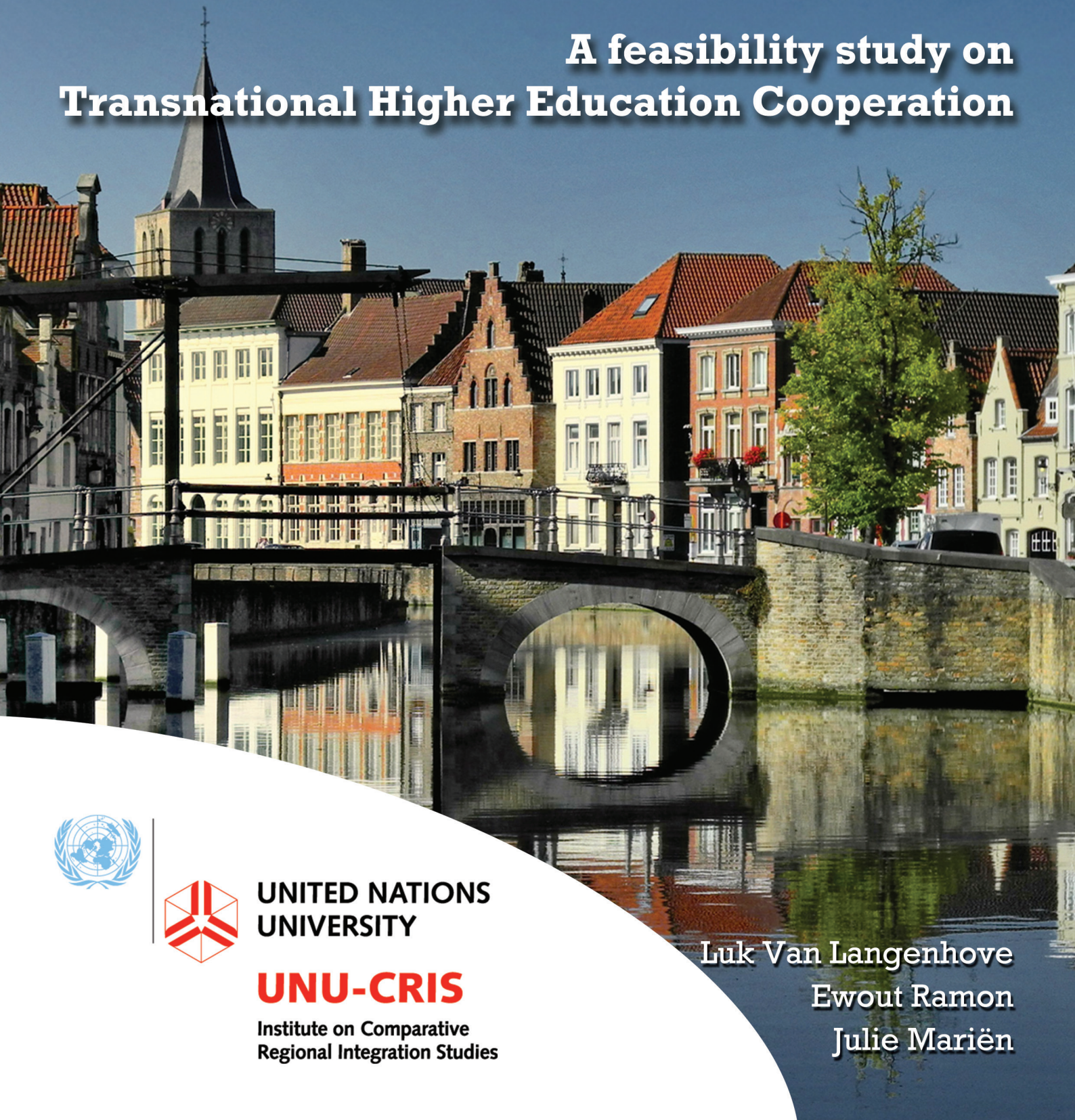


# Towards a University College in Bruges?

A feasibility study on  
Transnational Higher Education Cooperation



UNITED NATIONS  
UNIVERSITY

**UNU-CRIS**

Institute on Comparative  
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## Introduction

This report is a deliverable of a study undertaken by UNU-CRIS aimed at assessing the feasibility of developing new transnational higher education initiatives in Bruges. There are two dimensions to this feasibility. On the one hand there is the desirability of such initiatives. On the other hand there are the possibilities and constraints. The present report maps and assesses both dimensions with regard to the feasibility of starting Liberal Arts and Sciences education in Bruges through the establishment of a University College (UC)

The results of this study are intended to serve as suggestions to those who are interested in establishing new higher educational initiatives in Bruges, and as an information resource for all stakeholders concerned.

This study has been made possible thanks to the financial support of Euregion Scheldemond – which is a transnational partnership between the provinces of West Flanders, East Flanders and Zeeland –, the city of Bruges, the Province of West Flanders, University College Roosevelt and UNU-CRIS.

The research has been conducted by Ewout Ramon under the supervision and guidance of Luk Van Langenhove and with the assistance of Julie Mariën. It has been edited by Andrea Hak. The appendix contains a list of the people consulted.

## Executive summary

This is the first part of a feasibility study on new higher education initiatives in Bruges conducted by the United Nations University – Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies (UNU-CRIS). It maps and evaluates both the desirability and the possibilities and constraints for establishing a University College (UC) in Bruges, with a focus on transnational collaboration between Flemish universities and Dutch University Colleges.

A UC is characterised by a broad, intensive, interdisciplinary programme, called ‘the Liberal Arts & Sciences’ (LAS) model. Students compose their own personal bachelors programme under the guidance of a personal tutor. Typical of a UC are small scale teaching and an educational programme entirely in English. The concept of University Colleges has already been known for a long time in Europe, but Belgium has no full-fledged UC yet.

An analysis of current academic trends and developments in higher education, together with an assessment of the organisation of higher education in Flanders, the position of West Flanders and the ambitions for Bruges, leads to the following **conclusions**:

### A. Needs and opportunities

1. When compared to the rest of Europe, Flanders is lagging behind in the provision of LAS studies.
2. But there seems to be a growing awareness in Flanders of the benefits of interdisciplinary teaching and of the need for a further internationalisation of higher education.
3. The European Commission is meanwhile calling for broader bachelors programmes as a tool to mobilise more brainpower in Europe.
4. There is also growing local support in Bruges to develop higher education initiatives in the city.

### B. Conditions and constraints

1. Any initiative to establish a (non-private) University College in Flanders needs to be taken by one or several of the Flemish universities.
2. Setting up a University College in Flanders is best done in partnership with an existing UC.
3. Establishing a University College in Bruges requires political will to make the necessary infrastructure available.
4. Setting up and running a University College in Bruges requires the mobilisation of different European funding sources but cannot become sustainable without support from the Flemish authorities.
5. Finally, the Flemish legislative framework needs to be adapted in order to allow Flemish universities to organise English spoken LAS bachelors programmes where students are selected for admission.

The main conclusions of this study are that there is a societal need for embarking upon LAS in Flanders, that Bruges has a number of assets to host such an initiative, that a transnational initiative that involves Flemish universities is needed, but that realising this will need substantial changes in the Flemish legislative framework.

Based upon these conclusions, the following **recommendations** can be put forward:

1. Flemish universities should invest more in developing LAS in Flanders. A first step could be setting up a working group within the VLIR to discuss the issue.
2. The Flemish government should rethink its policies regarding higher education initiatives that are based on the LAS model.
3. The presence of a UC in Middelburg, Zeeland brings an opportunity to embark upon a transnational initiative in Bruges. Therefore, a dialogue between UCR and one or more Flemish universities should be started.
4. Stakeholders in Bruges (the City, the Province, RESOC, higher education institutions) should establish a local committee to prepare the ground for an LAS college in Bruges.

## Samenvatting

Dit is het eerste deel van een haalbaarheidsstudie over nieuwe initiatieven op vlak van hoger onderwijs in Brugge uitgevoerd door de Universiteit van de Verenigde Naties te Brugge (UNU-CRIS). Hierin worden zowel de wenselijkheid als de mogelijkheden en beperkingen onderzocht en geëvalueerd voor het opstarten van een University College (UC) in Brugge, met de focus op een transnationale samenwerking tussen Vlaamse universiteiten en University Colleges in Nederland.

Een UC wordt gekenmerkt door een breed, intensief en interdisciplinair programma, genaamd 'het Liberal Arts & Science' (LAS) model. Studenten stellen er onder begeleiding van hun mentor een persoonlijk bachelor programma samen. Eigen aan een UC is de kleinschalige vorm van het onderwijs en een studieprogramma volledig in het Engels. University Colleges bestaan al langer in Europa, maar in België bestaat tot op heden nog geen volwaardige UC.

Een analyse van de huidige academische trends en ontwikkelingen in het hoger onderwijs, samen met een beoordeling van de organisatie van het hoger onderwijs in Vlaanderen, de positie van West-Vlaanderen en de ambities voor Brugge, leidt tot de volgende **conclusies**:

### A. Noden en kansen

1. In vergelijking met de rest van Europa hinkt Vlaanderen achterop wat het aanbod aan LAS onderwijs betreft.
2. Maar het besef over de voordelen van interdisciplinair onderwijs en de nood aan meer internationalisering in het hoger onderwijs lijkt te groeien.
3. De Europese Commissie roept inmiddels op tot bredere bachelor opleidingen als een instrument om meer 'brainpower' in Europa te mobiliseren.
4. Er is ook een groeiend lokaal draagvlak in Brugge voor het ontwikkelen van nieuwe initiatieven voor het hoger onderwijs in de stad.

### B. Voorwaarden en beperkingen

1. Elk initiatief om een (niet private) UC in Vlaanderen te realiseren moet worden genomen door een of meer van de Vlaamse universiteiten.
2. Het opzetten van een UC in Vlaanderen gebeurt best in samenwerking met een bestaande UC.
3. Het oprichten van een University College in Brugge vereist politieke wil om de nodige infrastructuur ter beschikking te stellen.
4. Het opzetten en runnen van een University College in Brugge vraagt de mobilisatie van verschillende Europese financieringsbronnen, maar kan niet in stand gehouden worden zonder de steun van de Vlaamse overheid.
5. Ten slotte dient het Vlaamse wettelijke kader aangepast te worden, zodat de Vlaamse universiteiten Engelstalige LAS bachelor opleidingen kunnen organiseren waarvoor studenten worden geselecteerd.



De hoofdconclusies van deze studie zijn dat er een maatschappelijke behoefte is in Vlaanderen om mee te stappen in het LAS-verhaal, dat Brugge een aantal troeven heeft om er een dergelijk initiatief te organiseren, dat een grensoverschrijdend initiatief dat Vlaamse universiteiten betreft nodig is, maar dat het realiseren hiervan substantiële veranderingen in het Vlaamse wetgevende kader vraagt.

Gebaseerd op deze conclusies kunnen volgende **aanbevelingen** gemaakt worden:

1. Vlaamse universiteiten moeten meer investeren in de ontwikkeling van LAS in Vlaanderen. Een eerste stap zou het opstarten van een werkgroep binnen de VLIR kunnen zijn om de kwestie te bespreken.
2. De Vlaamse regering zou haar beleid moeten herzien met betrekking tot initiatieven voor het hoger onderwijs die gebaseerd zijn op het LAS model.
3. De aanwezigheid van een UC in Middelburg (Zeeland) biedt een kans om aan een transnationaal initiatief in Brugge te beginnen. Daartoe dient een dialoog tussen UCR en een of meer Vlaamse universiteiten te worden opgestart.
4. Stakeholders in Brugge (de stad, de provincie, RESOC, hoger onderwijs instellingen) moeten een lokale commissie oprichten om de start van een LAS college in Brugge voor te bereiden.

## 1. The changing landscape of higher education

As so many other aspects of society, higher education is undergoing many changes.<sup>1</sup> These changes form the background to which the feasibility of any new initiative needs to be situated. For this report, two major developments have been singled out: the increased calls for interdisciplinary education and the growing internationalisation of the higher education system. Together these two trends have major implications for the higher education system of any country.

### 1.1. The growing need for interdisciplinarity

The twenty-first century is characterised by an increasing (global) connectivity combined with increasingly rapid change. Interconnectedness among diverse elements on different scales lead to changes so rapid and complex, that they are impossible to comprehend from a single disciplinary perspective.<sup>2</sup> Students are facing and will continue to face challenges dealing with this, as will scholars and policy-makers. The answer seems to be a multi-perspective approach where different disciplines are used to deal with complex problems.

A discipline can conveniently be defined as any comparatively self-contained and isolated domain of human experience which possesses its own community of experts. Interdisciplinarity can best be seen as bringing together distinctive components of two or more disciplines.<sup>3</sup> In today's higher education system, these disciplines are institutionalised into departments and faculties. They form the backbone of how university teaching is organised, especially at the bachelors level: from a mono-disciplinary perspective. Such a disciplinary approach to teaching has become increasingly criticised. Bringing them together in an integrated approach simply holds a greater promise of bringing one closer to attaining a firm grasp of a complex subject than any important but one-sided study.

