Help build a more democratic and decentralised university!

The Democratisation and Decentralisation Committee (D&D) was installed in November 2015 in response to the Maagdenhuis occupation. The mandate was (summarized as) [1]:

a) identify core problems and their causes at the UvA and UvA Holding BV regarding the Executive Board, consultative right, voting rights, diversity and the academic climate;
b) formulate alternative proposals for models of governance, organisation, right of say, and financing that can solve those problems;
c) involve the academic community in these developments.

In the meantime the Committee has held in-depth conversations with students, employees, and managers. It has read reports, and attended debates at the university and faculty level. At the moment we are engaged in developing alternative management structure proposals. What follows is a preliminary sketch of four alternative options. A detailed schematic account of the options is available on the website, where you can also react to those proposals. Those responses will obviously be taken into account in the design and preparation of the agreed final and written ballot on our concluding report. The Executive Board is committed to upholding the outcome of that ballot.

Given our mandate, we will obviously not limit ourselves to the managerial structure in itself. We will also make recommendations for other nimble and feasible improvements. And we will naturally consider the question of how alternative models can help addressing and (where possible) eliminating bottlenecks. So in addition to management and administration we will consider teaching and research policy, personnel policy, diversity policy, and budgetary policy.

Four models for university management
Clearly the most important and controversial management problems are sufficiently familiar: top-down management, exclusive focus on quantitative output measurement, bureaucracy, dirigisme instead of consultation, breaches of the autonomy of lower-level structures, absent or insufficient consultation on the appointment of deans, Executive Board, Supervisory Board, etc. The models described below suggest changes

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[1] The full mandate is available on the D&D website: http://commissiedd.nl/

to overcome those problems. The first model is the most distant from the current situation, whereas the fourth model is the closest to the status quo. The other two models take intermediate positions. Clearly opinions will differ about the problem-solving potential of each model. Two of the models would require recourse to the legal provisions for public policy experiments.

An April 2015 survey identified more than 26 frequently mentioned problems. Our appraisal of the situation at the University revealed an even larger diversity. Moreover, there are significant differences in the severity and urgency ascribed to different problems. The causes of problems lie for the most part outside of the UvA. Management models are not panaceas. We expect that we can all contribute to making the UvA a more amenable and cooperative place. The question, then, is in which model you have the most faith.

There are similarities as well as differences between the models. Here are a couple of examples: all models see the university as a public and widely accessible social institution. That should be strengthened. The main focal points—teaching and research—can be distinguished, but not separated. The connection between teaching and research should be emphasised more. Open and democratic decision-making should be reinforced for the benefit of both students and personnel. Decisions need to be taken at the lowest possible level (decentralisation) and without the intrusion of labyrinthine mandatory directives from above.

We are keen to receive your comments (please see the form on the website, or this survey). If you want to comment in a confidential manner you can do so by writing to info@commissieDD.nl.

The green self-organising university
This model looks at the involvement of staff and students according to levels of self-government. The university is a federation composed of a *certain number of staff and student groups ('institutions' that combine bachelor's and master's programmes as well as research* programmes of a certain discipline or group of associated disciplines). Academic and support staff have a strong sense of ownership regarding these institutions and thus manage these together.

Each group has its own budget. The composition of a board may differ per unit but it is a distinctive feature that as many members as possible are involved in important decisions, such as implementing a new curriculum.

In the planning of research, teams of researchers play a key role. The most interesting scientific developments often take place at the intersection between different disciplines. Therefore employees will often seek to collaborate across different groups, including groups outside the University. This can result in joint research and teaching programmes. All of these developments take place in a bottom-up process. In the long term these groups will come to function as hubs within larger networks.

