

Governing the University in the 21st Century

Shared learning for shared leadership

A Strategic Leadership Programme For Dutch Research Universities

In 2020, UNL launched a programme entitled *Governing the University in the 21st Century* (UGOV21) as part of the ongoing professionalisation of university leaders and the reinforcement of governance practices. Since then, three successful programme cycles have been completed, with the fourth cohort scheduled to commence in November 2023.

Challenges

Dutch universities hold a strong international position. To sustain and advance this position in the 21st century, they must confront several significant challenges: escalating complexity, heightened competition, and the importance of closer cooperation in a context of geopolitical instability and eroding public confidence. In addition to the growing pressure on accountability, cyber security, social security, knowledge security, and crisis management are becoming increasingly important as well.

Clearly, university leaders are expected to meet substantial demands with regard to their leadership roles and insights into societal developments, strategic planning, national and international positioning, governance, stakeholder relationships, legislation and regulations, funding, information management, change management and risk mitigation.

Focus and content

In light of these challenges, the UGOV21 programme centres on effective university leadership, with a strong emphasis on governance and strategic leadership. This complements internal programmes primarily dedicated to personal leadership (effectiveness) and team leadership (management).

Dutch research universities operate as international players within an open system. Consequently, an international perspective is essential. Simultaneously, Dutch legislation and the Netherlands' collegial governance culture necessitate a distinct Dutch approach, rooted in a shared leadership model.

To that end, the UGOV21 programme offers up-to-date national, international and scientific insights into the most significant trends in higher education, policy, governance and leadership.

The content of the programme is based on extensive national and international preliminary research¹ and has been developed through co-creation with participants from the first three cohorts, guided by the Programme Committee composed with UGOV alumni.

The thematic elaboration is structured into five blocks of two days, addressing the following themes among others:

Organisational culture, structure and knowledge ecosystem	External coordination: funding, performance, differentiation
Governance, legislation and regulations	Internal coordination: allocation, quality assurance, R&R
Academic values, freedom, autonomy	Leadership, diversity and inclusion
Context (national, European, international) and mission	Open science and sustainable impact
Strategic cooperation, alliances, consortia	Security, risk mitigation and crisis management

Elaboration

- Throughout the programme, participants explore these themes in peer-to-peer interaction with each other, with former Dutch university leaders and international experts. Insights and experiences are shared in a safe, trusted environment (Chatham House rules).
- Participants choose a theme that aligns with their own learning needs and institutional context. They then take this theme and elaborate it as part of a small team in their “Governance Lab”.
- This facilitates knowledge sharing through the transfer of case studies, participant experiences, reflection on theory and their own administrative practices.
- The focus is on the Dutch research university context within an international framework, with relevant perspectives from other public and private sectors where applicable.
- Diverse formats: teamwork, presentations, panels, interviews, simulations, fireside chats etc.

Shared learning for shared leadership

Dutch university leaders are team players. Therefore, a shared learning concept was selected, in line with the collegial governance culture (shared leadership) at Dutch universities, with a focus on developing leadership capacity across the entirety of the institution. Various aspects of leadership are covered throughout the various blocks. Literature is supported and illustrated by the personal experiences of top leaders.

Participants gain access to the **UGOV21 alumni network** and can establish peer-to-peer interactions to discuss their leadership questions if desired.

¹ See Wende, M.C. van der, *Natuur talent is niet genoeg. Hogeronderwijsbestuur maakt werk van professionalisering* (Natural talent is not enough: stepping up the professionalisation of administrators in higher education). *Th&ma Hoger Onderwijs*, edition 2019-3. pp. 27–30.

Target audience

Participants are recently appointed or soon-to-be appointed senior members of governance boards at the faculty or institutional level (i.e. Deans, Rectors, (vice) Presidents) of Dutch research universities. Following the shared leadership concept, the Programme Committee will form a heterogeneous group of Deans and Executive Board members.

Participation is restricted to senior board members who have been nominated by their universities.

Preparation, language and study materials

Participants are expected to prepare for each block, which will involve tasks such as reviewing a case study, listening to particular podcasts, watching certain videos or reading recommended literature. On average, this preparation should take around four hours. This approach will allow participants to take an active part and help avoid long-winded lectures.

While the programme's main language is Dutch, English may be used depending on the attendees. Programme information is mainly available in English due to the role of the International Advisory Board and international speakers.

Background materials and literature are available in either Dutch or English and will be made available online.

Evaluation

Throughout the programme, both process and results are continuously evaluated at two levels: per block and for the programme as a whole. Oral evaluation moments are scheduled for this purpose, and digital evaluation forms are sent immediately after each respective block. The Programme Committee reviews the results and reports back to speakers and the UNL.






Locations

The sessions are held on the campuses of various Dutch universities. This is to ensure substantive reinforcement, variety and cost-effectiveness. Modest standards appropriate to the public higher education sector also apply to the selection of hotels and dining facilities.

