

**University Council
Third Plenary Meeting
Erasmus University Rotterdam**

Date and Time: 11/04/2023, 14:00 – 16:00

Location: Langeveld 1.16

Present in the Meeting: **Ivonne Cune-Noten (chair)**, Sebastiaan Kamp, Max Wagenaar, Jaap Cornelese, Natascha Kraal, Aleid Fokkema, Ernst Hulst, Simo Azzarhouni, Albert Wagelmans, Irena Boskovic, Tom van Dijken, Erin van Gestel, Nawin Ramcharan, Wesley Hennep, Veerle Bakker, Friso Roos, Cagla Altin, Lobke van Steenberg (Clerk), Ellie Cercel (Minutes).

Absents: Sandra Constantinou Juhasz, Emese von Bóné, Luuk van Tol, Wincey Randoe, Georgiana Carp, Nikita Schoenmaker, Chaya Raghoenath.

Waiver: Patryk Jarmakowicz.

01 Opening

01.01 Setting of the agenda

The agenda was set without adjustments.

01.02 Minutes first plenary meeting

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

01.03 Announcements

- *New Clerk*

The Presidium had a meeting with Roxanne Austin to assess her suitability for the role of UC Clerk as of next year. The Presidium unanimously agreed to her profile. The Chair proposed inviting Roxanne to the first Plenary meeting of the next cycle to introduce the Council and to have her spectate the final cycle. The UC agreed to these proposals.

02 Agenda items plenary meeting UC

02.01 Educational Vision

The concept letter of consent to the *Educational Vision* was shared this week with the UC via Teams. The UC agreed on sending this version of the letter.

Additionally, several members of the TF EV shared their heightened dissatisfaction with the low member turnout in the TF meetings.

Action point: The UC Clerk will format the letter of consent on *Educational Vision* and send it to the EB.

02.02 Erasmus Perspectives

The TF has not shared with the UC the letter of consent and advice to the *Erasmus Perspectives* yet. The TF updated the UC on the state of affairs regarding this agenda item.

The TF reviewed the EP document and structured their remarks in writing to CPC; the response was shared with the TF yesterday, which delayed them from formulating a reply letter in time for the third Plenary meeting. In summary, the TF is addressing three main issues: 1) investments above 1 million Euros, 2) changes in the allocation model, and 3) risk scenarios. Also, in the past weeks, there were several other topics wherein unexpected changes in budgets took place. The UC suggested the TF investigate whether these changes are represented correctly in the EP. The TF had already considered this issue and noted that changes are being represented in the EP only for 2024; the TF incorporated this remark in the advice letter.

The letter of advice and consent to the EP will be shared in time for the first Plenary meeting. The Clerk will inform the policymakers of this delay which was due to the late arrival of the necessary information. **Action points:** the TF will draft the concept letter of consent and advice to *Erasmus perspectives* before the first Plenary meeting of the next cycle. The Clerk will inform the policymakers of the delay in the procedure relating to *Erasmus Perspectives*. The Clerk will table the discussion on the agenda point *Erasmus Perspectives* for the first Plenary meeting of the next cycle.

02.03 Student Charter 2023-2024

The concept letter of consent to the *Student Charter 2023-2024* was shared last week with the UC via Teams. The UC agreed on sending this version of the letter.

Action point: The UC Clerk will format the letter of consent on *Student Charter 2023-2024* and send it to the EB.

02.04 2023 Whistle-blower Regulations

The concept letter of advice on the *2023 Whistle-blower Regulations* was shared last week with the UC via Teams.

The overall advice of the council is positive. However, the UC discussed the ongoing confusion regarding Chapter 4.12 in the policy concerning anonymous witnesses. Despite the additional clarification provided by the policymakers, the UC maintains that the wording of the article does not sufficiently clarify whether the statement of a witness that wishes to remain anonymous is disregarded or whether a statement that mentions another witness who is anonymous is disregarded. The law does not state a similar provision about (dis)regarding the statement of an anonymous witness. The council believes that the way the article is phrased now can be misinterpreted by later users and strongly advises the policymakers to rectify this chapter. Initially, the councillors advised deleting the chapter, but following the discussion in the council, we will also suggest the replacement of the text with “non-verifiable information”, while omitting any reference to witnesses.

In conclusion, the UC agreed on sending the letter of advice to the *2023 Whistle-blower Regulations* with the adjustment which was discussed in the Plenary meeting.

Action point: the councillors will adjust the letter with the advice mentioned in the meeting regarding Chapter 4.12. The UC Clerk will format the letter of advice on the *2023 Whistle-blower Regulations* after the mentioned adjustment and send it to the EB.

02.05 Institutional tuition fee 2024-2025

The concept letter of advice for the *Institutional tuition fee 2024-2025* was shared last week with the UC via Teams. The UC agreed on sending this version of the letter.

Action point: The UC Clerk will format the letter of advice on *Institutional tuition fee 2024-2025* and send it to the EB.

02.06 Institutional tuition fee Ukrainian students

The concept letter of advice for the *Institutional tuition fee Ukrainian students* was shared last week with the UC via Teams. The UC agreed on sending this version of the letter.

Action point: The UC Clerk will format the letter of advice on *Institutional tuition fee Ukrainian students* and send it to the EB.

02.07 Impact definition

The concept letter of advice on the *Impact definition* was shared yesterday with the UC via Teams. Most UC members considered there had not been sufficient time to read the letter and did so during the meeting. Following the break, the UC concluded that more time is needed to prepare for engaging in a discussion on this agenda point and decided upon tabling the discussion on the *Impact definition* for the first Plenary meeting.

Also, a councillor remarked that, in previous meetings of this cycle, the UC discussed the organisational green pact reference and whether we should use it to emphasise the focus we have as an organisation; the outcome of the discussion was to incorporate it into the advice letter, yet it has not been integrated into the letter shared with the council.

