

University Council
Third Plenary Meeting
Erasmus University Rotterdam

Date and Time: 06/02/2024, 14:00 – 16:00

Location: Polak 2-18

Present in the Meeting: Ernst Hulst, Sebastiaan Kamp, Pedro van Gessel, Joseph Ayinla, Albert Wagelmans, Timo Zandvliet, Cagla Altin, Yasin Demir, Nawin Ramcharan, Rami Elorabi, Aki Negate, Linqendo van der Klooster, Emre Ulusoy, Linda Dekker, Emese von Bone, Aleid Fokkema, Tom van Dijken, Achraf Taouil, Wesley Hennep, Katarzyna Lasak, Rosita Boedhai-Jansen, Natascha Kraal, Roxanne Austin (Clerk), Ellie Cercel (Minutes).

Absent: Ivonne Cune-Noten (chair), Max Wagenaar.

Waiver: Anthony van der Linden.

01 Opening

01.01 Setting of the agenda

The agenda was set without adjustments.

01.02 Minutes second plenary meeting

The minutes and action points of the previous meeting were approved.

01.03 Announcements

- Temporary Chair Replacement

Unfortunately, Ivonne's recovery will take longer than expected. It is difficult to tell how long exactly, but reasonable to think that it will take one more cycle. Therefore, the Presidium has decided on how to deal with this situation. Also, as a question regarding this was shared in Teams. Following Article 5.1 from the rules of Procedure, the Presidium decided to rotate the chairperson within the Presidium. Next week Nawin will chair the first plenary meeting and the Presidium will communicate the chairpersons for the other meetings of the cycle, next week. The Clerk assists the Chair, also in making sure that the quality of the meeting and the impartiality of the Chairperson are guaranteed. Besides that, the UC has a shared responsibility to ensure good and respectful meetings. Unfortunately, this is the situation for now and we hope for Ivonne's good recovery. We also received a message that she appreciated the flowers and the card.

02 Agenda items plenary meeting UC

02.01 Additional budget request Convergence

The letter of consent with advice on *Additional Budget Request Convergence* was shared with the members of the UC. The members of the Finance taskforce advised the council to grant consent to the proposal for additional budget. In addition, the council advises the EB to follow the advice we shared with the CPC policymakers in separate meetings, as well as provide us with clear and official documents pertaining to the Convergence. No further remarks were shared in the meeting; the UC gave its formal consent with the additional points of advice as the letter will be shared with the EB.

Action points: the UC clerk will format the concept letter of consent and advice *Additional budget request Convergence* and share it with the EB.

02.02 EUR campaign budget rules for the student elections of the University Council 2024

The letter of advice on *EUR campaign budget rules* was shared with the UC. The members of the respective task force proposed the following points of advice. With it, the UC positively advises the Executive Board on their proposal of changing the subsidy rules to make them better fit with the new elections system, with several adjustments to the original proposal. Mainly, we advise an alternative to the proposed 50-50% split, specifically that 25% of the annual campaign budget is to be divided into equal parts per lists that have made a request and 75% of the budget to be awarded proportionally to each list that has made a request, based on the share of a student candidate list in the total number of student candidates running for election. Moreover, instead of a total of 30 candidates, we advise that only the first 12 students per list will be taken into account to calculate the share of a student candidate list, as there are 12 student spots to fill in the UC. Finally, we advise the EB to closely monitor the budget constraints in the upcoming elections and, if needed, to increase the total amount for next year. An addition to the letter was made wherein we requested an adjustment of the budget yearly based on inflation.

The advice is based on several financial scenarios showing how the proposed changes will allow for sufficient distribution of funds in a more proportionate manner. The members of the UC approved the letter of advice with an additional remark regarding the monitoring of inflation. The TF Lead will incorporate the adjustment in the letter of advice.

Action point: The TF lead will incorporate the adjustment in the letter of advice *EUR UC election campaign subsidy rules*. The UC Clerk will format the letter *EUR UC election campaign subsidy rules* of advice and share it with the EB.