The choice of location for fieldwork (in block 4) will be determined by the teams in relation to their chosen theme for the Governance Lab. Locations should preferably be selected within Europe (including the Netherlands), with consideration given to CO2 emissions in travel planning.

Governance

The UGOV21 programme is carried out on behalf of the UNL's Strategy, Public Affairs & Governance Steering Group (SSPG), supported by a Programme Committee and an International Advisory Board. The programme is led by Prof. Marijk van der Wende.

Programme Committee		
Prof. Daniel Wigboldus	President, Radboud University, Chair (UGOV21 alumnus, cohort 1)	
Machteld Roos MSc	Vice-President, University of Twente (UGOV21 alumnus, cohort 3)	
Prof. Isabel Arends	Dean Faculty of Sciences, Utrecht University (UGOV21 alumnus, cohort 2)	
Prof. Marijk van der Wende	Utrecht University (programme leader)	
Jaap Verheij	HR director, UNL	

International Advisory Board		
Prof. Anton Pijpers	President, Utrecht University Chair, UNL SSPG	

Prof. Simone Buitendijk	Vice-Chancellor, University of Leeds	
Prof. Michael Schaepman	President, University of Zurich	
Dr. Stephan van Galen	Secretary-General, University of Groningen	
Prof. Luc Sels	Rector, KU Leuven	
Prof. Barbara Sporn	Vice-Rector Emeritus, WU Vienna Director, Institute for HE Management	

The programme will receive organisational support from the Program Education for Professionals at Utrecht University. This support will include coordination, logistics, financial administration, evaluation and reporting.

Contact and information: UGov21.UNL@uu.nl

Speakers who have already contributed to this programme:

Paul Althuis (TUD)	Ben Jongbloed (UT)
Isabel Arends (UU)*	Rina Joosten (Seedlink Tec)
Ron Augustus (SURF)	Elsbeth Kalenderian (UvA-VU)*
Maarja Beerkens (UL)	James Kennedy (UU)
Jaap Beernink (CEO of Novel-T)	Marc Klein Wolt (RU)
David Bohmert (CESAER)	Sander Lotze (UT)
Lex Bouter (VU)	Karel Luyben (CESAER/EOSC)
Annelien Bredenoord (EUR)	Robin Middlehurst (UK)
Douwe Breimer (UL)	Frank Miedema (UU)
Alex Brenninkmeijer (UU)	Rob Mudde (TUD)*
Simone Buitendijk (University of Leeds)	Martijn Nolen (TiU)
Theo Camps (TiU)	Sijbolt Noorda (UvA)
Baptiest Coopmans (TU/e-RvT)	Bart Noordam (ASML)
Dirk van Damme (OECD)	Paul van Nunen (Brainport)
Karl Dittrich (EQAR)	Patrick Oonincx (NLDA)
Wim van den Doel (LDE)	Annetje Ottow (UL)
Wim van de Donk (TiU)	Bart Pierik (UNL)
Paul Doop (NPO & TU/e-RvT)	Anton Pijpers (UU & UNL SSPG)
Pieter Duisenberg (UNL)	Mirjam van Praag (VU)
Eva Egron-Polak (IAU)	Martijn Ridderbos (UL)
Agneta Fischer (UvA)*	Jurgen Rienks (Nether)
Stephan van Galen (RUG)	Anja Smit (UU)
Charlie van Genuchten (SURF)	Robert Jan Smits (TU/e)
Peter Gill (TUD)	Paulina Sniijders (TiU)*
Sennay Ghebreab (UvA)	Barbara Sporn (WU Vienna)
Sandra Groeneveld (UL)	Erik Stam (UU)
Richard Harrison (WUR)*	Carel Stolker (UL)
Wilco Hazeleger (UU)*	Vinod Subramaniam (VU)
Wouter Hendriks (WUR)*	Nicole van Ummelen (TU/e)
Maria Henneman	Jaap Verheij (UNL)
Alexandra den Heijer (TUD)	Saskia Vlaar (RvC SURF, TNO)
Sjoukje Heimovaara (WUR)*	Frans van Vught (UT)
Peter van der Hijden (EC)	Peter Weijland (TUD)
Laurens Hessels (Rathenau & CWTS)	Carlo van de Wijer (TU/e)
Feite Hofman (OCW)	Daniel Wigboldus (RU)*
Ton Hol (UU)	Jaap Winter (Phyleon & EUR-RvT)
Francine Houben (Mecanoo)	

* UGOV21 alumnus

Founding members of the first UGOV21 program and International Advisory Board:

- Prof. Douwe Breimer, President and Rector Emeritus of Leiden University
- Dr. Sijbolt Noorda, President Emeritus of the University of Amsterdam and of VSNU
- Dr. h.c. Jan Veldhuis, President Emeritus of Utrecht University
- Prof. Frans van Vught, President and Rector Emeritus of the University of Twente
- Dr. h.c. Eva Egron Polak, former Secretary-General of the International Association of Universities, Paris
- Prof. Robin Middlehurst, Founding Director of the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, UK