Not only should students analyse problems using a complex combination of disciplines, they should be able to do so in as many different languages and with respect to as many different civilizational traditions as possible. It is the best way to develop creative innovators and problem solvers; people who understand existing ideas and techniques who are also able to develop new ones.<sup>4</sup>

There is a growing awareness that interdisciplinarity is becoming more and more important. The European Commission (EC) Directorate-General (DG) for Research along with many other institutes have recognised that next to the traditional disciplinary approaches, there is a need for deeper forms of interdisciplinarity. They emphasize the strong potential for this type of research to address the complexity of real world problems and their solutions. "Integrative approaches are constrained by the distance between disciplinary paradigms and the lack of multidisciplinary training in many fields prioritised for EU funding. The need for and obstacles to deep Interdisciplinarity need to be recognised as a prerequisite for the development of the full potential of the social sciences and humanities.

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<sup>1</sup> See for example the 'Higher Education in the World' series by the Global University Network for Innovation and the various reports from the OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) (such as "Trends Shaping Education 2013").

<sup>2</sup> Newell, 2007

<sup>3</sup> Nissani, 1997

<sup>4</sup> Mansueto, 2006

Close collaboration across disciplines makes it imperative for funding agencies, usually concerned with one strictly defined field (the natural sciences, the social sciences or the arts), to collaborate with each other and jointly fund scholarly work.”<sup>5</sup>

What holds for research also holds for education. But as already mentioned, the university system is – both for research and education – still largely organised in a disciplinary way. Except for the so-called ‘liberal arts and sciences’ where interdisciplinarity is the norm.

## 1.2. The global trend towards internationalisation

According to the OECD, an estimated 4.5 million students today study in another country and that figure will continue to increase to an expected 7.2 million in 2020. International students still form a very small part of the total student population around the globe, but the growth rate of international students exceeds that of domestic students. One could even say internationalisation has become an indicator for quality in higher education. “International student mobility is one of the very interesting indications of the globalisation of higher education, yet we know little about what drives it.”<sup>6</sup>

The gains from internationalisation manifest themselves on different levels and in different domains. A first value added through internationalisation is economic gains. The academic mobility made possible by the increasingly borderless academic world will, like other kinds of free trade, bring many economic benefits, along with intellectual ferment and tremendous opportunities for individuals.<sup>7</sup> A clear economic benefit is a direct financial impact of international students on the host country through fee income and associated expenditure during their study. This value has been researched in the UK for example, and was estimated at about £8 billion for 2008/09.<sup>8</sup>

A second benefit from internationalisation is the impact upon civil society in the region. Opening up to the global public attracts creative minds, be it students, professors or artists, and leads to innovative ideas. Together with strategic partnerships between research institutes, universities and the city, it contributes to an increase in prosperity and well-being of the region. Obviously, the institute itself and its personnel and students also profit from a regional or international collaboration. Not only because of the rise in employment opportunities, but also because of the multicultural environment in which they can study, work and live.<sup>9</sup>

A third beneficiary of internationalisation is the institute itself. It for example allows the institute to expand its research networks and to collaborate with various international partners; to attract international talents; to offer more qualitative curricula; to engage in development cooperation as a part of its social commitment; and to acquire name and fame at an international level.

<sup>5</sup> DG Research, 2009, pp. 124-125

<sup>6</sup> Van Damme, 2014a, para. 2

<sup>7</sup> Wildavsky, cited in Flanders Knowledge Area, 2013b

<sup>8</sup> Conlon et al., 2011, cited in Careers Research & Advisory Centre (CRAC), 2013

<sup>9</sup> CRAC, 2013

Lastly, there are advantages for the students. Internationalisation allows students to develop a global awareness and an intercultural understanding, which they can also integrate in their research. A study by Janson, Schomburg and Teichler<sup>10</sup> for example shows that more than 80% of students value their personal development as the most important positive effect of an international experience, followed by their increased chances on the labour market with a bit more than 50%.

Today universities all over the world invest in global partnerships and in the internationalisation of their curricula. Global competition is increasing and the study choices of international students are becoming more sophisticated. Students increasingly focus on making educational choices that add value to their career outcomes and are paying attention to the student experience and the level of student support services in higher education institutes.

## 2. The rise of the Liberal Arts and Sciences model in higher education

The growing need for interdisciplinarity as well as the increased internationalisation of higher education, put some pressures on the current higher education system. On the one hand, the traditional disciplinary organisation of the universities has difficulties coping with interdisciplinary teaching. On the other hand, universities face an increased international competition to attract (or keep) the best students. It is within this context that one has to situate the recent worldwide trend of establishing so-called 'university colleges' with a Liberal Arts and Sciences teaching model.

### 2.1. What is the Liberal Arts and Sciences model?

A Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) teaching model is characterised by selective, intensive, **international**, broad, **interdisciplinary** and small-scale education. An essential component is the residential character and the existence of an academic community. Students can compose their own curriculum, and receive guidance from their personal tutor. This composition however has to be done in accordance with a small set of rules, so that each student meets the academic standards.

About 200 students are admitted every year, which means a total of 600 students for a three-year programme.<sup>11</sup> Every year consists of two semesters, which last 15 weeks each. Every course is taught for four hours per week. The Fall semester could for example start at the end of August and end mid-December. The Spring semester could then start at the end of January and end mid-May. Ideally, courses take place on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Wednesdays should be 'free', necessary for study, excursions or lab courses. Next to the rhythm of the course hours, class size is also important. No class can exceed 25 students. This is because the number of interactions, amongst students, and between students and their teacher, starts to implode from 26 students onwards. The programme is entirely in English, and the success rate is significantly higher than in other university programmes.<sup>12</sup>

The ideal-typical college includes 4 departments: Academic Core (ACC), Arts & Humanities (A&H), Sciences (SC), and Social Sciences (SSC). Every department comprises different disciplines, which are grouped in tracks. The SSC of the UCR for example, has seven tracks: anthropology, economy, geography, law, political sciences and international relations, psychology, and sociology.

Students mostly focus on one department (according to their major), following two or three tracks which most interest them, but there is ample opportunity to take courses outside one's major department. Students are also required to take at least one course from each department, a course on methods and statistics, a language course, and depending on their major, they will be required to take a number of obligatory major related courses.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Apart from the general requirements, students are selected on the basis of a letter of motivation, a personal interview and/or other criteria.

<sup>12</sup> Chances of success for first year students at the University of Ghent: 42%, Leuven: 41% and Brussels: 40% (Amkreutz, 2013); while 85% of the LAS students obtains a bachelor's degree after 3 years (Tak & Oomen, 2012, p. 10).

<sup>13</sup> Tak & Oomen, 2012, pp. 11-12



In the second year, students are able to study abroad for one semester, and the third year is marked by interdisciplinary research. Conducting research is essential in LAS education, so a college would ideally offer research seminars, and for enthusiastic students, offer the opportunity to write an Honours Thesis or conduct a research project. Conducting research shoulder to shoulder with a professor is challenging and innovative for both parties, and often leads to peer-reviewed publications or presentations during conferences.

The role of interdisciplinarity in the liberal arts, then, is to help students see the real-world relevance of various academic disciplines, to assess their comparative weaknesses and strengths, their power and their blind spots. “It is to remove disciplinary knowledge from the ivory tower and make it relevant to their lives and their world.”<sup>14</sup> In doing so, it motivates the student to study across academic disciplines, placing their major in perspective, and highlighting the relevance of the liberal arts.

“Athletes often incorporate a variety of exercises not directly related to their sport to improve their overall strength and conditioning. For example, swimmers and soccer players cross-train by lifting weights. Cross-training may exercise key muscle groups more effectively than spending the same amount of time working out in the sport of interest. Analogously, a liberal arts education encourages scientists to improve their “competitive edge” by cross-training in the humanities or arts.”<sup>15</sup> Such academic cross-training develops a student’s ability to collect and organise facts and opinions, to analyse them and weigh their value, to articulate an argument, to recognise bias, to think critically and to acknowledge ethical concerns.<sup>16</sup>

LAS education aims not only to give students the necessary background for further studies, but also to prepare them for jobs that require an interdisciplinary approach. Economists for example simply cannot explain situations with theoretical models only; historical, cultural or psychological insights are equally important. Policy advisors to give another example, need a background in both policy studies or political sciences and for example in environmental studies, finances or law. Plenty of examples indicate that the labour market increasingly requires people with a very diverse set of skills and preferably also international experience. People with an academic degree are often also expected to have skills in for example ICT, communications, management, foreign languages, business administration, graphic design, etc.

At the same time, LAS education prepares students for their role as critical, well-informed, global citizens. In sum, the LAS model resonates well with the two developments in the previous section: the growing need for interdisciplinarity and the trend towards internationalisation of higher education.

## 2.2. The worldwide growth of the LAS model

The roots of the liberal arts tradition can be traced back to the great Greek philosophers which also constituted the basis of the medieval University in Europe. “The collegiate model, i.e. the smaller-scale college context preferred for the liberal arts experience, also has clear historical roots in the early European universities, for example Oxford and Cambridge.”<sup>17</sup>

Throughout history, Europe’s models of education have undergone major changes during distinct periods of time. Especially during the post-world war II period driven by economic considerations, higher education was characterised by massification and democratisation, resulting in a sharp decline in the LAS model in Europe up until recently.

In the eighties a revival of LAS started in Europe. Early LAS initiatives in Europe were all American by origin, but recent ones are more genuinely European. A (non-exhaustive) list of recent LAS initiatives in Europe was produced by Marijk Van Der Wende<sup>18</sup> and a modified and updated version is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Trends in the (re-)emergence of LAS education in Europe.<sup>19</sup>

Year of establishment	Institution
1886	American College of Thessaloniki
1923	American College of Greece
1962	American University of Paris
1969	American University of Rome
1969	Franklin College, Switzerland
1972	Richmond, The American International University in London
1972	John Cabot University (Italy)
1988	Vesalius College (Vrije Universiteit Brussel) (Belgium)
1991	American University in Bulgaria
1991	Central European University (Hungary)
1992	Collegium Artes Liberales (Warsaw, Poland)
1998	Gotland University (Visby, Sweden)
1998	University College Utrecht (Utrecht University, the Netherlands)
1999	Smolny College (St. Petersburg) (Joint degree programme of Bard College (USA) and Saint Petersburg State University) (Russia)
1999	European College of Liberal Arts (Berlin)
1999	Jacobs University Bremen (Germany)
2000	Liberal arts degree at St Mary’s University College, Belfast (UK)
2002	University College Maastricht (Maastricht University, the Netherlands)
2004	Roosevelt Academy (Utrecht University, the Netherlands)
2004-2006	Liberal arts programmes at the University of Amsterdam, Tilburg University and Utrecht University’s main campus (the Netherlands)
2006	BISLA, Bratislava (Slovakia)
2006	Faculty of Liberal Arts, Charles University (Prague, Czech Republic)
2009	Amsterdam University College (joint degree programme of VU University Amsterdam & University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands)

<sup>17</sup> Glyder and Weeks, 1998; Nussbaum, 2002; cited in Van der Wende, 2011, p. 2

