

NEWSLETTER

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

[All documents discussed can be downloaded here](#)

The University Council meeting of Wednesday 23 June, to close the academic year, was once again a true marathon session. The morning focused mainly on educational issues, such as the Language Coordination Desk Scheme, the Enrolment Scheme 2010 – 2011, the Institution Tuition Fees 2011 – 2012 and an initial exploratory discussion of the important policy memo Institutional Quality Care System. The afternoon featured the subjects: the Participation in Decision-Making Compensation Scheme, the Organisation of the Primary Process, the Management Report for the first quarter of 2010, the annual report UT 2009 and the Framework Development Memo 2011 – 2015. The framework development memo came up in connection with several items, such as the Organisation of the Primary Process and in discussing the general state of affairs in the presence of the Supervisory Council. The latter meeting focused on the concerns of the University Council relating to the shortfall in performance in the area of Research and Education (in particular the loss of market share), the financial situation and the discontent with the current situation which according to the University Council is rife among staff.

[Participation in Decision-Making Compensation Scheme](#)

Unfortunately the University Council has to conclude that within the UT there exists too little interest in participation in decision-making. This certainly has to do with how having a role in the decision-making process is appreciated and rewarded. The Executive Board is keen to increase participation and on the request of the University Council has amended the Participation in Decision-Making Compensation Scheme. This now includes a "repair clause" for student compensation, which had gone down as a result of a deduction based on the medical expenses system. In addition, the compensation for students who fulfil a special function in

the decision-making has been increased. The unit of staff (members) with a seat on the University Council is compensated for the time spent in participation in decision-making. From 1 September 2010, this compensation will be increased from 12% to 18%. In this context the member of the University Council is to make proper agreements with his or her superior so that this time can actually be spent on activities relating to the University Council. All allowances will be indexed from now on. Because it is clear that these improvements will be far from sufficient to make more people (in particular higher academic staff) enthusiastic about a role in participation in decision-making, the University Council has asked the Executive Board to also ensure that active involvement in participation in decision-making will result in appreciation for the functioning of staff members and may have a positive effect on the staff member's career. The Executive Board has stated in principle to be willing to take up this idea and in consultation with the University Council will present proposals on ways in which to incorporate this in the appraisal system of the UT.



To respond, send an email to: h.g.poorthuis@utwente.nl

[Language Coordination Desk Scheme](#)

An increasing number of students make use of the free language courses provided by the UT. The faculties are currently to pay for these. They would like to change this, in particular because there appears to be no limit to the number of students participating and the related costs.

During this cycle, a scheme with ideas on how to tackle this problem has been submitted to the University Council. The University Council agreed that it could not be tolerated that students needing a language course are rejected because the limit for the number of participants has been reached. The Executive Board agreed to this view and will attempt to prevent this as much as possible. Several members of the Council are of the opinion that students should not have to pay extra costs to ensure that only highly motivated students will participate in the courses. However, the Executive Board wishes to fully uphold the new scheme. The University Council is now considering drawing up an unsolicited advice on the matter.

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The University Council

The University Council (URaad) is the central representative body of the UT and holds regular discussions with the Executive Board. The council has 18 members; nine staff members and nine students. The University Council has a say in UT policy at the central level. Five parties are represented on the council: Campus Coalition and UReka, Pro-UT, Lijst Chairman and PvdUT.

At the moment the members of the University Council are:

Oscar Bloemen, Nikolai Oudalov, David Smits, André Veenendaal, Jan van Alsté, Frits Lagendijk, Laura Franco Garcia, Sandra Hackurtz, Mark Franken, Dick Meijer, Stas Verberkt, Silke Kücking, Jann van Benthem, Peter Prins, Frans Houweling, Herman Poorthuis, Jan the Goeijen and Nick Leoné.

Institution Tuition Fees

In the last council meeting, the council discussed the enrolment scheme and the institution tuition fees with the Executive Board. Most amendments in the first document result from amendments to the Higher Education and Research Act.

An important qualification in this context is that integrating the ITC into the student's charter is scheduled by the Executive Board for 1 September 2011. The council has confronted the Executive Board with this delay and will hold the Executive Board to the new term, including the required approval procedure. There will also be a transitional arrangement until this date.



The institution tuition fees have been increased this year. In this context, we have first studied the effects of previous increases. This showed that these do not appear to have any direct (demonstrable) negative effects. The proposed rates are cost-effective.

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Institutional Quality Care System

For the second time a draft version of the Institutional Quality Care System Memo was discussed in this cycle. The intention is still to land a so-called 'institutional audit'. To achieve this the UT must demonstrate that it has a sufficiently robust vision on (the quality of) education and that this is properly safeguarded. If the audit is passed successfully, this means a substantial relief of the accreditation procedures. The University Council supports the line described by the Executive Board, although we have written a letter with questions and suggestions to flesh out the idea. For example, we would like to see more transparency in the assessments of departments and we also consider the opinion of alumni relevant to quality improvement. We are also of the opinion that an issue such as teacher qualification (BKO and any follow-up) should show rapid progress in order to prevent it from becoming a paper tiger. It should become a real basis for getting UT education back in the top league! In October the definitive memo is expected for approval by the council.

