

**University Council
First Plenary Meeting
Erasmus University Rotterdam**

Date and Time: 04-03-2025, 14:00-17:00

Location: Polak 2-18

Present in the meeting: Luca Hellings (chair), Hugo Speelman, Sara Ouljour, Sebastiaan Kamp, Achraf Taouil, Bachar Farousi, Jaap Cornelese, Albert Wagelmans, Luna Becirspahic, Ernst Hulst, Aleid Fokkema, Esra Kahramanoglu, Deniz Alican, Federica Violi, Max Wagenaar, Roxanne Austin (Clerk), Floortje Dekker (Minutes), Linda Dekker, Rosita Boedhai-Jansen, Reinier van Woerden, Daan de boer, Jasper Klasen

Absent: Katarzyna Lasak, Nawin Ramcharan, Timo Zandvliet, Clara Egger

01 Opening

1.01 Setting of the agenda

There were no remarks, therefore the agenda was set.

01.02 Setting of the previous minutes

There were no remarks, therefore the minutes were set

01.03 Announcements

Upcoming consultation meeting

The Chair announced that next week the consultation meeting will take place at EMC. First, there will be a tour and then the consultation meeting will take place. Afterwards, the UC will have drinks with the EB, faculty council and program committees.

New UC member

The faculty seat for the ESSB is filled once again by Clara Egger. They will start from February 28th onwards.

New UC office

The UC will have a new office located in the A building, which will be in use starting from the next academic year.

02 Agenda items plenary meeting UC

02.01 Action plan report labor authority

No technical questions were shared beforehand. However, a UC member in the taskforce mentioned the taskforce has several policy questions for the EB. The Chair asked the UC

member to read the questions aloud to determine if there is consensus within the UC on asking them. There were no objections from the UC regarding the questions. Therefore, the following questions will be asked at next week's consultation meeting:

- *Is it true then that for professional services staff Work pressure is no issue and therefore requires no attention and/or measures?*
- *Is implying that enough staff can be made available without consequences not adding to the workload and -stress of the involved employees?*
- *How will the UC be involved in view of our participatory rights?*
- *How can the EB make sure that the groups that need Active Bystander training & dialogue sessions the most are reached?*
- *Why is a universal workload scheme considered to reduce overwork? Is there proof that in schools where this was implemented, such as ESHCC and ESSB, workload is experienced as considerably lower? Moreover, especially for researchers many tasks originate from outside the university. Think of editorships and peer review for academic journals, organization of large conferences, board membership of scientific societies, and so on. How do such tasks fit within the proposed scheme?*

Action point:

- The Clerk will send the questions regarding the Action plan report labor authority to the EB.

02.02 NVAO-application for accreditation (Toets Nieuwe Opleiding) for Master Development Studies (ISS)

There were no questions for the EB. Therefore, this topic will not be discussed in the consultation meeting.

02.03 Research strategy

There was a speaker for this topic who elaborated on the university's awareness of the issues surrounding scientific research, particularly the declining public trust in it. This lack of trust impacts the university's ability to influence society. The speaker emphasized the importance of the university regaining this trust. While they considered the research strategy a good starting point, they questioned whether it would be effective in restoring trust from society. They felt the proposed strategy lacked a focus on rebuilding this trust and suggested a stronger connection with other institutions, particularly those offering vocational education. The speaker concluded by advocating for more collaborations with vocational institutes. Lastly, the speaker acknowledged that the research strategy is a participatory effort by researchers, which is positive, but expressed concern that it might not be sufficient.

