

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.



University Council 2024-2025

For the upcoming 2024 – 2025 academic year, the following (elected) people will take seats on the University Council. The University Council consists of 18 members, nine staff members and nine students.

Employees

Herbert Wormeester (chair), Eline Marsman, Wilma Dierkes, Emile Dopheide, Laura Vargas Llona, Aditya Pappu, Michaela Schepers, Catalin Popa, Jorge Piano Simoes.

Students

Oliver Davies, Kai Kojima, Guus Verweij, Bonny van der Aa, Venise Taboada, Ivan Potkin, Robin Kamphuis, Emer Waarts and Tom Lamaker.

Three parties are represented in the council, for the students: UReka and DAS. And for the staff members: Campus Coalition.

TOPICS ON THE AGENDA IN THE MARCH CYCLE

These are some of the topics on the agenda in the March cycle:

- Reorganisation UCT
- Grace period for ICT accounts of former employees

These, and more, topics will be discussed during the public plenary meeting on Wednesday 26 March, which can be [joined digitally](#).

Several days before this meeting, the agenda, agenda items, and draft letters from the University Council will be published on the [webpage on the March cycle](#).

IN THIS EDITION A FEW OF THE IMPORTANT TOPICS THAT WERE DISCUSSED IN THE FEBRUARY CYCLE 2025.

Guideline and Model BSc EER Sept 2025: UC Consent and Key Changes

The University Council (UC) has granted its consent to the Guideline and Model BSc Education and Examination Regulations (EER) for September 2025. The UC has closely examined the proposed changes and engaged in discussions with the Executive Board, faculty representatives, and the rector magnificus, ensuring that all concerns were addressed.

One of the major changes is that grades for courses and study units will now have infinite validity, a change long requested by the UC. This will reduce over-examination and improve transparency in students' academic records. Another key change is that all course-level grades must be registered in Osiris, ensuring a uniform and transparent grading policy across faculties.

However, the UC also recognizes the potential challenges regarding bonus points and integrated assessments, which require clear definitions in the programme-specific EER sections. To ensure a smooth transition, the UC advises:

- Clarifying terminology around study-unit and course-level grades for consistency in the EER.
- Monitoring the feasibility of these changes, ensuring they do not place an additional burden on examiners.
- Conducting an evaluation of the new regulations when the next EER is submitted for consent.

With these considerations in place, the UC is confident that the new Guideline and

Model BSc EER will enhance clarity, transparency, and fairness in assessment procedures at the university.

Help Structure: UC Calls for Enhanced Implementation and Increased Visibility

The University Council (UC) has reviewed the annual reports on the help structure for 2023-2024 and while the framework itself is well-developed, the practical implementation and visibility within the organization remain insufficient. Despite all the input and effort put into these structures, the execution within departments is minimal, and more attention is needed to ensure that these support systems are effectively used.

A key point to consider is that the connection between policy developers and those responsible for implementing these policies could be strengthened. It is essential that individuals who will benefit from the support structure are well-informed about the available tools, guidelines, and procedures. The UC emphasizes that this involves not only effective communication but also active collaboration. Increasing structured conversations and engagement between system designers and implementers is important. This approach can help ensure that the support structure evolves from an abstract concept into a practical resource.

The current help structure has the potential to greatly enhance well-being and safety within our university community. While a framework is in place, it appears there may be opportunities for improvement in terms of accessibility and active engagement. The University Council (UC) believes that fostering greater interaction and collaboration among various parties will help ensure that this support system effectively meets the needs of those who rely on it.

To this end, constructive discussions are already underway between the UC and the DEI team, focused on exploring ways to enhance cooperation and integration. The UC views this initiative as a significant step forward and encourages the Executive Board (EB) to consider additional actions that would further increase the visibility and accessibility of the help structure within the university's daily operations. Together, we can create a more supportive environment for everyone in our community.

Advisory Committee on Institutional Collaborations

The University Council (UC) has advised the Executive Board to establish an Advisory Committee on Institutional Collaborations. This committee aims to provide a clear and transparent framework for assessing ethical considerations in partnerships with institutions, companies, and public organizations. While the university already has the Knowledge Safety Team (KST) and faculty Ethics Committees in place, there is currently no unified approach to evaluating the broader moral and societal

implications of collaborations.

The UC sees this as an important step to ensure consistency, transparency, and accountability in decision-making regarding institutional partnerships. Similar advisory bodies already exist at universities such as Erasmus University and Tilburg University. The proposed committee would consolidate different criteria, covering ethical concerns (e.g., human rights, sustainability) and sector-specific risks (e.g., fossil fuel or defence-related collaborations).

