

University Council
Third Plenary Meeting
Erasmus University Rotterdam

Date and Time: 03/10/2023, 14:00 – 16:00

Location: Polak 2.20

Present in the Meeting: Ivonne Cune-Noten (chair), Ernst Hulst, Katarzyna Lasak, Sebastiaan Kamp, Pedro van Gessel, Joseph Ayinla, Timo Zandvliet, Cagla Altin, Nawin Ramcharan, Linqendo van der Klooster, Emre Ulusoy, Linda Dekker, Natascha Kraal, Emese von Bone, Rosita Boedhai-Jansen, Aleid Fokkema, Tom van Dijken, Achraf Taouil, Anthony van der Linden, Max Wagenaar, Roxanne Austin (Clerk), Ellie Cercel (Minutes).

Absent: Albert Wagelmans, Maryam Mohamed.

Waiver: Yasin Demir, Esra Kahramanoglu.

01 Opening

01.01 Setting of the agenda

The agenda was set without adjustments.

01.02 Minutes second plenary meeting

- **02.01** – the section will include a mention of the lack of acknowledgment on behalf of the EB to our advice provided on the 31st of June
- **02.03** – the tone in this paragraph was considered harsh and will be improved.

With these adjustments, the minutes were set.

The action points were set.

01.03 Announcements

- Thursday's events (EMC)

Following last Thursday's tragic events at EMC, the EB announced a period of mourning for the university. Therefore, the meeting starts by reflecting on the events and holding a moment of silence. A condolence register will be open in the silence room on campus Woudestein. All UC members were encouraged to sign the register. Besides, the UC Chair was asked to sign the register officially, on behalf of the UC.

The UC discussed sending a letter of support regarding the incident to the boards of EUR and EMC. The Chair and Clerk will share the drafted letter this week.

The UC discussed the availability of support services following the incident. The Living Room support services were extended by one hour to allow students who had exams in the intended timeslot to join. However, there were reports from affected students that they would have preferred several more dates to be available for support. Councillor Linda will inform the Wellbeing staff of this request. However, these students can still benefit from these services, either by asking the Living Room staff for help or by calling the phone lines available by the Rotterdam Municipality.

- Update regarding UC Members

Maryam decided to withdraw her position as UC councillor due to personal circumstances. The Election Office is currently in the process of appointing her replacement.

Councillor Esra is absent and has a waiver until October 24th. From October 24 until February 2, councillor Esra will not be able to participate in the UC. During this period, she will be replaced by Rami Elorabi.

02 Agenda items plenary meeting UC

02.01 Voting Presidium

Councillors Aleid, Pedro, Nawin, and Cagla were appointed as temporary Presidium members during the first Plenary meeting. Since no other candidates signed up, no voting procedure took place in this meeting. As a result, the four councillors will remain in their roles permanently for the remainder of the academic year.

If a member will not be able to attend the Presidium anymore, a new election will be held for that slot.

02.02 Starting and Incentive grants EUR

During the CM, UC councillors identified certain flaws in the handling of both the procedure and content aspects pertaining to this agenda point. Also, the councillors made some suggestions to the EB on how a similar situation can better be handled in the future, either by elaborating on the procedural steps in the cover note as to how the advice was used, or an explicit mention of the reasoning behind the inclusion or exclusion of the suggestions in the decision-making process.

In response, the EB acknowledged the UC's concerns and promised to implement the requested improvements.

Action point: the Clerk will table the topic *Starting and Incentive grants EUR* to the upcoming cycle if the requested documentation is provided.

02.03 Action plan studying with a functional impairment

The concept letter of advice on *Action plan studying with a functional impairment* was shared online with the councillors. No remarks were during the meeting made regarding the content of the letter. The councillors approved of sending the letter.

However, the UC discussed the new procedure of sharing the concept letters online. In the previous year, all concept letters were shared as Word documents via the UC Teams channel, which was favourable as it allowed for comments and corrections. This encouraged a collaborative process on all topics. However, this year, the decision has been made to share the concept letters via the public online environment, for all interested EUR students and staff to access. Some councillors favoured the new procedure, as it fosters transparency by allowing meeting guests to be aware of all content discussed in the meetings. On the other hand, we want to avoid giving the impression that the concept letters represent the final or majority stance of the UC, when, in fact, the official discussions and voting happen in the meetings they are tabled for. The councillors agreed that both perspectives have their merits; it was decided that all concept letters will be shared internally via Teams as Word documents, which allows the option of making adjustments or suggestions, while a PDF version will be shared on the public website with the explicit mention "Proposal for Voting" which clarifies that a decision on the content is yet to be made during the respective meeting.

