

# CvB stukken voor agenda Universiteitsraad

Overlegvergadering d.d. : 25/09/19  
Commissievergadering : OOS  
Agendapunt : Enrollment moment for Semester 2  
Bijgevoegde stukken :  
Warm and Welcome University - enrolment moment for Semester 2  
advice1 - Advies platform studieadvies  
advice2 - platform onderwijscontactpersonen  
advice3 - PIA recommendation

Betrokken dienst: S&P

paraaf: 

Secretaris: Wichman

paraaf: 

Portefeuillehouder: Palstra

paraaf: 

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## 1. Status agendapunt:

Rol URaad:

- o Ter advisering

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## 2. Eerder behandeld in:

Naam gremium: UC-OW

Datum behandeling: 4 juni 2019

Naam agendapunt: Tussenweek – "Introductie Semester 2"

Conclusie toen:

There is no consent in the UC-Ow in advising the Executive Board, therefore the Executive Board is asked to take a binding decision. This decision will be prepared by SandP, based on the information the UC-Ow received via PIA and the Platform Study advisors.

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## 3. Toelichting/samenvatting:

### Summary

For several years there have been discussions on creating a proper enrollment moment for students starting at the UT in semester 2. Since the number of students starting in semester 2 are increasing it becomes of more and more importance to finalize a decision on this topic. In april 2019 a project team headed by Jelle Ferweda investigated several scenario's and reduced these to two viable options. These options were presented to several stakeholders.

The general conclusion is that all stakeholders support that a proper enrollment moment should be created for students starting in semester 2. Both viable scenario's have approximately the same support among stakeholders. Since there was no consent in the UC-Ow in advising the Executive Board, the Executive Board was asked to take a binding decision.

### Background

The University of Twente (UT) has two semesters. One, the first semester (S1) starts in September of each year. The second (S2) starts in February each year. Traditionally, the UT has used S1 as only enrolment moment for our degree programmes. S2 saw modest influxes of

exchange students. As such, the UT has focused its efforts in providing an orientation programme for new students on S1. During the last 2 weeks of August, new BSc and MSc students are welcomed to our university in a period of social interaction as well as orientation to our study facilities.

However, over the last years we have seen student intake in February grow. Vision 2020 specified an ambition to have 75% of our BSc students involved in an international experience and almost all of our MSc programmes now have an official start of the programme in S2. In 2019 the UT welcomed 234 new students in February. No full orientation programme however has been established for S2. Due to logistical challenges, students typically arrive during the weekend before classes and are on Sunday afternoon assisted in organizing the most critical administrative tasks. The rest of the on-boarding takes place alongside classes in the first two weeks of S2.

In April 2017 the Platform for International Affairs alerted the UT of the challenges for this ever increasing group of students. A number of studies were done upon request of the UCO, leading to a report and recommendations from S&B. These recommendations were not sufficiently supported, resulting in UCO requesting PIA to provide a broader background to the implications of the alternative scenarios. Jelle Ferwerda was asked by PIA to develop a more detailed recommendation to UCOW.

In April 2019 a projectteam lead by J Ferwerda provided realistic scenarios for the University of Twente under which students starting in the second semester of the academic year can be provided with a comprehensive orientation programme. Their conclusions can be found in the report *"Warm and Welcome University, Creating a fully facilitated enrolment moment for Semester 2"*.

The projectteam consisted of: J Ferwerda (ET), J Rademaker (EWI), J S Brüggewirth (SU), M Lindemann (CES), M Sjerps (HR) and R de Vries (SU)

In May 2019 the two most viable scenario's were presented to the UC-OW, along with advice from the involved educational platforms (PIA, onderwijscontactpersonen and studieadvies) and S&P.

#### Scenario 1

**Start the second semester 2 or 3 days later.** Provide the formal introduction to the academic programme during this time. Meanwhile, **focus on providing more digital tools** for students to prepare for their arrival at the UT (e.g., explore the option of registration with the municipality over internet, finalize the immigration steps online, provide videos about the courses and selecting a study programme). During the week of arrival, and during the course free week later in the quartile provide a social orientation programme.

