



WUR Council *Annual Report 2020*

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Words of Jelle Behagel

Chair of the WUR Council

What you have before you is the annual report of the WUR council for 2020. It was an eventful year, also for the WUR Council. In times of COVID-19, we continued in a new composition after the council elections and the summer period, and we had to get to know each other mostly online. Despite this strange "change of guard", throughout the year the Council has worked hard to make a critical and constructive contribution to the governance of the WUR. This often went very well, for example with constructive consultation on the COVID-19 measures and with a critical view on the impact those measures have on staff and students; with extensive budget reflections for 2021; and discussions on educations, quality agreements and other relevant policy dossiers. Some of these dossiers, such as "Bring Your Own Device" from the Student Council are now more or less implemented in our organization. Other important issues, such as (non-)smoking on Campus, have become less significant in a year where we worked a lot from home and learned to be flexible as WUR. As an organization, WUR has achieved great results by continuing to offer high-level education and by doing relevant research, also regarding COVID-19. These nice results have been achieved by making as many adjustments as possible to be able to do what we always did and what we are good at. The pressure, the effort and sometimes the pain too, that these adjustments have nevertheless asked from the staff and students of the WUR, and are still pressing today, are one of the main priorities of our work. Therefore, in 2021, we expect to make an active effort for staff and students when it comes to, inter alia, a new housing plan, a policy on working from home, and a National Program Education. Finally, we hope - as most of us do - for relief of the COVID-measures and the possibility to see each other in person on our beautiful Campus.

Composition WUR Council

Until September 2020

COR-members: Wim Chardon (OR ESG), Jan Helder (OR SSG), Rolf Heling (OR FB), Daniël de Jong (OR PSG, chair COR/WUR Council), Ard de Leur (OR CS+), Eef Lovink (OR ASG), Maryvon Noordam (OR WFSR), Gerwoud Otten (OR AFSG), Hein Stallinga (OR PSG).

COR-SSC members: André van Amstel (OR ESG, chair SSC), Betty van Gelder (OR SSG), Leon de Jonge (OR ASG), Mieke Kleijn (OR AFSG), Adrie Koopman (OR FB), Joost van Opheusden (OR PSG, secretary COR/WUR Council).

SSC-directly chosen staff members: Judith Poelman (PhD ESG, secretaris SSC), Max Finger Bou (Phd AFSG) SSC-student members: Harm Ligtenberg, Qizhi Ren, Ralph van Herpen, Kaj van den Heuvel, Sophie Kuijten, Camille de Regt-Harvey, Rick van der Tol.

From September 2020

COR-members: Ruud Bink (OR ESG, secretaris COR), Lianne Bouwman (OR WFSR), Pieter Claassen (OR AFSG), Jan Helder (OR SSG), Rick de Jong (OR PSG en vice chair COR), Kees Laban (OR FB), Ard de Leur (OR CS+), Eef Lovink (OR ASG), Gerwoud Otten (OR AFSG), Michel Riksen (OR ESG, chair COR), Hein Stallinga (OR PSG), Peter van Tulden (OR ASG).

COR-SSC members: Livio Carlucci (OR AFSG), Bart Gremmen (OR SSG) (replaces temporarily Betty van Gelder), Leon de Jonge (OR ASG), Martina Lazzarin (OR PSG).

SSC directly chosen staff members: Robin Barten (PhD-candidate), Jelle Behagel (ESG, chair SSC/WUR-council), Thera Leenhouders (FB), Frances Widjaja (PhD-candidate, Secretary SSC/WURcouncil).

SSC-student members: Irene van der Boom, Wieb Devilee, Judith Kikkert, Chenyue Li, Lan Rajic, Renee Rooijackers, Arthe Vashti, Marieke van Vonderen.

