

COMPREHENSIVE INTERNATIONALIZATION

AT VU UNIVERSITY
AMSTERDAM

- > Dutch Research Universities
- > Challenging Dichotomies
- > VU Strategy
- > Concerns



1 New Orleans February 19 20123 Anton Hemerijck

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

This presentation was given at the 2013 AIEA conference in New Orleans and discusses comprehensive internationalisation for research universities, based on the experience of VU University Amsterdam. The presentation is a coproduction with Kees Kouwenaar, senior advisor international strategy at VU. Actually Kees and I have worked intensively on comprehensive internationalisation at VU University for the past 2 years.

The presentation looks at the issue from three perspectives:

- a) from the outside world and its developments,
- b) from the current state of affairs at VU, and
- c) from a forward looking perspectives.

The presentation starts with some key info on Dutch research universities as a group or system.

At the live presentation, further handouts on VU's international strategy and present EMI courses were available. You can get copies from kees.kouwenaar@vu.nl.

NETHERLANDS: SOME KEY FACTS



Key facts:

1. Independent since 1579; constitutional kingdom since 1813
2. 41,543 sq km; temperate climate
3. Lowest point: Zuidplaspolder -7 m
Highest point: Vaalserberg 322 m
4. Population: 16,730,632
5. Official languages: Dutch, Frisian
6. GDP: \$ 701.4 bl (2011); 23rd (73.1% services)
GDP per capita \$ 42,000
7. Public debt: 65.1% of GDP
8. Age 65 years and over: 16.6%
9. Urban population: 83%
10. Life expectancy at birth: 80.91
11. Education expenditure: 5.3% of GDP
literacy 99%
12. Unemployment 15-24: 6.6%

This slide presents some genral key information on the Netherlands, generally available through the internet.

The key message here is that the Netherlands is a very small country, but highly developed and performing well on most scores.

DUTCH RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES



Broad-based universities:

1. Leiden University (1575)
2. University of Groningen (1614)
3. University of Amsterdam (1632)
4. Utrecht University (1636)
5. VU University Amsterdam (1880)
6. Erasmus University Rotterdam (1913)
7. Radboud University Nijmegen (1923)
8. Tilburg University (1927)
9. Maastricht University (1976)

Universities of technology:

10. Delft University of Technology (1842)
11. Eindhoven University of Technology (1956)
12. University of Twente (1961)

Life sciences and natural resources:

13. Wageningen University & Research Centre (1918)

Distance learning/life-long learning:

14. Open University (1984)



One cornerstone of the presentation is the notion of Dutch research (or PhD granting) universities may be seen as a coherent block or system.

For this reason, some key information is provided here on these Dutch research universities as a group.

As a system, the Dutch research universities are similar in size - and in many other ways – to state systems of research universities such as the SUNY system or University of California system.

There is a clear concentration in the western part, the “Randstad” which is in many respects one big metropolitan area.

13 DUTCH RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

- 12 in THES top 200, 3rd after US and UK
- All in ARWU top 500, 8 in top 200
- Well above EU average in EU research funding
- 4th in world citation impact scores (1.4)
- 2nd in world publication productivity (61/100 fte)
- 6th in Global Innovation Index
- 5th in Global Competitiveness
- 8th in worldwide EU patents



Dutch research universities are packed very closely in the international rankings: none in the top 50, but all (or almost all) in the top 200.

With 5000 PhD granting universities in the world (UNESCO/IAU data), this means that the whole group is well within the top 5% of PhD granting universities.

The key message here is that Dutch research university landscape is that of a high altitude plateau with fairly modest differences among the universities.

DUTCH RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

- Total students: 243,686
- $\frac{2}{3}$ bachelors, $\frac{1}{3}$ masters
- New entrants: 43,515
- Bachelors programmes: 412 (17% English taught)
- Masters programmes: 810 (70% English taught)
- PhDs with employment contract 8,700
- PhD degrees awarded per year 3,800
- academic staff (fte) 24,000
- But less int. stud. intake than Sweden/Germany



In addition to the system level information on the slide, one may observe that the Netherlands universities have completed the conversion to the Bologna three tier system in formal terms.

The next phase, in which undergraduate and graduate education are understood in new conceptual terms, is now underway.

English is quickly becoming the default medium of instruction (EMI).