02.03 Code of conduct for elections Erasmus

The letter of advice pertaining to the *Code of conduct proposal* was prepared and shared in Teams by the respective task force. The members of the UC read the letter and a discussion ensued. Several members of the UC expressed their disagreement with the contents of the letter, finding the approach inappropriate and highlighting that the letter misrepresented the UC's collective sentiment as shared in previous meetings.

Additionally, the discussion touched on the need for clarity regarding the consequences of code violations, and whether the current rules at EUR give guidance in such situations. There was consensus on the necessity of obtaining legal advice, as we received conflicting information from different sources, signalling that it was not clear what the correct procedure was. However, some members explained that while the role of the UC is to give advice for a proposed procedure, it is not appropriate that we specify the content of the legal aspects; this task would fall, instead, on a legal counsel. Also, some members voiced that, although some issues were reported in the past, their number nor gravity are not proportionate with the tone or suggestions expressed in the letter. Thus, UC members suggested that a shorter letter be drafted, expressing the need for further legal research from a legal counsel. Members also suggested phrasing the new letter in a more neutral tone to ensure neutrality in the advisory role of the UC.

Specifically, the UC agreed that the new letter would be short, confirming positive advice on the Code of conduct and expressing gratitude for the productive discussions with the Executive Board. Additionally, the letter will communicate the UC's concern regarding the adequacy of procedures for addressing gross violations of the Code of Conduct, advising the legal counsel to undertake a review.

Furthermore, the letter advises the Executive Board to align the regulations in the KRUR with these recommendations.

Ultimately, a voting procedure ensued, determining the decision of the council. The majority of members voted against sending the letter drafted by the task force assigned to the *Code of conduct* agenda point. Instead, the majority of the members voted on the drafting of a new letter in line with the suggestions discussed during the meeting. Councillor Aleid was tasked with finalizing the letter of advice. The urgency of this procedure is justified by the deadline of the letter of advice on the day of the Third plenary meeting, due to the topic having received an extension from the previous cycle.

Action point: Councillor Aleid will draft a letter of advice for the *Code of Conduct proposal* reflecting the recommendations that were voted on during the third plenary meeting. The UC Clerk will format the letter of advice *Code of Conduct proposal* and send it to the EB.

02.04 EUR Leadership Policy

The letter of informal advice on the *EUR Leadership Policy* was shared with the UC. No remarks were made in the meeting. The UC agreed to send the letter.

Action point: the UC Clerk will format the letter of informal advice for *EUR Leadership Policy* and share it with the EB.

02.05 Ethic Consideration University Collaborations

The letter of initiative on *Ethical consideration university collaborations* has been shared with the UC. The task force members have informed the council that the Executive Board is currently concerned with this topic and is discussing it with other Dutch university boards. The proposed initiative aims to contribute to these ongoing discussions by expressing the support of the UC for reevaluating university collaborations from an ethical perspective. During the meeting, the members deliberated on the contents of the letter.

There were mixed views within the UC regarding the proposal; while some councillors expressed their support for the letter, others were reserved. Opponents of the proposal were critical of the paragraph making specific mention of ties with an Israeli institution and suggested instead discussing the issue from a general standpoint, or by including other examples, such as Russian or Chinese institutions. Another shared concern was that the request for cutting ties is too strict. However, the task force members explained that the suggestion is conditional on whether the International Court of Justice rules the situation a genocide, thus legitimizing the advice to sever ties. Also, it was noted that the EB had indicated difficulty in addressing this matter generally during the CM, expressing their preference for discussing the matter on a case-by-case basis. With this proposal, we not only address the topic as requested by the EB, but we also set a precedent on how to handle similar situations in the future, thus arriving at a general approach based on a specific example. The TF members further explained that the reason behind the request stems from allegations that the specific institution in question has been under investigation by the UN for engaging in military research and alleged torture. Consequently, the UC members requested that these details be included as an appendix to the letter to clarify our standpoint.

Furthermore, some members expressed surprise at the EB's mention of a new policy document, the Global Engagement Policy, which had not been previously shared with the UC. As clarified by the TF, this document is still undergoing revisions and has not yet been finalized.