Questions before closure: minors

In the previous cycle the policy on minors was discussed. This includes: 'within the preconditions students are free to choose a minor at their own discretion'.

An observant newsletter reader informed us that in practice it is different and that the 'minor admission matrix' is unnecessarily restricted. The UReka faction asked a question about this, because students are unsatisfied as well. The rector acknowledged the problem and will ensure that the matrix is extended where possible. We expect an update about this in the next cycle.

Blackboard

The University Council drew attention to possible violations of privacy in Blackboard. The Executive Board promised to draw



up rules on the use of the Blackboard statistics (with the purport that no data which can be traced to persons may be used). It will also be checked with the Dutch Data Protection Authority whether collecting data does not violate the relevant Act.

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Management report 1st quarter 2010

The UR is positive about this new form of reporting. A presentation focusing on outlines instead of details is very useful. We have asked to make even more information contained in this report more transparent, in particular by using more graphs.

Preliminary enrolments

In the past six months the UT scored very poorly in the preliminary enrolment figures 2010/2011. This has to do, among other things, with verifying certificates, which takes longer for German students. According to the Executive Board, the UT is again on course. The absolute figures are higher than last year's level. The council is still concerned about the UT's still deteriorating market position, the imbalance technical/non technical and the risk profile of a large German intake (which is mainly the result of the tight situation on the German market, which can change). The page <http://www.utwente.nl/feitenencijfers/onderwijs/> refers to Studielink and the IBG website, where you can find information on the preliminary enrolments. Besides the Bachelor intake, the Master intake is also becoming an increasingly important issue for the UT. Once students have obtained a Bachelor degree, they must decide on a Master degree. Increasingly often UT Bachelor students go somewhere else to obtain their Master degree, whereas the intake of external Bachelor students lags behind. So on balance the UT is losing out on the intake of Master students at the moment.

Budget report at the end of March 2010

Compared with the budget the result of the faculties is expected to improve by €1.1 million. We owe this positive result to EWI having realised much more Work for Third Parties. The service departments show an expected deficit of €0.8 million as a result of, among other things, not being able to pass on cleaning costs. In total this makes for an expected result of €-9.6 million. This is in line with the budget.

[Framework Development Memo 2011-2014](#)

The framework development describes the policy-related and financial frameworks for the years 2011-2015. During these years the resources available will only increase to a very limited extent, partly because the central government is economising. In addition, the UT is faced with a decreasing market share, which may have financial consequences for the UT in the future. At the national level talks are in progress on how to adjust the national budget model.

It is noticeable that besides the improvement of the results (cutbacks) proposed by the Berger Committee, there are also cutbacks scheduled for the service departments from 2011. In the period from 2011 up to and including 2015 the available budget for the UT service departments will decrease from €71.3 million to €65.5 million. This is a decrease of approximately €6 million. The University Council presses for these planned cutbacks not to result in forced redundancies. As from the budget 2011, the ITC (6th faculty) will also be included in the total UT budget.

The Executive Board indicated that the S&O service department has a tight budget in view of the tasks it has. The Executive Board feels that more funding should be available for S&O in the near future.

We picked up information that there are problems relating to the management/funding of research and research-related education in accordance with the previously adopted "Management Research Memo". In this context this memo constitutes the basis of the findings in the framework development 2011 - 2014.

However, the University Council has serious doubts about the practical outcome of the management research memo, in particular in relation to the problems with the allocation of resources and the authority and accountability relationship between the Dean and the Academic Director. The University Council has received many worrisome messages in this context. The proposal of the University Council to map the problems by means of a questionnaire among Academic Staff was not adopted by the Executive Board.

In the next few years the Executive Board does not wish to implement any major system changes, it prefers consolidation and a focus on content. However, the Executive Board states to be aware of feelings among staff and will present points for improvement to solve bottlenecks in October. At the urgent



request of the University Council these will explicitly include the negative feelings among Academic Staff.

With the above promise the University Council ultimately arrived at a positive advice for the framework development memo 2011-2014.

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Discussion General State of Affairs in the presence of the Supervisory Council

Based on the Annual Report UT 2009 and the Framework Development Memo 2011 – 2015 we discussed with the Executive Board the general state of affairs over the past academic year 2009/2010 and the expectations for the future. This took place in the presence of the members of the Supervisory Council.

The meeting focused on the concerns the University Council has about the shortfall in performance in the area of Research and Education (in particular the loss of market share), the financial situation and the discontent about the current situation which according to the council is rife among staff. As for the latter in particular the undesirable consequences for the council of the management research memo were discussed as described in the above section on the framework development memo.

In a general sense the University Council feels that in the recent period the Executive Board has responded too evasively or overly subtly to the above problems and the council confronted the Executive Board with this giving several examples. The council acknowledges the complexity of the



underlying causes, but is of the opinion that the problems must first be clearly identified and acknowledged before a policy is formulated to solve them. The Executive Board expressed its awareness of the problems presented and wishes to improve the communication about these problems in the future.

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