Even if we think of the university as a federation, the university is always more than simply a combination of separate institutions. The university has a social responsibility and can present itself publicly in ways that allow it to best fulfil that role. Therefore it is important that in this respect members of the academic community--including members of the support staff--experience and demonstrate great commitment. To express their sense of mutual connection, members of the academic community elect a single university-wide council from their midst. If they so desire, the members of the council can appoint a chair--perhaps called a provost--from their midst. This means there is no Executive Board. The self-managed university is mission-driven so as not to descend into anarchy. The development of a widely held collective ambition requires regular investment.

The Supervisory Board is solely an oversight body, which reports back to the minister. Appointments are based on prior nominations by the joint[2] council meeting.

An elected council composed of students, as well as academic and support staff can function, if so desired, as a parliament at the university-level that can determine and safeguard key objectives and main directives of the institutional policy. Participatory decision-making processes are also in evidence on the central level. For example, when a question arises around the need for a new building, working groups drawn from a broad constituency will collaborate to formulate an advice on the necessity of these buildings and, possibly, discuss the realisation of these projects at a later stage. Everything is geared towards involving the academic community in the governance processes. Affinities and

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[2] 'Joint' in this context means that students and staff form one council together, separate means that there are different bodies for students and staff.

competencies of group members will be central in determining whether staff contributions to the management processes can be carried out by frontline staff on a part-time basis or whether tasks should be outsourced to external parties (legal advice, finances etc.).

Groups can unite on their own initiative and form their own faculties. The initial point of departure, however, is the current situation--a situation with faculties. Perhaps in due course (three or four years from now) there will no longer be a need for this intermediary layer of faculties.

The self-organising university will be built up incrementally, step by step; therefore it would take at least several years to be fully realised.

The yellow participatory university
Unlike the self-organising university, the participatory university is based on the principle that staff and students are responsible for teaching and research in both the first and last instance. Their involvement takes place along the lines of a representative democracy. Representative bodies make policy decisions. Depending on the issue at hand, this may be accompanied by wide consultations. Managers draft and implement regulations. They remain primarily accountable towards the councils, which represent students and employees in a joint council.

Since decision-making power rests with the councils, the elected representatives take on a highly demanding commitment. So they will receive expert advice and be partially released from their regular duties. Naturally this model also envisages other forms of participatory democracy, but the ultimate responsibility rests with the councils. The representativeness of the councils is ensured by the great transparency of decision-making processes, elections organised around ongoing discussions, and opportunities for members of the University to speak up and to follow and monitor the work of the councils. Ideas and opinions will be collected through online instruments.

The basic level is the department [afdeling]. Research institutes, schools and colleges are created starting from that level (possibly in collaboration with other departments), and their day-to-day management boards are staffed by the directors of the relevant departments [instituten]. The education committees play an important role within teaching institutes. The legal provision required for this reform will enable education committees to become part of the representative bodies and so to have voting rights on important documents such as the Education and Examination Regulations (OER).

Each level (college, faculty, and department) has a small day-to-day management board. Each board has two student members. They are assigned a portfolio by the board members. The Board of Trustees of the University is only a supervisory body of the Minister. The Supervisory Board is not involved in appointments, but appointments of members of the Executive Board require the approval of the minister. The Supervisory Board's sole task is to monitor the legality of university policy. This Board is appointed by the minister on the basis of nominations by the university council, employees, and students.

Given the powers of the councils envisaged in the participatory university, this model clearly reaches beyond the possibilities afforded by current legislation on a couple of points. Implementing the model would require recourse to the legislation on policy experiments (and therefore the consent of the minister of education).

The orange dual university

The orange dual university is a professional[3] organisation whose primary focus is teaching and research. Managers have decision-making power, but representative bodies with reinforced powers contribute to the involvement of the entire university community. The manager sees that his or her power is in service to the academic community, so decisions are taken in dialogue with the community.

The division between the organisation of teaching, research, and staff within the faculties remains intact, under the auspices of a strong faculty-level oversight of the accomplishment of the relevant objectives. Important decisions about the connections between teaching and research are taken jointly by directors authorised by the faculty, as is the case at present. Decisions on external collaborations are taken at the university level.

