

University Council
Consultation Meeting UC/EB
Erasmus University Rotterdam

Date and Time: 30/05/2023, 11:00 – 13:00h

Location: 2-04 Polak

Present in the Meeting: **Ivonne Cune-Noten (chair), Prof. Ed Brinksma (Chair EB), Dr. Ellen van Schoten (VP EB),** Sandra Constantinou Juhasz, Sebastiaan Kamp, Max Wagenaar, Nikita Schoenmaker, Jaap Cornelese, Natascha Kraal, Aleid Fokkema, Ernst Hulst, Albert Wagelmans, Emese von Bóné, Tom van Dijken, Erin van Gestel, Luuk van Tol, Nawin Ramcharan, Veerle Bakker, Friso Roos, Lobke van Steenbergen (Clerk), Ellie Cercel (Minutes).

Digital: Patryk Jarmakowicz.

Absent: Prof. Annelien Bredenoord (Rector Magnificus), Simo Azzarhouni, Irena Boskovic, Cagla Altin, Wesley Hennep, Wincey Randoe.

01 Opening consultation meeting

01.01 Setting of the agenda

The agenda was set without adjustments.

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

The minutes of the previous meeting and the action points were set without adjustments.

01.03 Announcements

- Absence Rector Magnificus

The EB excused the absence of the Rector Magnificus at the CM, as her presence was required in a Chamber meeting. However, she will soon be relieved of such obligations.

- Dealing with Crisis Situations

Following the recent earthquake crisis in Turkey, the EB has established a protocol that addresses the students and staff affected by crises; the protocol was created as a result of meetings with the Turkish Student Association, where it became clear that students would have expected a more proactive attitude from the EB.

02 Agenda items consultation meeting

02.01 Erasmus Perspectives

The UC TF Finance has addressed their remarks and questions regarding the Erasmus Perspectives document with CPC. The discussion resolved most of the technical remarks of the council; the TF has not identified any major problems with the main points of the policy that would otherwise interfere with giving consent, at this point. However, the TF identified several elements of the policy that will be addressed as part of the advice of the council to the EB. Namely, the UC expressed concern over the description of investments larger than 1 million euros and the changes in the allocation model. Therefore, the UC will request the EB a reflection on how other major societal issues is impacting EUR, including work pressure, housing shortage, market share shortage, etc.

The EB was content with the developments of the meeting between the UC and CPC; also, the EB wishes to respond to the questions of the UC and provide a prognosis for future investments, with the mention that there may be areas of concern of which the EB is uncertain.

02.02 Institutional tuition fees 2024-2025 & ITF Ukrainian students

The agenda points *Institutional tuition fees 2024-2025* and *Institutional tuition fees Ukrainian students* yielded the same discussion within the council; as a result, the UC decided to discuss them jointly.

The UC will provide positive advice to the *Institutional tuition fee Ukrainian students*.

Regarding Institutional tuition fees in general, the UC has questions regarding the inflation rate and the waiver policy. The UC understood that the fees will be raised significantly per the inflation rate and to maintain an alignment with the fees of competitors. The UC is willing to accept this change, with the strong recommendation that the EB will investigate the grants and waivers at EUR. The UC is not satisfied with the results of our inquiry into the matter and has prepared questions regarding the transparency of the different policies, the proportion to which faculties use the grants made available to them, and the subdivision of grants. Furthermore, the UC will inquire about the criteria for obtaining student grants, specifically about whether the GPA should have a high weight in qualifying for grants. Also, the UC would like to see a centrally written policy concerning grants and waivers.

Similarly, the UC is aware that faculties can provide waivers to tuition fees in individual cases and wishes to inquire as to how often the waivers are granted, as well as by whom. This line of inquiry stems from the concern of the UC regarding when grants are given to people from disaster or war zones.

The EB took note of the questions of the council. Regarding scholarships, the criteria are well-established, but the EB would like to expand on the options available to students; the EB shares the view of the council that the accessibility criteria for scholarships should broaden to better reflect the individual talent, as well as international and regional profiles. The EB wishes to organise a follow-up discussion with the council in the presence of the Rector Magnificus, to better answer the concerns of the council. However, the EB wishes to note that the developments of grants and waiver policies might be impacted, in the future, by the national debates concerning the internationalisation of education. The UC is aware that the national policymaking will have an impact on the EUR policy but expects that EUR will not make decisions based on assumptions of the national debate, as well as not make decisions that go against the Erasmian Values.

