

## Partnership UvA-AUAS no longer requires joint executive board

Over the last few years a successful partnership has been built in various areas within the UvA and AUAS in the field of teaching and research. However, the joint union at the administrative level has contributed little in this regard. This is the conclusion of research reports on the administrative partnership between the UvA and AUAS and on the organisational structure of the support services. The research reports, released on 8 September, were carried out by Berenschot and Deloitte. With the conclusion of this evaluation, the Executive Board highlights its preference for two separate boards for the UvA and AUAS, if possible from 1 January 2017.

With respect to the support services, the authors conclude that the collaboration has led to greater quality of service provision, but has not resulted in substantial additional efficiency gains. Discussions will take place in the coming months on how best to organise the support services in future. The Executive Board believes the support services should remain an integral part of the higher education community. Privatisation is not being considered.

A decision on the future structure of governance and the support services is expected at the end of 2016.

Both reports (in Dutch) are hereby made publicly available and can be downloaded [here](#) (Dutch website).

### Evaluation

As part of the evaluation by the consultancy firms, discussions took place with students and staff, and information was obtained through surveys and/or interviews with the deans, lecturers, professors, college and graduate school directors, service unit directors, heads of department and others involved in the partnership. Many documents from the past several years were also studied. In addition, an analysis was made of the transfer rate of students on the basis of data (e.g. CBS figures). The evaluations are the result of an agreement made in May 2016 between the former Executive Board and Supervisory Boards to evaluate the partnership. The projects were supervised by a committee comprising the Executive Board President (Geert ten Dam), a director of a shared service unit (Chris Schut), a dean from the UvA (Han van Dissel) and a dean from AUAS (Jean Tillie), and four members from the central representative advisory bodies (Naomi Appelman, Pieter Claeys, Menno Oldenhof and Breannán Ó Nualláin). With the conclusion of the reports, the committee has carried out its supervisory duty.

### Conclusions

In its report, Berenschot concludes that the administrative partnership has not delivered the benefits that were originally expected. At the turn of this century, there were long-term objectives – a merger of both institutions, simplified procedures for students to switch between programmes – but these were only partly achieved. This was, among other things, because of the changing social context and because regulatory changes did not happen as expected. Board members and supervisors did not always respond with sufficient resolve to such changing circumstances, the authors conclude. The report mentions several good examples of collaboration between the UvA and AUAS in the field of teaching and research, but these might have also potentially come about without the chosen administrative partnership. As for the support services, the authors conclude that the quality of service provision has increased because of the partnership, but has not resulted in substantial additional efficiency gains.

### Response of the Executive Board

Both reports are clear and give options and points for attention for further implementation. We want to

discuss these carefully in the coming period with the academic and applied sciences community. The planning for has been added as an attachment to this response.

On the basis of the reports, we view the future partnership from the following perspective.

A. Starting point

It is the duty of the Board and the UvA-AUAS support services to stimulate and facilitate teaching and research. Knowledge institutions are led by professionals and collaborative partnerships built on the basis of meaningful added value. As such, governance is a derivative of the primary process and collaboration mostly possible when its added value is acknowledged by the professionals involved.

B. Partnership in teaching and research

In recent years several collaborative partnerships have come about between the UvA and AUAS. Examples include the collaboration between nursing and paramedical programmes, the teacher-training college for primary education (PABO) and university teacher training programme, computing science, applied psychology, and programmes for the public sector in the field of law, but also collaboration between academic and applied research, partly stimulated by joint appointments between both institutions. Such collaboration generally comes about on the initiative of students and staff and is, as current research shows, of clear added value for teaching and research. This is why such collaborative links will continue to exist in future, irrespective of the way management and support services are organised.

The number of students who switch between research-oriented higher education and professional education are small. Nevertheless, the original aim of simplifying such transfers remains intact. Assuring access to university Master's programmes from follow-on minor programmes, academic routes and 3-year professional education for pre-university secondary education pupils, also requires joint agreements in future, especially at the faculty and study programme level.

Both institutions wish to retain links in Amsterdam and in the broader region and supplement each other from their respective professional and academic missions. The profiles of the UvA and AUAS are supplementary and not in competition with each other – in this respect, the starting point for the original partnership remains firmly intact.

C. Shared support and service provision

A positive result of the collaboration between the support services has been the increase in the quality of service provision. The starting point is that this achievement must be held on to. The manner in which this will be done in the future will during the coming period be discussed by the respective services and with students and staff from the academic and applied sciences community.

Berenschot and Deloitte highlight several options and points for attention for collaboration in the area of support and service provision. One of the options is to more specifically organise (parts of) the service provision that are closely aligned to the primary process at the campus level. One such domain we are considering are the front offices, where proximity to the student (student desk), staff member or building is important.

D. Governance

In the authors' view, the administrative union between the UvA and AUAS has not been of sufficient added value. The Executive Board shares this analysis. The previously adopted governance structure no longer fits the present-time, one in which the (national and international) environment demands robust institutions that seek collaboration from their own profile and identity. The Board's preference is therefore for a separate Executive Board for both the UvA and AUAS, if possible from 1 January 2017.

### **Follow-up**

During September and October, the Executive Board will speak with staff and students from both institutions, as well as the representative bodies. The objective of discussions is first to assess whether the Board's intended course of action is shared, and second to pinpoint matters on which decisions must be taken to ensure the collaboration between the UvA and AUAS is retained and bolstered, also after a dissolution of the 'administrative union'.

The discussions with existing consultative bodies will, whenever possible, take place during regular meetings. In addition, two meetings will be arranged in the first week of October at which all staff and students will be invited to engage the Board in discussion.

The Executive Board will make its proposed decision no later than the end of October, so as to ensure sufficient time for formal consideration by the representative bodies and the Supervisory Boards.

The time frame for all of this is added as an attachment to this response.

*Amsterdam, 8 September 2016*

UvA-AUAS Executive Board

Geert ten Dam  
Huib de Jong  
Karen Maex  
Hans Amman  
Nico Moolenaar

**Intended follow-up September-December 2016**

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<i>September</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 8 September: Reports made publicly available and presented to the Supervisory Boards, deans, representative advisory bodies and complete UvA-AUAS community.</li></ul>
<i>October</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussions with representative advisory bodies and administrative-consultative structures.</li><li>• Further consultation with directors of shared service units and other stakeholders.</li><li>• 3 and 4 October: Public meetings.</li><li>• 6 October: Discussions of reports and selection of course of action in Joint Meeting with UvA deans, AUAS deans and Executive Board.</li><li>• End of October: On the basis of input and response, Executive Board formulates proposed decision and presents it for consideration to Joint Meeting (UvA) and Central Representative Committee (CMR, AUAS) who will then have until the second week of December to respond.</li><li>• Discussion of proposed Executive Board decision during regular meetings with UvA-AUAS deans and the Supervisory Boards.</li></ul>
<i>November</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consideration by representative bodies with room for further discussion.</li><li>• Further elaboration of the required decisions for implementation, including possible future scenarios for each shared service unit.</li></ul>
<i>December</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 15 December: Final decision-making by Executive Board.</li><li>• 22 December: Executive Board decision presented to Supervisory Boards for necessary approval.</li><li>• Formally document and prepare implementation stage.</li></ul>

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