

**University Council
First Plenary Meeting
Erasmus University Rotterdam**

Date and Time: 09/05/2023, 15:00 – 17:00

Location: Langeveld 1.12

Present in the Meeting: **Ivonne Cune-Noten (chair)**, Sandra Constantinou Juhasz, Max Wagenaar, Nikita Schoenmaker, Jaap Cornelese, Natascha Kraal, Patryk Jarmakowicz, Aleid Fokkema, Ernst Hulst, Simo Azzarhouni, Albert Wagelmans, Emese von Bóné, Erin van Gestel, Luuk van Tol, Nawin Ramcharan, Veerle Bakker, Georgiana Carp, Friso Roos, Cagla Altin, Lobke van Steenberg (Clerk), Ellie Cercel (Minutes).

Digital: Sebastiaan Kamp, Irena Boskovic.

Absent: Tom van Dijken, Wesley Hennep, Wincey Randoe.

01 Opening

01.01 Setting of the agenda.

The point *Code of Conduct Elections* was added to the agenda of this cycle. The agenda point *Ties with the Fossil Fuel Industry* was moved up on the agenda to await the attendance of a councillor. With these adjustments, the agenda was set.

01.02 Minutes first plenary meeting

The minutes of the third plenary meeting were set without adjustments.

The action points were adjusted with the following remark: the Clerk will schedule a new meeting with the SAY policymaker where updates on the project will be discussed.

01.03 Announcements

- Occupation

An occupation was taking place in the Erasmus building at the time of the plenary meeting. The EB Chair informed the UC that the occupation was interrupting the primary processes of the University more intensely than in previous times.

- Progress meeting UAR, June 22nd

As previously communicated, there are three meetings planned concerning the progress of the University of the Arts Rotterdam. The first meeting took place before the first plenary meeting. Due to scheduling complications, the third meeting is planned for 15:45-17:00 on June 22nd. The Clerk understood the scheduling conflicts and asked the UC members to inform her of their attendance via Teams so a participation overview can be made. An announcement will be shared on Teams.

- Revision of the profiling fund

A document concerning the profiling fund will be tabled for consent in a future cycle. E&S has requested two UC student members to evaluate the revision of the profiling fund and provide preliminary input during the current cycle. The process is expected to take ca. 1 or 2 meetings. Councillors Luuk and Nawin agreed to review the document.

- Waiver

Councillors Patryk and Erin received a waiver for the current cycle.

- Room bookings

The UC received a response to the request of allowing parties to book rooms on campus free of charge during the election period. Although lists cannot have access to a shared account to use in the system, they can request to use a room via an application form. The Clerk will share the application

form on Teams with the councillors and has requested the Central Election Office to provide all parties with this information.

- *Mandatory Tuesdays May 30th and June 27th*

Due to scheduling conflicts, the CM will take place during the upcoming Mandatory Tuesday (May 30th) at 11:00, followed by drinks with the EB at 17:00. The Clerk and Chair will discuss ideas for an activity to take place in between these events. Councillor Georgiana has shared an idea that will be taken into consideration. Also, the HeQa TF meeting will be rescheduled as it conflicts with the activity.

On the final Mandatory Tuesday on June 27th, there will be a handover/introductory activity with the current council and the newly elected members of next year's council.

02 Agenda items plenary meeting UC

02.01 Educational Vision

In previous cycles, the UC cooperated with the Educational Vision policymakers via the EV TF to arrive at the final version of the document which was shared for consent in the current cycle. The EV is a concise mission statement that will be used as a guideline during the upcoming implementation stage. In that stage, the UC will likely have a more controlling role. Therefore, the concerns of the UC regarding this document may better be tackled in the implementation phase. The council believes it is important to highlight our expectations for the upcoming phase in the letter of consent. Furthermore these expectations must be communicated with next year's council during the handover.