#### Scenario 2

**Move the course-free week in Q3 to the start of the semester.** Use this week to provide students with an integrated orientation programme.

## Advice

### Platform Studieadvies

If the University of Twente does allow February inflow, (upcoming) students should be given the opportunity to prepare for the start of their classes like (upcoming) students who start in September. Both groups of students do have an equivalent right to facilities and support. (see: advice1 - Advies platform studieadvies)

### Platform Onderwijs Contactpersonen

In view of the internationalization ambition of the UT, the Platform endorses the need to be able to give a proper introduction to students who enroll in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. At the same time the platform notes that the impact of both proposals is quite large. Have heard the input from the faculties it is not possible to formulate an unanimous recommendations. (for input of individual faculties see: advice2 – platform onderwijscontactpersonen)

### Platform of International Affairs

The Platform of International Affairs (PIA) was very pleased to discuss the document "warm and welcome university". As you might know the PIA has been discussing the topic of a proper introduction for students starting out their study by the second semester many times the last years. The introduction in February is nothing compared to the one organized in August. Allowing more

time to arrange practicalities as well as give students a proper introduction to their study programme will give them a good start at the UT.

Looking at the project team that has drawn up the two scenarios we noticed all relevant units are represented there. We are happy to see they are all "on board", to guarantee the implementation of one of the scenarios.

The overall, and most important conclusion that the whole platform agreed on is that a break between semester 1 and 2, in order to facilitate a February introduction, is absolutely necessary. A digital kick-in (in the form of an on-boarding website) is not an alternative.

The over-all conclusion and recommendation of the PIA is as follows:

*Organize a proper introduction at the start of semester 2. Take into account that actual presence of students is necessary. Organize at least an orientation on the study programme, the study supporting facilities and other study related issues. According to the faculties this would require a three day period (in line with scenario 1).*

#### **UC-OW**

Uit de aangeleverde informatie blijkt dat voor internationale studenten de introductie belangrijk is, en dat dit daarnaast een grote impact voor de organisatie heeft. Hierover zijn de meningen binnen de UC-Ow verdeeld, met name waar het gaat om de impact voor de organisatie.

Er is besloten een instroommoment in februari te organiseren, de organisatie moet daar dan voor opgelijnd worden. Er moet rekening gehouden worden met het moment waarop voor buitenlandse studenten een kamer beschikbaar is. Ook moet worden gekeken naar de mogelijkheden in startdatum voor benodigde visa: het belang van de student staat wat de UC-Ow betreft voorop. Deze komt op zondag aan, en moet op maandag kunnen starten met colleges.

***There is no consent in the UC-Ow in advising the Executive Board, therefore the Executive Board is asked to take a binding decision. This decision will be prepared by SandP, based on the information the UC-Ow received via PIA and the Platform Study advisors.***

#### **S&P**

All stakeholders agree that a proper enrollment moment for students starting in semester 2 is necessary. Both scenario's have an (approximately) equal support among stakeholders and stakeholders have no insurmountable objections to either scenario. Most important at this time is that a final decision is made so implementation can start.

The strongest objection to scenario 1 is that the semester will be shortened by a few days putting more pressure on students and staff. The strongest objection to scenario 2 is that the lecture-free week (roostervrij week), which now coincides with primary and secondary school holidays, is moved to another time, possibly creating challenges for employees with younger children. It is up to the EB to decide which arguments she wants to prioritize.

#### **CES**

Vanuit CES worden de uitgangspunten voor een goed opgezette introductie volop ondersteund. Afhankelijk van de opzet van een dergelijk programma zal moeten blijken of dit gerealiseerd kan worden in 2/3 dagen of dat er een week voor nodig is. Betreffende intro biedt, naast de sociale aspecten, ook de mogelijkheid om studenten goed te informeren over het gebruik van de verschillende onderwijssystemen en het vooraf aan de start van het onderwijs kunnen inschrijven voor het te volgen onderwijs. Dat komt m.i. de transparantie, zowel voor studenten als ook de opleidingen, ten goede.