The UC recommend that the Advisory Committee consider evaluating both ongoing and future collaborations with institutions in Israel and Palestine. Recognizing the importance of this issue, it would be beneficial for the committee to assess how these partnerships align with UT's core values and to offer some preliminary guidance by May. If meeting this timeline poses any challenges, the UC encourages exploring temporary measures, such as pausing new collaborations and providing staff and students the option to opt out of related projects without any negative repercussions. The UC believes that this initiative will strengthen UT's ethical leadership and commitment to responsible international collaboration, ensuring that institutional partnerships align with the university's values and broader societal expectations.

Research Allocation Model

The University Council (UC) has given consent to the new Research Allocation Model (RAM). This new Research Allocation Model is not about lowering the overall research budget. The new RAM obtain new principles and parameters to give faculties BMS, EEMCS, S&T and ET, insight in the outcome of the allocation which they can take into account in their budgeting process. The UC first had an internal discussion around the document, and then submitted a series of written questions, primarily involving the need for some clarifications which were comprehensively answered by the team S&P and during the external meeting with rector magnificus Tom Veldkamp.

The UC is happy with the clarity and transparency of the new model. The main concern is to ensure that the effects of the new Research Allocation Model are monitored, and adjustments are made when necessary, therefore we gave the following advices: - To monitor how the number of FTE's per faculty develops in the upcoming year, given the strong influence of this component on the budget assigned to each faculty through the new Research Allocation Model; - To develop and implement a monitoring mechanism for the Strategy component of the Research Allocation Model. One that favour faculties who deploy the funds efficiently to align their research to the UT's Impact domain.

DECEMBER 2024 CYCLE

Introduction

The December cycle was a busy cycle for the University Council (UC), with a focus on the finances as the Concept Budget 2025-2029 was discussed, to which the UC has the right of consent. Especially within the financial context that our university is currently in this process consisted of having many meetings and lengthy discussions. We will further elaborate on what happened and about the current situation. Within this newsletter we will touch upon the following subjects that have been discussed within the December cycle, and give you a summary on what has happened (you can find the document through the hyper link):

- Concept Budget 2025-2029
- Memo Report Improfin
- Organisational language – Implementation parallel bilingualism
- UT DEI Development Plan 2024-2027
- Unsolicited advice Hate related incident on campus

If you want to see a complete overview of the agenda, the documents that have been discussed and the UC decisions and advice, please click [here](#).

Concept Budget and Improfin report

On the 15th of November 2024 an article was published in the Tubantia titled “UT has no control over the money”, in which an analysis of the financial system of the UT by improfin leaked. In the December cycle the UC received the Improfin report, and expressed their concerns on the content of the Improfin report as well as the way in which the document was handled and the impact this had on the university community as a whole and the financial column in particular. Therefore, the UC primarily recommended to the Executive Board to look at the strengthening of the finance department within the university and to have more transparency in their communication towards the UT community (unsolicited advice from UC about [Improfin report](#)).

Furthermore, the UC received the Concept Budget for 2025-2029. The budget is a financial translation, and an update of the policy set out in the Spring Memorandum 2025-2029. The UC reviewed the Concept Budget 2025-2029 and raised considerable concerns regarding the following; a lack of strategic personnel plans, the present structure of the financial system, the calculated increase of the 2nd and 3rd money streams, lack of information on the Clusters (Building blocks) and the advice from the local participatory bodies. Overall the UC expressed its feeling that that the Executive Board seems to have insufficient grip on the situation. Therefore, the UC did not feel confident in deciding on their consent yet in the plenary meeting in December and the decision from the University Council was postponed for max. 30 days. During this period the University Council spend time mapping out the

consequences to both providing consent or withholding it, had additional meetings with the EB and other internal departments and asked for additional external advice to be able to provide well-informed consent. In the end the UC, taking into account all information mentioned before, consented to the budget with 7 commitments made by the Executive Board.

Organisational language – implementation parallel bilingualism

The UC also received a document on the UT's implementation plan for adopting "parallel bilingualism" as its organisational language policy. This includes guidelines that help balance the use of Dutch and English within the organisation, to still promote inclusivity, accessibility and effective communication with both the local and international people within the UT community. The UC advised the Executive Board to create and share clear guidelines for implementing this parallel bilingualism, to explicitly encourage international staff and students to learn Dutch to stimulate integration and including this as a recommendation in the contracts for permanent staff. (see UC decision about the [Organisational language](#))

DE&I development plan and hate related incidents on campus

Furthermore, hate related incidents have taken place on campus. UToday already posted multiple articles on the topic and since it is of tremendous importance to the UT community and the UC and the topic of Diversity, Equity and inclusion was already discussed, the UC decided to give unsolicited advice on this topic to the Executive Board. In [this unsolicited advice](#) the UC advised the Executive Board to publicly condemn the acts of racial hatred and to refer the UT community to the support facilities available for people who experienced hatred, discrimination or harassment. Currently, a statement from the Executive Board has been posted on the UT website with tips on how to protect yourself and others, which can be found [here](#).

