

UNIVERSITEIT TWENTE.

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To The Executive Board

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cc.
Subject ITK

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Dear Executive Board,

The University Council considers the changes made in the ITK report as very appropriate. In the forthcoming meeting on September 11th 2019 the Council would like to discuss the following points with you:

- Self Directed Learning within TOM: The University Council notices that this is a very vulnerable point in the ITK as this important goal of education is not recognized by the students that gave their view on the report. The honesty in the ITK regarding this discrepancy is very much appreciated by the University Council but at the same time would require an indication of what this means for this goal.
- Multiple vulnerabilities remain formulated as aspirations or trends observed within the organization. This specifically concerns 2.5.3 vulnerabilities 1, 2, 6, and 7 and 3.6.3 vulnerabilities 3 and 4. Is the formulation sufficiently sharp?
- The discrepancy in UTQ percentage between the UT and the VSNU raises the question what the validity is of numbers generated by the university.

The University Council also wrote its own contribution to the ITK, which you will find below.

Decision:

Chapter 5

Reflection and decision of the University Council

In the meeting of September 11th 2019 with the Executive Board of the University of Twente, the University Council decided to consent to the Critical Self Evaluation Report Institutional Audit.

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Reflection of the University Council on the ITK

Recurrent themes for the University Council (UC) in the past few years within the domain of the ITK are the implementation of the Twente Educational Model (TEM), internationalization (especially the language used in education and at the university as a whole), workload and governance. The viewpoint of the UC on the developments of these four connected issues is given below.

Twente Educational Model

Within the university community the TEM was originally received with mixed feelings. Strong supporters and skeptics fiercely discussed the expected benefits (more coherent curricula, direct application in projects, increased study pace), but also the foreseen problems (enhanced workload, too large educational units of 15 EC). Staff and students representing both sides were found throughout the university community, including the University Council.

The TEM has over time evolved into a situation of widespread appreciation of the educational approach: alignment of the various topics in a module and the direct application in a project. The increase in appreciation is, to the opinion of the UC, also the result of various adaptations of the original TEM framework that provides a less strict implementation of the division into 15 EC educational units. This is required as the number of students that do not study in a nominal pace is much larger than originally anticipated and therefore requires a large(r) effort from teaching and support staff.

The University Council has been instrumental in keeping its attention on this group that consists of students with a structural or temporal disability, students that are active in extracurricular activities (these are important for the university as they are the backbone for the extremely appreciated closed-knitted campus society and atmosphere) as well as students that choose a different pace of study. The original strict TEM implementation caused a very opaque situation for students leading to a compromised student well-being. With various measures both on the university level and within faculties and educational programs this has been (partially) countered and has led to the initiation of the present TEM 2.0 discussion. Despite the long trajectory required to initiate the TEM 2.0 discussion, the University Council supports this discussion and the implementation trajectory wholeheartedly as it promises a major positive development in the education philosophy of our university.

Internationalization

Internationalization has changed the University of Twente because, as a consequence it changed the language of communication and education. The change of the language of instruction – as well as production - from Dutch to English a few years ago, by the majority of the bachelor programs was surrounded by a heated discussion on the question who takes the initiative for a change in language and who decides. The fact that the majority of the bachelor and master programs are English taught has had and still has a profound impact on the university. Inclusiveness of non-Dutch speaking students implies that also outside the classroom English is the lingua franca which has a profound influence on all aspects of daily life for both students and staff. Another point of attention are the “implicit” learning outcomes of both English language competency and Internationalization. A final point of concern is the position of the Dutch language competency within the curriculum of both Dutch and foreign students, in the perspective of the transfer to the Dutch labour market. The recent requirement for all

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programmes to develop a vision on Dutch language and the active promotion of Dutch language courses among students and staff provides a better balanced situation in view of the current national debate on this topic.

Governance

The governance of the University of Twente has changed with regard to three important aspects: 1) a multi-person faculty board, in which one member has a specific task and responsibility for education.

Those members of the five Faculty Boards are joint in the Executive Boards advisory committee UC-Ow, presided by the Rector Magnificus. 2) a more independent positioning of faculties and educational programmes and positioning them in the lead for strategic programmes such as the quality agreements. 3) an improved interaction with participating bodies.

In reflection on these changes: enabling an integral policy on education, research and personnel and at the same time installing multi-person faculty boards (with a student assessor) are fulfilled conditions for a stronger and more independent educational and research policy at faculty level. However, this relatively recent change did not lead to all of the desirable results yet. The strategy of faculties and clear definitions of the actors in the new governance structure still needs clarity. The strengthening/professionalizing of the faculty councils and programme committees needs serious attention. A final important issue is the management, distribution and archiving of documentation within the university. This process needs to be more clear and transparent for all.

Workload

The workload of staff remains an issue of concern acknowledged by all. It was foreseen that the implementation of TEM would only cause a temporarily increased workload for the staff, but instead the increased workload is of a structural nature. Although several projects were initiated at various levels of the organization, the ongoing (and even increasing) workload remains a main point of concern as it strongly influences the way staff work and students are able to study.

*Yours sincerely,
On behalf of the University Council,*

*dr ir H. Wormeester,
Chairman*