Kijkend naar de uitvoeringsaspecten vanuit CES-perspectief dan zijn beide voorgestelde scenario's goed te ondersteunen, waarbij moet worden opgemerkt dat in het 1e scenario de druk op het onderwijs door het invullen van de 1<sup>e</sup> 2/3 dagen met intro i.p.v. onderwijs (nog) verder toeneemt.

#### **HR**

HR recognizes the importance of a proper enrollment moment for students starting in semester 2. Taking in account the perspective of employees well-being, HR has strong preference for scenario 1 (start the second semester 2 or 3 days later).

Although scenario 1 will presumably put pressure on UT staff in the *first year* of introducing a proper enrollment process for S2, the negative effects of this scenario may be tempered by offering support (e.g. help or temporary extra capacity to enable redesign of modules and planning) during the first year of change.

HR estimates *the negative effects of scenario 2* on the *work-life balance* of UT staff to be more *far-reaching, structural and difficult to solve*. By moving the holidayweek (which now

coincides with primary and secondary school holidays) to another time, a significant group of employees (especially those with younger children) no longer has the opportunity to enjoy family (skiing) holiday in the springbreak. In addition they will be confronted with the challenge to organize childcare for the home situation during springbreak. This is a recurring issue, with indirect and structural effect on the work-life balance of UT staff.

Consulted Service Department(s): CES, HR, S&P

Consulted Educational Platform(s): PIA, Onderwijscontactpersonen, Studieadviseurs

Consulted other: UC-Ow

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#### **4. (Voorgenomen) besluit CvB:**

*Gezien*

*Gehoord*

*Overwegende*

*Besluit het CvB:*

##### **Creating a proper enrollment for Semester 2**

The Executive Board decides to move the course-free week in Q3 to the start of the second semester starting from the academic year 2020-2021 and use this week to provide students enrolling in the second semester with a formal introduction programme.

Het EB requests that an evaluation of this decision takes place after 3 years.

##### **Considerations:**

- All consulted stakeholders agree that a proper enrollment moment for students starting in semester 2 is necessary, with physical presence of the students
- Both scenarios have an (approximately) equal support among the consulted stakeholders,
- The consulted stakeholders have no insurmountable objections to either scenario,
- The strongest objection to scenario 1 is that the semester will be shortened by a 2-3 days, putting more pressure on students and staff,
- The strongest objection to scenario 2 is that the lecture-free week, which now coincides with primary and secondary school holidays (springbreak), is moved to another time, possibly creating challenges for employees with younger children,
- The CvB recognizes that moving the lecture-free week may cause an additional challenge for a specific group of employees. However, employees outside of 'regio-noord' already face this challenge (as do all employees in other school holidays).
- Although there was no consent in the UC-Ow, the majority of the faculties prefer scenario 2,
- To provide students with a proper enrollment, a period of 2 to 3 days is short, considering that both faculty introduction, warm-welcome and formalities need to be handled.
- Both students and employees see advantages in having a lecture-free week between semester 1 and semester 2, providing a slower transition between semesters.

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**GRIFFIE URaad: (door griffie UR in te vullen)**

**Eerder in URaad aan de orde geweest?**

- Nee.
- Ja, op

Conclusie toen:

**Nadere toelichting:** (Voor als presidium/griffier vindt dat één van bovengenoemde punten nadere toelichting behoeft)

# Warm and Welcome University

Creating a fully facilitated enrolment moment for Semester 2.

