

To the University Council

**Date**

26 March 2021

**Subject**

Reaction to letter Opening Academic year 2021-2022 to 2031-2032

**Our reference**

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**Your reference**

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Dear members of the University Council,

We like to thank you for your letter about the opening academic year 2021-2022 to 2031-2032, more specific regarding the Witte Week, and the extensive research you did.

We are not in favour of reintroducing the Witte Week for several reasons.

First of all, we have to conclude that a strict enforcement of a Witte Week will result in an increase of the study load and work pressure for students in the rest of the academic year. As work pressure and study load are major points of concern among our students, we are quite reluctant to take measures that tend to increase this problem. Secondly, experience provided by the RKvV shows that the non-adherence by certain faculties of the Witte Week (as an exam free period) has not been a substantial obstacle for student organisations to organise large multiple-day events. We have no information that the student-attendance of these events has substantially suffered.

We certainly encourage efforts made to benefit the well-being of students. The Student Well-being Week at the EUR is a great example of this. However, a strictly enforced exam free Witte Week will not increase the opportunity for students to participate in Student Well-being Week activities. As stated in your letter, students feel that the mandatory educational activities, not the exams, hold them back from attending.

E&S will contact the university council members who are involved in this matter, to explore the possibilities for enhancing the participation of students in the Student Well-being Week. We also are sympathetic with your ideas on opening a broader discussion on the topic of harmonisation of the Academic Calendar. However, as this will partly reduce the autonomy of the schools within EUR, this will probably take time and effort.

Sincerely,



Prof. dr. F. van der Duijn Schouten

Rector Magnificus of Erasmus University Rotterdam