University Council
First Plenary Meeting
Erasmus University Rotterdam

Date and Time: 05/09/2023, 15:00 – 17:00
Location: Rotterdam Diergaarde Blijdorp, Blijdorplaan 8
Present in the Meeting: Ivonne Cune-Noten (chair), Ernst Hulst, Katarzyna Lasak, Sebastiaan Kamp, Pedro van Gessel, Esra Kahramanoglu, Joseph Ayinla, Albert Wagelmans, Timo Zandvliet, Cagla Altin, Yasin Demir, Nawin Ramcharan, Linquendo van der Klooster**, Emre Ulusoy, Linda Dekker, Natascha Kraal, Emese von Bone, Rosita Boedhai-Jansen, Maryam Mohamed, Aleid Fokkema, Tom van Dijken, Achraf Taouil, Anthony van der Linden,** Roxanne Austin (Clerk), Ellie Cercel (Minutes), Sophie Luck (M&C Officer), Hanna Barkoczi (M&C Officer).
Absent: Max Wagenaar.

01 Opening

01.01   Setting of the agenda

01.02 Announcements
  -    Welcome to all the new UC-members, the new Clerk, and M&C Officers
The UC came together in a new format, with newly elected staff and student members, a newly appointed Clerk, and M&C Officers. Further, the Chair informed the UC that this academic year attendance during plenary meetings will be tracked in a new format.

02 Agenda items plenary meeting UC
02.01 Voting Ad interim positions Presidium

Councillors Cagla, Nawin, Pedro and Aleid have been voted to join the Presidium. Councillor Anthony will be placed in the backup position.

02.02 Voting CC members

The members of the UC selected the members of the Confidentiality Committee through a voting procedure.

02.03 Voting HoKa/HeQa members

The members of the UC selected the members of the HeQa Task Force through a voting procedure. The elected employees were councillors Albert, Emese and Linda. The elected students were councillors Emre, Anthony, Timo, and Linquend. Councillors Tom and Achraf Taouil were selected for the backup positions. Councillor Nawin withdrew from the election. In the necessary case, a new voting procedure will take place to select a TF member from the backup positions. Furthermore, the UC was informed that attendance in TF will be recorded, and 3 or more TF meeting absences will lead to expulsion from the TF.

02.04 Voting CMT student position

The members of the UC selected the members of the CMT student position through a voting procedure. The elected member was Yasin. Councillors Anthony and Achraf will be considered for the backup positions.

02.05 Regular Task Forces

Regular Taskforces are expected to run for an entire academic year. The selected TF Leads will have the added responsibility of maintaining contact with respective policymakers. Besides the TF composition decided upon during the current meeting, all UC members are invited to contribute their ideas and efforts to the TF tasks of their liking. Also, all TF meetings are public, and interested members of the UC are invited to join when interested. Besides the regular TFs decided in the meeting, new temporary TFs can be created throughout the academic year depending on topics and needs.

The following regular TF were put forth during the meeting:

- **Social Safety and Wellbeing** will consist of councillors Aleid (Lead), Linda, Joseph, Achraf, Natasha, Sebastiaan, and Rosita; topics such as employee monitors, HR, social safety, and student wellbeing could be covered by the TF.
- **Policy** will consist of councillors Sebastiaan (Lead), Albert, Cagla, Anthony, and Achraf; the TF will be concerned with improving the regulation, monitoring, transparency, and communication of policies throughout EUR and at the Faculty level.
- **Strategy** will consist of councillors Albert (Lead), Natascha, Aleid, Yasin, Tom, Pedro, Linquendo, and Timo; this TF will be concerned with different strategic updates and projects such as the Convergence and the new EUR strategy.
- **Diversity and Inclusion** will consist of councillors Cagla (Lead) Sebastian, Maryam, Yasin, Rosita, Ernst, Emese, Joseph, and Esra.
- **Professionalization of the UC** will consist of councillors Nawin (Lead), Tom, Maryam, Cagla, Rosita, Joseph, and Achraf; topics covered will be, for instance, improving the party and list systems.
- **Finance** will consist of councillors Natascha (Lead), Esra, Anthony, Pedro, Timo, Tom, Albert, and Aleid; the TF will be concerned with topics such as EUR budgets, Convergence budgets, Erasmus Perspectives, and other financial updates involving the EUR.
- **Sustainability** will consist of councillors Tom & Yasin (co-leads), Sebastiaan, Natascha, Ernst, Emese, Linda, Achraf, Linquendo, and Cagla; topics covered by the TF can include sustainability projects and policies and there will be close contact with members of the EB.