Aim:	Provide realistic scenarios for the University of Twente under which students starting in the second semester of the academic year can be provided with a comprehensive orientation programme.
Date:	April 17 <sup>th</sup> 2019
Sponsor:	PIA on behalf of UCOW
Author:	J Ferwerda (ET)
Project team:	J Rademaker (EWI) J S Brüggewirth (SU) M Lindemann (CES) M Sjerps (HR) R de Vries (SU)

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## Background

The University of Twente (UT) has two semesters. One, the first semester (S1) starts in September of each year. The second (S2) starts in February each year. Traditionally, the UT has used S1 as only enrolment moment for our degree programmes. S2 saw modest influxes of exchange students. As such, the UT has focused its efforts in providing an orientation programme for new students on S1. During the last 2 weeks of August, new BSc and MSc students are welcomed to our university in a period of social interaction as well as orientation to our study facilities.

However, over the last years we have seen student intake in February grow. Vision 2020 specified an ambition to have 75% of our BSc students involved in an international experience and almost all of our MSc programmes now have an official start of the programme in S2. In Feb. 2019 the UT welcomed 234 new students in February. No full orientation programme however has been established for S2. Due to logistical challenges, students typically arrive during the weekend before classes and are on Sunday afternoon assisted in organizing the most critical administrative tasks. The rest of the on-boarding takes place alongside classes in the first 2 weeks of S2.

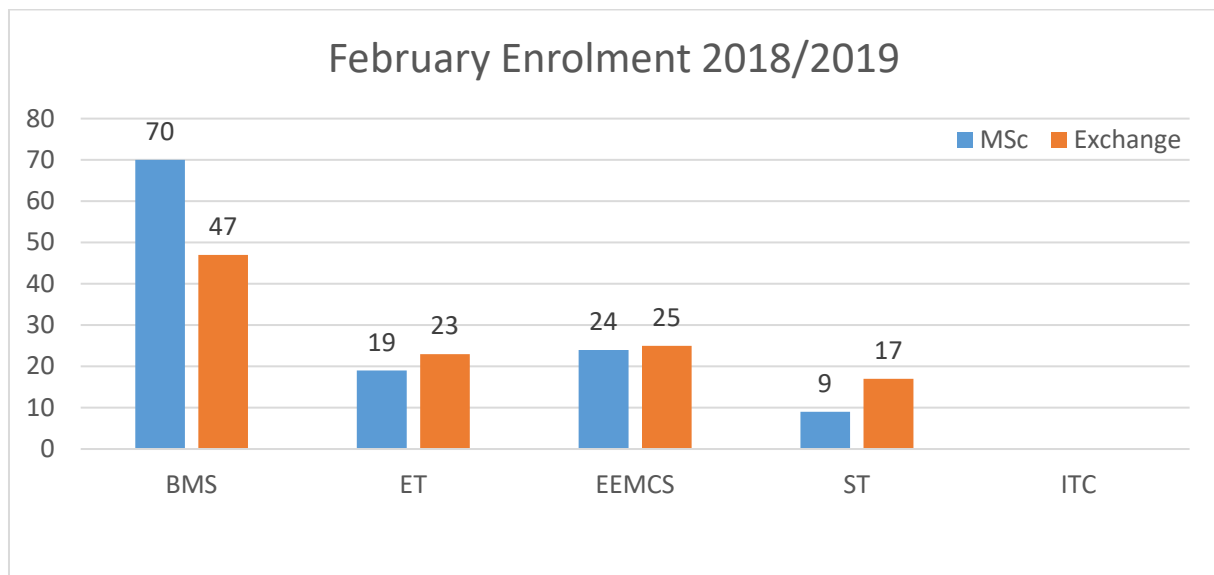


Figure 1. Enrolment figures for february 2018. No data for ITC was available at time of writing. Source: Mobiliy online (17 April 2019 & M&C Application dashboard (17 April 2019).

In April 2017 the Platform for International Affairs alerted the UT of the challenges for this ever increasing group of students<sup>i</sup>. A number of studies were done upon request of the UCO, leading to a report and recommendations from S&B<sup>ii</sup>. These recommendations were not sufficiently supported, resulting in UCO requesting PIA to provide a broader background to the implications of the alternative scenarios. Jelle Ferwerda was asked by PIA to develop a more detailed recommendation to UCOW.