A modern professional organisation such as this one requires a management that involves the various stakeholders in the decision-making processes in a timely manner. A powerful role for management goes hand in hand with strong representative bodies. Therefore the powers of

[3] 'Professional' refers to the knowledge of staff and students.

the representative bodies are widened. Members of the representative bodies are well supported in terms of time and assistance and have more scope to introduce their own initiatives. The interests of the key stakeholders—students and staff—differ, so separate[4] rather than joint representative bodies are more suitable to this type of organisation. However their powers and their agendas should be better coordinated. This creates a need for joint meetings.

At the most basic level, existing schools, research institutes, and departments constitute cooperative domains structured by mutual agreements. Moreover, a clear set of rules will be laid down to regulate the representative participation opportunities of each part of each domain. The education committees play an important role within the education institutes. Subject to the legal provisions mentioned above, the education committees will become part of the representative bodies and will have voting rights on the OER.

The members of the Executive Board are appointed by the Supervisory Board, which then continues to oversee their activities. Appointments to the Executive Board are made on the basis of nominations by a committee consisting of representatives from all parts of the University (this would require a legal change or an amendment of the relevant regulations). Deans are appointed by the Executive Board, again on the basis of nominations by an appointment committee composed by members of the faculty-level representative bodies. The Supervisory Board is appointed by the minister, and its sole task is to monitor the legality of university policy.

Given the extension of voting rights for the representative bodies envisaged in this model, it is likely that implementation would require far-reaching changes to University regulations and, possibly, recourse to the legal provision for policy experiments.

The blue existing university
The existing university is most similar to the university in its current situation. The current structure is upheld in terms of the main directives. However, this does not mean that it is impossible to make small adjustments in the governance structure and culture.

[4] 'Joint' in this context means that students and staff form one council together, separate means that there are different bodies for students and staff.

For instance, similarly to the current situation, there will be representative bodies at both the faculty and university level. At the level of the teaching programmes there will be education committees. The legislative change that is currently being finalised will be an opportunity for the UvA to strengthen the representative bodies and education committees, not just on paper but in practice. For instance by providing better facilitation and support. Each advisory or appointment committee for new board members will have at least one student and one staff member. Furthermore, this university will try to find ways of involving students and staff members in the policy-making processes at an earlier stage, it will attempt to make the decision-making processes more transparent and well-organised, and it will try to give more substantive content to the formal legal rights currently in place. Elected members of representative bodies will produce a plan at the start of their term and at the end of the year they will offer the board an evaluation report, which will also be made publicly available.

A digital tool or app will be developed to easily canvass opinions held by the academic community. Policy documents and decisions made by the boards and the representative bodies will be made available on a searchable website. The university will install Kafka-brigades who will look into which rules and procedures can be simplified. The university will also enable the representative bodies at all levels to put forward proposals pertaining to their own regulations.

On the next page you will find a schematic description of these 4 models.

University models (schematic presentation)

		A. The green self-organising university	**B. The yellow participatory university**	**C. The orange dual university**	**D. The blue existing university**
General principles					
1.	Metaphor	Federation	Cooperation	Professional Organisation	Corporation
2.	Underlying idea	Consistently approached from the primary responsibility of students and staff for research and education	Consistently approached from co-governance by students and staff representatives at all levels	Interplay between managers on the one side and staff and students on the other side	Centrally directed policy on the topic of research and education
3.	Democratic process	Self-organisation and direct involvement	Joint representation of students and staff in governance councils at all levels	Representative bodies with extensive oversight and rectification powers	Current situation regarding right to vote and consultative right
4.	Type of representative bodies	To be determined in the process	Joint councils	Joint	Joint
Device for democratic decision-making					
5.	Decision-making	Principled agreement based on trust and deliberation; mutual accountability	Executives are accountable towards executive councils	Expansion of current voting rights and information rights; reinforcement of right to take initiatives. Introduction of the right of amendment	Current situation
6.	Role of executives and managers	Diffused leadership wherever possible, otherwise facilitating role	Facilitating role, emphasis on preparing and implementing policy	Professional managers with decision making power; student and employee members of the executive with	Current situation with student member of the Executive Board