Specific corrections to the letter were proposed, including deleting a duplicated paragraph, correcting the statement "War crimes against humanity", omitting the example of the group Dutch Scholars, and omitting the clause that asked to "suspend" the ties while waiting for the final judgment from the ICJ. The TF Lead will attach the evidence supporting the allegations against the mentioned university as an appendix to the letter. Ultimately, a voting procedure ensued, determining the decision of the council. The majority of members voted in favor of sending the letter of initiative drafted by the task force *Ethic consideration university ties*, with the corrections and additions shared in the meeting.

Action point: the TF Lead of *Ethic consideration university ties* will adjust the letter of initiative with the remarks discussed in the third plenary meeting. The UC Clerk will format the letter of initiative *Ethic considerations university ties* and share it with the EB.

02.06 Evaluation Consultation Meeting

The members of the UC reflected on the events at the Consultation Meeting and interactions with the Executive Board. One point of reflection stemmed from the discussion of the *Code of conduct* agenda point, which exceeded the planned timeframe. Furthermore, concerns were raised about instances where certain councillors were not paying attention during the EB's responses, a behaviour deemed undesirable and to be avoided in future meetings. The lack of unity among council members' opinions was reflected in the confusion and tension noticeable in the interactions with the EB. The members of the UC emphasized that in future Consultation Meetings, it is essential to maintain a professional and respectful environment, akin to hosting guests.

Reflecting on the meeting's preparation, councillors noted the confusion that arose during the CM regarding whether topics should be approached with detailed or broad preparation. The UC agreed to uphold a unified front which can be ensured by preparing better within task forces as well as deciding on the desired approach during the second plenary meeting. Also, we should refrain from posing technical questions to the EB and instead prepare clear and concise questions.

03 Incoming documents

03.01 Response to 38696 Erasmus MC Bachelor of Medicine Selection Regulations 2024-2025

No remarks were shared. The UC is sufficiently informed and no response to the letter is required.

03.02 Scienceguide

Scienceguide requested the assistance of the UC in conveying an initiative to the EB that would prevent the project from being discontinued in February due to insufficient financial resources. The UC decided against forwarding this request to the EB.

03.03 Gender-neutral Toilets

The UC received an email from a student expressing concerns about the gender-neutral toilets. Given that this topic is tabled for the next cycle at Councillor Joseph's initiative, the Presidium suggested that the concerned student and the councillor be brought in contact to discuss the matter. The UC agreed to the suggestion by the Presidium.

04 Any other business

04.01 Evaluation Student Party System

It was once agreed that the student party system would be evaluated, but the method has not yet been determined. The Presidium proposes to set up a task force that will determine a proposal for the evaluation. The procedure is returned to the Presidium, which determines the further steps. Councillors Aleid, Albert, Nawin, Wesley, Timo, and Achraf joined the task force. All Council members can, however, still provide input on the topic.

04.02 Any other business

- Student safety. Two councilors in the HeQa TF have reached out to both Student Wellbeing and IDEA policymakers to request additional data concerning student safety, particularly regarding freedom of expression. With their support, more information will be shared in the upcoming months.
- Requesting EB Support for Ukrainian students. Recent news indicates that Ukrainian students will soon face changes in their residency status, requiring them to obtain student visas to remain in the Netherlands. A UC member proposed seeking assistance from the EB to streamline the visa application process for this large student group at EUR. The UC members endorsed this request but suggested addressing it informally, considering that the Executive Board may already have an initiative in progress.

Action point: The UC Clerk will seek clarification from the EB regarding their plans to assist Ukrainian students in their residency status. The UC Clerk will table the topic *Requesting EB Support for Ukrainian students* as AOB at the first plenary meeting.

- Clarification CMT assembly. In a previous meeting, the councillor in CMT informed the UC of their suspicion that the team had assembled in his absence. In the meantime, they have been officially informed that the suspicion was false.
- Delayed Letter Replies. A councillor notified the UC that a response letter from the EB has possibly been delayed, as it was expected to be tabled during the meeting. The UC Clerk will check if any letters were delayed.