This document aims at providing a clearer background to the implications of different scenario's.

## Management summary: Conclusion and recommendation

The work included in this document aims at providing students starting their study experience at the UT in February with a proper introduction to their new social and academic surroundings. This document includes the insights from service departments (HR, CES), faculties and students. The broad scope of input reflects the impact changes in class schedules may have on both staff as well as students.

We present two alternatives that would allow the UT to provide new students starting in the second semester with a good introduction to the university. As a committee we feel the choice of which alternative has preference cannot be made by the committee alone. As such we request UCOW to decide which alternative is preferred, and initiate steps towards implementation.

The following alternatives were found to be most viable, each with specific implications for the students and organization. A more detailed explanation of the Viable scenarios and the Consequences of viable scenarios can be found further down in this document.

### Alternative 1

Start the second semester 2 or 3 days later. Provide the formal introduction to the academic programme during this time. Meanwhile, focus on providing more digital tools for students to prepare for their arrival at the UT (e.g., explore the option of registration with the municipality over internet, finalize the immigration steps online, provide videos about the courses and selecting a study programme). During the week of arrival, and during the course free week later in the quartile provide a social orientation programme.

### Alternative 2

Move the course-free week in Q3 to the start of the semester. Use this week to provide students with an integrated orientation programme.

## Setup

In order to come to a balanced input, the main stakeholders were identified based on earlier recommendations:

The initial advice to UCO identified the core problem to be that no class-free time is left between the end of exams in S1 and the start of S2. This leads to a situation where students cannot arrive on campus in time, due to housing being occupied by students finishing S1. As a result they either have to find temporary housing, or arrive just in time for classes to start. The latter leads to unreliable presence of students in the week before start of classes of S2 making a long well-structured orientation period obsolete for many. The solutions offered were therefore in the area of freeing up space in the course schedule, allowing time between S1 and S2.

Key stake-holders as identified are then:

- Students, especially international students (Who often have less alternative housing options upon arrival)
- Centre for Educational Support, especially the scheduling section
- Human Resources department, as moving class schedules affects teaching staff
- UT International affairs, responsible for the arrival & orientation programmes

From each of these sections representatives were invited through the boards of the Student Union, the Board of Unite, and the department heads of HR, CES. Finally, the faculty internationalization coordinators were asked to provide a representative. In the invitation, the previous studies were shared and the representatives were asked to prepare 3 main questions with the unit they represent:

- Are the scenarios identified in previous studies the only available scenarios
- Could you provide a preference for these scenarios from the perspective of Staff, of sitting students and of newly enrolled students
- What are the negative consequences of each of these scenarios from the perspective of Staff, of sitting students and of newly enrolled students

In a focussed brainstorm session, the answers to these questions were explored.



## Why is the problem a problem?

In short, students that arrive late on campus, face study delay during their first quarter of studies, affecting study success and student well-being.

### **Formalities**

During the orientation period in summer, students can organize all the formalities with Immigration, housing, registration in the municipality, health checks and enrolment as part of an integrated process. For S2, support for this process is reduced and students receive basic support during a 2 hour session on the Sunday before classes. The results in students needing to go to several government offices during the weeks after arrival.

### **Course programme**

During the S1 introduction, students spend time with their academic advisors and in group settings receive information on the way courses link together, and the overall study programme. This is required information to prepare a studyplan, select elective courses and get books. During S2 enrolment, this is organized ad-hoc during the first week on campus.

### **Social embedding**

The S1 orientation programme is focussed on social embedding, providing a social support structure for the study period ahead. This is important for mental well-being of students. In S2 this is not explicitly organized.

### **Campus Services**

During the S1 orientation all on-campus and off-campus student facilities are introduced to new students. This allows for a fast familiarisation of the campus and its surroundings. We have come to realize the S2 enrolment does not provide such information provision.