Action points: The UC Clerk will format the letter of advice on *Action plan studying with a functional impairment* and send it to the EB. All UC concept letters will be shared in *Teams* as Word documents and in *my meeting* as PDF documents with the watermark "Propos

02.04 Draft Policy Development cycle

The concept letter of advice on the *Draft Policy Development cycle* was shared with the UC. Additional remarks regarding the letter were shared during the meeting.

Firstly, in either the first or the second sections of the letter, a reference to the CAO (i.e., collective labor agreements) clause that the original document agrees on will be added. This reference relates to the legal requirement of including compensations relating to career progress. Secondly, the letter will be expanded to include a remark on the lack of regulations on team functioning and related evaluation.

Action point: The TF Lead will make the discussed adjustments to the letter. The UC Clerk will format the adjusted letter of advice on *Draft Policy Development cycle* and send it to the EB.

02.05 Policy framework for events (with external speakers)

After reviewing the discussion with the Executive Board, the UC has chosen to extend the period needed to prepare a letter of informal advice on the topic *Policy framework for events (with external speakers)*. For this purpose, a TF was formed comprising of councilors Achraf (Lead), Aleid, Nawin, Joseph, Anthony, Cagla, and Sebastiaan. The TF will be responsible for drafting the letter of informal advice, which will be shared with the UC before the upcoming 2nd Plenary meeting.

The UC further discussed the content of the policy. A councilor reiterated their concern regarding the potential misuse of the policy for censorship. However, the majority of the UC disagreed with this viewpoint. The UC believes that the new policy will be an improvement from the previous approach, which relied on ad hoc decisions regarding event speakers. Further, the UC agrees with the EB on the point that the policy is a work in progress that will be evaluated once implemented.

Action point: the TF Policy framework for events (with external speakers) will draft a letter of informal advice. The UC Clerk will table the discussion on the Policy framework for events (with external speakers) for the Second Plenary Meeting on October 31st.

02.06 Mindlab

During the CM, it emerged that the ISS Human Resource Business Partner was not aware of the planning of Mindlab. This was surprising to the EB as they were under the impression they had been informed. According to the Mindlab policymaker, the ISS and EUC contacts did not reply to the invitation sent. According to the ISS UC member, the ISS HRBP received the invitation but did not wish to emphasize the participation of ISS employees, since Mindlab is mainly in Dutch (with English subtitles), while ISS staff is mostly international. The UC would like to address this as the UC believes it is important to encourage participation. However, several UC councilors understood the situation, as the high workload experienced by staff makes it difficult to attend additional events.

The councilors also discussed attending a Mindlab session as a University Council. The UC Clerk will arrange a date for the UC to attend. The Chair emphasized the importance of presence once more and asked the councilors to provide a reason in case of absence.

Action points: The TF will draft a letter of advice on *Mindlab*. The Clerk will table the discussion for the First Plenary meeting.

03 Incoming documents

03.01 Invitation LDE

The UC was invited to an online meeting with the LDE Dean. The link to the meeting can be found in Teams. The UC discussed preparing for the meeting.

In previous years, the UC experienced communication challenges with the LDE policymakers, especially regarding financial aspects and the collaborative relationship with LDE. While the UC is made aware of a budget increase, the UC lacks information about the spending plans and goals of this increase.

To address this issue more effectively, the council discussed some approaches. One option was to request the spending overview from the LDE policymakers, which will necessitate further discussions within the UC and with the EB. Additionally, the UC will inquire with the LDE policymakers about their intended role of the UC and our involvement in the upcoming year.

Action points: the Clerk will share the question about UC participation with the LDE policymakers. The Clerk will table the agenda point *Budget LDE* at the second Plenary meeting.

03.02 Response political party Volt to our letter: Verkeersmaatregelen ter verhoging van de verkeersveiligheid rondom het complex Woudestein; dreigende opheffing tramlijn 7.

In the previous academic year, the UC aimed to maintain public transport accessibility following the cancellation of tram line 7 and to ensure road safety for pedestrians and cyclists crossing the street.

Further, a councilor was in contact with municipal representatives, who have initiated a traffic safety investigation. Upon completion of the survey, the committee expressed willingness to have a discussion with the UC. Also, the municipality has already decided to cancel tram line 7, and the organization MRDA is now overseeing the process. The UC can expedite the process by reaching out to this organization.

However, the Chair reminded the UC that our primary role is to signal irregularities through the EB of EUR, rather than work actively on remedying them. As a result, the UC will discuss the outcomes of this advice with the EB and make a joint decision on how to proceed.

Additionally, the tramline cancellation may increase the traffic on the metro lines adjacent to the campus. However, the path leading towards the metro consists of loose stones, and the increased traffic flow might lead to more accidents.

Councilors Ernst, Achraf, and Joseph will meet with Volt and present the situation around campus.