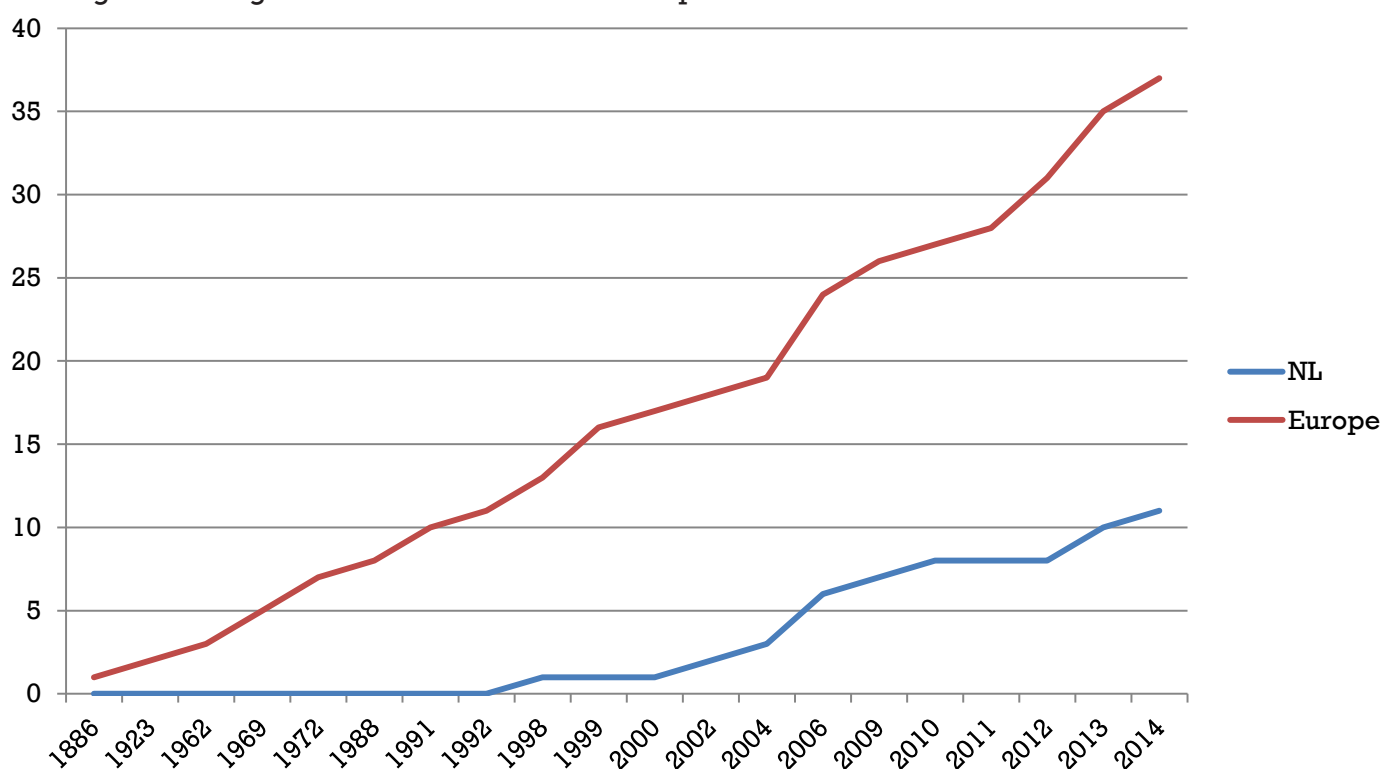
<sup>18</sup> Van Der Wende, 2011

<sup>19</sup> Van der Wende, 2011, pp. 5-6; Guttenplan, 2013

2010	Leiden University College (Leiden University, the Hague Campus, the Netherlands)
2010	Liberal arts programme at Winchester University (UK)
2011	Liberal arts programme at University College London (UK)
2012	Liberal arts programme at Freiburg University (Germany)
2012	King's College London (UK)
2012	University College London (UK)
2013	University of Exeter (UK)
2013	Erasmus University College, Rotterdam (the Netherlands)
2013	University of Birmingham (UK)
2013	ATLAS University College, University of Twente, (the Netherlands)
2014	University of Kent, Canterbury (UK)
2014	University College Groningen (the Netherlands)

The table indicates a clear upward trend to be observed in Europe in general and in the Netherlands in particular, as illustrated in figure 1.

Figure 1. The growth of the LAS model in Europe and the Netherlands.



The first Colleges in the Netherlands were inspired by the American model. The US counts around 550 LAS Colleges, with the oldest one being the Harvard College (Boston), established in the 17th century. The US Colleges could not simply be copied into the Dutch educational landscape because of contextual differences in education. Therefore, they were transplanted and transformed, resulting in big differences between the US and Dutch models. US Colleges are, for example, different in scale and intention.<sup>20</sup>

According to Huisman and Van Vught<sup>21</sup>, the (re-)emergence of LAS education in Europe is a response to “the need to differentiate the massified European systems, which are characterized by insufficient diversity and flexibility in terms of the types of institutions and programmes offered to an increasingly large and diversified body of students.”

The current LAS programmes in Europe seem indeed to be initiated in order to overcome the disadvantages of early and over-specialisation at the bachelors level. They offer an alternative for most university programmes in Europe that have a mono-disciplinary and rigid nature. The features of LAS education create a very supportive and comfortable environment for learning and yield individuals who are better able to deal with complexity across disciplines. That way, LAS students are better equipped to meet the changing nature of the world and the changing nature of work.

At regular universities, there may be students who see their professors as such giants that they cannot imagine themselves attaining such academic heights.<sup>22</sup> The more approachable faculty at LAS colleges provide less intimidating role models. At an LAS college, the students are the centre of attention, they are the institution’s reason for existence. It generates confidence and a feeling of self-worth.

LAS colleges offer a balance between broad and in-depth education across disciplines, which helps the student discover his/her talent, and in turn also stimulates the development of this talent. Through the interdisciplinary and intensive methods – which includes the crucial part of giving feedback, especially from students to teachers – LAS education gets or tries to get as close as possible to excellent learning, and excellent teaching.

Table 2 presents an overview of the main differences between UCs and regular universities.<sup>23</sup>

Table 2. Overview of the main differences between UCs and regular universities.

<b>Regular Universities</b>	<b>LAS Colleges</b>
Large scale teaching	Small scale teaching
Small amount of lessons and contact hours	Large amount of lessons and contact hours
Research is priority number one for teachers	Education is priority number one for teachers
Majority of students is not highly motivated	Majority of students is highly motivated
Testing at the end of each semester	Continuous evaluation through occasional assignments, mid-term examinations and final examinations
No system of tutors	A tutor is assigned to each student who mentors and helps the student in his/her study progress
Several retakes possible	No retakes possible
Monodisciplinary study from start to finish	Multidisciplinary start of the study. Accent on a major and minor follows later

<sup>21</sup> Huisman and Van Vught, 2009; cited in Van Der Wende, 2011, p.7

<sup>22</sup> Cech, 1999, p. 209

<sup>23</sup> Tak & Oomen, 2012, p. 36

To further illustrate the differences between the trajectory of regular university studies and LAS education, figure 2 is often used.<sup>24</sup> A multidisciplinary start equals a broad base in the first year, which narrows as the years of study progress.

Studies have shown that LAS colleges, compared to other universities, do in fact uniquely foster a broad range of empirically substantiated good practices in undergraduate education. Some, like extracurricular involvement, were attributable to its residential, full-time student body, others, like student-faculty contact and quality of teaching may be attributable to a combination of factors.<sup>25</sup> The most important of these factors are ‘institutional size’ (a more manageable social-psychological environment invites greater levels of student engagement than larger institutions) and ‘an institutional ethos or culture that places a premium on effective teaching and high academic expectations’.

There is, however, one major disadvantage of LAS colleges. Namely, their lack of access to (expensive) equipment that enables more sophisticated research projects, or their access to books, cannot match that of large research universities. One way to solve this problem is by establishing sustainable partnerships with the bigger academic institutes. In the Netherlands this has resulted in partnerships between the regular universities and the LAS institutions (see table 3).

Figure 2. Trajectory difference between regular university studies and LAS education.

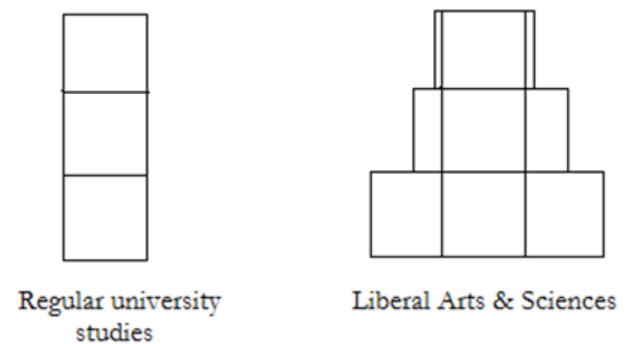
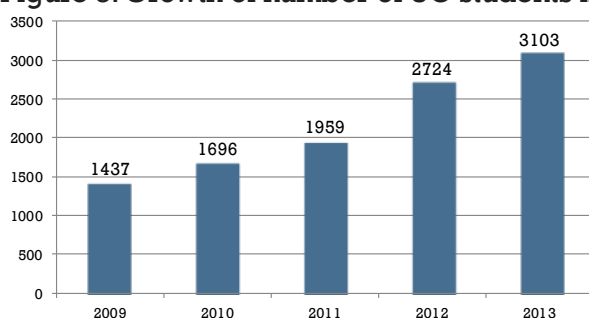


Table 3. Dutch university partnerships

University	University College(s)
<b>University Utrecht</b>	University College Roosevelt (Middelburg) University College Utrecht (Utrecht)
<b>Maastricht University</b>	University College Maastricht (Maastricht)
<b>Amsterdam University</b>	University College Amsterdam (Amsterdam)
<b>Erasmus University Rotterdam</b>	Erasmus University College (Rotterdam)
<b>University of Twente</b>	Atlas University College (Enschede)
<b>University of Groningen</b>	University College Groningen (Groningen)
<b>Leiden University</b>	Leiden University College (The Hague)

Figure 3. Growth of number of UC students in the Netherlands<sup>26</sup>



Finally, next to the number of UCs, also the number of students enrolled in broad bachelor education grows relatively fast in the Netherlands. In five years (2009 – 2013), the number of students doubled.

<sup>24</sup> Oomen, 2014

<sup>25</sup> Pascarella, Wolniak, Seifert, Cruce, & Blaich, 2005, pp. 87-90; Pascarella & Blaich, 2013

<sup>26</sup> VSNU, cited in Dirks, 2014



### 3. The Flemish higher education landscape

The previous sections have documented some world-wide trends that affect the higher education system. Also, the LAS model was introduced as a way of dealing with the challenge of the need for interdisciplinarity and internationalisation. In this section, the situation of higher education in Flanders is analysed with a particular focus on West Flanders and Bruges.

Higher education in Flanders today is largely shaped by the European framework of the Bologna Process. This process is meant to create ‘the European Higher Education Area’ and should facilitate student mobility across Europe. The bachelor-master structure is a visible result of the Bologna Process. The higher education system consists of three cycles. The first cycle consists of the bachelors programmes, the second cycle are the masters programmes and the third cycle are the Doctorate or PhD programmes.<sup>27</sup>

There are several types of higher educational institutions in Flanders. The types best known are the ‘universities’ [universiteiten] and the ‘colleges of higher education’ [hogescholen]<sup>28</sup>. A college of higher education offers bachelors programmes with a professional orientation. Academic education comprises bachelor and master courses, which are provided by universities. Only universities can award the degree of Doctor.<sup>29</sup>

Universities and colleges of higher education cooperate intensively through the so-called “associations”.<sup>30</sup> These are official entities regulating cooperation. Members of the association – consisting of at least one university and one college of higher education – may transfer their powers regarding education, scientific research and social society services to this association.

The establishment of associations has emphasized the trend towards large higher education institutions in Flanders. Together with the increase of university students through the democratisation process of higher education, we can speak of a ‘mass education’ culture. Except for some specific educational bachelors programmes<sup>31</sup>, universities in Flanders are open for everyone with a diploma of secondary education. This gives almost everyone the opportunity to enrol in university programmes. Some courses of these programmes are also offered to students from outside the main department, to students who chose the course as an elective, or to students who are taking the course for the second or third time. This sometimes results in auditoria filled with over a thousand bachelor students. Some example figures<sup>32</sup> of first year bachelor students of 2012-2013 can be consulted in table 4.

27 Dutch – Flemish Accreditation Organisation [Nederlands - Vlaamse Accreditatie organisatie] (NVAO), 2013

28 Sometimes also translated as ‘university colleges’. To avoid confusion, ‘a college of higher education’ is used throughout the document to refer to a ‘hogeschool’.

29 Flemish Government [Vlaamse Overheid], 2008, p. 34; DET, 2013a

30 The associations are (Flanders Knowledge Area, 2013a):

- Antwerp University Association: <http://www.associatie-antwerpen.be>
- Brussels University Association: <http://www.universitaireassociatiebrussel.be>
- Ghent University Association: <http://www.augent.be>
- K.U.Leuven Association: <http://www.associatie.kuleuven.be>
- Limburg University Association: <http://www.auhl.be>

31 Some educational programmes, like medicine and dentistry, require an entrance exam.

32 Figures were acquired from the datawarehouse Higher Education of the Flemish Ministry of Education and Training.

	Law	Psychology & Pedagogy	Economic and Applied Economic Sc.
<b>Ghent Uni.</b>	491+	581+	550+
<b>Leuven Uni.</b>	602+	543+	702+
<b>Antwerp Uni.</b>	366+	/	451+
<b>Brussels Uni.</b>	155+	187+	159+

This increasing number of students made universities invest in large(r) auditoria. UGent for example recently built the Leon Demeyer auditorium with 1000 seats. At KULeuven, the biggest auditorium is the Pieter de Somer auditorium with 814 seats, at VUB it is the Roger Van Geen auditorium with 587 seats and in Antwerp, it is the Rector Dhanis auditorium with 700 seats. Still, for certain courses, some students have to sit on the staircases.

Universities offer academic bachelor courses that prepare students for master courses. Academic courses centre on general training and focus on the acquisition of academic or artistic knowledge. They enable students to acquire competences which they must have in order to function in the field of sciences or the arts. The student workload of a bachelors programme is at least 180 ECTS<sup>33</sup> credits which correspond to three years of full-time study.

