

Cover note University Council

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Details		
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Author / Section		Verheijke/Feenstra – Academic Affairs/CPC
Handled by (to be invited to the committee)		Verheijke/Feenstra/Van der Zanden/Matthijssen (E&S)
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Context / Reason

NPO budgets have been granted by the Ministry to Erasmus University to address needs in both research and education, with a clear focus on student needs because of the Covid 19 pandemic.

Students experienced lack of social contexts, reported anxiety and experienced study delay. Second year bachelor students of 2020-2021 did not visit campus and still need some sort of onboarding I 2021-2022, since the past Academic Year did not onboard them at Erasmus University as of yet. Lecturers experienced enormous workloads and researchers experienced research delay.

Before summer recess we presented the Council with the concepts of the central NPO plans. Since the agenda of the Council was already full, the final documents are presented to the new Council.

The plans need formal consent on section D (Appendix B and C); for all other items consent on the outline of the budget is applicable (already processed). The documents enclosed follow the outline in the Erasmus Perspectives.

As for the language:

The ‘Samenvattend plan NPO’ needs to be submitted in Dutch. Therefore Appendix A is in Dutch. A translation will be presented to non native Dutch speakers upon request of the Council. For now, an extensive summary in this memo will compensate for this.

Jurisdiction UC / Question to the UC

For items A-C and E, F the council has the right of consent on the main outline of the budget (Erasmus Perspectives).

For item D (Appendix B and C), plans on In- throughput and wellbeing, we agreed that you have right of consent for the plan as presented.

Extensive Summary

Erasmus University designed extra plans to mitigate effects of the Covid-19 pandemic for students and researchers. You will find these plans in appendix A ‘Samenvattend Plan NPO middelen Erasmus University.’ The ministry of education (OCW) has granted Erasmus University funds and has issued guidelines how to spend this money. You will find these (in Dutch) in the Bestuursakkoord NPO (May 2021). Erasmus University will execute the guidelines accordingly.

The Bestuursakkoord allows Erasmus University to invest in 6 themes:

A Increased influx of students- Extra money to cover costs for extra students through allocation based on a headcount of students 1-10-2020 (extra teachers, facilities, etc.). Student numbers have risen due to Covid 19. The extra funding is used to cover these costs.

B Compensation Tuition Fees – Students pay 50% of their tuition this academic year. Erasmus University gets financial compensation for this.

C Extra hands in the Classroom - We are allowed to hire extra teaching support staff. This is a continuation of an existing subsidy measure and will relieve work pressure and further support small scale education and better feedback for students.

D In-throughput of students – Both faculties and the central university will invest extra in student wellbeing and student success. Surveys by Erasmus University showed increased levels of anxiety and loneliness.

To prevent doubling and/or misalignment with HEQA- investments on personal and professional development of students and student wellbeing, internal guidelines have been drafted mainly addressing plans in section D: in-throughput of students and Student Wellbeing (appendix B, C, D, E). All NPO plans are extra and should reinforce current HEQA-investments.

E Erasmus MC internships - Medical students experienced study delay since they could not complete their internships. Erasmus MC will be compensated to take measures to mitigate this and to help students to complete their studies in due time.

F Extra means for researchers -who have a temporary contract and who experienced delay in their research.

The plan in Appendix A outlines all budgets allocated towards faculties and central services. The table on p.11 gives you an overview on means allocated to faculties and on top of p.12 you will find the budgets that will be granted to general services to cover costs of increased student numbers.

For sections A (increased student numbers), B (compensation for tuition) and C (extra hands) focus lies on upscaling regular activities. You will not find extra plans for these sections. In our regular reporting cycle we will monitor whether the money has been spent. You will be informed about this in regular reporting updates.

Plans in section D do require extra attention from your Council. You have extended rights here, since these funds are allocated at measures to enhance both study and student success, as well as wellbeing. The NPO investments run alongside those in the current Wellbeing plan, however, NPO-plans provide extra support and/or reinforcement

Plans in section E (internships at Erasmus Medical Centre) were discussed with the Faculty Council of Erasmus MC.

In section F researchers will be compensated. Guidelines are very specific: only researchers with a temporary contract are eligible and all costs should be related to research. We have agreed with

faculties that they will account for the spending based on a head count. Of course, in sharing information with the ministry we will report on an aggregated level, to safeguard privacy.

Monitoring and reporting will be executed in the regular reporting cycle. We will report to the ministry twice annually and in our annual report of Erasmus University. You will be informed about these reports.

In this summary we will give a more extensive summary of plans that have been drafted under section D. Besides plans by faculties that have been or will be consented to by faculty councils, a central plan has been drafted to address the wellbeing of students. This plan needs your consent in September 2021.