Action point: Councilors Ernst, Achraf, and Joseph will meet with Volt and point out the loose stones on the path leading towards the metro

04 Any other business

04.01 Reflection CM

The councilors expressed their appreciation to Councilor Aleid for chairing the CM.

Further, a reflection of the discussion took place. Firstly, it was remarked that, at several instances during the meeting, the discussion was not kept central, which made the main conversation confusing and disruptive. The councilors would like to prevent this from taking place in the future. Secondly, it was remarked that the points shared in the meeting, as well as during any other

business, should be, in general, agreed on before the CM, as they are shared in the name of the UC. For this purpose, a new agenda point will be introduced in all second plenary meetings during which the UC will prepare the agenda items tabled at the CM. Thirdly, the council concluded that all topics should be handled sensitively, with a neutral tone and content.

Action point: the UC Clerk will table the agenda point *Preparation CM* at all second Plenary meetings.

04.02 Availability and Presence on Tuesdays

The Chair reflected on the presence of the University councilors during the activities scheduled on Tuesdays. This discussion was triggered by the UC attendance during the *Smarter Academic Year* meeting, wherein only 9 members of the council were present. The poor attendance may reflect less professionalism. The Chair emphasized that it would be preferable if the UC members who cannot attend or are not interested in joining the extra meetings, inform the UC Clerk about their intention and reasoning. On a similar note, several TFs shared troubling attendance numbers during TF meetings. The Chair reminded the UC that, according to the regulations, regular absences will lead to exclusion from the TFs, and every UC member is required to be active in at least 1 TF in each cycle. Lack of participation in the activities of the UC may lead to the withdrawal of financial compensation as a UC member.

04.03 Update regarding evaluation opening hours library

In May and June, REF conducted a pilot with extended opening hours of the University Library. The outcome of the pilot will be preliminarily discussed with a small committee. A TF has been established for this discussion, comprising of councilors Achraf (Lead), Nawin, Joseph, and Sebastiaan.

Action point: the TF *Evaluation opening hours library pilot* will discuss the outcomes of the pilot opening hours library with the policymakers

04.04 Event for visibility UC (24th October)

On the 24th of October, the UC M&C Officers have organized an event with the goal of increasing the visibility of the UC: a popcorn stand will be placed at Erasmus Plaza and several councilors will be present to connect with students and staff while handing out popcorn. The stand will take place from 14:00 onwards. Councilors Natascha, Cagla, Anthony, Joseph, Lina, Linquendo, and Aleid have put themselves forth for the event. The M&C Officers will create a roster to ensure constant presence at the stand and the councilors can indicate their preferences.

Further, the UC requested the M&C Officers to organize a similar event at other Erasmus University locations, such as ISS and EMC. Also, it was suggested to make merchandize available with the UC logo.

04.05 AOB

- Emergency alarm – a councilor shared that new EUR students should be better informed by the university that an emergency alarm is set off every month, as this has led to some students panicking the previous Monday.

Action point: the UC Clerk will share the concerns regarding the unannounced Emergency alarm with the security team

- ISO – a student member of the UC was asked to be an informal contact link with ISO. The UC agreed with this proposal. However, some students from EUR and other universities are already in touch with ISO through a WhatsApp group chat. Councilor Cagla will share the group chat invite link with the interested councilors.
- Student loan interest rates – a councilor informed the UC that there will be an increase in the interest rates for student loans, which will affect many students and their studying possibilities. The councilor inquired if the UC could take action regarding this issue. Several remarks were made. For one, the UC does not have influence over this matter occurring at the national level. Also, there is no precedent for the UC addressing national or regional issues without the support of the EB. Thus, the topic will be discussed with the EB during the next CM.

Action point: the Clerk will table the agenda item *Student loan interest rates* to the upcoming Second Plenary meeting in preparation for the next CM.

- Vacation availability UC – a member of the UC requested that no activities be planned during regional vacation weeks. This request will be considered.
- Elevator in Polak building – the elevator in the Polak building has been broken for a significant amount of time without any reparation plans in sight. This is problematic, shared one councilor, since any issue with the remaining elevator will make the Polak building inaccessible, especially for people with accessibility limitations. The elevator issue was encountered in other buildings on campus, such as Van der Goot. The UC agreed to address these incidents with the EB.

Action point: The Clerk will address this issue to the relevant policymakers. The topic will be tabled at the CM, if necessary.

- Student wellbeing – a councilor enquired if there are sufficient student psychologists needed to address the higher demand for help following the incidents at EMC. It was shared in the meeting that the EUR psychologists increased their available time slots to deal with this situation. Also, the municipality of Rotterdam offered a public hotline.
- Quality Commission Supervisory Board – a new person was appointed in this position on 31st July 2023.