In addition to the formation of the TF, the Chair informed the UC that the possibility of forming an informal participatory body to the Convergence is currently being considered. This body will be a joint activity from representatives of various stakeholder groups to the Convergence. The goal of this is to enhance oversight and communication. The Chair clarified that the formal rights of the UC regarding the Convergence will continue to be reinforced in this scenario.

Members of the UC raised the issue that, if we join the other stakeholders in frequent conversations, we should be cautious of the different interests involved. On a similar note, the UC reiterated the request of receiving more involvement and a better overview of the participatory rights which are not fully being enforced now, especially concerning the Convergence.

02.06 Meeting Schedule

The schedule of the entire academic year is shared in MyMeeting. Additional training dates and meetings are shared in the Outlook agenda. Additional meetings will be planned in consultation with the Council.

The UC was sufficiently informed about the topic.

02.07 Starting and Incentive grants EUR

The final policy proposal of the EB regarding the Starting and Incentive grants was shared with the UC. This proposal comes as a result of advice and discussions with the UC, the vice deans of research, and the financial directors. The TF Finance will begin working on this topic.

Regarding the documentation, it was remarked that the policy on the 20% overhead division was not yet shared with the UC despite having been mentioned in the cover letter. Also, the UC request in the final cycle of the previous year for a document outlining the different packages and improved transparency requirements was not yet fulfilled. These issues will be considered by the Clerk and the TF in conversations with the policymakers.

Action points: The UC Clerk will request the missing documents. The TF Finance will prepare the topic *Starting and Incentive grants EUR* and the topic will be tabled for the Second Plenary meeting.

02.08 Action plan studying with a functional impairment

The TF Diversity and Inclusion will begin working on this topic. A remark was shared in the meeting wherein the SMF Team is not assigned a high FTE amount, despite seemingly ambitious plans. The UC requested more details about the working conditions within the team.

Action point: The TF D&I will begin working on the topic and address the remarks of the UC.

02.09 Policy Development Cycle

The TF Wellbeing & Social Safety will begin working on the P&D cycle revision. Councillor Albert will join the TF temporarily for this agenda point.

Action point: The TF Wellbeing & Social Safety will begin working on the P&D cycle revision.

02.10 Ties with the fossil fuel industry

In the previous academic year, the initiative *Ties with the fossil fuel industry* was launched by several councillors. The initiative revolves around examining the engagements with the fossil fuel industry. It encompasses the development of a monitor and the organization of dialogues within the EUR community. The UC had expressed its support for this initiative, but also raised concerns about the speed of its progress, emphasizing the need for urgency. Additionally, there are ongoing efforts to schedule meetings involving the EB, DIT, UC, and sustainability policymakers. During these meetings, we will explore the possibility of arranging a temporary break from collaborating with the most damaging companies and establish criteria for future collaborations.

Regarding dialogues with the VU, while the EB had previously expressed its intention to engage in such discussions, updates on this matter are still pending. Notably, in contrast with information shared in the previous CM, it has come to the attention of several councillors that VU has already completed its monitoring process and made decisions regarding ties with the fossil fuel industry. Also, the UC wishes to know when the EUR monitor will be finalized. The UC decided to discuss these remarks with the EB in the CM to obtain a more detailed picture of updates.

Finally, the UC decided to reach out to other University councils for potential collaborations on the topic.

Action point: The TF Sustainability will discuss cooperation opportunities with the other Dutch UCs. The TF Sustainability will research the UV decisions on ties with fossil fuel industries. The remarks will be discussed with the EB in the CM to obtain a more detailed picture of updates.

02.11 Access to offices

At the advice of a councillor who worked on this agenda point in the previous year, the UC decided to cease working on the topic of *Access to offices,* with the reasons being that action is being taken within each faculty affected by the decision to restrict access to offices in off-work hours.