The UC also received the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I) Development plan 2024-2027, aiming to further embed diversity, equity and inclusion into the core values of the university. The plan mainly aims to address incidents of discrimination or exclusion and to make policies and practices more inclusive, focusing on various target groups within the organization. Although the UC resonates with these values, the actionability of these plans was missing. Therefore, the UC [negatively advised](#) on this document, with the possibility to revise this decision upon the next presentation by March 2025. Furthermore, the UC shared the message with the Executive Board to focus on clear, concise and actionable measures that can be implemented immediately, take leadership in informing the UT community about discrimination and its support measures, and make use of and improve the existing help structures to reflect this development.

INTRODUCTION NEW MEMBERS



Laura Vargas Llona

My professional journey started at UT twenty-five years ago, as a Physics Erasmus student from Spain. In all these years I have continuously looked for new challenges and opportunities, working in three different faculties both in academic and support roles and contributing to the Shaping Team and SEG Inclusion within the Strategy and Policy department. I have consistently assumed the role of a bridge-builder within my research group fostering collaboration and dialogue among academics, support staff, PhD candidates, and students, or in more recent years, between the service departments and the faculties.

My commitment to the UT staff and students extends beyond my research projects, and through my roles as confidential advisor, co-chair of the DEI Advisory Board, and Secretary of the UT-Kring, I'm devoted to promote an environment in which people's well-being and success comes first, a space where we can all flourish to our fullest potential. My passion lies in the areas of organizational culture, leadership, social safety, equity, inclusion, internationalization, and sustainability, among others. The prospect of joining the university council is an opportunity to broaden my horizon and continue speaking up, advocating for the interests of colleagues and students, ensuring the voices of all stakeholders are heard and represented. It is an opportunity to use my experience in facilitating communication and connecting people, from the work floor to the policy makers, and from the Executive Board to the broader university community.

The UT is a dynamic organization, constantly evolving with its people and structures in a constantly changing landscape. I believe fostering constructive dialogue and creating an environment where diverse perspectives are welcomed ensures robust decision-making processes that help create a future-proof organization.



Jorge Piano Simoes

Good communication is crucial for any relationship, and that is no different regarding the relationship between the University of Twente and the executive board. The university



council plays an important role ensuring this line of communication, with the excellence of the research and teaching conducted at the UT, as well as the wellbeing of its employees and students, at the back of its mind. Being part of this process is a task I take with humility and aware of the weight of the responsibility. As a health psychologist, I am looking forward to bringing my expertise to this position, and I also look forward to providing my small contribution shaping decision making to be as transparent and democratic as possible.



Catalin Popa

My motivation to join the University Council stems from a strong commitment to ensure that the voices of researchers at the University of Twente are heard and addressed. In my role as a Grants Advisor in the Strategic Business Development department, I interact daily with researchers from all faculties, gaining unique insights into their challenges and needs. Having been an active researcher myself, I connect deeply with their concerns and am driven by a sense of justice and responsibility towards our research community.

On the University Council, I aim to represent the interests of UT researchers by leveraging my knowledge of their experiences and my expertise in the European funding landscape. My current position as the chair of the SBD Service Council has equipped me with the skills necessary to effectively serve and advocate for our community. I am dedicated to fostering transparent decision-making processes and ensuring that strategic decisions, especially in times of financial pressure, are well-informed and beneficial to our research environment.



Michaella Schepers

My name is Michaella Schepers, staff member of Centre for Education Support (CES), and it is my intention as a group member of the University Council to take a holistic approach to advice on decision-making. As a (former) member of the Service Council CES, I got to know the University of Twente as an organisation very well. In my work and during consultations, I have regularly seen that the tasks of the departments are discussed in the decision-making process without consulting with the departments. That is a missed

opportunity.

I am convinced that both the board, staff and students ultimately all have one common interest: to be able to move around in a (financially) healthy organisation, in which everyone can work and/or study in a safe-, valued- and professional manner. How do I think I will achieve this?

Mainly by being myself: Approachable, with an open attitude, listening, conducting critical dialogues and a little humour.