## Identification: The root of the problem

The project team initially looked at the broader scope: What is the core of the problem. We set up a root-cause analysis to determine the line of argument, leading to the alternative causes of the problem:

- **Basic problem: Students do not get a good introduction** [because]
- They arrive late on campus {because}
- Housing is available only the weekend before classes start [because]
- Other students are still in the accommodation [because]
- Exams are not over yet

From this, we concluded, creating space between S1 and S2 would effectively provide a moment to give students a good orientation. However, there are alternatives to explore that might solve these problems equally well.

## What alternatives exist?

Before we looked at changing the course schedule, we had a focussed brainstorm on alternative solutions, in order to avoid following a set path. The following alternatives were brought up:

### Can we stop exams earlier?

In our discussions, we looked at the option of reducing the exam period of S1 from 2 to 1 week. This would mean you lose 5 educational days in the semester to plan exams and activities in the module. This makes this a less desirable solution

### Can we find alternative housing

In our discussions, we realized that there is no overcapacity of accommodation on/near campus. As such, just finding temporary housing for large groups of students may not be realistic. It is however an item that could be formally verified with the UT housing team.

**Recommendation:** Ensure no temporary housing for new students is available at a realistic price, or explore alternatives such as a buddy system in which the buddy also shares his/her room for a couple of nights with the incoming student.

### Instead of facilitating orientation and formalities on campus, can we do this digitally & remote?

The concept here is to develop an *on-boarding website* where students can organize their IND registration, Municipality, bank-account, courses etc. Upon arrival the University can allocate an enrolment buddy system that shows the new students all things needed in the programme.

**Recommendation:** Consider out of the box solutions where a further digitization replaces the need for an on-campus orientation period

### Can we move the kick-in activities to the current class-free week?

In line with the previous option. By ensuring the formalities are organized through a digital portal, only social aspects and introduction to the surroundings are left. Could these be provided during the course free week?

### Can we flip the length of Q3 and Q4

A quick discussion with the CES scheduling office and faculty learned that this is not a viable option due to the unequal amount of available educational days in the quartiles and the amount of education needed.

### Can we move the whole second semester a week later

All classes of S2 start one week later. The semester ends a week later than currently. This would however mean that summer break is reduced by a full week. Due to pressure from resits, momi and BSA we feel that this would affect staff work-life balance more than the situation asks for.

## Viable scenarios

In the end we concluded there are multiple scenarios that could be considered realistic and should be weighed against each other. These are the following:

### Scenario 1

This scenario consists of a number of actions:

#### **Move to a more digital arrival and enrolment system**

It would be valuable to explore to what extent arrival information & processes can be further digitized. Visa formalities have mostly been digitalized. Can this be expanded for other formalities?

#### **Start the semester a few days later**

The faculties have indicated they see the need for 2-3 days in order to provide students with the formal part of the orientation programme, which focusses on study setup, software, courses and the registration steps.

#### **Provide social orientation during the week in the evening & in the education free week**

To ensure a social orientation activities are organized during the first week on campus in the evening hours. Besides this, an option would be to allow societies to introduce themselves during the class-free week (Week 3 of Q3).

### Scenario 2

#### **Move the course-free week from Q3 to the start of Q3**

In this scenario the UT lets go of the link between the course free week and the school holidays in the region. The course-free week is moved to the start of the second semester, and used to provide new students with an integrated orientation programme. Effectively, the semester starts a week later, and ends at the current ending time.

## Consequences of viable scenarios

The consequences for staff, current students and new students were explored for each of the scenarios in an open brainstorm.

### Move to a more digital arrival and enrolment system

Pro	Con
More time spent before arrival, the less time is needed from staff upon arrival	Development of such an app requires UT wide participation to develop a smart enrolment app.