Additionally, the councillors discussed whether the value of academic freedom is outlined in the EV document and whether it should be explicitly stated. On the one hand, the council believes that academic freedom is a basic value highlighted in the law and therefore does not need to be explicitly outlined in the EV as the values of the EV are supposed to support existing rules. On the other hand, the council has noticed instances whereby students that hold the nondominant view in a classroom or faculty do not always feel safe sharing or engaging in a debate with members of the dominant view. Also, sometimes public members are not allowed to join debates and symposiums on campus. The TF has explored the topic of academic freedom at an earlier stage, and it was included in the EV document as the value of *open-mindedness*. However, several members of the UC believe that academic freedom should be stated explicitly in the EV document. As the opinions of the council varied, the discussion on academic freedom will be further elaborated on in TF meetings. The TF members will be mindful of this discussion while reviewing the document.

Action point: the EV TF will discuss and review the feedback of the UC regarding the Educational Vision document. The topic will be tabled for the second Plenary meeting.

02.02 Erasmus Perspectives

The Erasmus Perspectives documents are awaiting the consent of the EB and have not yet been shared with the UC. However, the TF Finance was given access to the concept documents in order to prepare for this cycle. The UC will receive the documents in the course of a week as the EB consents to them.

Action point: the Clerk will share the documents of *Erasmus Perspectives* with the council. The topic will be tabled for the second Plenary meeting.

02.03 Student Charter 2023-2024

The Student Charter is an annual document that requires the consent of the UC. Councillors Patryk, Sebastiaan, and Sandra joined a TF to review the document.

Action point: the TF will begin reviewing the *Student Charter* document. The topic will be tabled for the second Plenary meeting.

02.04 2023 EUR Whistle-blower Regulations

The EUR Whistle-blower regulation was adjusted to align with Dutch Legislation and European regulation. The TF Wellbeing and Social Safety will work on reviewing this document. Also, the councillors requested that Safe@EUR be included in the flowchart.

Action point: the TF Wellbeing and Social Safety will begin reviewing the documents of *2023 EUR Whistle-blower Regulations*. The topic will be tabled for the second Plenary meeting.

02.05 Institutional tuition fee 2024-2025

The Institutional tuition fee is an annual document describing changes in tuition fees. The UC discussed the implications of the policy stated in the document and formed a TF to work on the Student Charter.

Firstly, councillors Georgiana, Aleid, Sandra, Patryk, and Sebastiaan joined a TF under the Lead of councillor Aleid to work on this agenda point for the current cycle.

Secondly, the UC deliberated on various implications resulting from the proposed change in tuition fees. Particularly, as studying becomes more expensive, students' well-being is impacted by the pressure of succeeding in light of the required financial strain. Therefore, increasing the tuition fees might be detrimental in that regard. However, it was noted that the increase is related to the inflation rates. In previous years, the UC requested the EB to increase the number of scholarships and agreed to the increase in institutional fees to a controlled level depending on the inflation rates. Also supporting the increased rates was the argument that, when comparing EUR fees to those of similar Dutch universities, those at EUR are on the lower side, which might undermine our perceived value compared to our competitors. Also, the increase in tuition fees affects non-EEA students, whom the councillors believe to already have a high SES background and thus have the means to bear the higher costs.

Furthermore, the UC discussed the issue of scholarships. The availability of scholarships was deemed insufficient despite our previous years' requests, as exemplified by only 2 spots offered at EMC. On the other hand, the scholarships are for non-EEA students, which are a minority within EMC due to the nature and language of the program. Also, the UC would like to evaluate the utilisation of the scholarships, seeing as the eligibility criteria are very challenging, if not impossible, to attain. Ultimately, the UC conveyed its dissatisfaction with the number of available scholarships and expressed the intention to address this matter further with the EB.

Finally, the UC believes that the values associated with high-achieving students are outdated and unattainable and are advocating for evaluating students' performance based on societal impact. Accordingly, the UC proposed including a more realistic perspective of high-achieving students in the Educational Vision. The UC values educational accessibility and urges the EB to consider that increasing the financial requirements of future students contributes to lowering educational possibilities for students of limited means.

Action point: the TF will discuss the input of the UC and will review the document *Institutional tuition fees*. The topic will be tabled for the second Plenary meeting.

02.06 Institutional tuition fees Ukrainian students

The UC was informed of the decision of the EB to adjust the Institutional tuition fees for Ukrainian students. During the meeting, the councillors discussed the implications of this decision. Councillors Jaap, Erin, Simo, Cagla, and Irena joined a TF under the lead of councillor Jaap to work on this agenda point during the current cycle.

