

**University Council**  
**Second Plenary Meeting**  
**Erasmus University Rotterdam**

**Date and Time:** 05/03/2024, 14:00 – 17:00

**Location:** Polak 2-20

**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, Esra Kahramanoglu, Achraf Taouil, Anthony van der Linden, Katarzyna Lasak, Natascha Kraal, Roxanne Austin (Clerk), Ellie Cercel (Minutes).

**Absent:** Ivonne Cune-Noten (chair), Rosita Boedhai-Jansen, Max Wagenaar, Wesley Hennepe.

## **01 Opening**

### **01.01 Setting of the agenda**

The agenda was set.

### **01.02 Minutes first plenary meeting**

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

### **1.03 Announcements**

- *Evaluation Chair by CC*

The functioning of the Chair (Ivonne) will soon be evaluated by the Confidentiality Committee. The CC will gather input from the UC by e-mail.

- *Onboarding 2024-2025*

The secretary will soon start organizing the Onboarding 2024-2025. The structure of the Onboarding programme will be similar to last year's onboarding with some small adjustments, following the evaluation we had at the beginning of this year. Two specific adjustments are that more time with the policymakers will be facilitated and more information regarding the Taskforces will be provided.

- *Smarter Academic Year*

On March 12, the Smarter Academic Year update meeting is scheduled with Harriet Schelhaas. Please accept the invitation or e-mail Roxanne with a valid reason in case you cannot make it to the meeting.

- *M&C Interviews for Instagram reel*

At the end of the meeting, the M&C Officers would like to interview some councillors (students and employees) about the work they do for the council and how they have experienced it so far. Therefore, a request was made to (if possible) stay a bit longer after the meeting.

## 02 Agenda

### 02.01 Annual report Legal Procedures

No technical questions were shared in preparation for the second plenary session. The question asked at the previous meeting was answered, in particular:

- *Why is the annual report shared this late with the Council?*

“The 2022 annual report was only recently finalised. Due to personnel changes, the annual report could only be presented to the EB at the end of 2023.”.

No further comments were made regarding the document. However, the Social Safety and Wellbeing taskforce will consider addressing the need to modernize the legal procedure as a right of initiative/action point. In addition, the council would like to ask the opinion of the Executive Board regarding a recent observation that, in some faculties, the legal procedure may not be as clearly accessible to those in need of it.

**Action point:** the task force Social Safety and Wellbeing will look into an initiative to modernize the legal procedures.

### 02.02 Evaluation Mindlab

No technical questions were asked in preparation for the second plenary session. The questions asked at the previous meeting were addressed and the answers were shared during the meeting. Specifically:

- *Considering that ISS did not take part in the Mindlab, how will the ISS staff be involved in the new training provided by HR?*

“All trainings that are provided by the HR Learning & Career Center are available to all EUR-staff. Participation in Mindlab is not necessary for taking part in any current or future (online) trainings and workshops.”

- *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?*

“ISS is planning to organize an alternative to Mindlab in 2024. They are currently exploring the option of a performance (incl. discussion) offered by a theatre group that can perform in English.”

In addition, a suggestion was made to share the University Council’s appreciation of the Mindlab with the Executive Board at the upcoming Consultation Meeting. However, since the University Council already clarified our positive feedback during a previous cycle when the topic was formally tabled, the suggestion will not be considered. Finally, the University Council considered having been sufficiently informed regarding the agenda point *Evaluation Mindlab*, thus the topic will not be tabled again at the third plenary meeting.

### 02.03 Sleeping pods on campus Woudestein

The letter of initiative is in progress. When contacted regarding the initiative, the relevant departments shared positive reactions; nonetheless, two issues that need to be addressed are regarding financial and facility aspects, which will be further addressed with the help of the UC Clerk and the RE&F policymakers.

**Action point:** the UC Clerk will table the agenda item *Sleeping pods on campus Woudestein* at the third plenary meeting.

#### **02.04 Redistribution of All-gender toilets**

The discussion points made in the first plenary meeting have been evaluated by the task force and are being incorporated into the letter of initiative. However, this is still in progress, therefore no concrete updates were made.

**Action point:** the UC Clerk will table the agenda item *Redistribution of All-gender Toilets* at the third plenary meeting.

#### **02.05 Preparation CM**

*Topics that will be tabled at the consultation meeting.*

- **Smoking on campus.** The UC is aware of more complaints regarding persisting smoking on campus, despite the smoking ban. This problem is enhanced by the inability to properly reinforce the issue. This issue has been tabled repeatedly at past consultation meetings, with the same outcome of reinforcing soft measures, which is proving ineffective. The UC would like to discuss the matter once more with the Executive Board, with an emphasis on finding measures on a national level, specifically within UNL.

**Action point:** the UC Clerk will table the agenda item *Smoking on Campus* under at the Consultation Meeting under any other business.

*Topics that were discussed but will not be tabled at the consultation meeting.*

- **Erasmus Recruitment Days email fraud.** The investigation into the Erasmus Recruitment Days email fraud is ongoing; the council decided not to table the discussion at the consultation meeting since it is outside the scope of the UC to intermediate such matters.
- **Research student numbers.** It was signaled to a UC member that student numbers may be on a downward trajectory, which could have financial consequences for some faculties. However, the information can be found in the Erasmus Perspectives, to be tabled in two cycles. Thus, the council decided not to table the topic at the consultation meeting.
- **Instances of vandalism.** The UC discussed whether to address the recent instances of vandalism (i.e., graffiti, Christmas tree) with the Executive Board. While several councilors were in favor of the suggestion, to prevent normalizing this type of behavior, others were of the opinion that a discussion would not be necessary, since we can expect the opinion of the EB as being against such acts. Following a voting procedure, the UC decided not to table the topic at the consultation meeting (8 votes in favor and 9 votes against, 3 abstained).
- **Polarisation on campus.** The UC discussed whether to discuss instances of heightened polarisation of ideas on campus, especially in light of a recent act of vandalism. Since there were

mixed opinions, the decision was put up to a vote, resulting in the decision not to table the topic at the consultation meeting (6 votes in favor and 13 against, 1 abstained).