VU UNIVERSITY AMSTERDAM

- Total students: 24,000
- bachelors: 14,000 masters: 10,000
- Annual freshman intake: 4,000
- Bachelors programmes: 50 (6 % English taught)
- Masters programmes: 100 (71% English taught)
- PhDs with employment contract: 647
- PhD degrees awarded per year: 324
- academic staff (fte): 2,153

High in research rankings



VU University is one of the larger universities. We have more than our share of graduate students and - in undergraduate education – far more than our share in students from diverse backgrounds and 1st generation students

GLOBAL PORT AMSTERDAM

AIRPORT



SEAPORT



GREENPORT

DATAPORT

7

IMHE SUNY Conference April 12-13, 2012, New York, Kees Kouwenaar

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

VU University is one of two research universities in Amsterdam. Our sister university is the University of Amsterdam UvA, located in the old city centre and with a strong disciplinary focus.

VU is located in the new business & finance centre of Amsterdam, close to the airport Amsterdam Schiphol.

VU and UvA are working ever more closely together with a joint Dentistry faculty, a joint liberal arts college Amsterdam University College, and a joint Amsterdam Faculty of Science now in the making.

VU and UvA are also involved in the Amsterdam Economic Board, working with the City and the Private sector in a Triple Helix concept.

COMPREHENSIVE INTERNATIONALIZATION

AT VU UNIVERSITY

- > Dutch research universities
- > **Challenging dichotomies**
- > VU Strategy
- > Concerns



As indicated at the outset, this presentation offers three perspectives for comprehensive internationalisation.

The first one is that of the environment in which our university operates. It is a global environment of changing dichotomies.

CHALLENGING DICHOTOMIES

SHIFTING GLOBAL GRAVITIES



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There is no need to explain the upsurge of new kids or rather new giants on the block: in politics, economics and in higher education & research. Other acronyms may be added to point to the next generation of booming countries. (MIKT: Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea and Turkey; CIVETS: Columbia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt, Taiwan, South Africa).

GLOBAL SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST ↔ GLOBAL COOPERATION NETWORKS

GLOBALISATION IS HERE TO CHANGE!

T. Friedman, <i>The World Is Flat</i> 2005	J. Gray, <i>False Dawn</i> , 2002
Globalisation 1.0; 1492 – 1800, driven by countries & governments	The era of globalisation is over
Globalisation 2.0; 1800 – 2000, driven by corporations	Global free market is a utopian project that will fail
Globalisation 3.0; 200 - ..., driven by individuals	The current system of global laissez faire will last shorter than the <i>belle époque</i> (1870 – 1914)
Money goes to quality	A diverse (connected) world is a safer world

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The comparison above between Friedman's and Gray's views on globalisation have been borrowed from a recent presentation of prof Marijk vd Wende at the Haagse Hogeschool.

The key point here is that the discussion on universities as public institutions or simply part of "the education industry" is not nearly completed, but that universities are and will be more than ever international entities.

In my academic work, I see and I am thoroughly convinced that that economic prosperity and political stability simply do not stand a chance without social cohesion and a minimal level of balanced distribution of health, wealth and wellbeing. Universities also need to find a balance between academic prowess, competition and their contribution to direct wealth creation on the one hand, and their contribution to long term political stability and social cohesion on the other. On the only scale possible for this is of course the global scale.

CHALLENGING DICHOTOMIES

SINGLE PEAKS OF
WORLD CLASS
UNIVERSITIES

HIGHLAND OF
EXCELLENT
RESEARCH
UNIVERSITIES

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What we see in many of the upcoming countries is a heavy public investment in the academic excellence of only a few Flagship Universities. The other universities are often left to fend for themselves and governments invest relatively little in funding for higher education of the masses. A vast increase of less competitive private universities and sharp differences in quality within the HE system are logical consequences.

This - with other developments - calls into question if (and for how long) the Dutch and similar countries will be able to maintain their highland of excellence; whether they will be forced to transfer to the system of single peaks among inevitable deeper valleys.

CHALLENGING DICHOTOMIES

US: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS PLUS STUDY ABROAD

EUROPE: BA .STUDENT EXCHANGE MA. MOBILITY

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In the past 25 years, the mobility patterns have been quite different in Europe and in North America.

In Europe, the dominant pattern has been that of reciprocal student exchange.

In North America, the focus has been on international degree students on campus and – separate from that – study abroad programmes for the American students.

Although these patterns still exist, they are beginning to be effected by the Bologna system conversion in Europe.

CHALLENGING DICHOTOMIES

The diagram features two blue rectangular boxes, one on the left containing the text "GLOBAL COMPETENCIES" and one on the right containing "DIVERSITY AT HOME". A blue double-headed arrow connects the two boxes, indicating a reciprocal relationship. The background is white with a large, faint watermark of the VU logo and the text "VU UNIVERSITY AMSTERDAM".

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Universities are expected to impart their students with the competencies required on the global labour market and to compete and collaborate in the international research world.