On a similar note, the UC questioned whether the criteria of grants and waivers align with the EUR vision of inclusivity and diversity, especially considering that the strategy was implemented 4 years ago and yet the issue has not been overcome. The EB believes this to be a misrepresentation of the EUR vision, as the ideas of inclusion and diversity have developed and changed over the years, which

might explain why the issue is only now becoming relevant. Also, EB wishes to look at the local impact that grants have.

Action point: the UC will share the questions and remarks on *Institutional tuition fees* in a letter of advice to the EB.

Action point: Table follow-up on scholarships for next CM.

02.03 State of affairs advice UC to EB

- BSA

Following the decision of the Ministry to reduce the BSA threshold to 30 ECTS, the UC decided to send the letter of advice, already sent to the EB, to the Ministry as well as to indicate our stance regarding this decision. Similarly, the UC would like to know the opinion of the board regarding this decision.

During the meeting, the EB shared their opposition to the decision made by the Ministry. Although the EB is aware that the 60 ECTS BSA requirement is an imperfect instrument with several downsides to its application, such as increased study pressure, the EB believes that there are several positive long-term implications of its use. Specifically, it provides better guidance for students that struggle to finalise their higher education by guiding them toward different academic paths. Also, it reduces the financial burden on the University caused by unpaid students. These observations are supported by studies, situations in the past and at other institutions in which the increase in the BSA requirement solved these issues.

The EB decided to share this opposition with the Ministry; the EB is planning on addressing several issues that will be encountered when the BSA will be lowered and requesting the help of the Government to resolve them.

All things considered, the EB and the UC are interested in maintaining higher BSA criteria than the Ministry decided on. Similarly, other Dutch universities share this view and are communicating it with the Ministry. The EB appreciated our point of view and our efforts of maintaining a higher BSA.

Action point: The UC will share the letter of advice to the EB on *BSA* with the Ministry of Education.

03 Any other business

03.01 Evaluation Occupy EUR

The UC expected to receive the report on OccupyEUR in May and requested the state of affairs of the investigation.

The EB explained that the draft report is being finalised after undergoing a final feedback session. The EB is involved in the feedback session to clarify factual misunderstandings. The EB firmly expects the final version of the report on the 14th of June. Therefore, the evaluation of OccupyEUR will be tabled for the final UC cycle.

Action point: the OccupyEUR Evaluation Report will be tabled for the final UC cycle.

03.02 Accessibility

The UC joined an awareness session on the state of affairs of accessibility on our campus and shared their view with the EB.

The UC stated that the standard of physical accessibility on campus is problematic, despite the numerous developments in the buildings, as well as the campus lacking the building disadvantages encountered in older, medieval campuses. The UC believes that the accessibility problems are remaining unresolved due to a lack of central policy; at the moment, accessibility at EUR depends on many different committees. On the other hand, students with functional impairments have to go through many bureaucratic bottlenecks to receive the help they need, which then delays their study progress significantly and enhances the distress they feel. For example, tutors are not allowed to make judgements about the type of exemptions they can offer their students, such as absences or taking oral examinations online instead of offline; these examples could make a difference for students with impairments, as they would be allowed to continue their education without major delays they otherwise experience when dealing with central policy and committees.

The EB understood the viewpoints of the UC and is working on reducing the mistakes in accessibility issues and the time for receiving exemptions. Furthermore, the EB is aware that the percentage of students struggling with disabilities is significant and wishes to enhance the awareness of this topic with the different committees as well as individually with educators and tutors. However, the EB was not completely convinced that we need a central policy for accessibility, as further creates bottlenecks and restricts the ability to react locally to problems of accessibility; the EB believes that awareness is the more urgent matter of the two.

Furthermore, the UC wished to differentiate our requests. On the one hand, the UC believes that we need to improve the central policy on physical accessibility issues in order to tackle the major building issues. On the other hand, the UC believes that there needs to be better instruments that allow staff and students to tackle personal accessibility matters at a local level.

The UC agreed on tabling this discussion for an upcoming cycle to better prepare to address our concerns.

Action point: the UC will table the discussion on the EUR Accessibility for an upcoming cycle.

03.03 Events 3rd Occupation

The EB issued a statement regarding the events that occurred on the 3rd OccupyEUR event; the board believes that the events of the occupation have become grimmer and the incidents more dangerous, including a threat to the life of a EUR security member. EB felt there was a clear infringement on the Erasmian values. The EB wishes to discuss this matter in depth at the time of the review of the OccupyEUR report. Therefore, both topics will be tabled for the upcoming cycle.

Action point: the discussion on the events of the 3rd occupation is tabled for the upcoming cycle.