Executive Secretaries in 2020

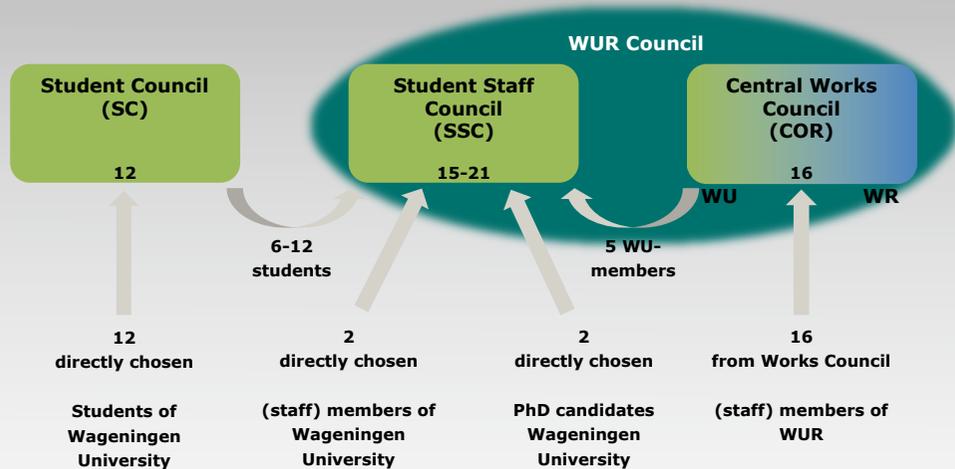
Clementine Sluijsmans, Anneke Vos - van Dijken.

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WUR Council 2020/2021



General Information and Numbers



Elections:

The WUR Council exists of a maximum of 28 members. The composition changes every three years because of the term of office of a large part of the members. In June 2020, elections have been held at the decentral councils and from these members were appointed for the COR (Central Works Council) and SSC (Student-Staff Council). Also, two SSC members were appointed directly. There are yearly elections for the Student Council and PhD-representation in the SSC. As a result of these elections, the WUR Council has 28 members available, of which a large portion is new, and a smaller portion already took part in the previous period. The Daily Board has been completely renewed.

Committees:

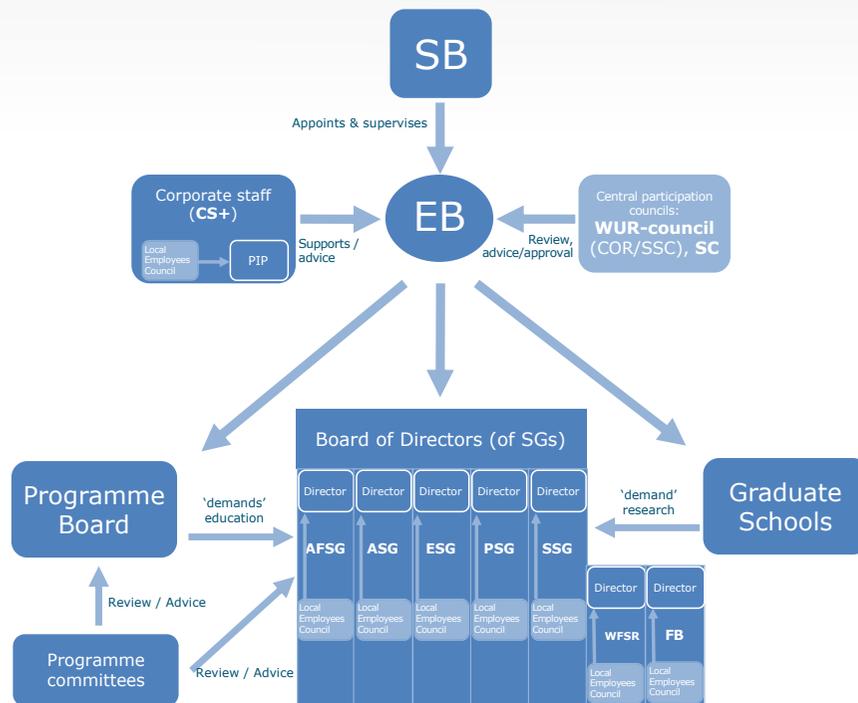
Six committees have been active during 2020: Communication (C), Education & Research (E&R), Finance (F), Housing, Working Conditions and Environment (HAM), Management & Organization (M&O) and Personnel (P), and two ad hoc-committees for the dossiers COVID-19 and Extended Day-time Schedule (EDS). In the committees, dossiers are discussed, and Technical Meetings (TO's) are being held with staff of WUR. The committees thus prepare formal advice and/or approval of the COR and GV.

