

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

**Date and Time:** 20/04/2023, 15:00 – 17:00h

**Location:** Langeveld 1-12

**Present in the Meeting:** Ivonne Cune-Noten (Chair UC), Prof. Ed Brinksma (Chair EB), Dr. Ellen van Schoten (VP EB), Sebastiaan Kamp, Jaap Cornelese, Aleid Fokkema, Simo Azzarhouni, Irena Boskovic, Emese von Bóné, Tom van Dijken, Luuk van Tol, Nawin Ramcharan, Wesley Hennep, Wincey Randoe, Veerle Bakker, Friso Roos, Lobke van Steenberg (Clerk), Ellie Cercel (Minutes).

**Absent:** Prof. Annelien Bredenoord (Rector Magnificus), Sandra Constantinou Juhasz, Max Wagenaar, Nikita Schoenmaker, Natascha Kraal, Patryk Jarmakowicz, Ernst Hulst, Albert Wagelmans, Erin van Gestel, Cagla Altin,

## **01 Opening consultation meeting**

### **01.01 Setting of the agenda**

The agenda point *Room reservation system for lists* was added to the AOB section of the agenda. With this adjustment, the agenda was set.

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

The minutes of the previous meeting were set without adjustments.

### **01.03 Announcements**

No announcements were tabled for the meeting.

## **02 Agenda items consultation meeting**

### **02.01 Starter Grants policy document (short-term)**

The UC had raised two issues with CPC regarding the policy document that required further clarification. Firstly, the conditions for buying out teaching hours were not entirely clear, particularly regarding the possibility of recruiting temporary personnel. Secondly, the UC requested a more detailed framework for the 20% division of funds. While the 20-40-40 split, it is unclear how the individual grant holders can claim the money needed for extra support, and what are the consequences when the funds are exhausted. The CPC has understood the objections of the UC and adapted the policy document accordingly. However, the revised document was received only this morning, and the councillors have not had sufficient time to provide feedback on it.

In conclusion, it appears that the requested adjustments have been made, and the UC is preparing to make a final decision in the upcoming plenary meeting. Adding to this, the EB wishes to know if there are any remaining objects so that they can be addressed before finalising the policy.

**Action points:** the UC will review the adjusted policy document on *Starter grants* and will provide the EB with a decision at the end of the cycle.

### **02.02 Restricted campus opening hours**

Starting April 1<sup>st</sup>, the opening hours of the EUR campus offices and buildings were adjusted to reduce energy consumption. This decision was made without the prior involvement of the UC.

The UC requested to know why the UC was not involved in this decision and the EB shared several reasons.

Firstly, the EB stated that this decision did not significantly alter the working conditions on campus, as certain study and workspaces have extended opening hours, buildings will remain open during ongoing classes and meetings, and staff members can request access to continue working in their designated building. However, the EB maintains that closing several buildings and, by consequence, several central installations, has a positive impact on the energy consumption at EUR. The UC disagreed, stating that this decision has implications for the working conditions of staff members, as evidenced by the remarks the council prepared for the EB.

Secondly, the EB believes this decision is relevant for faculty management, since the degree of impact and the number of necessary adjustments may differ depending on each faculty. Moreover, the proportion of staff working late is different for each school which is further evidence for discussing the decision at a decentral level. In reply, the UC disagreed, stating that, as the decision impacts the entire campus, and since there is no clear distribution of buildings-to-faculties, this matter has to be discussed at a central level as well.

Furthermore, the UC raised several remarks regarding the implications of the decision.

Firstly, the UC noted that there were no preventative steps taken and asked the EB for an explanation of this procedure. The UC suggested an awareness campaign to encourage staff to turn down the heating in their offices, but the EB explained that central heating would need to be turned off to make a significant difference. The EB also stressed the importance of staff members adjusting their behaviour in order to help achieve the EUR sustainability goals. Also, the EB disagreed with the statement regarding the lack of preventative measures. For example, one preventative measure taken by the EB was conducting a survey which discovered that buildings were being used very scarcely at night, leading to resource wastage. In response, the UC requested a document detailing the survey results and calculations.

Secondly, the UC was concerned about the choice of buildings that will remain open and suggested that there are more sustainable options available, like Langeveld. However, the EB argued that the decision to keep the University Library open was based on a cost-benefit analysis.

Thirdly, the UC believes staff members are being inconvenienced by being required to request access to their workspace only one day in advance and suggested that a better system be created which would allow requesting access for longer periods, such as for the duration of one course, or on a recurring basis. The EB acknowledged this concern and will explore the possibilities. The UC can expect to receive an update from the EB regarding this matter by the end of the week. However, the one-day ahead policy cannot be changed due to practical reasons related to central insulation and security organisation.

In conclusion, the EB agreed that, in hindsight, the decision on adjusting the campus opening hours should have involved the UC. Therefore, looking forward, the EB is willing to evaluate the outcomes of this decision with the UC and modify it on the basis of the observed outcomes.

**Action point:** the EB will inform the UC of the procedure for requesting access to offices by Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> of April.

### 02.03 Convergence

The Convergence receives a significant and increasing amount of money, while the UC has few resources to oversee the spending. Although previous meetings allowed the council better insight, we feel that they do not meet the expectations and needs of the UC. Hence, the UC would request additional consultation.

The UC would like to ask if the Convergence office can use the document shared in the previous meeting, “Convergence update”, for further developments by incorporating further adjustments within this document. This way, the UC would be better prepared for discussions with the EB.