#### Considerations

<p>Embed this in the campus app as part of a section "Your arrival at the UT"</p> <p>A careful check is needed whether IND, town hall, banks etc would be willing to do a full online registration without presence in the Netherlands.</p> <p>This scenario is not a full solution and would need to be linked to a social/surroundings orientation after arrival.</p>
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### Start the semester a few days later without changing the rest of the schedule

Pro	Con
<p>It happens in other cities</p> <p>Least impact for sitting students</p> <p>New students get a few days to get settled</p>	<p>Less time to teach the courses putting extra pressure on staff</p> <p>Students have less time to absorb the lecture material &amp; run study groups</p> <p>Scheduling lecture halls is already difficult, which will become even more difficult</p>

#### Considerations

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### Move course-free week in Q3 to the start of Q3 (And start classes in week 2 of Q3)

Pro	Con
<p>Staff will have a more relaxed start of the semester, allowing a pause between exams and new classes</p> <p>Sitting students have a break after exams, reducing stress</p> <p>This follows the pattern TUD has decided to use</p> <p>New students have plenty of time for all formalities</p> <p>New students are facilitated to build initial relations in Twente</p> <p>This does not affect course scheduling (Onderwijsplanning)</p>	<p>The course free week is currently linked to school holidays, facilitating parents to take a few days off.</p> <p>The current timing of the course-free week allows students to go on holidays with their younger siblings</p> <p>This creates a break in classes 4 after Christmas</p> <p>Students have no real break from Feb until July</p> <p>New students do not have a moment to catch their breath</p>

#### Considerations

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### Move the whole second semester one week later

<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>
	Summer break is shorter, affecting the UT's desire to have a good work-life balance. This increases the mismatch with 4TU Deadlines for MOMI and BSA do not change (?) Students have less time for summer holidays and summer jobs

#### **Considerations**

Overall, this breaks the opportunities for taking holidays (staff) in ever smaller pieces

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<sup>i</sup> PIA, April 2017 "Request to create a proper orientation week before Spring Semester"

<sup>ii</sup> S&B, Jan 2018 "Roostervrije periode tussen blokken of semesters"

**Ongevraagd advies platform studieadvies**

*If the University of Twente does allow February inflow, (upcoming) students should be given the opportunity to prepare for the start of their classes like (upcoming) students who start in September. Both groups of students do have an equivalent right to facilities and support.*

To; UCoW

From: Platform Onderwijs contactpersonen

dd. 29 may 2019

#### Advice Memorandum "Warm and welcome University

In the Platform Onderwijscontactpersonen on 28 May, the memorandum "Warm and Welcome University" and the two proposed options were extensively discussed in order to formulate an advice for the UCoW.

#### General remarks.

In view of the internationalization ambition of the UT, the Platform endorses the need to be able to give a proper introduction to students who enroll in the 2nd semester. At the same time, however, the platform notes that the impact of both proposals, for a relatively small group of students, is quite large. The Platform took into the discussion also a third option: the possibility of having the students in question come a week earlier, but as already stated in the memorandum, a considerable number of practical problems will arise with this alternative, especially with regard to housing.

Having heard the input from the faculties during the consultations, it must be noted that it is, unfortunately, not possible to formulate a unanimous recommendation with regard to a preference for one of the two proposed options.

Therefore below the remarks per faculty:

- ATLAS: not in favor of option 2 to move the college-free week, due to problems that will arise in the planning of the ATLAS education program. If a choice has to be made then option 1 is preferred.
- EEMCS: EEMCS takes the position that if we, as a university or faculties / study programs, take internationalization seriously, we will have to organize an enrollment moment. Alternative 2 is preferred, creating a week off in Q3 at the start of the semester. Of course if this applies to both BSc and MSc students.
- BMS: For BMS the student interest was the most important issue in making a possible consideration in both options. BMS anticipates scheduling problems when choosing an option, whereby the first 2/3 days are scheduled for an introduction. BMS therefore has a preference for option 2.
- Science and Techn.: TNW does not have a clear preference for one of the proposed options, partly because fewer international students are entering. Therefore the current setup can be maintained. If a preference must nevertheless be expressed, option 1 is preferred.
- Engineering and Techn.: ET has discussed both options extensively and after ample considerations, the preference of ET is for option 2. Considering option 1 also anticipates scheduling problems in the further planning of education.
- ITC: ITC has no intake in the 2nd semester and has therefore no preference for either of the two options.