Meetings:

In 2020, the WUR Council has had 17 internal meetings (WUR-C 121 - 137), and 6 consultation meetings with the Executive Board (OWUR-C 63 - 68).

Advice and Agreement:

The Executive Board often submits proposed policy, depending on the topic and the and legal provisions, for advice or approval to the different participatory bodies of the WUR Council. Throughout the year, this happened 10 times. The WUR Council formally reacted 5 times (for example "Outlines Budget WU 2020" and "Adjustment Quality Agreements"), and the COR formally reacted 5 times (for example "smoke-free Campus" and "Multiannual Plan for the Environment"). Furthermore, the WUR Council has formally advised in several areas (for example concerning the approach of COVID-19 measures within WUR).



6 Consultation meetings

17 Internal WUR Council meetings

8 Committees

28 Members



Committee Education & Research

In 2020, the committee Education & Research (Cie E&R) has engaged with different dossiers, own initiatives and COVID-19 and the associated measures. An important recurring dossier of the committee is the quality agreements, where the SSC has right of approval on important changes. By terminating the basic financial grant for students, EUR 2.3 billion was released, designated as the so-called "quality investments" and invested in Higher Education. In Cie E&R a special delegation (the "focus group") works on this dossier. In 2020, three amendments were adopted on the use of free space, the appendix from 2019 was approved, and the focus group, on behalf of Cie E&R, was intensely involved with the realization of the quality funds. Furthermore, committees E&R and Finance have joined forces composing a position paper on the concept budget WU 2021. In this position paper, attention is drawn to, inter alia, facilitating an ergonomic working place on the Campus as both at home for staff and certainly for students due to increasing problems with RSI. Although the desired result (free RSI sets for students) was not achieved, the WUR Council has sent a clear signal to the Executive Board. The committee has also closely monitored the COVID-19 measures and the impact on education and research, for example with the lowering of the Binding Study Advice (BSA).

In September, the WUR Council was renewed, including Cie E&R. The committee consists of a diverse, enthusiastic group of staff, professors, students and PhD's, which gives the committee ears and eyes within a large part of the organization. This led to, after dissatisfaction was detected within the organization, Cie E&R started with their initiative "Free Dutch course for international staff". The committee also works on internationalization, monitoring of the tenure track, PhD'ers@WUR, chair plan strategy, Bring Your Own Device and more. Even though the committee held a small number of physical meetings, we can be satisfied with the results.



Ad hoc committee COVID-19



At the end of 2019, the coronavirus "COVID-19" emerged, and spread around the globe in February/March 2020. The virus appeared to be more problematic than a regular fever and resulted in a situation in which, also in the Netherlands, the hospitals and in particular the Intensive Care departments could barely cope with the influx of ill people. The government started to implement measures, such as the urgent advice to work from home, keep 1,5 meters distance and not travel abroad unless it is necessary. For the Executive Board, this led to the decision to establish a Crisis Management Team (CMT) in March 2020, to put in place the necessary measures inside WUR with great speed and diligence. The chair of the WUR Council has been informed about this and was informally updated about the measures. The CMT has been active for a short period - after which the Executive Board decided to go back to normal management, but with a special advisory body focused on COVID, namely the "Corona Team". Within the WUR Council, the committee M&O was mainly concerned with this dossier and has provided the consultation meeting with the Executive Board in June with questions on online and international Study Programs and measures to go back to Campus. In June, the Executive Board has disclosed a document showing an analysis of the consequences of the coronavirus for WUR and advice for the policy to be adopted in different scenarios (WURld after the Curve). Because of the importance of taking quick decisions in the summertime, this dossier was not given to the WUR Council for advice, and Cie M&O was not able to react immediately.