When enrolling, students can choose to register for: a degree contract with a view to obtaining a degree or a certificate; a credit contract with a view to obtaining a credit certificate for one or more course units; or an examination contract with a view to obtaining a degree or credit certificate for one or more course units.

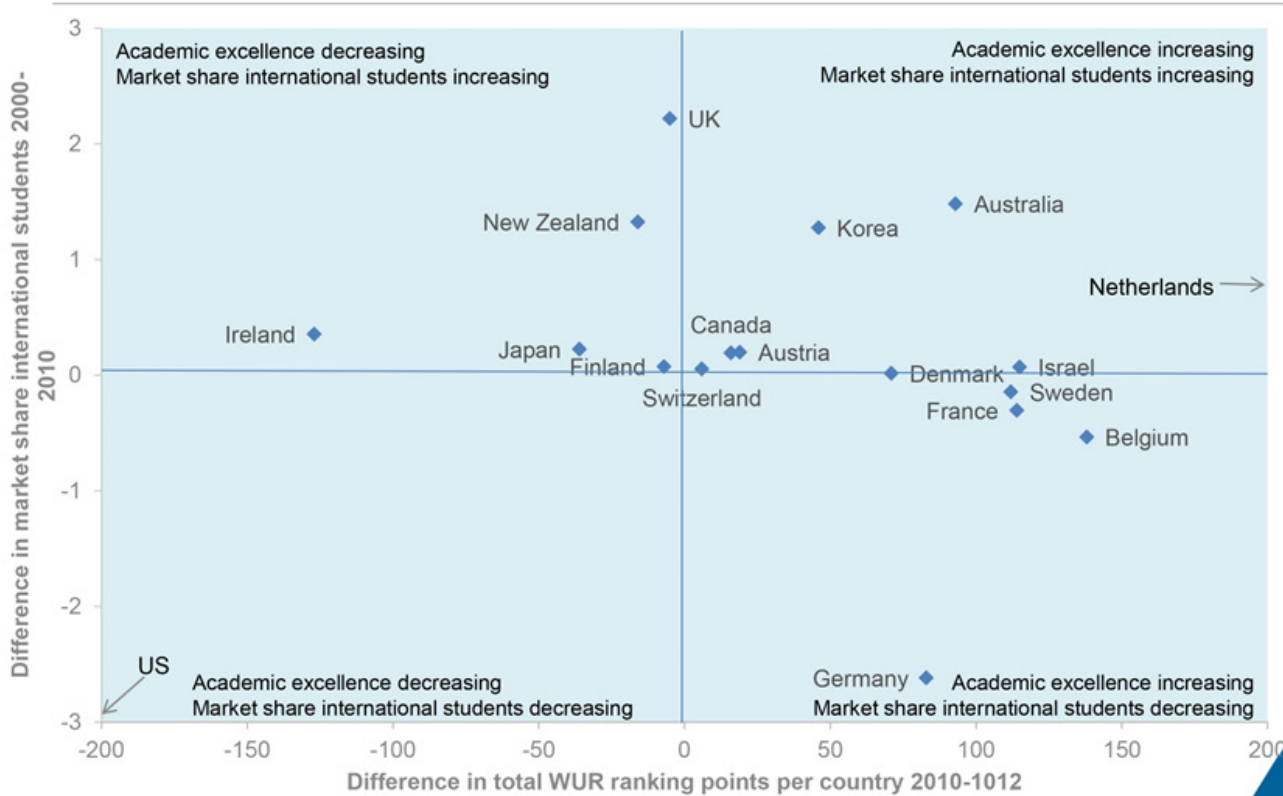
The 'normal' trajectory is a route in which students take course units from only one programme in the same academic year, as determined by the institution.

Contrary to the general trend in Europe, higher education following the LAS model is quasi non-existent in Flanders. The only exception is the Vesalius College in Brussels. It places emphasis on providing students with a broad education in English, reaching beyond artificial boundaries between disciplines. They only offer three bachelors programmes however (Business Studies, Communication Studies and International Affairs), which might be too little to speak of a full-fledged LAS College.

Other exceptions in Flanders are the College of Europe in Bruges and a campus of the University of Kent in Brussels. They do not provide bachelor teaching, but offer a range of specialist postgraduate programmes, taught in English, related to the study of European Studies and International Affairs respectively. Finally, there is the United Business Institutes – Brussels, offering a 3-year bachelors programme in Business Studies and a Master of Business Administration, in partnership with Middlesex University London. Courses are taught in English and in small classes.

Belgian universities are thus facing an increased global competition. But as a recent OECD study indicates, there is certainly room for improvement regarding the international student market share (see figure 3).

Figure 4. Comparing trends in academic excellence and international students market shares (source: Van Damme, 2014b, p46).



The Flemish government therefore intends to reinforce the international climate/character of Flemish higher education. Not only do they want to focus on the ‘20/20/20 objective’<sup>34</sup>, they also want to make internationalisation an integral part of Flemish higher education institutions. They recognize the importance of improving the international climate in the institutions, and on the international dimension reflected in the learning outcomes of the programmes and courses.

*“Internationalisation is an indispensable aspect of the character of our age. In education and higher education, internationalisation plays an important role. That’s why our higher education must respond to the worldwide trend for internationalisation to guarantee the place of Flanders and Brussels within a globalised knowledge society. Adequate international exchanges of teachers and students is vital to achieving this. On the one hand, Flemish higher education must have the opportunities and the necessary competitiveness to attract talent from elsewhere, and on the other we need highly educated Flemish students who make their way into international institutions, industries, research centres, etc. As the social policy document on the reform of higher education (2010) rightly states, Flemish students and teachers must be able to communicate adequately and exchange with the international community, and our higher education must be adequately open to students and teachers from abroad. On my initiative regulations have been adapted, allowing our universities and university colleges<sup>35</sup> to offer more courses in other languages.”*

Pascal Smet, Flemish Minister of Education.<sup>36</sup>

34 The focus on achieving European targets of 20% of graduates with experience acquired abroad by 2020.

35 Here: colleges of higher education.

36 DET, 2013a, p. 8

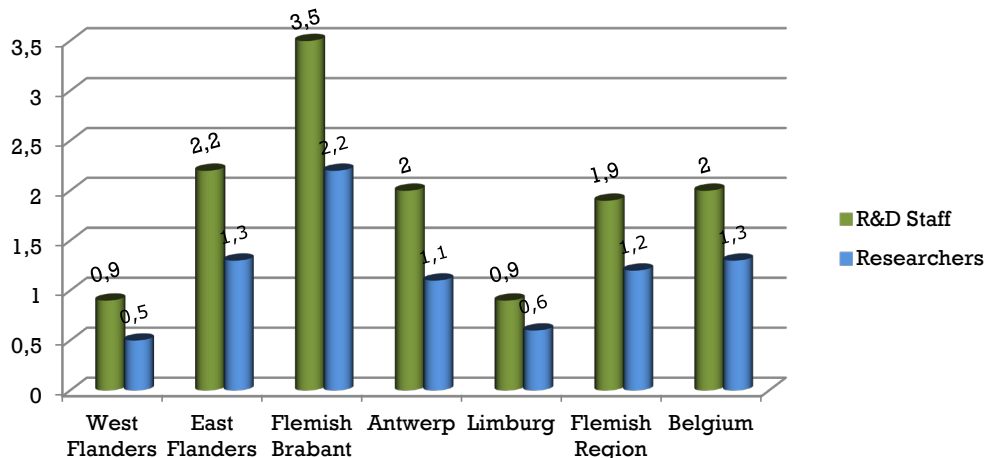
In this regard, the Flemish government supports initiatives such as international summer schools and intensive programmes. It also promotes student and teacher mobility, increased synergies and international cooperation between academic institutions, and increasing the appeal of Flemish higher education, etc.<sup>37</sup>

Furthermore, the Flemish government aims to support foreign students through grants, in order to boost the attractiveness of Flemish higher education. International students that come to Flanders, mostly to follow a bachelor's degree, master's degree or PhD programme in a language other than Dutch, offer an added value to Flemish higher education. Important elements include the interaction with Flemish students and staff, and the transfer of knowledge and expertise. Attracting outstanding international students is especially interesting for institutions of higher education in this regard. After they complete their studies, students that return to their home country can act as 'ambassadors for Flanders'. Their introduction to Flanders can even lead to the development or reinforcement of economic, social and political ties.<sup>38</sup>

### 3.1. West Flanders

Compared to the rest of Flanders, West Flanders has less academic programmes, research facilities and resources to conduct academic research. This is reflected by the fact that only 1.3% of the Flemish research funding for higher education in 2012 went to West Flanders. Although this figure does not show the full picture (the figure does not include the funds for KULAK<sup>39</sup>), it still points to a less developed academic foundation for the province.<sup>40</sup> This is confirmed by the low proportion of West Flanders in the so far 1543 Flemish participations in the Seventh EU Framework Programme (FP7) namely 5.4%. Also in relation to total employment in the province, West Flanders scores below par in terms of employment of researchers and Research & Development (R&D) staff compared to the Flemish Region. For both indicators, not even half of the Flemish average is met (see figure 5).

Figure 5. Employment of researchers and R&D staff in relation to total employment per province



Source: Eurostat, processed by: department DSA<sup>41</sup>, POM<sup>42</sup> West Flanders cited in Depestel, 2013, p.8

37 DET, 2013a, p. 41

38 DET, 2013a, p. 47

39 [Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Afdeling Kortrijk], Catholic University Leuven Department Kortrijk

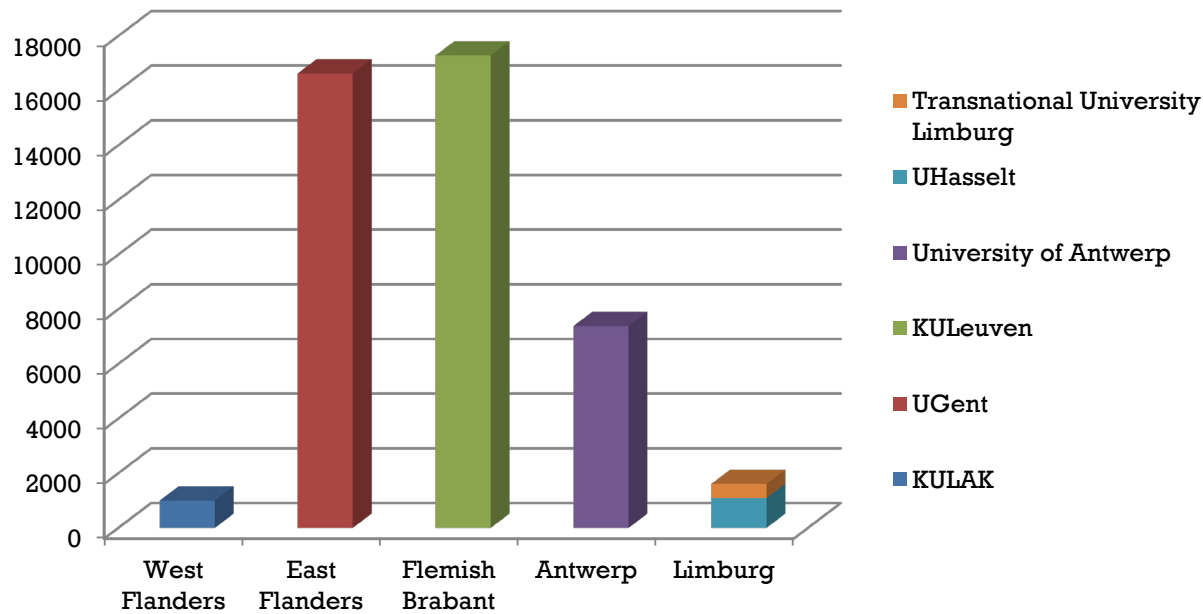
40 Depestel, 2013, p. 7

41 Data, Study and Advice [Data, Studie en Advies]

42 Provincial Development Agency [Provinciale Ontwikkelingsmaatschappij]

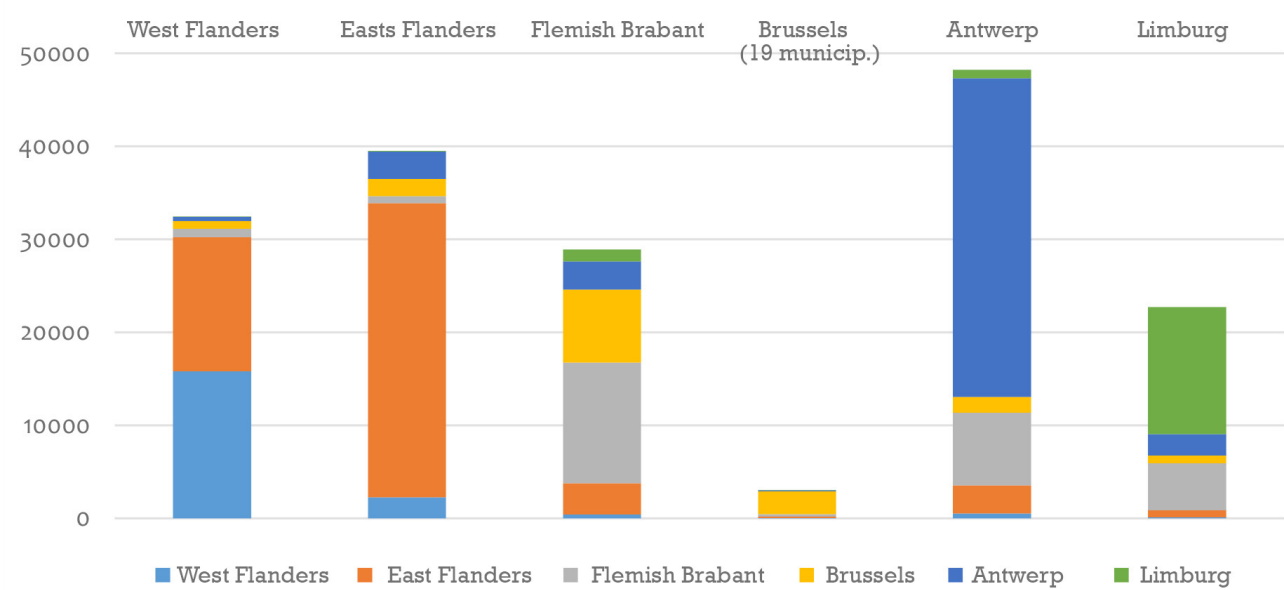
Also figures of the academic year 2012-2013 by the Flemish Department of Education and Training (DET) and the Agency for Higher Education, Adult Education and Educational Grants (AHE, AE and EG)<sup>43</sup> indicate that the provincial distribution of students enrolled in fully fledged academic bachelors programmes is unbalanced (see figure 6).<sup>44</sup>