A UC member thanked the speaker and clarified that this topic is for informational purposes, not for advice. They also asked what the speaker would like to ask the EB. The speaker responded that they would ask the EB how they plan to regain trust and what the university can offer to vocational institutions. The Chair then gave the floor to the taskforce lead. A UC member remarked that the taskforce has not met yet, but so far, they believe the strategy lacks substance. They intend to ask the UC what the main focus of the research strategy is. They also want to inquire about the alignment of the strategy with other strategic partnerships and discuss the creation of positive societal impact. Another UC member noted that there are already initiatives with vocational institutes and proposed asking Academic Affairs technical questions about these initiatives instead. Other UC members agreed. Another UC member pointed out that this is a research strategy, and vocational schools do not play a research role. A different UC member questioned the reasoning behind asking a technical question about vocational school partnerships. The Chair responded that the technical question is solely being asked to gather information. The following three questions will be asked to the EB:

- *Why does the strategy have so little content?*
- *How does the research strategy relate with our other strategic partnerships such as LDE?*
- *In which way is the EB in contact with various educational institutions especially vocational schools (MBO's) and do these initiatives result in new perspectives?*

The following technical question will also be sent out:

- *What initiatives are currently in place with vocational schools?*

Action point:

- The Clerk will send the policy questions regarding the Research strategy to the EB and the technical question to the policy maker.

02.04 Employer vision EUR

The Chair asked if there are any questions the taskforce would like to ask in the consultation meeting. A UC member in the taskforce commented that there are indeed questions for the EB:

- *Although not completely different, it can be expected that the new EUR strategy 2025-2030 stresses different topics and behaviors. Would it not be wise to wait one more year with the introduction of an EUR Employer Vision?*
- *Would it not be feasible that an employee first and foremost tries to excel in his/her job (research/teaching/support). By only stressing the 'creating social impact part' it sort of seems to suggest that the employer actually does not care so much about the actual job of a person, just as long as societal impact is created. Is this intended?*

The final point the taskforce would like to raise in the consultation meeting is the use of the term "competitive salary" in the document. As they believe this phrasing is inaccurate. Another UC member raised concerns about the university hiring people through 'BV's' for certain jobs. Another UC member questioned whether this issue was relevant to bring up with the EB. In response, a different UC member suggested asking the EB how their commitment to reducing external hires aligns with the university's employer vision. Other UC members agreed with asking this. Lastly, a UC member pointed out that the 'Employer Vision' and 'Terms of Employment' on the EUR website do not align. After some discussion, it was decided that this issue would only be raised with the EB if the UC member provides specific examples of inconsistencies between the two documents before Thursday.

- **Action point:** The Clerk will send the questions regarding the Employer vision to the EB.

02.05 LDE Strategy

The Chair noted that an English version is now available. A UC member in the taskforce mentioned that this topic is for informational purposes, so there is limited action to be taken. There were no further questions from the taskforce, and they confirmed that they are sufficiently informed. As a result, this topic will be removed from the agenda.

02.06 EUR campaign budget rules

No taskforce meeting has been held yet. The Chair inquired if there were any questions for the EB. A UC member commented that the taskforce lead will post any questions on Teams before tomorrow. The Chair emphasized that questions must be submitted during this meeting, or they cannot be directed to the EB. The Chair also mentioned that a proposal could be received from Election Office before March 7th, based on a letter from last year on

this topic. However, it is unlikely that the proposal can be implemented before the upcoming elections. However, the Clerk will request Election Office to work on the proposal for the EUR campaign Budget Rules.

Action point:

- The Clerk will request Election Office to work on the proposal for the EUR campaign Budget Rules.

02.07 PhD Council

There was no taskforce meeting but there was a meeting with all PhD councils where the disbandment of EPAR was discussed. Resulting in the following questions:

- *What is the institutional responsibility of the EB in ensuring the continued existence of participatory bodies?*
- *How does the EB reflect on the disbandment of EPAR, its formal impact on PhD students, and the initiative to establish a new PhD council?*

Action point:

- The Clerk will send the questions regarding the PhD Council to the EB

02.08 PhD survey

There will be no questions for the EB on this agenda topic. However, there are some technical questions for the policymakers.