				consultative powers	
7.	Inclusivity of decision-making	Drawing on the expertise of all staff and students as much as possible	Possibility of substitute and 'duo' counsel members (others can temporarily occupy position)	idem	Current situation
8.	Reinforcement of deliberation and openness of management	Direct participation in governance is facilitated by extensive transparency, referenda, online platforms, and conferences	Representativeness of the councils is safeguarded through extensive transparency, referenda, online platforms that disseminate information and facilitate discussion, discussion meetings and deliberative meetings broadcast live, themed congresses, consultation moments, deliberative elections and online polls. Policy-making will be organised as 'open' as possible	Input of council members and debate is facilitated through transparency, online platforms that facilitate information and discussion meetings and deliberative meetings broadcast live, themed congresses, consultation moments, deliberative elections and online polls. Policy-making will be organised as 'open' as possible	More transparency, development of polling options
9.	Facilitation and support for council members	Time, money (in case of substantial amount of time, support and appreciation)	Support staff and external experts where necessary	Better support through administrative structures and when necessary external expertise	idem
Basic level					
10.	Basic level: organisation	X numbers of institutions with budgets for teaching and	Departments are the basic level of the organisation	Teaching and research institutes,	Current situation: colleges and schools,

		research	regarding research and education (for instance in schools, institutes etc.)	departments and OBP-subject groups form domain and, jointly, the basic level	departments, OBP-subject groups
11.	Basic level: participation	To be filled in by staff and students, recognition of basic rights	Departmental council composed of students and staff determines departmental policy	The representative bodies are regulated by domain subject to the approval of the faculty. This includes advising over appointments of directors/chair persons	Education committee with voting rights on the OER (requires changes in the law)
12.	Basic level: leadership, appointments and dismissals	To be determined by staff and students	Management appointed by departmental council	Management appointed by departmental council	idem
13.	Education committee	Education committee is part of the governance of the institute	Education committee voting rights for parts of the OER (after change in legislation) and better support	Education committee voting rights for parts of the OER (after change in legislation) and better support	idem
14.	Collaboration	Institutes can jointly determine teaching and research programmes	Departments can jointly determine their own research and teaching programmes	To be determined at the faculty and institutional level	idem
Faculty					
15.	Role of the faculty	Transition management, decision about continuation in four years	Faculties will continue to exist, their function will change	idem	idem
16.	Management of the faculty	Faculty board elected by students and staff	Dean chosen by faculty council	Dean. Appointment committee with delegates from the	Dean. Delegates of the representative bodies in the

				representative bodies appointed by executive board	appointment committee (analogous to legislative change). Appointed by Executive Board
17.	Participation at faculty level	As long as there is a faculty, council consisting of representatives of different institutes	Faculty council chosen by staff and students in the faculty	Student council and works council with expanded and synchronized rights and powers relative to the current situation	Maintaining system of works councils and student councils, with powers defined by current law
University					
18.	University level: organisation/participation	Transitional regime, to be determined	Executive Board. University Council highest governance body	Executive Board and members of the representative bodies. Student council and works council with expanded powers relative to the current situation	Executive Board and members of the representative bodies.
19.	Appointment and dismissal of management/Executive Board	Transitional regime, to be determined	Appointment Committee consisting of members of the university council, the university council decides	Advisory appointment committee with members of representative bodies appointed by the Supervisory Board.	One student and one staff member in appointment committee. Supervisory Board determines
Supervisory Board					
20.	Role of the Supervisory Board	Adjusting university policy to legal frameworks	Testing university policy to legal framework	Testing university policy to legal	Determining university policy

				framework	framework, given current legal target
21.	Appointment of the members of the Supervisory Board	To be determined	Appointment by minister based on nominations by University council and students and staff	Current situation	Current situation