



University Council

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Onderwerp

Reaction to the UC advice on the appointment procedure of deans

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Page

1/8

Annex

Department

College van Bestuur

Visiting Address

Burgemeester Oudlaan 50
Erasmus Building
A2-06

Mail Address

P.O. Box 1738
3000 DR Rotterdam

T +31 10 408 8757

E cvb@eur.nl

W www.eur.nl

Dear members of the University Council,

The Executive Board is grateful for your thorough and constructive advice on the appointment procedure for Deans.

In this letter, we will address your comments and suggestions. Where possible, these will be incorporated in the procedure. Otherwise, an explanation is given in this letter on why some of your suggestions are not adopted by the Executive Board.

One general note to make before addressing your specific remarks, is that although a procedure like this one needs to be clear, it is never possible to exclude all possible unclarity or uncertainties during appointment procedures, in one regulation. That would also not be desirable, because that could lead to a too detailed and rigid procedure. It is important that the procedure provides a good basis for a transparent and clear process. With clear roles and responsibilities. In addition, it is important that such a procedure offers sufficient room to refine the details per appointment process in close consultation with each other. Moreover, by conveying the specific requests of some Schools concerning the procedure, the opinions and concerns of other Schools should not be ignored.

Process of evaluation of the current procedure

In your advice, you indicate that it is insufficiently clear why and how the current procedure was evaluated and why a full new procedure is necessary. The current procedure was the first time the EUR implemented a general procedure for the appointment of deans. Before the Executive Board adopted this procedure, each recruitment could follow a

different process and no clear guidelines on the way Deans are appointed were established. The current procedure helped to clarify those processes and guidelines, but its application in recent years also laid bare some shortcomings. It was learned that the process could be outlined more clearly including better definitions, could provide a clearer process flow and that the procedure did not cover the appointment of interim Deans.

Based on the experience gained during the past six appointment procedures for new Deans, we have discussed these shortcomings. This has been done by HR in cooperation with our Legal Affairs department, the (Secretary) of the Executive Board, and with those involved in the recruitment procedures in the various Schools (Deans, Faculty Council Members, management). A draft of the revised procedure has been presented to all the Deans, after which extensive input and feedback from some Deans has been received.

Based on the input we received from the deans and the UC, some parts will be further refined. You will receive an adapted procedure for this in February. We have now prioritized assessing the U-Council's suggestions and responding to the letter.

Relation between Executive Board and Schools in the procedure

Your advice mentions the possible tensions between the responsibility of the Executive Board in appointing Deans and the involvement in that procedure of the Schools. In the revised procedure, it has been made more explicit that, ultimately, the Executive Board is the one to make the final decision on which candidate to appoint, in line with the (legal) responsibility of the Board. However, the support within Schools is very important. That is why the involvement of the faculty community is again emphasised and anchored in the revised procedure. Given the extensive and formal involvement of this community, we do not recognise 'disenfranchisement' of the faculty community. Their input and involvement ensure that the needs, trajectory of substantive and organisational development, and current composition of the School are shaping the final decision to appoint a Dean by the Executive Board.

Textual and formatting comments

Thank you for your comments regarding the numbering of the articles, these will be adjusted. Concerning the use of upper case for definitions, this is in line with the EUR-wide practice in formal regulations to make clear that a definition is followed. Your comment on sometimes unnecessarily difficult language may be the effect of the translation into English, we will have a look at the translation and welcome any concrete input from your Council on specific sentences, in this regard.

Reaction to comments on chapter 1

Diversity & Diversity Policy. Both in our strategy and in our policy for appointing staff, diversity and inclusion are key goals of the EUR. The articles in this procedure are in line with those goals and policies, published on MyEUR.

Your comment on letters and CVs of candidate Deans for Schools that have English as a working language is supported by the Executive Board. Therefore, for each procedure, the language to be used should be determined at the beginning of the process. A brief comment on this can be included in the procedure.

Faculty community. Concerning the definition of 'faculty community', we agree that this in general means all students and staff. Since it is impossible to involve all students and staff in a procedure, it is necessary to determine the proper representation of the community. Possibly, referring in the procedure to 'a representation' ('afvaardiging') of the faculty community could help prevent any misconceptions. 'This representation enables us to get a fuller picture of the challenges, developments and needs of the faculty community, so that the desired profile of a new dean can be attuned to it.'

Reaction to comments on chapter 3

Serious reasons. We agree that the concept of 'serious reasons' needs more explanation, of course without restricting it in such a way that the definition prevents us from applying the procedure. Therefore, in a footnote to this clause, an explanation will be given to illustrate what serious reasons could consist of. We agree that involvement of the Faculty Council in these situations is suitable and will add this to this article.

Reaction to comments on chapter 4

Search profile. As explained in reaction to the comments on chapter 1, we recognise the possible misunderstanding of the concept 'faculty community'. However, based on the experiences in procedures in the past, it is highly desirable to have broad input on a profile and criteria for a new Dean. That means consulting with the formal representatives of a School, the management and the Faculty Council, but also being open to input from other staff members and students.

We do not support the idea to establish in the procedure the exact number of interviews, or the exact people to be consulted, because that would lead to a too rigid and detailed procedure that would prevent us from applying it in a way that fits the specific characteristics of a School or the specific situation. The goal in this phase of the procedure is to have varied input, not just by those (already) in an influential position in the School, to gain a full understanding of the needs, wishes, and concerns of the faculty community with respect to the profile and criteria of a new Dean. However, when establishing the profile and criteria the Executive Board also must take into account considerations on a EUR-level, given the important role Deans also have in EUR-wide developments.

