- *Can the UC receive a timeline?*
The EB does not have a decision on the timeline yet, but it could become available in a few weeks.
- *Is the EB looking at other universities since there might have been similarities?*
The EB informed the council that the project team and Bureau Turner are collecting insights from other universities.
- *This change will lead to a peak in work pressure; how will the EB ensure that staff stays motivated to work more for the benefits in the end?*
The EB recognised the challenge and will create a communication plan. The EB remarked that, looking at other Universities, when the goal of the plan is visible and realistic, doing more work gives staff more energy.
- *The BSA threshold change can impact the curriculum; can the EB explain how this is handled?*
The changes will impact particularly BA1.
- *Is Turner working for EUR or for all the pilots?*
The EB asked Turner to conduct the research at EUR, thus working separately from the 2 other universities.
- *Is the amount of work exceeding the average standard as an academic institution?*
The EB is aware that the changes have to respect the 60 ECTS benchmark; this could mean having more group assignments, a bigger minor space, and less traditional exams.
- *Do EUR students work harder for the ECTS?*
The EB does not have a direct answer and took note of the question.
- *To what extent are the LDE or Convergence incorporated in the changes?*
The expansion of the minor space may interact with the collaborations. However, the entire curricula will not be synchronised. Also, the EB wishes to create more joint masters within the LDE or Convergence.

02.02 Budgets HeQa funded programmes (education)

During the second Plenary meeting, Jeroen Jansz, Vanessa Abel, and Bienenke Verheijke were invited and answered various questions from the UC. The UC maintains a question for the EB regarding Erasmus X.

As one of the largest HeQa projects, ErasmusX's project plan differs from other projects in an important way. In their project plan there is no obligation laid down for implementation. This is because one of the main ideas behind ErasmusX is 'radical innovation', which means that their experiments are allowed to fail. While we recognize that there should be room for these experiments to fail, we do think that there should be boundaries in place to limit the amount of fundings that are spent during the testing phase. What does the board think of this? What boundaries should be set for the experimentation/testing phase?

During the meeting, the EB explained that part of the experimentation with disruptive innovation is not having restrictions beforehand; instead, the current control system comprises of biannual meetings between the EB and Erasmus X, where they report on their activities and failures. Also, only 2 projects were terminated. The EB wishes to allow Erasmus X to oversee their own projects while keeping control mechanisms on the funding.

The UC remarked on the overlap between the projects of CLI and Erasmus X and wishes for more control. Also, innovative projects are more likely to impact the future students of EUR

more than the current ones. Thus, the council believes that better supervision is important to ensure that the current student population is more likely to benefit from these projects.

The EB suggested the UC be provided with an annual overview of the number of students the projects are currently impacting. The UC is in possession of those numbers but does not consider them helpful. Specifically, the UC is concerned that the responsibility of the implementation does not fall with Erasmus X, but with the schools; this way, if the schools do not choose to further implement the projects, the funding and the development of the innovative ideas are lost.

The UC suggested that innovation is a strategic aspect of being a university, and funds could be delivered not only from the HeQa plans but also from a more central budget.

Finally, the EB understood the concern of the UC and wishes to have a discussion on measuring the rate of implementation of projects while allowing Erasmus X to have room for creativity.

Action points: the EB will discuss the issue of overseeing the implementation of Erasmus X projects internally. The EB will reach out to organise a meeting on the implementation with the members of the HeQa TF.

02.03 Safe@EUR

The UC shared several questions and remarks with the EB. It was agreed that the EB will provide an answer in writing to these questions.

Action point: The EB will provide a written response to the questions raised by the UC regarding the Safe@EUR point.

02.04 Accessibility EUR

The topic has been moved from the previous CM due to time constraints. During the meeting, councillor Patryk shared the main elements of an informal advice letter with the EB concerning students and staff with visible and invisible functional impairments.