In the second half of 2020, the WUR Council installed its own ad hoc committee COVID-19, independent from Cie M&O, consisting of representation from all committees. This ad hoc committee had weekly meetings (and continues to do so in 2021) with the chair of the Corona Team. This way, the WUR Council is well informed about affairs the Corona team deals with and knows what topics to discuss with the Executive Board. The coronavirus permeated the country and thus WUR for the whole year. Most of us had to work from home and many students had to follow their classes online and teachers had to transfer all their classes to online versions. All measures within WUR are decided upon by the government; this is a clear decision by the Executive Board. As an ad hoc committee of the WUR Council, we primarily focused on following government policy, translation to WUR by the Executive Board, and giving advice because of many signals from staff and students. No matter how well all parties performed in this matter, at the end of 2020 WUR is still in lockdown and COVID-19 is held prisoner by COVID-19.

See the intranet pages of WUR called "Coronavirus updates" for relevant information.



Committee Finance

The Finance committee (Cie F) has a clear range of duties that focusses primarily on the central financing of WUR. The financial data of WUR are given confidentially; quarterly cost reports, the framework letter, the outlines of the WU budget are not being made public for this reason.

Every quarter, the financial management reports are being discussed in a technical briefing with Corporate Finance & Control, in which Cie F is informed well. Cie F also led the discussions on the outlines of the WU budget within the WUR Council. The SSC namely has right of approval on the outlines of the budget (NB: The Student Council has right of advice on the outlines of the WU budget). The budget cycle started at the beginning of the year with the writing of a position paper together with Cie E&R in which the SSC offered its vision to the Executive Board. Certain points in this were inter alia larger investments for RSI-prevention, financial support for teleworking for staff, more funding for WUR-funded research and more study places for students. After this C-F&C composed, together with the Executive Board, the framework letter, on which the SSC gave formal feedback later. Because of the COVID pandemic, the framework letter could only be completed in October instead of June, which is common practice. The SSC decided, as was advised by Cie F, to give no further reaction to this letter. In November, the concept budget 2021 was presented to the SSC (and the SC). After technical meetings, different internal meetings and the final consultation meeting of November 24 2021, the WU budget 2021 was approved by the SSC in combination with the request for a good teleworking system. The SSC also indicated that WU should play a more active role in creating good quality study places at home for students.





Committee Housing, Working Conditions and Environment

The activities of the HAM Committee (Cie HAM) consist on the one hand of advising to the COR/SSC regarding requests for advice/approval, and on the other hand of critically following the relevant developments within WUR to enter the dialogue with the participatory bodies in the form of a technical meeting.

Cie HAM consisted of 8 people until July 2020 and after the elections of June, it has changed its composition. The committee now exists of 8 COR members and WU staff and 2 students (a total of 10 members). The meetings of Cie HAM have taken place online in 2020 because of the pandemic. The effectiveness of executing tasks has not suffered too much from it. Personal interaction is less apparent than in previous years when physical meetings were present.

Topics that came for advice/approval at Cie HAM were very diverse: the smoke-free Campus, the Multiannual Plan for the Environment 2020 - 2022 and aquifer thermal energy storage (ATES; construction of sustainable energy supply for the Campus). Cie HAM has conditionally approved of this.

Advice of Cie HAM has been important in the Strategical Housing Plan 2020 -2025: a focal point in this point was the MyWURSpace-principle which led to a lot of resistance within WUR. Cie HAM has made the objections against the principle clear in a technical meeting with the involved policy staff. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Strategical Housing Plan has been pushed back by the Executive Board. In the new Strategical Housing Plan, the element 'Remote working' will be included.

Dossiers without right of advice or approval with which Cie HAM has dealt with are the environmental impact assessment, the annual report on radiation safety, the policy on 'extremely dangerous substances', and the policy on 'regulations accidents and incidents". Cie HAM held an annual meeting with (market) experts of Facility Services (FB), -c-HRM and the medical officer to discuss the state of affairs on RI&E. The assessment on RI&E is on decentral level. At the end of 2020, Cie HAM has begun starting up a periodic consultation with the Department of Safety and Environment (within FB) to discuss ongoing developments.



Committee Personnel

In 2020, a total of 16 meetings were held, of which 11 were regular meetings, 1 technical meeting with the company doctor (Zorg van de Zaak; Care on the House) and corporation council staff (BMW), and 4 technical meetings with c-HR. At these technical meetings both as acute matters, business at hand are discussed.