Discussing the profile with the selection committee is not necessary, because the selection committee is composed of mostly people that were already part of the consultation on the profile and criteria. However, it is important that the committees have a good understanding of the profile as this is the basis for selecting the candidates.

Concerning the involvement of the outgoing Dean, our principle is that retiring officials should not be formally involved in determining their own succession. Naturally, outgoing Deans may be informally consulted in the creation of the profile.

Internal and external candidates. Indeed, internal and external candidates that are equally suited, are treated equally in this procedure. The reasoning behind this is that it may depend on the specific circumstances and context of a School whether it is preferable to have an internal or an external candidate. For instance, in those cases where the broad consensus is that a School would benefit from a 'new' leader that has no history in the School, a provision granting internal candidates preference would lead to the suboptimal outcome of the procedure for that specific School.

This provision leaves room for those kinds of considerations to the Executive Board, following the integral responsibility the Board has not just for the interests of one School but for the university as a whole.

Composition of committees. The Executive Board decides on the composition of the committees. The Board may consult with the School where it sees fit. Defining how many conversations (and with whom) the Executive Board must have before determining this, would be an example of an over-detailed and rigid procedure. These committees need to have a support base in the School, in order to have a successful procedure. Therefore, this is done in consultation with the Schools' management. The Faculty Council determines which of its members compose the committee comprised of participatory body members (which also answers your suggestion on the ACP). It is important that the committees are composed with sufficient diversity so that there is also sufficient room and attention for diversity of candidates.

Composition of the selection committee. We understand your point here about broader involvement of members of the faculty community but would like to point out that the involvement of the School is (much) broader than just the members of the SC, enabling the new Dean's landing in a School. Limiting the number of members of the SC increases the opportunity to have a proper conversation with candidates and to come to conclusions. Therefore, and to preserve some flexibility to adopt to specific circumstances, we do not intend to adopt your suggestion. With regard to determining which other Dean(or Deans) should take part in the selection procedure, we believe that this is a decision mainly based on EUR-wide considerations, and sometimes also one of practical availability, asking the Faculty Council to advise on this therefore would not be logical.

Composition of the Appointment Advisory Committee. The composition of the Advisory Committee (AAC) is also a delicate balance between broad involvement and feasibility. We do understand your request to expand the limitation that members should at max be two levels lower than a Dean, in order to allow other stakeholders to participate. We will adjust this clause by removing that provision.

Informing internal candidates that are not shortlisted.

We understand your suggestion and agree that internal candidates should be informed by the EB or the Secretary of the procedure, also in writing. We will adopt this suggestion in the procedure.

Timeline and internal communication. We agree that all members of the committee need to be informed about the full timeline. This will be done by the Secretary of the procedure. This has been done in recent procedures, but we recognise that some external recruitment companies have not always been as diligent.

Sharing the topics of discussion of each interview is not desirable and very rigid. It is good practice, however, for each committee to prepare themselves for an interview and to go through with each other what questions they want to ask.

Concerning the availability of the information on candidates, we recognise that due to the unpredictability of these procedures, and its candidates in it, in exceptional situations the information was shared rather late. The point about timeline and planning should cover this, but does not prevent extraordinary situations. We agree that if deviations from the timeline occur, committees should be informed beforehand. However, we do appreciate and recognise that some flexibility is necessary sometimes, due to unforeseen circumstances. Complaints about the procedure can be, and in practice are, addressed to the Secretary of the procedure.

Hearing the Faculty Council. We agree that the hearing of the Faculty Council should in principle be done in writing, as is standard practice. Meeting the candidate does not fit the procedure, since that is what the members of the Faculty Council in the participatory advice committee are tasked with.

Procedure completion. We do not fully understand your comment about the Secretary of the Faculty Board, a position that does not exist in all Schools at the moment. We agree that the members of the committees should be informed before information is made public and will adopt this in the procedure.

Procedure reappointment incumbent Dean. We agree that 'timely' can be made more explicit and will adopt this by

adding a 9-12 month period. Your suggestion to hear the FC in writing after the opportunity to speak with the EB-member in charge of reappointment is also adopted. Concerning the order of events, the formal (legal) procedure is that the EB first has to state its intention to reappoint, before a Faculty Council can be heard. The intention is not a final decision, leaving sufficient room for the opinion of the FC to be taken into account.

Interim dean. You request to have a 'guide' for when to appoint an interim Dean in the procedure. We understand this wish, but would also point out that the appointment of an interim Dean results from considerations and circumstances that are not always predictable. The footnote in the procedure provides some examples of situations that result in the need for an interim appointment. We agree with your suggestion not to appoint an interim or acting Dean for more than a year initially, and will adopt this in the procedure.

Hearing the faculty community. We agree that this refers to the Faculty Council, in line with the role of the Faculty Council in the reappointment of incumbent Deans.

Shortened procedure. The purpose of the shortened procedure is to be able to appoint an interim Dean in extraordinary circumstances. In most cases, it is a matter of greater urgency. This therefore requires faster selection and decision-making. Therefore, copying the regular procedure with Selection and/or Advisory Committees is not suitable. We do agree that the Faculty Council and the Faculty management should be involved, which is why the articles here outline how and when the EB informs the faculty community (management and Faculty Council) about the candidate before taking a decision.

Reappointment incumbent interim Dean. Reappointing interim Deans follows the procedure of the reappointment of regular Deans, although the considerations accompanying the intended reappointment differ in nature. The Faculty Council is formally heard in matters of reappointment, the procedure therefore follows that line. The maximum duration of the contract is covered in article 5.3 already.

Pagina
8/8

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Special procedure EMC. We will include a clear reference in the procedure to the separate procedures for EMC and ESHPM.

Executive Board Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam,



Prof. dr. H. Brinksma
President