02.12 Annual Report EUR 2022

No remarks were made during the meeting. The UC was sufficiently informed about the topic *Annual Report EUR 2022.*

02.13 Mindlab

The topic will be handled in the TF Social Safety & Wellbeing. The members of the UC consider this topic to be relevant to all employees and requested sending a reminder about the awareness campaign to all employees. Also, the UC is invited to attend the event.

02.14 Highlight report December 2022 and March 2023

No remarks were made during the meeting. The UC was sufficiently informed about the topic *Highlight report December 2022 and March 2023.*

02.15 Policy framework for events (with external speakers)

The policy framework for events with external speakers was shared with the UC as right for information. The members of the UC discussed several remarks about the formal process and the content of the policy document.

Firstly, the UC agreed that the formal rights of the UC should be of advice and urged the Chair to resolve the matter with the EB. This will be done at the upcoming CM, but the Chair urged the UC to prepare a letter of informal advice on this topic.

Secondly, several questions regarding the document were shared in the meeting.

- Why are certain faculties allowed to make their own rules regarding guest speakers?
- How are the factors established and by who?
- Regarding the factor "external speakers" who are known for controversial views. Who decides what is controversial? Can this be elaborated? (see p4, "external speakers known for controversial statements in the public view or social media...")
- Why was a new policy framework created and based on which threats?
- The policy requires a security advisor to decide on external guests; the UC believes that the responsibility should lie with a group of advisors or a committee. What is your view on this?
- Was there a policy framework in place for this scenario, and if so, where can we find it?
- Why will the document not be fully published?
- Page 16 mentions a side note that certain organizers can be charged with costs. This could be explained more clearly in the document.

On a more practical note, it was remarked that the links shared in Appendix 5 are faulty.

Considering all the above-mentioned questions, the UC believes that the policy document is unclear, which might create differences between faculties when implemented, as well as make it difficult to organize inter-faculty events. To address these concerns and seek clarification, the UC plans to invite the policymakers to the second plenary meeting. The UC agreed to share the above-mentioned questions and any additional ones via Teams to facilitate more efficient communication with the policymakers.

Action point: The Clerk will invite the policymaker responsible for the agenda point *Policy framework for events* to the Second Plenary Meeting.

03 Incoming documents

- **SMF update**

The councillors ran into troubleshooting issues when opening one of the documents shared. The Clerk will share the document again with the UC via Teams.

- **Reaction EB to Erasmus Perspectives**

The EB response letter to the UC letter on Erasmus Perspectives has not been shared yet. The Clerk will work on rectifying the issue.

04 Any other business

04.01 Evaluation onboarding

Members of the UC who participated in the onboarding process shared their reflections. In general, the councillors were positive about the events. They were pleased to see that advice from previous years had been incorporated into this year's onboarding and they commended the overall organization and communication.

However, some suggestions were put forth. For instance, there was a desire for more comprehensive information about the system of the university, as some members found certain details, like the HeQa TF, challenging to grasp. One member mentioned that having detailed information presented during the meeting made it easier for them to sign up for TFs and proposed extending the deadline for TF sign-ups to accommodate this.

There was also a discussion about the dinner event, with one councillor feeling that it might have been exclusive for those who do not consume alcohol and raising questions about whether drinking can be considered professional behaviour. It is important to note that this experience was not shared by all council members.

Lastly, some UC members expressed a desire for more dedicated time with policymakers during the onboarding week.

04.02 Study Spaces at EUR

Last year, particularly during weekends and the final months of the academic year, the EUR campus was faced with study space shortages. This discussion on this agenda point was deferred during the summer break but is now resurfacing as the first few weeks tend to be busy as well. Two years ago, additional study spaces were created, but the problem persists due to the popularity of certain spots, wherein not all spaces are utilized effectively. An informal TF consisting of councillors Nawin (Lead), Joseph, and Rosita was formed to tackle this agenda point.

04.03 M&C Officers

Some members of the UC wished to know what the interaction between the 2 M&C Officers would look like and how it involved the UC. The M&C Officers shared they will work closely together to achieve the same goals, will share the relevant tasks amongst themselves, and therefore can be seen as one position. The advantage of this formulation is that they will be able to put more effort and time into this task.