A councillors expressed their dissatisfaction with the decision of discontinuing the rate reduction after the upcoming academic year, as future students will continue to suffer from the same consequences of the war.

Also, a councillor was critical of the decision of making an exception for Ukrainian students and not extending similar benefits for students from other affected groups, such as those from Syria and Turkey who suffered from the effects of the recent earthquakes. Other councillors

disputed this remark, as Syrian and Turkish students can find solace in other areas of their countries not affected by the earthquakes, whereas Ukraine is fully engulfed in a state of war. Furthermore, it is stated that the decision is due to a partial agreement reached by UNL, suggesting that the UC could urge the EB to address our arguments in a future UNL meeting. The UC would like to support the reduction for Ukrainian students but continue to raise awareness for students from other impacted groups as well as request transparency on the history of the decision to avoid speculation. The UC advised the members of the TF to include the input of student associations when researching this topic as well as research the history of this measure before addressing it with the EB, such as, for instance, payment issues.

Action point: the TF collected the input of the UC and will continue reviewing the document *Institutional tuition fee Ukrainian students*. The topic will be tabled for the second Plenary meeting.

02.07 Impact Definition

The Strategy TF reviewed the Impact Definition document in February 2023; however, as this procedure did not follow the right UC protocol, the same document was officially submitted for the advice of the UC in the current cycle. Therefore, the councilors can offer their input through the TF. Also, the Clerk will request another document as it was missing from the submission.

The UC remarked that the document has implications for our institutional slogan and touches upon the value of academic freedom. Also, it was noted that as part of the new strategy, there is a governance feedback structure taking place in which the EB holds bilateral discussions with the faculties on topics of sustainability and impact. In light of this, the UC proposed to establish a protocol for conducting discussions with the service councils in a similar manner in order to further the impact possibilities. With the implementation of this procedure, we can better ensure that important conversations take place across all relevant areas within our institution.

Action point: The Strategy TF will collect the UC input regarding the Impact Definition document. The topic will be tabled for the second Plenary meeting.

02.08 UC monitor

All UC members were asked for input about the topics that should be covered in the follow-up survey organized by the TF UC monitor. A link was shared with the councilors during the meeting via Teams.

02.09 CiO report

The documents were shared via Teams as RE&F requested to treat them confidentially. The RE&F will review the documents and give their input in the upcoming plenary meeting.

Action point: a discussion on *CiO report* is tabled for the second Plenary meeting. The RE&F TF will review the documents until the second Plenary meeting.

02.10 Ties with the fossil fuel industry

Two documents were shared with the UC describing a councilor's proposal of cutting the ties between EUR and the fossil fuel industry. The agenda point will be tackled by the Sustainability TF. The goal is to have the questions in the document answered and then move forth toward a proposal that can be presented to the EB. Two questions were addressed during the meeting:

1. Does the UC find the EUR ties with the fossil fuel industry problematic?
2. What is the position of the UC on the ties of the fossil fuel industry?

During the meeting, the councilors expressed several viewpoints and arguments. Firstly, some councilors were concerned regarding the document references, questioning whether they provide the full spectrum of the arguments on the topic and feeling that there might be bias against the fossil fuel industry. It was suggested to consult sources or external parties that could provide a neutral point of view in order to consider all implications. However, not all councilors agreed, pointing out that the

document referenced ca. 30 sources, and believing that the concerned councilors could conduct further research on their own to form an informed opinion. Furthermore, some councilors did not perceive the sources as biased, believing there is enough evidence showing that these companies have been partaking in questionable and damaging activities, such as active lobbying to stop climate policies, influencing discourse, and climate change denial.