Simultaneously, they are required to be relevant to their local and regional communities and to give tangible contributions to the knowledge valorisation chains that boost regional economic development.

CHALLENGING DICHOTOMIES

FUNDAMENTAL
RESEARCH IN
GLOBAL NETWORKS



KNOWLEDGE
VALORISATION FOR
REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

CHALLENGING DICHOTOMIES

INDIVIDUAL GENIUS



FOCUS AND MASS



The Dutch Nobel prize winner Kamerlingh Onnes beat his British competitor in the race for 0 degrees Kelvin not because he was the brighter scientist, but because he was better at creating and managing a team of young scientists around him.

CHALLENGING DICHOTOMIES

AUTONOMOUS ACADEMIC PEERS ↔ INSTITUTIONAL VISION & STRATEGY

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What is the best advice for managing professionals? Don't!
The same holds in vigour for academic professionals.
Yet, institutional strategy and shared identity are uncontested strengths (or weaknesses). Each university will have to find its own answer to this dilemma; over and over again

COMPREHENSIVE INTERNATIONALIZATION

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- > **VU Strategy**
- > Concerns



VU University Amsterdam has built its comprehensive internationalisation strategy on the basis on our understanding of Dutch Research Universities as a system and our grappling with a world of changing dichotomies.

VU INTERNATIONALIZATION STRATEGY

ONE VISION

From:
Dutch university with international
(research) links

Towards:
Internationally embedded
university in Amsterdam
metropole



VU is already a university with many and strong links to the international academic world. It could not belong to the top 150-200 of the world and could not thrive in the European Education Area if it would not be.

But there is still a major difference between a basically national university with strong international links and a truly international university which is firmly embedded in the fabric of Amsterdam as an internationally vibrant metropolitan region. It is our vision to make this transition.

VU INTERNATIONALIZATION STRATEGY

THREE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- Intercultural competencies
 - Undergraduate: credit mobility
 - Graduate: degree mobility
- International identity & atmosphere
 - International Campus and Corp. visibility
 - International staff composition
- Focus & coherence
 - Investing in partners in 'new' countries
 - Cross –faculty res. And ed. linkages



This slide copies the strategic objectives from the recently adopted international strategy document.

The reader may note that these strategic objectives are quite similar to the ones identified by Marmolejo (Marmolejo, F. (2012), "Internationalization of higher education: the good, the bad, and the unexpected", Chronicle of Higher Education, October 22, 2012.) and repeated the OECD's recent report "Approaches to Internationalisation":

- ☐ improve student preparedness
- ☐ internationalise the curriculum
- ☐ enhance the international profile of the institution
- ☐ strengthen research and knowledge production
- ☐ diversify its faculty and staff

The reader may also note that international recruitment is not a primary objective. VU want more international graduate degree students and more international short time undergraduate students and it can't afford (is not allowed) to spend Dutch public funds on them. But increase of foreign enrollment service the objective of intercultural competencies and is not a goal of its own.

VU INTERNATIONALIZATION STRATEGY

APPROACH

- Top down-bottom up coproduction
- Comprehensive VU International Office
- Vice Rector International



The tension between the need for a coherent institutional strategy and the need for commitment and initiatives from the members of the academic community is universal. One of the handouts (kees.kouwenaar@vu.nl) explains in more detail how VU strives to reconcile these seeming opposites.

VU has made a considered choice for a comprehensive international office, bringing together efforts in mobility, recruitment, project & programme support targetted at regions as diverse as Europe, North America, newly developing countries and least developed countries.

We aim to create stronger connectivity in this way: between the academic and administrative perspective and between the institutional and departmental level of our university.

The institution of the new function of Vice Rector VU International is a crucial step in this process.

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No new strategy without new and continued concerns and challenges.
At the next-to-last slide, a number of these are listed without any further clarification: they speak for themselves.

VU INTERNATIONALIZATION STRATEGY

CHALLENGES & CONCERNS

- Innovation in a conservative culture
- Necessary investments and budget cuts
- Top down calls for immediate results
- The 'mixed blessings' of new public management
- Money to quality: highland in jeopardy?
- IAMSTERDAM
- Learning paradigm change (MOOCS)?



COMPREHENSIVE INTERNATIONALIZATION

PARTING MESSAGE

STRATEGIC CHANGE
E = Q . A . F



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Effectiveness equals Quality times Acceptance is an old established wisdom. This formula applied within the system: within our university. If we also take the external environment into consideration, it becomes clear that the effectiveness of our strategy will also depend on its goodness-of-fit with the surrounding institution”:

$$E = Q * A * F$$

Anton Hemerijck, dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Vice Rector VU International

Kees Kouwenaar, senior advisor international strategy.

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