02.09 Eureka week duration

Technical questions have been answered by the policy makers. The taskforce feels like it is undesirable to shorten the Eureka week and has some questions for the EB:

- How does the EB view the impact of overlapping International Day and Campus Day on international students, given the importance of introducing them to the university and student life?
- How does the EB assess the effect of a condensed schedule on study and student associations' ability to engage with new students?
- To what extent does the EB believe that the shorter schedule maintains the overall value of Eureka week?
- Could the EB explain why no major event sector partnerships were established for EW24, despite their potential to reduce costs and generate revenue

The following question will be sent out as a technical question:

- *What part of the programme are taken out to reduce the eureka week?*

Action point:

- The Clerk will send the questions regarding the Eureka week to the EB

02.10 Diversity travel

A taskforce meeting was held, resulting in the following three questions:

- *Can the EB provide insight into the financial impact of Diversity Travel on the budget, and is this impact in line with expectations?*
- *Is the travel provided by Diversity Travel truly as sustainable as intended?*
- *How was the contracting of Diversity Travel and the mandatory use of their services communicated?*

Additionally, a fourth question will be submitted as a technical question:

- *Was a pilot conducted on the diversity travel system? If so, what exactly was tested, and what were the results?*

Action point:

- The Clerk will send the policy questions regarding Diversity Travel to the EB and the technical question to the policy makers

02.11 Security Compensation

The technical questions have not been answered yet, so there are no questions for the EB. As a result, this topic will not be discussed in the upcoming consultation meeting.

02.12 Promote and support student parties

There are no questions for the EB and this topic will not be discussed in the upcoming consultation meeting.

02.13 Preparation Consultation Meeting (11/03)

Potential new strikes

Following a meeting organised by the labour council and the unions. A UC member would like to ask the EB to what extent they still support strikes against government budget cuts.

PhD students taking courses at LDE partners

A UC member inquired whether a response from the EB had been received. The Chair clarified that a response is expected before summer.

Smoking on campus

A UC member would like to ask the following question regarding smoking on campus:

- *Is there progression on the maintenance of the no smoking area?*

Annual awards

A few years ago, the university shifted its focus from study success to student success. Faculties are also increasingly moving away from awarding cum laude distinctions. A discussion followed regarding whether the Student Excellence Award, which requires a cum laude master's degree, still aligns with this policy shift. One UC member suggested that the Erasmus Trust Fund, rather than the EB, determines the award criteria. The UC member who raised the issue argued that the award's focus on high grades does not reflect the current policy and suggested discussing it with the EB so they could raise it with the Erasmus Trust Fund. Another UC member pointed out the international context, where high academic achievements like cum laude are expected. Others noted that faculties can decide individually whether to retain cum laude distinctions. A UC member inquired about the intended outcome of raising this issue, to which the proposer responded that they believe the award's criteria should be reconsidered. A proposal was made to submit this as a written question to the EB, but another UC member noted that the process had already started, so it was better to ask now. After some deliberation the UC decided on asking the following questions:

- The Lambers Student Excellence Awards is awarded to student who graduate cum laude. How does this align with the broader educational vision that looks beyond study success, and how does this relate to the fact that some faculties have abolished cum laude?

There was some objection from several UC members to the second question. Therefore, a vote was proposed on this question. With the following results:

- In favour: 15
- Against: 2
- Abstain: 2

Based on these results, the following question will be asked:

- *Would the EB consider bringing up this matter to the Erasmus Trust Fund?*

Action point:

- The Clerk will send the questions for three AoB topics to the EB

03 Incoming documents

03.01 Response to University Council Position on Minor Length for Upcoming Policy Discussions

The Chair remarked that this response was not formally requested by the UC. The presidium decided to send a statement from the earlier sent SAY letter regarding the 20 weeks minors to the vice-deans of education. As a response, the Rector Magnificus decided to send the UC a formal letter regarding 20 weeks minor. A UC member suggested that the taskforce on 'minor length' should address this letter.

03.02 Response to 38798 Reorganisation regulations EUR Right of Consent

There were no remarks.

04 Any other business

04.01 Attendance and taskforces

There were no remarks.