As there is no TF, the UC decided to contribute their points to the letter on Teams. The discussion and voting on the letter will take place in the first Plenary meeting.

Action point: The UC members will integrate their remarks on the *Impact definition* concept letter via Teams. The Clerk will table the agenda point *Impact definition* at the first Plenary meeting of the next cycle.

02.08 Opening hours buildings

A concept letter of initiative on *Opening hours buildings* was shared with the UC via Teams last week. In this letter, the UC argues for the elimination of the office registration system. The councillors discussed their standpoint on this policy.

Firstly, the UC would like to address in the letter the issue of unclear and untimely communication regarding the policy, both to the UC and the academic staff.

Furthermore, the UC engaged in a divisive discussion regarding the content of this initiative. On one side, several councillors advocated against the policy and proposed granting academic staff access to their offices beyond the current working hours to facilitate their access to relevant materials, such as physical books, articles, and papers. Further, they disputed the argument put forth by the EB in the previous cycle CM, which claimed that the policy cannot be adjusted due to practical constraints related to security and central heating operations. They further argued that this policy contributes to employees' reluctance to return to working on campus following the lockdowns, which further enhances the low attendance of EUR staff in offices.

On the other side, several councillors opposed this initiative on the grounds that it contradicts the UC's value of improving sustainability practices on campus. Further, they argued that the need for physical office spaces is outdated, as proven by the COVID-19 lockdowns. Further, they highlighted the legal requirement for employers to provide their employees with fully heated spaces and security, making the request unfounded. Finally, they suggested that they could support the initiative if the letter excluded points 3) and 4), which pertain to the wellbeing of staff being hindered by the policy.

The discussion helped clarify the shared goals of the UC regarding the opening hours of the office spaces. The councillors agree on the elimination of the current system which requires a one-day advance registration period for access to buildings and offices. However, there was disagreement within the UC regarding the prioritisation of sustainability versus entitlement to spaces and wellbeing. Furthermore, the discussion revealed information gaps, such as the legal requisites for employment conditions and sustainability costs per building. Also, the council would like to investigate whether the need to access one's own office space varies among faculties, as it appears that the ESPHIL academic staff were more affected by this policy compared to staff from other departments.

Following a voting procedure, the council agreed to table the initiative for the upcoming cycle, excluding points 3) and 4). The letter will advise the EB to conduct further research into the needs of employees in different departments and the cost-effectiveness of their respective buildings operating beyond the current restricted hours. A temporary TF comprising councillors Jaap, Albert, Irena, and Max was established to tackle this topic.

Action point: The TF will incorporate the remarks of the UC on the initiative *Opening hours buildings* and The UC Clerk will format the letter of informal advice on the *Opening hours buildings* and send it to the EB. The Clerk will add the discussion on the personal offices as discussion for the first plenary of the next cycle.

02.09 Ties with the fossil fuel industry

A concept letter of initiative was shared with the UC in Teams. The TF had a meeting with the EB Vice-President, and it appeared that the VP is willing to cooperate with us on this topic. In light of this, the TF proposed the following procedure: a voting process will be conducted on the key parts of the letter, and those agreed-upon will be addressed in the next CM. This way, the UC could engage in a productive debate with the EB instead of relying on written exchanges with the EB secretariat. Subsequently, a final letter of initiative will be sent to the EB following the discussion in the CM.

During the meeting, the UC members voted on the content of the proposal. The majority was in favor of all three proposals: 1) the establishment of a one-year moratorium on collaborations with the fossil fuel industry, 2) addressing an emergency letter from the EB to the Dutch parliament, 3) communicating with other UCs in the Netherlands to begin a collaborative process on this topic.

Several members of the council suggested investigating our ties with other harmful industries, such as chemical companies. However, the UC agreed to focus on the fossil fuel industries for the time being and extend our efforts to other polluting industries in the future.

Furthermore, the UC suggested enlisting the help of an independent committee to undergo the assessment of the different industries we are partnered with, based on which a decision will be made following the moratorium. The UC argued upon requiring the help of an impartial committee.

Action point: The Clerk will table the topic *Ties with the fossil fuel industry* for the second Plenary meeting of the next cycle, to discuss the approach during the CM.

02.10 UC monitor

The link to the UC follow-up survey was shared with the UC via Teams. Due to time issues, the councilors were requested to provide their responses to the survey after the Plenary meeting and up to Thursday afternoon.

Action point: The UC will respond to the UC follow-up survey in Teams before Thursday afternoon.

02.11 Evaluation CM

The councilors evaluated the previous CM.

Overall, the councilors were satisfied with the CM. The UC was especially positive about the attitude of the EB during the discussion of the agenda point *Accessibility*; the councilors noted that the EB is responsive to personal stories as they can relate and provide concrete solutions to the voiced issues.

The UC reflected on an improvement point, namely that we should ensure the discussion does not derail from the main points that were prepared for the meeting, as we appear underprepared, and the EB can use it to their advantage; the UC remarked this happening in the past and agreed to improve it.

Furthermore, the UC was displeased by the absence of the Rector given the topics on the agenda. The Chair took note of this complaint and will monitor the presence of EB members in future meetings.

03 Incoming documents

- 38558 – Safe@EUR

The TF Social Safety & Wellbeing will inspect the response letter *Safe@EUR* and consider whether a response is necessary.

- 38562 – BSA

The UC decided that no further action is necessary regarding the summary.

- Financial Support Fund revision

The UC considered that more time is necessary to decide whether further action is necessary regarding this document.

- DEF Bestuursakkoord

The UC is sufficiently informed on this topic and no further action is necessary.

04 Any other business

05 Closing