- **Study places for students.** A task force consisting of councilors Ernst, Achraf, Esra, and Anthony was formed to tackle an initiative looking at the availability and usability of study spaces on the Woudestein campus. Some topics to be reviewed include the timeslot reservation system post-Corona and *Tomorrow's campus* data summary (PowerPoint will be shared in Teams).

### **03 Incoming documents**

#### **03.01 Response to 38695 Budgets HEQA Programmes and 38699 Budget HEQA Programmes Erasmus X**

The HeQa task force has been involved in meetings with the relevant policymakers and is currently in the process of arranging co-creative meetings with the Erasmus X project managers, as announced in the response letter. Councillor Achraf, not a member of the task force, has asked to join these sessions.

#### **03.02 Convergence medezeggenschap-CEB bijeenkomst**

No further remarks were raised regarding the upcoming Convergence document. Nevertheless, the council members upheld a critical stance regarding the correspondence from the Convergence Office to the UC, stemming from the absence of clarifying information regarding the budget plan, costs, and results, as well as legal affairs, structures, and processes of the School of Convergence, despite multiple previous inquiries having been made by the UC. The Convergence task force debated this issue once again, leading to the assignment of Councillor Max with the responsibility of addressing these concerns and requesting the missing information from the Convergence Office. The UC Clerk asked to share the information.

In addition, a meeting with the Convergence Office is planned for Wednesday, which will be attended by councilors Achraf, Max, and Natascha.

#### **03.03 Spontaneous memorial for Alexei Navalny**

The Presidium accepted the e-mail for information, but will not follow up, as the e-mail was not directly addressed to the UC (the e-mail was in cc).

### **04 Any Other Business**

#### **04.01 Safety improvement front office ESSC**

The Education and Student Affairs policymakers attended the second plenary session upon their request to gather input on a safety improvement plan for the ESSC front office. The safety plan is aimed at providing front office staff members, who are in regular contact with students regarding aspects such as enrolment and finances, with a protocol that can prevent and address threatening situations appropriately. Currently, the plan includes recorded phone calls and a panic button alerting security for front-office interactions. Regarding the phone recordings, there will be an

official warning, but the actual protocol for that is still being reviewed with the advice from Legal Affairs.

As for formal measures, there are few rules in place, however, students can be expelled due to social safety concerns. The recordings are a first step in ensuring a fair and objective approach to staff threats. Some councillors suggested making this clear in the Code of Conduct, student charter, or the order regulations.

Also, it was suggested to ensure that data storing is done well and is communicated to those being recorded, as well as to ensure that the recording is announced at the beginning of each call and that the exact reason for the recording is stated. Also, it should be explicitly mentioned who has access to the recording and when it can lead to an escalation. Also, the protocol should ensure an alternative for those who do not wish to be recorded, for example regarding private matters.

The Council further made suggestions on handling bias in subsequent interactions with flagged callers; however, the policymakers assured that the front office staff is well trained for this situation, and they already have an informal method of alerting each other to potential threatening callers through notes. Thus, this system would only formalize that aspect. The protocol should ensure the possibility of contesting the claim of violation, for example, if the caller was not aware of the interaction being perceived as a threat.

The front office staff is positive regarding this initiative. The Council suggested extending the protocol to other departments, for instance, the IT help desk.

#### **04.02 Training Facilities Students UC**

The secretary is currently looking at possible training facilities for UC students. The UC was invited to share any specific training needs that should be taken into consideration when planning the themes; some suggestions were made during the plenary session, however, any further ideas can be emailed to the Clerk following the meeting.

Some topics for consideration were financial literacy (e.g., reading and interpreting documents, data, figures; how the higher education financial system operates), communication and debate skills, and UC-related matters. Further, the UC requested the training be available to the staff members as well as to the students.

#### **04.03 Organising debate elections**

On May 22, the election debate will take place. Last year, the topics were prepared by 2/3 council members who were not involved in the elections. This year, the Presidium proposed we follow the same approach, however asking the staff members to help prepare the debate content-wise, as all student members are part of lists. The Council agreed to this procedure, with the addition that each candidate list would send the debate committee 2-3 topics they wish to see tabled.

#### 04.04 Any other business

- **Timing debate.** A UC member suggested adjusting the planning of the debate to an earlier date in the election timeline (such as before the voting starts), and later in the day in general (such as after regular classes end), to ensure more participation.
- **Digital working environment.** A UC member signaled that Android phone users experience technical difficulties when holding more than one Microsoft account, as is usually the case with UC student members. Some members found a solution to create an additional profile on the smartphone with the “working profile” option.
- **NPO funding.** This year, the NPO funding will be terminated; this is funding aimed at post-pandemic relief. The UC would like to inquire if students will be affected by this, to prevent any issues. The UC Clerk will check with the EMC or policy advisors.

**Action point:** the UC Clerk will contact the EMC/policy advisors regarding the outcomes of the NPO funding termination for students.

- **Toilet hygiene Polak building.** Some councillors are receiving increasing notice that the toilet hygiene in the Polak building is problematic and would like to discuss the issue with REF.
- **Evaluation student list system.** The task force met regularly and gathered data, which they would like to discuss further with the UC. This will be discussed in Teams and at the next plenary meeting.

**Action point:** the UC clerk will table the agenda item *Evaluation student list system* at the third plenary meeting.