In addition, the UC would like to schedule a separate meeting with the Convergence office and possibly with the EB Chair to consider the questions from the UC once more. The EB is willing to have a meeting where the concerns of the council are discussed in greater depth. It remains to be decided whether the Convergence office will participate in the meeting.

However, EB believes that keeping the Convergence lightweight by not having participation at a high level is beneficial for making quick progress. Otherwise, the progress would be weighted down by heavy documentation and legal aspects. In response to this, the UC believes there needs to be a balance, as we see the risk that our rights may not be taken into account as well. The UC asked the EB to better consider our rights.

In conclusion, the EB acknowledged the need for improved communication efforts and wishes to address this issue.

**Action point:** The EB will schedule a meeting with the UC to address the questions regarding the Convergence.

#### **02.04 Working hours Ombudsperson**

Even though this agenda point will be discussed in the ELC, the UC would like to stress the importance of the Ombudsperson again and share our concern regarding the available hours and support available for the Ombudsperson. Specifically, the UC already signalled the lack of sufficient support and working hours for the previously appointed Ombudsperson; the UC was assured that the situation would improve for the current position, yet the problem remains.

The EB recognised the concerns of the council and the efforts of the Ombudsperson and is currently in the process of negotiating the possibility of an increased contract with the HR department. Also, the EB assured the UC that our request for increased support for the current Ombudsperson was respected, but it proved to be insufficient despite that.

Also, the activity of the Ombudsperson will be monitored as it is possible that he may still have to account for leftover work due to the recent handover. This assessment might lead to a readjustment of his time in the future.

#### **02.05 Update Strategy 2024**

The EB shared some updates from the Strategy Office. In the original Strategy document, it was outlined that impact was important to define; nonetheless, it was decided that impact can be defined in education, research, and engagement. Although this document has received a lot of support, the UC has not yet received official updates, but it is expected to be tabled for one of our future cycles for advice.

Also, the UC expressed its concern about not having been involved closely in the development of this document. Although we understand this was unintentional, we believe it is important to prevent these

oversights in the future. The EB took note of this concern and will work on addressing this issue internally.

**Action point:** the update Strategy 2024 will be tabled for a future UC cycle.

## **02.06 State of affairs advice UC to EB**

### **- 38557 Plan of Action Accessibility**

The UC requested an update on the working group as a council member is supposed to be involved as well. However, no contact has been made yet. Due to the policy advisor being ill, the start of the plan is delayed. However, the working group will be formed before the summer holidays, and a council member will receive the invitation in advance.

## **03 Any other business**

### **03.01 Cleaning of the buildings**

The UC shared the remark that beginning with the new cleaning contracts, there seems to be less time for the cleaners to do the same amount of work. Therefore, it has been noticed that various buildings remain dirtier than before.

The EB responded that the current contract began on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, and no changes have been made to the employee hours. However, they acknowledge the possibility that some buildings are not sufficiently cleaned. To that extent, the RE&F Office is tasked with ensuring that the measured cleaning levels are similar to the levels contractually established.

The UC believes that the cleaning staff is underpaid and inquired what the EB thinks of their working conditions. The EB ensured the council that the staff is paid within the normal standard and that they regularly ensure that the conditions are acceptable.

### **03.02 Climate emergency state announcement**

The UC inquired about the impact of the climate emergency state on policymaking and UC rights. The EB updated the council on the state of affairs within the Sustainability Office and Sustainability TF. For example, there are investigations into the ties of EUR with the fossil fuel industry; they are in the process of inventorying this and organising an academic discussion on how to proceed. As this is a complicated process, an external platform was asked to facilitate several dialogues within the EUR schools; these dialogues are planned to begin shortly. The EB wishes to ensure the participation and representation of all the faculties. The results of these dialogues will be important in continuing our sustainability efforts. Other measures include plans to subsidise vegan meals on campus, using more reusable cups, and limiting energy usage on campus by restricting opening hours.

The UC would like to know what the EB understands by having a state of emergency, as well as what level of involvement the council has in these decisions. The EB responded that they believe that the climate is changing and that it is important to bring this issue closer to our community to be more sustainable in terms of resources, food, travel, etc. Also, the EB remarked that they are working closely with the Sustainability TF and are willing to make these changes with the help of the council.

### **03.03 Room reservation system for lists**

The UC inquired whether it would be possible to use the reservation system for rooms during elections, as it currently is only available for study associations. In response, the EB ensured the council that, if it is technically possible, the system will be made available for election candidates as

well. The UC reminded the board of the urgency of this matter, as the election period already commenced.

Additionally, because of the large number of candidates, individual candidates can only get ca. 50 euros. The Central Election Office recently informed the council that there are efforts to increase the amount of funding to be divided to ensure that individual candidates receive sufficient support for their campaigns. Also, it was proposed to keep this change for the upcoming year.

#### **03.04 RE&F service adjustments**

A councillor remarked that there has been a temporary adjustment in the article detailing the services provided by RE&F. Specifically, there are concerns that new plans may not be implemented and instead left on the shelf; Roadmap durability seems to be affected by this as well.

The EB acknowledged the concerns of the council, stating that the labour market is very intense, and it has affected our university, as well as RE&F. Due to work pressure and limited staffing, some projects will have to be put on hold until the summer. However, they are seeking to hire new staff.

#### **04 Closing**