Section D: Promoting Student Wellbeing on an institutional level (Chapter 7, p. 12 onwards)

To come up with valid plans, we performed two baseline measurements (appendix D: Student Monitor and E: Focus Groups interviews with all faculties who are eligible to receive NPO funding under section D (ISS excluded). These documents are in English and you will find them attached. Main outcome: students experience more problems with loneliness, anxiety and depression, although they do report to feel at home at our university and to be generally satisfied with life. Students in focus group interviews indicate that University should pay more attention to student success (besides study success) and students have put forward the urgency that more psychologists and counsellors are needed. Next, general opinion is that information on student services can be enhanced and that teachers might become better aware what to do enhance student resiliency and student success.

Faculty plans to enhance in-throughput and student wellbeing

Faculties designed plans based upon these measurements and discussed these with their members of participation. On page 21 you will find an overview of budgets that will be spent on the two main topics: (1) measures to enhance onboarding and study success and (2) measures to enhance student wellbeing. Measures to enhance the student intake and study success are: providing extra courses to remediate knowledge gaps due to Covid-effects in secondary education; measures to mitigate effects of study delay (extra courses, extra study guidance); instruments to better keep track on individual student success; extra teaching staff to support the learning processes. To enhance student wellbeing most faculties invest in extra social activities to enhance social cohesion and a sense of belonging. Second, they invest in extra outreach (extra ears in classroom like RSM) and counselling. Third, extra courses will be offered to enhance student resiliency and skills to cope with stress, time management, et cetera.

Promoting Student Wellbeing on an institutional level

Faculties designed plans in May/June. In a cross-faculty design session they exchanged plans. The programme lead of Student Wellbeing and the head of student affairs E&S took notice of all plans and proposed additional measures on a central level. These were discussed with all faculties of Erasmus University, as well as with all universities nationwide.

Based upon the base line measurement and the wellbeing plans on a faculty level, the central plan to promote wellbeing entails (financials in K):

- Extra care and prevention, by means of assigning extra psychologists and counsellors to decrease waiting lines;	424
- Enhance Outreach, by means of better information for students on the chain of care within Erasmus University to be measured by number of students reached and satisfaction rates;	266

- Enhance Sense of Belonging: by means of a free membership for all students of Erasmus University to create community events in specific spaces in the well known app ‘‘Unilife’’ to be measured by number of students and activities in the context of Unilife;	135
- Enhance outreach and inclusivity of student unions aimed at new and wider groups of students at Erasmus University to be measured by number of students and activities.	57
- Sharing knowledge about teacher training activities with other universities (to support teacher training programmes paid for by HOKA funding)	14
- Membership of Caring Universities: with the support of the Wellbeing group of the Council, Erasmus University will join Caring Universities with a focus (in line with the inter university aims) on early prevention, online and offline.	132

Caring universities, focus on student wellbeing and online prevention

The costs of Caring University represent membership costs and input from Erasmus University. In an effort to align activities amongst universities nationwide, universities have addressed themes with the aim to co-jointly design activities. Erasmus University will lead the themes on community building (related to: enhance outreach in the above) and e-health modules for students (related to: membership of caring universities). The community building will be monitored on the number of activities and student satisfaction rates. The e-health modules will be evaluated with evidence based research, in line with principles of Caring Universities. The Executive Board has allocated money for central services under section A: increased student numbers to this effect.

Follow-up process

We propose that the Financial Committee of the Council will follow up on all sections. Twice a year Erasmus University will report to the Ministry of OCW. These reports will be shared for advice with the Committee (and the Council upon that).

We propose that all ongoing in section D will be reviewed by the members of the HEQA working group and the working group on Student Wellbeing, periodically. The outcomes will be presented twice a year to OCW and the reports will be shared for advice with these Committees (and the Council upon that).

Specifics

We would like to explain that the timeframe to design these plans came at a particular busy time of the year (end of academic year 2020-2021). Plans were made in a pressure cooker.

The investments should benefit students asap. In September we need to share all plans with the ministry. Although we have tried to have a discussion with your Council before the summer recess, we think it is beneficial that a new Council starts at the beginning with the monitoring of these plans. We hope that you understand that – although a more extensive period of discussion and advice would have been beneficial – with the current timeframe options are limited.

Documents to be attached

Appendix A Overall NPO plan (in Dutch) – as it will be submitted to the Ministry of OCW

Appendix B: Erasmus University NPO Plan ‘Promoting Student Wellbeing on an institutional level’

Appendix C: Budget to go with Erasmus University NPO Plan ‘Promoting Student Wellbeing on an institutional level

Appendix D: Student Monitor

Appendix E: Overall report Focus Groups