

University Council
First Plenary Meeting
Erasmus University Rotterdam

Date and Time: 13/02/2024, 14:00 – 16:00

Location: Sanders 0-10

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, Anthony van der Linden, Wesley Hennep, Katarzyna Lasak, Rosita Boedhai-Jansen, Natascha Kraal, Roxanne Austin (Clerk), Ellie Cercel (Minutes), Hanna Barkoczi and Sophie Luck (M&C Officers).

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

01 Opening

01.01 Setting of the agenda

The agenda was set without any adjustments.

01.02 Minutes third plenary meeting

The following adjustments were made to the minutes of the previous plenary meeting:

- *02.03 Code of conduct elections.* the term "legal committee" will be changed to "legal council".
- *02.05 Ethic Consideration University Collaborations.* The following sentence: "and omitting the clause that asked to "suspend" the ties while waiting for the final judgment from the ICJ." was added in the final paragraph of this agenda point.
- *02.06 Evaluation Consultation Meeting.* The final paragraph of this agenda item contains a repetition which will be edited out.

Finally, at his request, it shall be noted that councilor Pedro had voted against the letter of initiative *regarding Ethical considerations for university collaborations* in the previous (i.e., third) plenary meeting. Since the request is without precedent in the history of the University Council, and several UC members were concerned about encouraging similar requests in future council meetings, as well as the lack of clarity in the Rules of Procedure regarding the confidentiality of the council votes, a decision was reached whereby the minutes of the third plenary meeting will not be adjusted to explicitly state which councillors voted against the letter of initiative. Also, the UC members concluded that there is a need for further legal advice in clarifying the confusion created by the lack of clarity in the Rules of Procedure, especially when comparing articles 26 and 28.

1.03 Announcements

- *Marketing and Communication plan elections*

The Marketing and Communication Officers presented the council with a concept plan for the upcoming UC elections. This involves improved digital promotions (e.g., myEUR dashboard, emails, Erasmus Magazine, social media platforms), screen promotions (e.g., the plaza screen, QR codes on PCs waiting screens), as well as onsite promotions, such as physical booths (which, for fairness, will be manned by the M&C Officers and not UC members) and 5-minute classroom pitches. The debate will take place on May 22nd at the Pavilion. However, the UC members discussed moving the event to an earlier date, as currently, it coincides with the final date of the election period, which might

significantly reduce the effectiveness of the event in gathering voters. A change of venue was also recommended, as the Pavilion did not prove fully suitable for last year's event.

The election visibility plan will soon be shared with the Central Elections Office thus it might undergo some changes.

Action point: The M&C Officers will check for other locations to schedule an earlier date for the debate.

- *Update Chair*

The Chair's condition has improved, causing her to return to work digitally on a reduced schedule. We expect her to return at the next plenary meeting.

- *Sustainability information session (February 27)*

On 27 February, an information session with Sustainability is scheduled. Please know that all UC members are expected to attend. The Clerk shall be informed of any absences in a timely manner, a week before the meeting.

02 Agenda items plenary meeting UC

02.01 Annual report Legal Procedures

The UC members shared their dissatisfaction with the lateness of the report, pressing for a more urgent reporting. The council agreed to review the documents, in preparation for a discussion at the second plenary meeting.

Action points: the UC Clerk will address the UC's complaint with the policymakers via email. The UC Clerk will table the discussion on the topic *Annual report Legal Procedures* at the second plenary meeting.

02.02 Evaluation MindLab

Two questions were posed regarding the document:

- *Considering that ISS did not take part in the Mindlab, how will the ISS staff be involved in the new training provided by HR?*
- *Considering the Rector's promise that an alternative to the Mindlab will be organized at ISS, what are some plans for this prospect to take place?*

The council agreed to review the documents, checking for the outcome of the advice we provided in a previous cycle, in preparation for a discussion at the second plenary meeting.

Action points: the UC Clerk will forward the questions of the UC on *Evaluation Mindlab* to the policy maker. The UC Clerk will table the discussion on *Evaluation Mindlab* at the second plenary meeting.

02.03 Sleeping pods on campus Woudestein

A member of the UC aims to establish sleeping pods on the Woudestein campus after the idea was suggested by a group of students inspired by recent developments at other universities. Initially, the suggested universities will be contacted for more information, followed by the suggestion of a pilot program.

Some concerns were raised. Firstly, a council member raised the issue of hygiene, specifically how will cleanliness be ensured in the pods. Similar projects can serve as inspiration, for example, the mindfulness pod in the EUR Library, or the TU Delft sleeping pods where cleaning products are available for use next to the facility. Secondly, several councillors were concerned that the sleeping pods enable the issue of study pressure for students, wishing to raise awareness to deal with the root of the issue that is causing students to need sleeping breaks from studying. However, it was argued that one benefit of the pod is providing decompression of sensory inputs. Thirdly, it was suggested to remove the first question in the letter of initiative, as it is too direct. Finally, there were some concerns about the funding of the project. To tackle these concerns, some suggestions were made, such as creating a clear cost analysis of the initiative, asking the advice of the REF and Student Wellbeing policymakers, distributing a poll with the help of Erasmus Magazine.