Sincerely

H. Punt  
vz Education Contact Platform

Dear members of the UC-Ow,

The Platform of International Affairs (PIA) was very pleased to discuss the document “warm and welcome university”. As you might know the PIA has been discussing the topic of a proper introduction for students starting out their study by the second semester many times the last years. The introduction in February is nothing compared to the one organized in August. Allowing more time to arrange practicalities as well as give students a proper introduction to their study programme will give them a good start at the UT.

Looking at the project team that has drawn up the two scenarios we noticed all relevant units are represented there. We are happy to see they are all “on board”, to guarantee the implementation of one of the scenarios. This is also reflected in the way they discussed all relevant factors related to this issue.

In the PIA meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> of May we discussed the pros and cons of both scenarios. All members were present except S&P (they want to give their advice to the board based on the outcomes of the different bodies/platforms).

Though the advice of the PIA should be seen in the light of the interests of international students, other aspects were certainly included in the discussion:

- How does it affect all students?
- How does it affect staff members?
- How does it affect time schedules?
- How does it affect study programmes?

The overall, and most important conclusion that the whole platform agreed on is that a break between semester 1 and 2, in order to facilitate a February introduction, is absolutely necessary. A digital kick-in (in the form of an on-boarding website) is not an alternative.

A selection of arguments that were mentioned in favor of scenario 1 or 2:

- Also students (and staff) that just finished exams in semester 1 will benefit from a break.
- Regarding scenario 2: Staff members often argue not having the “holiday week” aligned with schools any more, but in fact it is not an “holiday week” it is a week without study activities and if staff members want to take a leave, most of them still can do so.
- It concerns both bachelor’s and master’s programmes, as the majority of the incoming exchange students join bachelor’s programmes . However, it differs per faculty.
- In favor of scenario 2: in the current situation the February intake has a break after only two weeks of studying. The break is experienced as an unwelcome interruption for this group.
- In favor of scenario 1: the idea suggested in the document of using the ‘spring break’ for the social part of the kick-in would solve part of the problem mentioned above.

After a long and thorough discussion 8 members gave their preference on the scenarios:



- 5 faculties: 3 votes for scenario 1 versus 2 votes for scenario 2, so small majority in favor of scenario 1
- 2 student bodies (SU and Unite) one voted in favor of scenario 1, the other in favor of scenario 2.

Even though members expressed a preference for scenario 1 or 2, almost all indicated that they could live with the other scenario too, as long as it means the February intake will get a proper introduction in the future.

All members present agreed on the following:

- Digital tools for the improvement of the Kick-In (both for February and September intake) in the form of an on-boarding website, or adjusting the campus-app are a good idea. However, only as a supporting instrument. For essential parts of the intake/arrival procedure, actual presence of students is necessary. This means digital tools cannot form a proper alternative.

The over-all conclusion and recommendation of the PIA is as follows:

***Organize a proper introduction at the start of semester 2. Take into account that actual presence of students is necessary. Organize at least an orientation on the study programme, the study supporting facilities and other study related issues. According to the faculties this would require a three day period (in line with scenario 1).***

Furthermore, pay attention to social orientation and organize this in collaboration with the (study) associations. This should be done no later than the third week of the semester.

We hope our recommendation (and considerations) will assist the UC-Ow in making a final decision between scenario 1 and scenario 2.

Best regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' followed by a long horizontal line that curves upwards at the end.

Jan Schut  
Chairman of the Platform International Affairs

21<sup>st</sup> of May 2019