Figure 6. Provincial distribution of students enrolled for fully fledged academic bachelors programmes



Finally, a study by Van den Berghe, Kirsch and Beernaert<sup>45</sup> shows how West Flanders is the province most affected by brain drain. Figure 7 shows that less than half (48,63%) of the generation students<sup>46</sup> living in West Flanders also studies in West Flanders. If we take Brussels and Flemish Brabant together, this is the lowest number of all provinces. There are almost as many West Flemish students in East Flanders (44,48%) as in West Flanders.

Figure 7. Relation between place of living of the generation student (horizontal axis) and place where this student studies (vertical axis)



43 DET and AHE, AE and EG, 2012  
44 The numbers are not exact, as some universities offer programmes in partnership with each other. Departments that did not offer 3 year bachelors programmes were excluded.  
45 Van den Berghe, Kirsch, & Beernaert, 2014  
46 A generation student is a student who is enrolled for a bachelors programme at a Flemish higher education institution with a diploma contract for the first time.



Higher education institutions (HEIs) have an important role to play in respect of regional development. They can provide the public and private sector in the region with education and research – potentially matching specific needs of the region – and contribute to the development of a knowledge-based economy. Some, as indicated in the study of Van den Berghe, Kirsch and Beernaert<sup>47</sup>, even see the absence of a full-fledged university in West Flanders as the major obstacle for the further development of a knowledge economy.

In the past, neither public policy nor the higher education institutions have tended to focus strategically on the contribution that they can make to the development of the regions where they are located. Particularly for the older, traditional HEIs, the emphasis has often been on serving national targets or on the pursuit of knowledge with too little regard for the surrounding environment. But this is now changing. To be able to play a regional role, HEIs are required to do more than simply educate and research; they have to engage with others in their region, provide opportunities for lifelong learning and contribute to the development of knowledge-intensive jobs which will enable graduates to find local employment and remain in their communities.<sup>48</sup>

Regions and HEIs can build partnerships based on shared interests, principally economic ones. From the perspective of agencies promoting city and regional development, HEIs can be a key resource. They can help serve regional development by contributing to a region's comparative advantage in knowledge-based industries and to its human capital base, but also by helping to generate new businesses, by contributing to tax revenues and by providing content and audience for local cultural programmes for example. From the perspective of HEIs, regional involvement also has a range of benefits. The local area can bring business to institutions in a variety of forms, including student enrolments and payments for research, consultancy and training. At the same time, a thriving region creates an environment in which higher education can also thrive, helping HEIs to attract and retain staff and students.<sup>49</sup>

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47 Van den Berghe, Kirsch, & Beernaert, 2014

48 OECD, 2007

49 OECD, 2007

### 3.2. Bruges

Bruges is a unique city in many aspects. It has an ancient history and a huge cultural heritage. It is an example of a medieval historic settlement, which has maintained its historic fabric. Original gothic constructions and churches form part of the town's identity. Each year thousands of tourists come to Bruges to have a taste of its rich past. In the golden Middle Ages it was home to the Bourgundian Dynasty, and was closely associated with the school of Flemish Primitive painting, of which famous artists, like Jan Van Eyck, were part. The features are reflected in historic buildings and numerous museums. The historic centre of Bruges is even on the World Heritage List of UNESCO.

Although the number of students is rising steadily, Bruges still struggles with problems like brain drain and an ageing population. It has one of the lowest number of students compared to other Flemish student cities. In 2011, 5,1% of the population of Bruges were student. After Turnhout, this is the lowest number in Flanders.<sup>50</sup> Bruges is also the only provincial capital without a full-fledged university.

The City Council of Bruges has made a remarkable effort to attract more students and to make Bruges more attractive for its current students. It tries to profile its city as a student city and collaborates with Howest, Vives and the College of Europe. They organise a lot of activities for students. There is, for example, at least one free sporting activity per month, a photo contest, a students on ice event and a traditional student welcome festival. On their website, the city announces when and where students can study together. Usually this is at the facilities of Vives or Howest. The city of Bruges also offers a discount card for several bars, restaurants, associations and cultural activities. The city also offers the possibility to rent a cheap room in Bruges. They suggest to rent a room via the website 'Kotwest', a website that brings students and landlords together.<sup>51</sup> Finally, several student associations are active in Bruges, both from Vives and Howest. They organise all sorts of leisure activities. Nevertheless, there is still room to improve and to adapt socio-cultural activities in Bruges to the needs of students and young adults<sup>52</sup>.

#### College of Europe

The College of Europe is an international university attracting students from various countries to follow a specialised postgraduate programme in European studies. The College selects students to prepare them for leadership functions. Going from European law to administrative courses, the College could be an important partner for the UC in Bruges (and vice versa). New bachelor students can benefit from its enormous network of professors and EU professionals. The College is always able to attract international prominent figures to give lectures to its students. In the past they have invited officials like François Mitterand, Margaret Thatcher, Jacques Delors, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, José Manuel Barosso and Xi Jinping. Also the library of the College, which is already available to UNU-CRIS personnel, could become part of a big network of university libraries in Bruges.

Furthermore, a network between the students of the College and the UC can be established, where knowledge and experiences are exchanged in a multicultural and international

<sup>50</sup> Youth Council of Bruges [Brugse Stedelijke Jeugdraad], 2011

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.kotwest.be/>

<sup>52</sup> Van den Berghe, Kirsch, & Beernaert, 2014

environment. The development office of the College, for example, organises different activities next to the educational programmes, which can be attended by all students and faculty. The presence of the College in Bruges will certainly contribute to the intellectual development of the UC students.

Together with the two colleges of higher education, Vives and Howest (presented below), the College offers student services for certain activities and problems such as: studying with a disability, student housing, sports and culture, mobility, and psychosocial problems.<sup>53</sup> Cooperative structures for these matters could easily be established between all parties. Finally, there is a specific project set up by the College that will be of interest to our future international students; i.e. having lunch on Sundays with a host family in Bruges. It is a way for foreign students to interact with locals, get to know the local culture and traditions, and practice their Dutch.

### Vives, Howest and Kulab

In Bruges, there are 2 colleges of higher education which can be included in the cooperation network of the future UC. First, there is **Vives**, a college of higher education associated with KULeuven. It holds 13.000 students, and has campuses all over West Flanders. One of the campuses is located in Bruges and holds over 3000 students.<sup>54</sup> Vives invests a lot in research and development, and defines itself as a knowledge centre for innovative, practical research.

Secondly, there is **Howest**, the college of higher education of West Flanders [Hogeschool West-Vlaanderen]. It is associated with other colleges in Ghent, as well as the University of Ghent. It holds 2 campuses in Bruges where 3209 students are enrolled. The college offers education in various fields, from biomedical sciences and health services to architecture and informatics. It also holds a **Confucius Institute**, which is part of a worldwide network of more than 300 institutes. They are based on a partnership between a Chinese institute of higher education and an institute outside China. In 2012, Howest and Zhejiang Gongshang University in Hangzhou opened their institute in Bruges to spread the Chinese language and culture.

Next to the colleges of higher education, there is a department of KULeuven located in Bruges, called **Kulab**. It has two faculties: one in Kinesiology and Rehabilitation Sciences, the other in Industrial Engineering. At the moment of writing, the latter faculty was located in Ostend, but KULeuven's intention is to move all programmes to Bruges by 2016. The Kinesiology and Rehabilitation Sciences faculty, located in Bruges, only has a 2-year bachelors programme and counted 1.342 students for 2014.<sup>55</sup> The third and final year of this bachelors programme is organised in Leuven.

All educational institutions attach a lot of importance to international cooperation and internationalisation and they work together with different foreign institutes. It would be beneficial for all parties if a collaboration could be established between them and the UC. Infrastructure could be shared, teachers could be exchanged, activities could be mutually organised, student facilities and services could be managed together, etc.

<sup>53</sup> City of Bruges, 2014

<sup>54</sup> DET and AHE, AE and EG, 2012, pp. 45-46; Katholieke Hogeschool Brugge-Oostende (KHBO), 2014

<sup>55</sup> KULeuven, 2014

## Episcopal Seminary

The Episcopal Seminary [het Grootseminarie] in Bruges trains diocesan priests, permanent deacons and parish assistants. It houses professors in Biblical Hebrew, Canon Law, Church History, Philosophy, etc. The same collaboration possibilities exist as for the other local institutes.

## UNU-CRIS

The United Nations University Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies (UNU-CRIS) in Bruges is one of the research institutes of the United Nations (UN). It is specialised in studying the processes and consequences of regional integration and cooperation and has a lot of expertise in cross-national academic cooperation.

The network of UNU-CRIS is remarkable; it has close ties with the UN, regional organisations like the European Union, the African Union, etc., the College of Europe and other universities all over the world. UNU-CRIS cooperates with other universities in different programmes, research projects and summer schools. It offers, for example, a joint Master Programme with the University of Maastricht, and it co-organises a Doctoral Summer School with the University Andina Simon Bolivar in Quito, Ecuador.

The comparative research conducted at UNU-CRIS ranges from regional integration to human security, from international trade to health care policies in the south, and from transnational policy networks to circular migration. Each year, researchers and interns from all over the world come to UNU-CRIS to gather work experience in the field of regionalism studies, while enriching the research institute with different perspectives, experiences and knowledge.

## 4. Formulating the dream: LAS in Bruges

The above analysis leads to a number of conclusions regarding the desirability (needs) and feasibility (conditions) of establishing an LAS institution in Bruges.

### 4.1. Needs

First of all, it cannot be denied that **Flanders, compared to the rest of Europe, is lagging behind concerning the provision of LAS education**. This might itself be only a symptom of a broader trend: the lack of differentiation of its higher education supply. This stands in sharp contrast with, for instance, the situation in The Netherlands where since 2000 the increased heterogeneity of the university student population has been answered by initiatives to connect better with different target groups, and to answer the demand for other trajectories for excellent students and students with research ambitions.<sup>56</sup>

Differentiation refers to the content, form and level of education. Universities can differentiate in various ways, but if we take the Netherlands as an example, these are the most important ones: 1) broad bachelors programmes; 2) UCs; 3) English programmes; 4) research masters; and 5) honour programmes and modules.<sup>57</sup>

This development in the area of differentiation in the Netherlands is the result of a combination of factors: successful local initiatives combined with competition and the exchange of good practices, as well as governmental policies offering resources as incentives and space to experiment.

As trends in neighbouring countries clearly indicate the relevance of the LAS programme, Flanders should take this opportunity to offer development possibilities for Flemish educational actors in this regard. Even the EC encourages more efforts for an increased interdisciplinarity.<sup>58</sup> By not acting, Flanders runs the risk of leaving this field open to other, international actors, losing out on ambitious national and international students.

Making LAS available in Flanders would give Belgian students the opportunity to take part in international LAS education without having to leave the country. The University of Maastricht, for example, also embedded international, English, small scale education with constant evaluations (e.g. assignments, presentations, etc.). In 2011, one out of fifteen students in Maastricht was Belgian, which meant an increase of 36% compared to the year before. According to then rector Gerard Mols<sup>59</sup>, the success was attributable to the intense guidance and the international atmosphere, with English as language of instruction. ‘This modern form of education and the good international reputation of our university appeals to a young and ambitious generation of Belgian students’ [own translation].