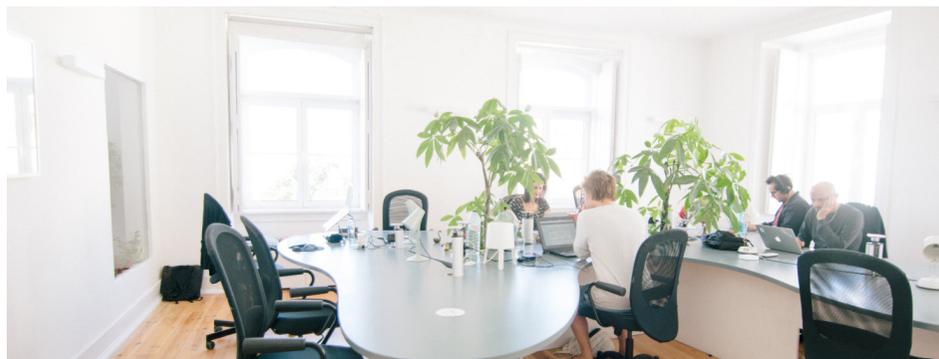
In 2020, several permanent matters are being discussed, such as the annual reports of 'Zorg van de zaak' and 'BMW'. Persisting worries are work-related stress and workload. Although this continues to be to our attention, an approach remains difficult.

At the beginning of 2020, the Netherlands has been invaded by the COVID-19 pandemic, something that affected all departments of WUR. This has led to a transfer of working places and activities. In the beginning, especially teleworking was experienced as pleasant, but as the pandemic lasted longer, the work-related stress increased. For this, several causes can be identified, such as teleworking in combination with care for children that may or may not be homeschooled, isolation because of working from home alone, and an increase in the number of activities. This has the constant attention of Cie P and COVID-19.

Cie P has requested a review of 'the arrangement lease cars' to choose as WUR for a more sustainable resolution such as CO2 neutral use of electrical cars. The advice of the COR is adopted by the Executive Board.

In the context of the Participation law, multiple meetings have been held with Jops (Job Participation Support) on the support of people with a functional disability who want to work at WUR. This is an interpretation of WUR of the Law Job Agreement (Wet Banenafpraak).

At WUR, the internship allowance is not the same for interns in different Business Units (BU). In 2020, an inventory was made to get a better insight into the different units and levels of educations. A discussion has begun through a technical meeting with c-HR and has been continued in 2021.





Committee Management & Organization

Committee Management and Organization (Cie M&O) deals with all dossiers that have to do “something” with Management and Organization. In practice, this means that it deals with common comprehensive dossiers such as the Strategic Plan of WUR or the ‘Code of Good Governance’ which the Executive Board and Supervisory Board use with their governance.

The WUR Council has been informed about the declaration of intent of a partnership agreement between the University of Utrecht, UMC Utrecht, WUR and TU Eindhoven and this has been taken for notice. The “Revised Complaint Regulation Scientific Integrity WUR” (De “Herziene Klachtenregeling Wetenschappelijke Integriteit WUR” (March 2020, ID 7098, ID 7099) is given for approval to the COR. As advised by Cie M&O, the COR has approved this document. The Executive Board has given “joint regulation National Herbarium of the Netherlands” (ID 7363) for approval to the SSC. Cie M&O advised to approve this document and the SSC followed suit.

The update of the Strategic Plan WUR in April has been used by Cie M&O as information for the State of Course meeting with the Executive Board in June; the preparation of this meeting has been done by all WUR Council committees. The State of Course meeting was marked by COVID-19 and the Strategic Housing Plan (SHP) (see Cie HAM).

At the end of the year the COR received a revised “code of conduct Universities - as applied on Wageningen University & Research” (“Code goed bestuur Universiteiten - zoals toegepast op Wageningen University & Research”. This code of conduct is taken up by the WUR Council/ Cie HAM in 2021.