The UC would like to emphasise we are not satisfied with the accessibility situation at EUR and would like to see more urgency given to it. Also, the UC would like to address the points that were lacking in the plan of action: not enough accessibility on campus for students with functional impairments, not having received from the EB the plan of RE&F, the current provisions for these groups being granted with delay or not at all.

The EB agreed with the points mentioned by the UC and shared the dissatisfaction felt with regard to the accessibility situation. Further, based on conversations with the staff and students with these issues, the EB created an audit and a plan of action; a budget was reserved as well as two hirings were made with the goal of working out a plan of action. Additionally, the EB is provided with monthly detailed updates from RE&F on the state of affairs. Also, the EB wishes to see an improvement in how the staff treats issues of accessibility. Also, the EB is working on solutions to the problems that are being recognised. The UC requested access to the regular updates of RE&F, and the EB will discuss what can be shared with us.

Action points: The Rector and the VP will decide how and which information from the RE&F updates on accessibility at EUR will be shared with the UC. The UC will share a letter of advice on the topic of accessibility with the EB.

02.05 International students

The UC shared an overview document with the EB and addressed several questions with the board. Additionally, the UC wishes to demarcate the discussion on the initiative and that on the national announcement on international students.

1. We discussed expectation management for international students before coming to the Netherlands, by means of an extensive website page (including transparency about living costs and scarcity, etc). When can we expect this page?

2. We discussed that there are a lot of good policies and resources already available for international students, but when and how are they going to be better communicated to students that are already here? We recommend mandatory information sessions at the beginning of each academic year and again a web page to go to.

3. Certain standards are being met for enrolled international students, pertaining but not limited to, social integration and support, orientation as an expat, accessibility, and more. To this end, we exercise our right of information and wish to be updated on policies and events that strive to promote specifically international student wellbeing.

The EB recognised the issues that the UC shared and highlighted certain things that have been improving since the initiative, such as an improvement in the expectations communicated to international students via the EUR website.

Also, the UC remarked that the international staff and students are welcomed differently now than before, which coincides with the communications from the parliament on the international students and urged the EB to consider the implications of these messages when expecting the integration of their international students. A few solutions were shared, such as integrating diversity themes, having a more holistic perspective of science, and improving the inter-faculty agreements on providing online education for special circumstances of international students (e.g., family-related emergencies).

In conclusion, the UC will follow-up on the Rector's suggestion to connect Martine Wierenga, the Head of the International Office, in order to discuss the three issues in a solution-oriented approach. The Rector also identified that certain aspects of the international student life cannot be helped by the university, such as the hardships of moving abroad. However, the UC wishes to make those expectations and provide support for them.

Additionally, the topic of the national ban on international student recruitment was discussed. The EB differs from this announcement and maintains a welcoming attitude to international students and employees. The EB believes in the international identity of the EUR community. At the national level, several issues exist, such as housing due to growth, but the EUR percentages are lower than the ones identified as problematic at a national level. The EB identified the lack of a control system on recruitment as problematic; numerus fixus systems exist independently of the language of teaching due to legislation protecting against discrimination. Also, the EB Chair is part of the TF of the UNL and is currently working on ways to navigate the current situation. Also, the EB does not agree with a national control mechanism of the system.

A UC councillor suggested a control system of giving more Dutch courses and fewer English courses. However, the EB disagreed with this suggestion, as many Dutch students show significant interest in English-taught courses, and many international students choose to study Dutch to follow the Dutch-thought courses.

Action point: The UC will contact the Head of International Office to further discuss the points brought forward on international students.

02.06 Representation of the UC

The UC gave an update on the efforts done to enhance the representation of the UC, as well as asked for more support from the EB with this task.

1. Support of the M&C office in our activities to promote the UC and the elections. Specifically, the UC encountered some resistance in earlier years, such as in collaboration with the M&C department, and hope that the EB can support us.

The EB agreed to lend their support to the UC and suggested that the UC specifically share with the M&C office what they need help with; in the case this collaboration will not be fruitful to the UC, the EB was willing to find different solutions.