All in view to represent the best interests of all parties.



Aditya Pappu

Hello! My name is Aditya. I am originally from Mumbai, India and I arrived in the Netherlands almost six years ago to do the Sustainable Energy Technology Masters at the UT. Post-graduation I became a PhD candidate in the Energy Group (part of the Mathematics and Operations Research Group) of the EEMCS faculty. Currently I am in the third year of my PhD.

In a nutshell, I want to push for the interests of researchers, including students and doctoral candidates (PhDs and PDEngs). More specifically, coming from a research background, my main focus is on reducing the burden of unnecessary bureaucracy that currently plagues research work at the UT, especially the doctoral journey. Think mandatory courses or the compulsory T&SP. Simply put, I think researchers should focus their time on doing the thing they are hired to do: research. A good bureaucracy is a lean one that comprises of the minimal rules required for a researcher to function at their individual optimum. Any bureaucracy that detracts from that should be strictly eliminated. My goal is to work with the board of the UT and its policy makers to ensure ways in which researchers can allocate more time to deep work, which I think in the current world of 'mandatory trainings' and 'fill another form culture', is being threatened.

The opportunity to envision change also comes with the responsibility of executing it. Now that I have gone through some of the pain points of being an international masters' student and of the doctoral journey, I decided that actually joining the UT Council and working towards eliminating these pain points for other researchers is better than just complaining about them.

Hope you agree and wish me luck!



Ivan Potkin

Hi!

I am Ivan Potkin, a third year Advanced Technology student. Since the start of my studies in the UT, I have been active in my study association, S.A. Astatine. Last year I was in its board as Treasurer and Commissioner of Educational Affairs. I like to keep myself busy and engaged in the university life, from getting precious ECs to being active in committees of all kinds. I believe in importance of student rights in the University, because they provide opportunity for anyone to be involved, gain new experience and learn new skills far beyond the plane academic knowledge. I see no better way to support these rights as through representation of our, student voices at the highest levels of University's policy and decision-making.

That's why I am more than happy to put my efforts in a year of being a University Council member!



Kai Kojima

My name is Kai, from Japan, studying MSc Business Administration in the Purchasing & Supply Management track. I have been working with the (I)BA programme during my Bachelor's and also was the Secretary & Vice-President of ESN Twente two years ago. I love music, photography, and thrifting! This year as a member of the University Council, I hope to give unique and valuable insight from my experience interacting with all kinds of people with different backgrounds. See you around!



Emer Waarts

Hi!

My name is Emer Waarts, and starting in September, I'll have the privilege of serving as a member of the University Council. Over the past few years, I completed my bachelor's degree in Biomedical Engineering and spent a year on the board of the Euros rowing club. I'm now in the final year of my master's in Biomedical Engineering and I am preparing to graduate. I'm really excited to represent students in the University Council. My focus will be primarily on student well-being and ensuring that student interests are heard and addressed.



Guus Verweij

I'm Guus, a Civil Engineering and Management Master student. I got into student participation during my board year where I was the officer of educational affairs of study association ConceptT. I was a regular at the Programme Committee and the previous vice-chairman of the Faculty Council of ET. I aim to use these experiences to keep ensuring quality education and proper quality assurance by making student voices heard at a UT-wide level. Next to that, I find it very important to protect and improve the open and personal atmosphere here at the UT.



Venise Taboada

Hello! I am Venise Taboada, a third-year Industrial Engineering and Management student. I joined my study's education committee in my first year and never looked back, going on to represent students in the IEM Programme Committee and serve as a Secretary for the Honours Association. Through all this, I have been learning more about the university's educational vision, as well as the campus' incredibly active student body. I hope to bridge these both as best as I can so that we can foster a community of driven, diverse, daring students, who can challenge their personal and professional growth within and without their main study.



Bonny van der Aa

Hi everyone! I am Bonny. I am 22 years old and I am currently in the third year of my psychology bachelor. Outside of my studies I really like going for a run, cooking and having a good time with my friends, house mates, etc. I have done a board year as chairwoman of study association S.V. Dimensie where I have learned a lot and gathered and strengthened skills together with my fellow board members. Furthermore, I have been active as a student for a day mentor in the past and I was team captain of the open days team for psychology. Long story short, I have been very involved within and outside of our university. And now all of these past opportunities have led me to a new challenge; being a university council member. So far I have already learned a lot from this experience, and I am sure that feeling will become even stronger throughout the upcoming months.

My mission is to be a good representative for our student body here at the University of Twente. So feel free to reach out to me or grab a cup of coffee with me any time to share your view and ideas!

Registry University Council

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