In addition, and in line with the above, a UC would answer the call for more international education in Flanders. In Maastricht for example, more than 44% of the students are foreigners.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> The Association of Universities [De Vereniging van Universiteiten] (VSNU), 2012, p. 5

<sup>57</sup> VSNU, 2012, p. 5

<sup>58</sup> DG Research, 2009

<sup>59</sup> Belga, 2011

<sup>60</sup> Belga, 2011



A second conclusion is that there is **growing awareness in Flanders that investing in LAS is worthwhile**. In contrast to regular, large-scale universities, the success rate in LAS colleges is very high. At UCR for example, 85% of the students obtain their bachelor's degree in three years.<sup>61</sup> At Flemish regular universities, we deal with a success rate for first year students of around 40% on average.<sup>62</sup> Also, in contrast to regular universities, UCs use small scale education. Courses require intensive individual advance reading and preparation. Meetings are arranged in the form of structured individual and group discussions, which are introduced and followed up by teacher presentations. This all aims at creating a high level of intellectual activity during courses. According to Luc Soete<sup>63</sup>, rector magnificus of the University of Maastricht, this interactive model remarkably leads to better results than classic forms of education. 'In a big auditorium you create passive education. The student is not being challenged' [own translation]. Also former rector Rudi Verheyen of the University of Antwerp<sup>64</sup>, denounces the marketisation and expansion of higher education. 'It prompts all institutes to do the same things in the same way. Also, they are forced to guide students who are not able to succeed without guidance, but they do not receive funds to excel outstanding students'. Bruges could become a test case for this 'new' type of education, complementing and cooperating with the existing educational actors in Flanders.

In Belgium the Communities are competent with educational policy, including higher education.<sup>65</sup> Relevant policy documents for Flanders are 'Brains on the Move', 'Flanders in Action' (Vlaanderen in Actie), the 'Belgian Research Action through Interdisciplinary Networks' (BRAIN) and several decrees and decisions.

In general the Flemish government strongly encourages student mobility, wants to attract more foreign students to Flanders and wants to become a knowledge economy. Flanders Knowledge Area<sup>66,67</sup> for example promotes incoming student mobility through their website 'Study in Flanders'<sup>68</sup> and it supports the internationalisation of Flemish higher education through various projects.<sup>69</sup> The action plan of the Flemish government 'Brains on the Move' contains initiatives that should contribute to the further development of an international and high-quality Flemish higher education. The following proposals from the action plan connect well to the idea of setting up a UC:<sup>70</sup>

- "courses should be organised in association with international partners
- courses should deal with international elements
- international projects as an assignment for a course
- structurally employing foreign guest teachers
- making the curriculum more international
- organising international summer schools and other intensive programmes, etc."

61 Tak & Oomen, 2012, p. 10

62 Amkreutz, 2013

63 Ysebaert, 2013

64 Tegenbos, 2013

65 De Wit, 2006, p. 1

66 Flanders Knowledge Area, 2014a

67 Flanders Knowledge Area is an independent agency for the internationalisation of Flemish higher education. It is supported by the Flemish Department of Education and Training and the Department of Flanders International.

68 <http://www.studyinlanders.be/>

69 Flanders Knowledge Area, 2014b

70 DET, 2013b, p. 39

As a UC would develop interdisciplinary and innovative approaches to local and global problems, it could also contribute to some policy goals of the 'Pact 2020', a strategic plan developed by the Flemish government together with important civil society actors.<sup>71</sup>

Thirdly, investing in LAS would allow Flanders to **answer the call of the EC for broader bachelor education**. The EC has criticised "the apparent uniformity in provision as being due to a tendency to egalitarianism and a lack of differentiation, as well as to over-regulation and the strong dependence on the state inhibiting reform, modernization, and efficiency".<sup>72</sup> One of the most challenging recent reforms in higher education set forth by the EC, is indeed the shift to student-centred learning. It is an approach to education focusing on the interests of the students, rather than those of teachers, for example. It is focused on each student's interests, abilities, and learning styles, placing the teacher as a facilitator of learning. This type of teaching method is applied in UC education, where student voice and feedback are central to the learning experience for every learner. The method contrasts the teacher-centred learning, where the teacher is at the centre in an active role with the students in a passive, receptive role. Teachers choose what the students will learn, how they will learn, and how they will be assessed on their learning. Student-centred learning, on the other hand, requires students to be active, responsible participants in their own learning.

The EC has repeatedly called for broader bachelors programmes as a tool to mobilise more brainpower in Europe<sup>73</sup>, and it has also criticised the mono-disciplinary and rigid nature of most university programmes in Europe. *"A tendency to uniformity and egalitarianism in many national systems has ensured that the average quality of universities, while generally homogeneous, is comparatively good – at least academically. But there are also deficiencies stemming from insufficient differentiation. Most universities tend to offer the same monodisciplinary programmes and traditional methods geared towards the same group of academically best-qualified learners – which leads to the exclusion of those who do not conform to the standard model. Other consequences are that Europe has too few centres of world-class excellence, and universities are not encouraged to explain at home and abroad the specific value of what they produce for learners and society"*.<sup>74</sup>

The European high level group on the modernisation of higher education<sup>75</sup>, in a report to the EC on improving the quality of teaching and learning in higher education, looks forward *"to a time when the new ideas on models of learning, on interdisciplinarity, integrated learning, on team pedagogy, on deep learning etc. will be mainstreamed, inspiring a new generation of students to reach levels of intellectual literacy that stretch them beyond merely 'good enough' to 'excellent'"*.

The high level group also stated: *"Universities and higher education institutions, as part of the education system, should not educate students only in narrow, knowledge-based specialisations, but must go further, seeking the integral education of the person. They should consider offering students transversal majors or areas of specialisation. This perspective sees students themselves realising that they need to acquire broader knowledge and skills."*

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71 Vlaanderen in Actie, 2012

72 European Commission, 2005, cited in Van der Wende, 2011, p. 4

73 Van der Wende, 2011, p. 8

74 European Commission, 2005, pp. 3-4

75 High level group on the modernisation of higher education, 2013, p. 19

*Higher education should help students build a wider base on which they can build their future professional competences. Fast changes in technology, and generally in the way we work, make hard skills rapidly obsolete. Learning to learn – one of the seven competences of the European Key Competences Framework – is fundamental. Efforts need to be concentrated on developing transversal skills, or soft skills, such as the ability to think critically, take initiatives, solve problems and work collaboratively, that will prepare individuals for today's varied and unpredictable career paths.”<sup>76</sup>*

The report includes specific recommendations, some of which are clearly in line with the LAS teaching methods:<sup>77</sup>

- Higher education institutions should encourage, welcome, and take account of **student feedback** which could detect problems in the teaching and learning environment early on and lead to faster, more effective improvements.
- **Curricula should be developed and monitored through dialogue** and partnerships among teaching staff, students, graduates and labour market actors, drawing on new methods of teaching and learning, so that students acquire relevant skills that enhance their employability.
- Higher education institutions should introduce and **promote cross-, trans- and interdisciplinary approaches** to teaching, learning and assessment, helping students develop their breadth of understanding and entrepreneurial and innovative mind-sets.
- Higher education institutions should develop and implement holistic **internationalisation strategies as an integral part of their overall mission** and functions. Increased mobility of student and staff, international dimension of curricula, international experience of faculty, with a sufficient command of English and a second foreign language and intercultural competences, transnational delivery of courses and degrees, and international alliances should become indispensable components of higher education in Europe and beyond.

A fourth conclusion relates to the localisation of an envisaged LAS in Flanders. While in principle any town could host a University College, there are some **good reasons to choose Bruges**.

Next to the already mentioned attractiveness of Bruges and its experience with student hospitality comes the fact of the growing local support for developing higher education initiatives in the city.

The Regional Socio-economic Consultative Committee [Regionaal Sociaal-economisch Overlegcomité] (RESOC) forms the negotiation forum at the regional level for the development of a strategic vision on the socio-economic development of a region. This vision is outlined in a ‘region pact’, which is published every six years. In this region pact RESOC expressed the need to address the ‘missing link university’ in Bruges. Compared to other students in West Flanders, more students from Bruges tend to enrol in university. They have no other option than to migrate to other cities that have a university. Most of the time these students settle in their university city, contributing to the brain drain from

<sup>76</sup> High level group on the modernisation of higher education, 2013, p. 36

<sup>77</sup> High level group on the modernisation of higher education, 2013, pp. 64-67

Bruges to other Flemish cities. This results in a loss of socio-economic growth. Hence, RESOC proposes to invest more in future oriented and high quality higher education. They propose several measures to reach this goal. One of them is to increase cooperation between schools and universities in a cross regional way. Another proposal is to investigate the possibilities of setting up a UC to deal with the 'missing link university' in Bruges. This project would thus be completely in line with the measures proposed in this region pact.<sup>78</sup>

The City of Bruges has outlined in its general policy programme for the period 2013-2018, that education - in every kind of form - creates employment and attracts talent towards the city. According to the City Council, Bruges ought to have the best educational offer in West Flanders and should therefore support educational initiatives in Bruges. This new initiative can be seen as one of those initiatives, and would contribute to the implementation of the policy statement.<sup>79</sup>

According to the provincial decree, a province must set up a multiannual plan at the start of each new governing period. This plan provides the policy goals and policy options. The strategic note of the multiannual plan describes what the province wants to realise in the coming legislature.<sup>80</sup> In the strategic note and the explanatory note of the multiannual plan 2014-2019 one also finds a focus on education. The province states it wants to create a coordinated education flanking policy<sup>81</sup>, taking current diversity and existing initiatives on Flemish and local levels into account. It also states it will financially support internal and external partners in realising their policy goals.<sup>82</sup> The education flanking policy itself was still under development at the moment of writing, but it is already clear that special attention will be given to technical professional education, basic education and higher education.<sup>83</sup>

Finally, there is also an economic incentive to establish a UC in Bruges. The University of Ghent calculated the annual impact of UCR on the province of Zeeland, and estimated an economic impact of 15 million euros per year, which can be translated into 200 jobs.<sup>84</sup> We expect a similar figure for Bruges.

## 4.2. Conditions

All of the above supports the case for developing LAS in Flanders and for establishing a UC in Bruges, but realizing this dream will only be possible if the following conditions are met:

1. A UC needs to be **associated with a university**. Hence it will be absolutely paramount that one or several Flemish universities take the lead in the initiative to establish a UC in Bruges. Given the fact that two university associations (KULeuven and UGent) already have a presence in Bruges, it would make sense that either KULeuven or UGent take up this role. A joint endeavor of these two universities is also a possibility.

78 RESOC Brugge, 2013, pp. 53-63

79 Stad Brugge, 2013, p. 20

80 Province of West Flanders, 2014a

81 Province of West Flanders, 2014b, p. 106

82 Province of West Flanders, 2014c, p. 35

83 Province of West Flanders, 2014d

84 Schoors, Karas, & Kamphuis, 2010

2. Setting up a UC requires specific expertise. Therefore, a **partnership with an existing UC** would be advisable. Given the (relative) proximity of UCR in Middelburg, a partnership with that UC could be an option. Besides, UCR already has collaborations with UNU-CRIS in Bruges, it has been involved in this feasibility study, and it has already expressed an interest in being involved in a Bruges LAS initiative. On top of this, a partnership with UCR would allow the coordinators to apply for European funding for cross-regional cooperation between Zeeland and West Flanders.

But other options are possible too and need to be explored, including a triangular partnership between the South of England, Zeeland and West Flanders. It should also be noted that the University of Maastricht – home of University College Maastricht – now has a ‘campus’ in Brussels.

3. Establishing a UC cannot be done without a **suitable location and infrastructure**. A typical UC such as the one in Middelburg involves 600 students; 200 per year, with classrooms not exceeding 25 students per course. This implies an infrastructure with ideally 20 classrooms, 20 offices, a reception, a big hall, a big auditorium, a cafeteria, a library, a study room, two meeting rooms, a computer room, a music room, sanitary facilities and a small number of parking spots. On top of that, the local student housing market should be able to accommodate up to 600 students.

During the course of this feasibility study it became clear that Bruges has no shortage of potential locations. But it will require political decisions by the local authorities to make the necessary premises available. This implies a financial investment by those authorities.

4. The operating costs of a UC can be estimated to be 6 million euros per year. On top of all this there are the costs related to setting up the whole programme, which can be estimated to lie between 15 and 20 million euros. Several **funding sources** will be needed to cover those costs. In the Netherlands, UC students are financed by the national government which allows the UCs to keep the tuition fees at a relatively low level. This should also be the ambition for the Bruges initiative, but will require changes in the Flemish legislative framework (see following point). Meanwhile funding for the development phase could already be attracted.