Secondly, the councilors were unable to reach a conclusion regarding the goal of this discussion. On the one hand, some councilors wish to cut ties with the fossil fuel industry in order to make a political stance, set a societal example, and have an impact on policymaking. They also emphasized the moral obligation of taking a stance and accepting third-stream funding from companies with shared values, as exemplified by not accepting funding from nuclear plant industries. Also, some councilors believe that science is politicized, which further supports the importance of making choices that reflect our values. Also, steps have already been taken in this direction at EUR, as the pension providers decided to cut ties with the industry. On the other hand, some councilors believe ties should not be cut as long as we remain a scientific institution focused on research and thus not politics. They believed that cutting contact with these industries eliminates our access to discussions that could contribute to finding solutions. They referred to sources stating that keeping contact with the industry might have better outcomes. Additionally, the councilors would like to support research on what the implications of this decision would be for education, funding, research, and exams; for instance, several EUR alumni get employed annually within these companies.

Thirdly, the UC is critical of the significant amount of time it was required to compile the list of fossil fuel companies with which EUR is affiliated. Nonetheless, the Clerk can provide the interested councilors with the contact of the person responsible for the task.

In conclusion, the majority of the UC decided to continue working on this agenda point. For this purpose, a TF was formed consisting of councilors Veerle, Nawin, Sandra, Albert, Simo, Georgiana, Erin, Natasha, Luuk, Tom, and Friso, under the lead of councilor Tom.

Action point: the TF will collect the UC input on the *Ties with the fossil fuel industry* and review it. The topic will be tabled for the second plenary meeting.

02.11 Code of Conduct Elections

The UC was informed by the CPC of the fact that there are no regulations within EUR that specifically limit external financing during elections. However, Legal Affairs has offered to assist the UC in drawing up specific guidelines regarding external financing. Due to time restraints, the UC would like to discuss this topic further in the upcoming plenary meeting.

Action point: The topic of *Code of Conduct Elections* is tabled for the second plenary meeting.

03 Incoming documents

- 38557 - 275.753 Response to 38557 Plan of Action Accessibility

Action point: The RE&F TF will review the letter and prepare a follow-up response.

- Report Intern

The advice report was completed by the intern and shared with the UC. The report can be used in the further development of the list system. The report will be tabled for the next cycle when the discussion on the review of the list system will take place.

Action point: the Clerk will table the *Report Intern* for the next cycle as part of the evaluation of the list system.

- 38563 - RM 275.755 Response to 38563 Budget CLI 2023

Action point: The HeQa TF will review the letter and prepare a follow-up meeting.

04 Any other business

04.01 UC Office

The UC remarked that the UC office is not always accessible due to the opening hours of the Tinbergen building and requested that this be improved.

Action point: The Clerk will look into improving the UC office opening hours.

04.02 Library Access

A few councillors remarked that it is customary in the upcoming months that high school students study in the EUR study spaces and shared their dissatisfaction with this situation as these students cause disruption as well as take space away from EUR students that need to prepare for finals. The councillors suggested employing an ID checking system similar to that used during the pandemic period, however, this is not possible as student cards are not being issued anymore. The councillors agreed to discuss this further.

04.03 Occupy EUR

A councillor remarked that OccupyEUR is not beneficial for the development of the UC as it signals distrust in the participatory bodies. Also, the councillor believes the occupation is violating the Elections Code of Conduct as the members attract attention to certain parties participating in the UC elections.

04.04 Letter UC Restricted Campus Opening Hours

The UC was supposed to prepare a letter of advice referring to the restricted campus opening hours. This was not done yet as the UC received a response from the EB informing us that the faculties were asked to investigate how the restrictions are impacting their activities; the FCs would collect the feedback and share it with the UC. The UC discussed how to proceed with this action point. On the one hand, we could send a letter of advice independently of the investigations taking place at the faculty level. On the other hand, we could collect the FC feedback and write a more thorough letter of advice. In the end, the UC agreed on sending an initial letter emphasizing the main points that the council is critical of. Furthermore, it will be mentioned that we could incorporate the FC feedback in a subsequent follow-up letter providing more detailed advice.

Action point: the UC members will write the letter of advice regarding *Restricted Campus Opening Hours*.

04.05 Electoral debate

The electoral debate will take place on the 22nd of May from 15:00-18:00 in the Pavilion. The Central Election Office will send an invite to all candidates. The Clerk has asked the help of several councilors who are not participating in the elections in order to organize the debate.

Action point: UC members not participating in re-elections are asked to contact the Clerk to help organize the debate.

05 Closing