2. Bringing the Participation hub to the attention of the EB. The UC informed the EB that the UC would prefer a central place on campus for all the participatory bodies combined; the UC believes that such a location could make matters easier for organising meetings, as well as improve the visibility of the UC on campus and promoting the involvement of the students and staff in the UC affairs.

The EB acknowledged the issue of scheduling rooms on campus, especially due to the limited spaces caused by the renovation of Tinbergen. However, the EB was not able to give any assurances during meeting. Instead, the EB will have an internal discussion in order to decide how to help the UC with a better representation on campus.

3. List funding. A UC member suggested an increase in funding per candidate and also to think about specific funding for the lists.

The EB and UC decided to get back to this question at a later time.

02.07 State of affairs elimination HOVO

The UC has requested from the EB the state of affairs regarding the elimination of HOVO. This was expected to be tabled for the CM in November 2022, according to the minutes of June 29, 2022.

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 in October/November. Therefore, this will be tabled for the next Consultation Meeting in November.

The EB shared that HOVO Rotterdam has been dismantled, but 5 courses have been transferred to HOVO Utrecht. Thus, for the Rotterdam public, it is possible to follow certain HOVO courses at the moment.

02.08 State of affairs knowledge safety

The UC requested from the EB the state of affairs regarding knowledge safety. This was expected to be tabled in autumn 2022, based on the minutes of June 29, 2022.

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.

The EB informed the council there has been an audit to investigate what policy can be started, and more information will follow. The EUR decided to join the CSC program and does not want to cancel it due to its success. However, a few schools decided not to join, with the main reason being that the amount of money a PhD student receives is low and does not align with the employment conditions of PhD students in the NL.

In response to developing an ethical aspect of working with CSC and developing a partner policy, the EB developed a checklist to raise awareness within the schools that there may be challenges to knowledge safety. The EB will receive the reports in the spring of 2023 and a discussion will then take place based on those reports.

The EB Chair was absent during this portion of the meeting; being the main EB member responsible for this topic, the EB was not able to answer in full the questions of the council.

Action point: a discussion on the *State of affairs knowledge safety* is tabled for the next CM.

02.09 Convergence/ Culture&Campus/ Arts institute

The UC requested from the EB updates on the developments.

- *Convergence.* A discussion will take place in the upcoming week focusing on the impact of the Convergence on the main running programmes.
- *Culture&Campus.* The new program manager will seek contact with the UC to ensure that we have more access to information.

02.10 State of affairs advice UC to EB

- *Compensation participatory bodies.* The UC will be informed of the outcome of a discussion with the management Deans that will take place in April 2023. Also, the UC wished for developments to be happening sooner, in preparation for the candidacies starting in March.

Action point: The UC will be informed of the outcome of a discussion with the management Deans that will take place in April 2023.

- *Institutional plan Corona.* There were no updates.

03 Any other business

03.01 Sinterklaas celebration 2022

Prior to Corona, there was an annual Sinterklaas celebration at EUR. However, this celebration was not organised in 2022. The UC would like to ask the EB the reason why the celebration was not organised and if it could start again in 2023. This was always well attended to and appreciated by the employees at EUR.

The EB was not aware of the celebration happening before Corona. However, the EB agreed to continue the celebration from 2023.

Action point: The EB will inform the M&C Office to organise the Sinterklaas celebration in 2023.

03.02 View EB on ChatGPT

There was a discussion on the views of the EB regarding ChatGPT and its implications at EUR.

The EB believes the situation is complex and fascinating and had expected it to happen. On the one hand, the EB wishes to stress the opportunities that come with such a technology and has asked CLI and Erasmus X to reflect on the possibilities of AI in education. On the other hand, the EB is aware that a moral framework and policies for using such technologies need to be developed, but this will take a long time due to the complexity of the situation. This should be done in collaboration with other institutions. Also, the EB wants to implement research and PhD positions to develop insight into ChatGPT.

Action plan: The UC will table a discussion on ChatGPT in the third Plenary meeting of the current cycle to decide how it will be handled in future cycles.

04 Closing