Action point: The UC member that proposed the initiative, will use the UC's input to further define and revise the proposal. The UC Clerk will table the topic *Sleeping pods on campus Woudestein* at the second plenary meeting.

02.04 Redistribution of All-Gender Toilets

In response to alleged heightened concerns regarding the gender-neutral toilets across campus, a council member has introduced an initiative to the University Council, requesting a change in the current distribution of gender-neutral toilets. This proposal draws inspiration from the University of Utrecht's pilot study.

The reactions of the council to the proposal were varied, with some members expressing support while others were wary of its implications, particularly for the groups reliant on all-gender toilets. Specifically, there was support for some aspects of the proposal, such as the removal of the gender-neutral toilet adjacent to the prayer room as well as a more equal distribution of facilities in the Mandeville building, where currently only one floor out of 19 is equipped with such toilets. On the other hand, concerns were raised regarding the implications of the current situation for members of specific communities; for instance, a group of women who face the challenge of not being able to maintain modesty (e.g., headscarf adjustments) when using gender-neutral facilities.

However, alternatives to the proposal were discussed, including improved signposting regarding the facilities in each toilet, as well as the elimination of urinals in the gender-neutral toilets, which have reportedly caused uncomfortable situations. Additionally, it was noted that the current proposal lacks adequate sensitivity towards some groups and may fall short on meeting diversity and inclusion criteria.

The discussion made it clear that there is no consensus nor clear data on what the needs or opinions on the EUR campus are, and that there is a need for further discussion and clarification of the proposal. As a result, the D&I task force will work on improving the proposal, with respect to the concerns shared in the meeting.

Action point: the D&I task force will revise the proposal in light of the comments discussed by the council. The UC Clerk will table the topic *Redistribution of all-gender toilets* at the second plenary meeting.

03 Incoming documents

03.01 Response to 38698 EUR Meerjarenplan 2024-2027

The council did not see the need for a written reply to the response letter, however, the Finance task force will evaluate the reply further and inform the UC if they would like to discuss it with the Executive Board at the upcoming Consultation Meeting. The HeQa task force members did not see concerns that would require further elaboration at the moment.

03.02 Response to 38697 Compensation student members participation

No remarks were made to the letter.

04 Any other business

04.01 Overview of attendance and taskforces

A member of the UC shared the concern that the task force attendance overview does not offer proportionate evidence of the effort each member puts into a task force. For instance, the Financial or Strategy task forces require a constantly large workload of its members, as topics are submitted each cycle, thus the members of these task forces are less able to join temporary task forces; however, this might be mistakenly interpreted as low input from members outside of the UC who are not aware of the high workload. Some advantages of the overview are that it gives voters insights into what topics each member is active in, as well as useful for transparency reasons.

04.02 Timetable UC elections 2023-2024

The Central Election Office informed the UC of the timetable for the upcoming candidature and election period, with the request to change the deadline for candidature. In the schedule, the deadline is 16 April. According to KRUR, this should be May 6, which is eight days before the voting period starts. Art. 11.11 of the KRUR states that "Each submitter of a list may submit the list for the Election of members of the University Council up to eight (8) Days before the first Day of Voting". This is a flaw in the current KRUR which will be addressed in the new adjusted KRUR but can be solved now once through an agreement between the Council and election office. This agreement would only apply to the upcoming elections. The election office proposes to keep the deadline on 12 April contrary to what is now in the KRUR, for two reasons, 1) candidates will then have a longer campaign period, since the deadline on 8 May implies a 1-week campaign period; 2) it involves a lot of administration for election office if the deadline is on 8 May. If two-thirds of the council agree to this proposal, the election office will submit this one-time deviation from the KRUR to the CvB for final decision-making. This means that the deviation from Article 11.11 cannot be invoked with regard to the 2024 elections and election results.

The members of the UC reviewed the request and decided against the proposed procedure. The main concerns stemmed from the request to change the regulations, which was regarded as unsuitable, as the councillors were unsure what their legal role was in this situation. An alternative, better-suited option would be to change the regulations for next year instead, thus respecting the council's rules of procedure. Also, the proposal does not clarify what the implications of this decision would be on the faculty council elections. As a result of the urgency of the request, the UC cannot receive input from the faculty council members on their preference, nor to consult legal advice. These concerns and the final decision against the proposal to change the election deadline will be shared with the Central Election Office.

Action point: the UC Clerk will share the concerns and decisions of the UC regarding the request *Timetable UC elections 2023-2024* with the Central Election Office.

04.03 Meeting ISS student representatives

The ISS student representatives requested a meeting with the UC. The ISS council member will propose several dates for the purpose of this meeting on Teams.