As a first step, the Flemish government could be approached to support the further concretisation of the initiative. The financial support of €37.000 by the Flemish Department of Education and Training to the transnational educational project between KULAK and the University of Lille, can serve as a precedent.

Secondly, the **INTERREG V** (Flanders – The Netherlands) programme can be mobilised. Through promoting cross-border, transnational and inter-regional cooperation of various entities, institutions and companies on relevant matters, the INTERREG programme (which is part of EFRD) is an important tool for European regional development. One of the outstanding key points in this context is cohesion - the creation of equal living conditions and development requirements in the European regions.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>85</sup> ateneKOM, 2013



Each cooperation area chooses four out of the list with eleven funding priorities mentioned in the EU regulation concerning the European Regional Development Fund. The fund aims to promote intelligent, sustainable and integrated growth (EU 2020 strategy) and to connect economic, environmental and social issues that can be funded in concrete projects.

The cooperation area Flanders – The Netherlands chose the following four:

- i. Strengthening research, technological development and innovation
  - o The programme invests in the reinforcement or establishment of transnational research and knowledge infrastructure. A specific focus is put on knowledge centres and shared ‘open access’ research facilities.
  - o Stimulation of cooperation between enterprises, R&D centres and educational institutes. Valorisation of knowledge and innovation of products/services/applications/processes.
- ii. Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors
- iii. Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency
- iv. Promoting employment and supporting labour mobility
  - o Integration of transnational labour markets including transnational mobility, cooperative local employment initiatives and cooperative training programmes.

The budget for this programme is estimated at around 150 million euros (with reservation) and projects will be fundable for 50%. The first official calls for proposals are expected to be launched at the end of 2014, beginning of 2015.

The intention should be to apply for INTERREG funds for the start-up of the UC in the framework of the first and last priority in the list above.

Thirdly, the **Erasmus+** programme of the EC can be mobilised as well. The fields of education, training, youth and sport can make a major contribution to help tackle the key challenges Europe is facing both now and in the next decade. They have been recognised as key drivers within the Europe 2020 Strategy to overcome the socio-economic crisis affecting European member states, to boost growth and jobs and to foster social equity and inclusion. Against this background, Erasmus+ is the European Programme in the fields of education, training, youth and sport for the period 2014-2020.<sup>86</sup>

The focus for this project is on Key Action 2 of the Erasmus+ programme: Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices. It supports the following:

- “**Transnational Strategic Partnerships** aimed to develop initiatives addressing one or more fields of education training and youth and promote innovation, exchange of experience and know-how between different types of organisations involved in education, training and youth or in other relevant fields. Certain mobility activities are supported in so far as they contribute to the objectives of the project;
- **Knowledge Alliances** between higher education institutions and enterprises which aim to foster innovation, entrepreneurship, creativity, employability, knowledge exchange and/or multidisciplinary teaching and learning;



- **Sector Skills Alliances** supporting the design and delivery of joint vocational training curricula, programmes and teaching and training methodologies, drawing on evidence of trends in a specific economic sector and skills needed in order to perform in one or more professional fields;
- **Capacity Building** projects supporting cooperation with Partner Countries in the fields of higher education and youth. Capacity Building projects aim to support organisations/institutions and systems in their modernization and internationalisation process. Certain mobility activities are supported in so far as they contribute to the objectives of the project;
- IT support platforms, such as **eTwinning**, the **European Platform for Adult Learning (EPALE)** and the European Youth Portal, offering virtual collaboration spaces, databases of opportunities, communities of practices and other online services for teachers, trainers and practitioners in the field of school and adult education as well as for young people, volunteers and youth workers across Europe and beyond”.<sup>87</sup>

The grant application has to be submitted by **30 April** for projects starting between 1 September of the same year and 28 February of the following year; and by **1 October** for projects starting between 1 February and 30 September of the following year.

The aim should be to apply for a grant for a **‘long term’ strategic partnership** project of three years (max. €450.000) before the deadline of 30 April 2016, to fund preparatory aspects of the transnational cooperation such as travels, meetings, management costs, etc.

5. Finally, and most importantly, the Flemish **legislative framework will need to be adapted** in order to allow Flemish universities to receive student-based funding for English LAS bachelors programmes where students are selected for admission. Here one of the major constraints might be the protection of the Dutch language in higher education. “The Dutch language is legally defined as both the management language and the teaching language in institutions of higher education in the Flemish Community”.<sup>88</sup> Exceptions for bachelor and master courses are possible, for example for programmes aimed especially at foreign students. In that case however, an equivalent study programme needs to be provided in Dutch.<sup>89</sup>

To overcome this constraint, an application can be submitted for an exemption from the equivalence condition, provided that the bachelors or masters programme is offered together with a partner outside the Flemish Community.<sup>90</sup>

Another constraint will be the selection process for admission to the UC. It is unusual in Flanders, although not non-existent. There are for example admission tests for the studies of medicine and dentistry, selection procedures for research masters and proficiency tests for audio-visual and performing arts and music. Also for all other university programmes, the idea to set up (non-binding) admission tests to slow the growth of the number of students is circulating amongst the Flemish universities.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>87</sup> European Commission, 2014, p. 15

<sup>88</sup> De Wit, 2006, p. 16

<sup>89</sup> Vlaams Parlement, 2013b

<sup>90</sup> DET, 2014

<sup>91</sup> Hermans, 2009

In the long term, Flemish decrees should be adapted in order to allow for selection procedures for LAS programmes. But the Dutch examples show that even before the legislation is adopted to accommodate LAS, universities can already develop initiatives.

All of the above allows us to conclude that establishing a University College in Bruges is a realistic dream, but not an easy one. The next step is to transform the dream into a concrete roadmap. Annex B. of this report outlines such a roadmap that aims at starting in 2018. What is needed for this is determination and a coalition of supporters. As the founder of IKEA once said: it takes a dream to create a successful business idea, but it takes people to make dreams a reality.

## Recommendations

The main results of this feasibility study can be summarised as follows:

1. **There is a societal need for LAS in Flanders.**
2. **Bruges has a number of assets to host a UC.**
3. **Establishing a UC in Bruges is only possible if done by one or several Flemish universities, which in turn will need changes in the legislative framework.**
4. **A partnership with a Dutch UC is preferable**

Based upon these conclusions, the following recommendations can be put forward:

1. Flemish universities should invest more in developing LAS in Flanders. A first step could be **setting up a working group within the VLIR** to discuss the issue.
2. The Flemish government should **rethink its policies regarding higher education** initiatives that are based on the LAS model.
3. The presence of a UC in Middelburg, Zeeland brings an opportunity to the Flemish universities to embark upon a transnational initiative. A **dialogue between UCR and one or more Flemish universities** should be started.
4. Stakeholders in Bruges (the City, the Province, RESOC, higher education institutions) should establish a **local committee** to prepare the ground for an LAS college in Bruges.

## Annex A. List of consultations

During the course of this feasibility study, there have been consultations with many individuals and organisations both formally and informally. The following lists the most important meetings held.

- Meeting with Provincial executive Carl Vereecke, Bruges (11/10/2013)
- Attended seminar: Wat na 2013? Oost-Vlaanderen investeert in Europa, Ghent (23/10/2013)
- Meeting with Provincial executive Jean de Bethune, Bruges (07/11/2013)
- Attended seminar: Europa 'mee'-maken: voorstelling nieuw subsidiereglement voor grensoverschrijdende uitwisselingen, Bruges (13/11/2013)
- Meeting with Hans Adriaansens (founder of UCR) and Barbara Oomen (Dean of UCR), Bruges (06/12/2013)
- Meeting with Renaat Landuyt, Frank Vandevoorde, Carl Vereecke and Hans Adriaansens, Bruges (24/01/2014)
- Meeting with Jean-Pierre Saelen (VOKA), Bruges (05/02/2014)
- Meeting with Luc Soete (Rector Maastricht University), Maastricht (06/02/2014)
- Attended info session about European subsidy programmes, Kortrijk (11/02/2014)
- Meeting with Noël Vercruysse (Head of Department, Department of Education, Department of Higher and Adult Education), Brussels (13/02/2014)
- Attended open day UCR, Middelburg (19/02/2014)
- Meeting with Magda Kirsch (Educonsult), Bruges (11/03/2014)
- Meeting with Koen Goethals (Academic administrator UGent), Bruges (12/03/2014)
- Meeting with Tine Decuypere (RESOC Bruges), Bruges (12/03/2014)
- Meeting with UCR (Hans Adriaansens, Jorrit Snijder & Barbara Oomen), Middelburg (24/03/2014)
- Meeting with Leen Ervinck (INTERREG), Bruges (17/04/2014)
- Meeting with Conny Van Gheluwe (Cabinet of Provincial executive Jean de Bethune), Bruges (23/04/2014)
- Attended agenda committee RESOC Bruges, Bruges (03/06/2014)
- Meeting with Dirk Van Damme (OECD), Paris (13/06/2014)
- Meeting with Harm Hospers (Dean University College Maastricht), Maastricht (17/06/2014)
- Meeting with Koenraad Debackere (General administrator KULeuven), Leuven (15/07/2014)
- Meeting with Franky Demon (City councillor for spatial planning, housing, youth and Bruges student city), Bruges (16/07/2014)

## Annex B. Roadmap

### Schedule

#### Legislative framework

Any new educational programme in Flanders must be accredited by the NVAO. The accreditation serves as a quality label and is valid for six years. The accreditation procedure can last for maximum nine months and should be completed one year before the start of the programme.

The decree stipulating the accreditation requirements also provides learning outcomes for both bachelor's and master's degrees.<sup>92</sup> These involve competences such as critical reflection, creativity, knowledge of research methods, insight in scientific knowledge, etc. The Flemish Government draws up a list - the central register of higher educational programmes - of bachelors and masters programmes per institute. It consists of the different places where an institute can set up a certain programme.<sup>93</sup>

The decree concerning the universities in Flanders is another relevant decree. It stipulates guidelines regarding university staff, admission requirements for students, language requirements, financial provisions, etc. It also states that the university board should set up an investment plan for at least five years.<sup>94</sup>

As this new educational programme would ideally be provided in cooperation with a partner across the border, it is important to know the conditions under which a joint educational programme can be set up in Flanders. These conditions are outlined in the decree concerning the restructuring of the higher education in Flanders. Chapter five on cooperation agreements is of particular importance for this project.<sup>95</sup> The Flemish government recognises the importance of international partnerships within higher education and promotes them through various mechanisms. Incentives to promote these partnerships include public funding for research activities, a tax advantage for companies who cooperate with universities and funding for Erasmus activities and programmes.<sup>96</sup>

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92 Vlaams Parlement, Decreet betreffende de herstructurering van het hoger onderwijs in Vlaanderen, 2013a

93 Vlaams Parlement, 2013a

94 Vlaams Parlement, 2013b

95 Vlaams Parlement, 2013a

96 De Wit, 2006, p. 18

## Time schedule

The aim is to open the UC in September 2018. This estimation and the following time schedule are merely projections and are in no way fixed. They were taken up in the report to give the reader an idea of the steps that need to be taken. Again, the timetable is subject to change.

To establish a UC, the following steps need to be completed:

- 1) Raise funds (INTERREG, Erasmus+, etc.)
- 2) Present the report to all stakeholders
- 3) Develop the educational programme
- 4) Develop a business plan
- 5) Allocate infrastructure
- 6) Start renovation and adaptation of infrastructure (green building and renovation principles should be incorporated into all future construction projects)
- 7) Prepare the accreditation process – submit application documents for accreditation – processing of the accreditation
- 8) Hire staff
- 9) Design website, logo and house style
- 10) Ultimate deadline of the accreditation process
- 11) Start the marketing campaign
- 12) Training and orientation for the staff
- 13) Develop curricula
- 14) Update the website with curricula
- 15) Start of first fall semester
- 16) Start of first spring semester
- 17) First evaluation report
- 18) Graduation of first students (2021)

First, funds must be raised. Information about the different funding schemes has already been outlined before under the topic ‘resources’. To recapitulate, most of the official calls are expected by the end of 2014 – beginning of 2015. The preparations for these applications should therefore be made as soon as possible.

A second action will be the presentation of the report to the different stakeholders. It will involve a general presentation about the project and the next steps. Thirdly, the educational programme will be developed. It will outline what courses will be offered at the UC.

Fourth, a business plan must be developed. This should include a working budget, a timeline, the specific accreditation requirements and a marketing plan. It will reuse some elements that are already outlined in the feasibility study, but it will include more in-depth and practical information. The governing structures of the UC will also be outlined in the business plan, together with its mission statement, vision statement, identity statement, policies, personnel needs and admission parameters.



Fifth, infrastructure should be allocated (by local authorities) as soon as possible. Afterwards, licensing requirements should be dealt with and renovation works, the sixth step, can take off. Green building and renovation principles should be incorporated into all future construction projects. To minimise the risk of underestimation, we estimate the duration of the renovation works to be three years.

