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Realistic consultations?

Employee participation is a great asset at universities and can be found scattered around campus, although often well-hidden. Last week, I joined the Service Council on a two-hour quest at the floor of our personnel department. It was a working visit of said council and every now and then its members were asked about the exact nature of the Service Council. For this body, unknown unfortunately also means unmanned.

Recently I had an interview with Executive Board member Jo van Ham and University Council (UC) chairman Rinus van Weert. Look at it as our contribution to provide UC with at least some exposure prior to the December elections. It didn't lead to fireworks or anything, but that's not how we treat each other in public anyway. Although sparks used to fly in the old days. I liked the fact that last Monday Van Ham appointed himself as an advocate of 'realistic consultations'. During the UC meeting barely three hours later he presented the student parties with an ultimatum regarding the budget cuts for board grants. The students, fairly shell-shocked, were told there was no way around halving the budget. Any other amount was not up for discussion. Was that to set a shining example of realistic consultations for them, really?

The Cabbolet case

Late September, Marcoen Cabbolet received his PhD from the Vrije Universiteit Brussels. Summa cum laude, no less, although nearly four years ago practically the same dissertation was rejected by TU/e at the last minute. Fascinating. Cabbolet graduated as a chemist, developed a physical theory, wanted to do his PhD at the faculty of humanities in Tilburg, lingered at the department of Mathematics in Eindhoven, and now holds a PhD in Philosophy and Moral sciences. The one conclusion that forces itself



upon us is that some major misjudgments have been made. Is this the drawback of the rise of interdisciplinary research?

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◀ Rewwwind www.tue.nl/cursor

Our Rewwwind feature provides you with snippets of last week's news. What happened online after the previous Cursor magazine was published?

Executive Board cuts board grant budget by nearly half

October 19, 2011 - The two student parties within the university Council, Groep-één and the Progressieve Fractie say the cut for board grants of nearly a quarter million euro are

disproportionate and refuse to agree to the plan. The Executive Board is sticking to it and will only talk about a new distribution of the grant system.

Champions League among grants for two professors

October 18, 2011 - Both prof.ir. Ton Koonen and prof.dr.ir. Meint Smit (both of Electrical Engineering, COBRA research school) have received an Advanced Grant from the European

Research Council (ERC). The grant is meant for senior researchers in Europe and is worth nearly 2.5 million euro per grant.

Failed PhD candidate Cabbolet avenges himself in Brussels

October 13, 2011 - On September 23 last, Marcoen Cabbolet received his PhD from the Vrije Universiteit Brussels. He received his doctorate 'with highest honor'. In 2008, his PhD research at TU/e's Department of Mathematics & Computer Science was cancelled at the last minute after the controversial nature of his study surfaced in an interview with Cursor.

The contested dissertation introduces Cabbolet's 'Elementary Process Theory', an all-encompassing theory based on the assumption that antimatter is repelled by the gravity field of normal matter. Should Cabbolet's theory prove correct, that would have serious consequences for the validity of both quantum mechanics and the theory of relativity itself.

Joint introduction day for new students in Eindhoven

October 11, 2011 - New students in Eindhoven will be treated to a joint introduction day next academic year, which will focus on getting to know the city especially. TU/e, Fontys and

Design Academy announced their plans last Wednesday, October 12. What the Eindhoven Student Day will come to look like exactly is yet unknown.



◀ Flashback

Auditorium 1966 versus 2011

Since its erection 46 years ago, the outside hasn't changed much. But take in its surroundings! Until some fifteen years ago, there was still a large, square pond on the south end of the Hoofgebouw. Today only the concrete blocks remain, which are hardly ever used by students to sit on, surprisingly. The water has been drained and the hole has been filled with sand back when dr.ir. Henk de Wilt was still Chairman of the Executive Board (1996-2002). Because he wanted to give the university a more open quality, much of the shrubs and trees had to make way, and what was once a pond was turned into a multi-purpose lawn. In the year 2011, there is talk of putting the pond back in the Groene Loper. Ing. Boudewijn Elmans, project manager at Real Estate Management insists the plan is still in its initial sketching phase. "Maybe there's all sorts of intricate infrastructure beneath the surface which makes the plan impossible." (NS)

Photos | IEC Archive and
Bart van Overbeeke



≡ Clmn Ladies in science and technology: why and how?



Sometimes I can't get rid of the feeling that I study at West Point Academy. Indeed, most programs at TU/e are attended by male students. It explains why one of the aims of 2020 Strategic Plan is to attract more female students and teachers. However, before going all the way to achieve this goal, we need to find answers to two important questions: why and how. Surprisingly, while reading relevant publications I couldn't find a clear and well-motivated answer to the question "Why do we need more female students in technology?" I found some abstract ideas such as "gender diversity" or "programs' social profiling". I gathered we want to increase the influx of female students in order to... increase the influx of female students. If that assumption's correct we have other, more important, problems to solve first. OK, suppose we have found the answer to our previous question. Then still, there's the problem of how to achieve our aim. Facilitating positive discrimination wouldn't be the best solution because discrimination is bad for either gender. Science is not a sport and having stronger muscles is not an advantage anymore. Moreover, I'm sure that most women that have been accepted at TU/e wouldn't want to be considered weaker students and would demand equal treatment. None of them wants to hear: "She's studying here not because she's smart but because she's a girl." So we must try and promote technical education and motivate potential female students starting at elementary school. For example, I attended Tech United team's fan night. At this fun event many little 10-14 year-old girls were fascinated and I'm sure returned home with the idea that "Robots are cool!" In my opinion, that how it should work if we want our technical community to be more diverse.

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