Seventh, a request for accreditation from the NVAO must be prepared in May 2015. The application should be submitted in September 2015. The accreditation process will last for maximum nine months. The ultimate deadline to receive accreditation for this programme is July 2017, because there should be one year between the accreditation of the NVAO and the start of the programme.<sup>97</sup>

The next and eighth action is hiring professors and other staff. A one-year period to do this from January until December 2017 is envisioned. Somewhere during this period the website, logo and house style of the UC can be designed. Afterwards, the marketing campaign can take off from September 2017 until the end of April 2018. This campaign must attract students from Belgium, the Netherlands and other countries.

Ninth, there is the period from January 2018 onwards to train staff and for everyone to get acquainted. The teaching staff should then also decide on and develop their curricula. Afterwards, the website can be updated with the curricula. This should be finished by April 2018. The fall semester will start at the end of August and lasts until mid-December 2018. The spring semester will last from the end of January until mid-May 2019. It is important to mention that as much as possible should be monitored from the beginning, in order to deliver a complete and thorough evaluation report at the end of the first year. This would also include surveys conducted among students and staff, from April until May 2019.

Finally, the first students will graduate in May 2021.

An overview of the timetable is presented on the two following pages. It is meant to give a general impression. The deadlines are projections and can be changed at any time.

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<sup>97</sup> Van Oosterhout, 2014

# 2014

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

INTERREG

Allocate infrastructure

Present report

Develop educational programme

Develop business plan

# 2015

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

Infrastructure (buildings, licenses, ICT, etc.)

Prepare accreditation process

Submit

Processing the application

# 2016

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

ERASMUS +

# 2017

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

Hire Staff

Design website, logo & style guide

Deadline accreditation

Marketing campaign

# 2018

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

Training and orientation for the staff

Develop curricula

Updating website

Fall semester

# 2019

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

Spring semester

First evaluation report

## Organisation and staffing

For this part the organisation and staffing of UCR was used as an example. The eventual organisation of the UC in Bruges will only be determined in a second stage of this project and might turn out to be very different. Nevertheless, an overview is useful to give a general impression.

There are about 90 staff members working at UCR of which 51 are full-time staff members. About one fifth of the total staff members are supporting staff, while the rest are academic staff.<sup>98</sup> Positions to be filled in Bruges include a dean, professors, teachers, a student advisor, a student office assistant, an international coordinator, a registrar/admissions coordinator, a head of ICT, ICT specialists, a head of communications, a communications officer, a human resource manager, a managing director, an office manager, an assistant controller, a business controller, librarians and maintenance staff.

At the head of the UC will be a **dean**. He/she will be responsible for the UC's vision and goals and strategic planning. There will be a **head of department** for each faculty. The dean and the head of department are often teachers as well. The head of department is responsible for the organisation and general conduct of the department. For the teaching activities at the UC several **professors** will be employed. A number of those will be permanent. Next to permanent and visiting professors, assistant professors and other qualified teaching personnel will be hired.

There will be a **student affairs office** consisting of student advisors, student office assistants, an international coordinator and a registrar/admissions coordinator. The **student advisor** at the UC, next to the personal tutor, assists students in setting up their personal programme. Whereas advisory meetings with a personal tutor are obligatory, advice by student advisors is complementary. These advisors can also help students with their personal problems. **Student office assistants** assist students with practical matters related to for example administrative tasks and with everyday student life. The student affairs office also consists of an **international coordinator** who is in charge of the international network of the UC. He/she also assists international students or Erasmus students with their administrative tasks and other matters, and is responsible for the coordination of summer schools or other international programmes. Another necessary position is the **registrar/admissions coordinator**. His/her task is the supervision of the selection process of the different applications for the UC.

There will also be a **communication office** comprising a **head of communications** and a **communications officer**. They are responsible for organising events, ceremonies and the alumni association, publishing newsletters and press releases, managing the media policy, the website and intranet and representing the UC at other institutions.

A **careers/postgraduate studies office** could be established where one of the student advisors is responsible for providing assistance to students looking for further studies or a job (for example providing an overview of relevant masters programmes, information on how to write a curriculum vitae, organise job events, etc.). The office could also provide student jobs that have to do with the workings of the university.

Another possible service is a **language service**. This would support students throughout their studies in English, the working language of the UC. This service could provide additional language courses to the obligatory English language course at the UC. Also Dutch courses would be provided to help international students integrate in Flanders. There is a possibility to cooperate on this matter with the College of Europe. Another possibility is to cooperate with existing language services in Bruges that offer a wide range of languages such as Babel, IVO or SNT.<sup>99</sup>

A **library** is a necessary part of a university. Students will be able to study in a library and consult or borrow books. Further opportunities for cooperation in this matter should be explored. After all, UNU-CRIS, the College of Europe, Howest, VIVES and the city of Bruges all have library facilities based in Bruges. The possibility to borrow books from the library of Zeeland where students of UCR can already borrow books, should also be explored. At UCR students have the possibility to access every library in the Netherlands with their library card. There is even a possibility to have books delivered at the library they prefer.<sup>100</sup> The Dutch system could be an example for the Belgian library system where there is much less cooperation between university libraries.

Another important service is the **ICT service**. This service consists of a head of ICT and ICT specialists. It will be possible to have a wireless internet connection at every campus and a mailing system will be established for the UC students. To establish an online academic community, we could use a type of intranet or we can follow the example of Howest and use the modern system of 'cloud computing'. It offers the possibility to share documents and software, consult emails and agendas, etc. Their mailbox disposes of a back-up system with a capacity of 25 GB.<sup>101</sup> It will also be possible to access digital sources from home through a VPN-connection.<sup>102</sup>

The **general affairs office** is responsible for some general managerial and organisational tasks of the UC. At the head of this office is the **managing director**. His/her duties will be personnel organisation, reporting to corporate directors and discussing the progress of projects. Other necessary functions for the general functioning of the university are an office manager, a business controller, an assistant controller and maintenance staff. The **office manager** is responsible for the efficient and smooth operation of the university, the administrative tasks, the coordination of the different facilities, etc. The **business controller**, with the help of the **assistant controller**, is in charge of business administration and financial management. Another required position is the **human resources manager**, who assists in the selection of staff. Finally, the **maintenance staff**, consisting of cleaning personnel and handymen, will be responsible for cleaning and maintenance.

An organogram of how the UC could be staffed is presented on the next page. Again, this is merely to give an impression to the reader. Positions are not fixed and figures are subject to change.

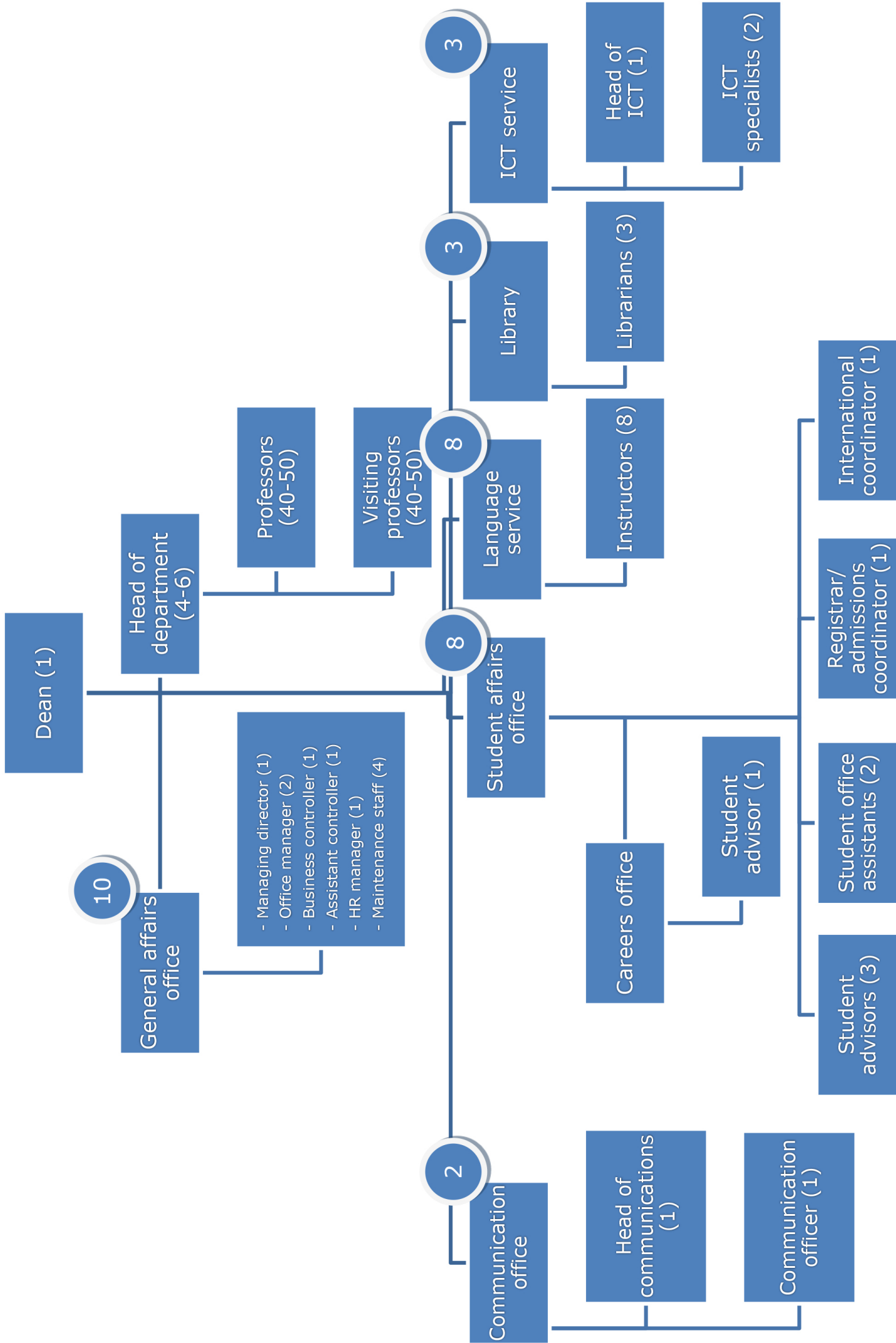
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99 Babel, 2014; IVO Brugge, 2014; SNT, 2014

100 University College Roosevelt, 2012

101 Howest, 2014

102 A virtual private network (VPN) extends a private network across a public network and enables a computer to send and receive data across shared or public networks as if it is directly connected to the private network.





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## List of abbreviations

ACC	Academic Core	KULeuven	Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
A&H	Arts & Humanities		[Catholic University of Leuven]
AHE, AE and EG	Agency for Higher Education, Adult Education and Educational Grants	LAS	Liberal Arts & Sciences
Atene KOM GmbH	Agency for Communication, Organization and Management	MA	Master of Arts
BISLA	Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts	MRes	Master of Research
BRAIN	Belgian Research Action through Interdisciplinary Networks	NL	The Netherlands
CRAC	Careers Research & Advisory Centre	NVAO	Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatie Organisatie [Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organisation]
DET	Department of Education and Training	OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
DG	Directorate-General	OMC	Open Method of Coordination
DG EAC	Directorate-General Education and Culture	PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
DSA	Data, Studie en Advies [Data, Study and Advice]	POM	Provinciale ontwikkelingsmaatschappij [Provincial development society]
EC	European Commission	R&D	Research and Development
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System	RESOC	Regionaal Sociaal-economisch Overlegcomité [Regional Socio-economic Consultative Committee]
EEA	European Economic Area	SME	Small and medium enterprises
EPALE	European Platform for Adult Learning	SMI	Skills Mismatch Index
EPOS	Europese Programma's voor Onderwijs, Opleiding en Samenwerking [European Programme for Education, Training and Cooperation]	SNT CVO	SNT Centrum voor Volwassenonderwijs [SNT Centre for adult education]
EU	European Union	UA	University of Antwerp
FP7	Framework Programme 7	UC	University College
GB	Gigabyte	UCR	University College Roosevelt
HEI	Higher Education Institution	UGent	University of Ghent
Howest	Hogeschool West-Vlaanderen [College of Higher Education West Flanders]	UHasselt	University of Hasselt
ICT	Information and Communication Technology	UK	United Kingdom
IVO	Instituut voor Volwassenonderwijs [Institute for Adult Education]	UN	United Nations
KHBO	Katholieke Hogeschool Brugge-Oostende [Catholic College of higher education Bruges-Ostend]	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
KULAK	Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Afdeling Kortrijk [Catholic University of Leuven Departement Kortrijk]	UNU-CRIS	United Nations University – Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies
		US	United States
		VOKA	Vlaams Netwerk van Ondernemingen [Flanders' Chamber of Commerce and Industry]
		VPN	Virtual Private Network
		VSNU	De Vereniging van Universiteiten [the Association of Universities]
		VUB	Vrije Universiteit Brussel [Free University of Brussels]