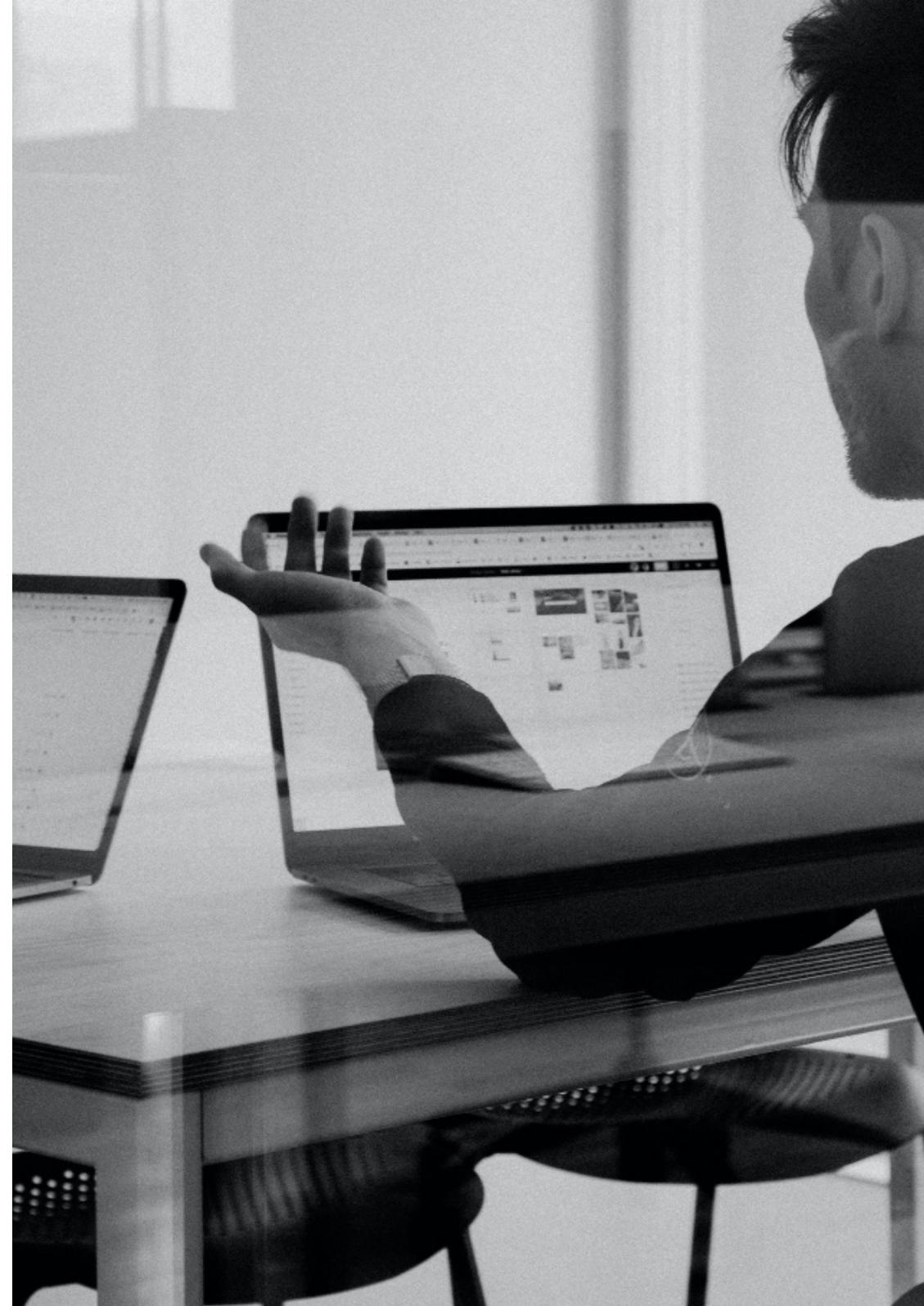
Committee Communication

During 2020, the number of available members differed considerably. When the WUR Council members started in September the Daily Board has, together with Cie Communication, made a new start. Through different communication channels, the constituency was informed several times of the topics that the WUR Council works on. For the Council, especially the contact with the constituency and questions such as 'What are you running into?', 'What could be done differently and perhaps better?' are regularly received via the specially designed mailbox wur.council@wur.nl.

News on topics that the WUR Council works on can be found on the intranet group:
<https://intranet.wur.nl/Project/WURCouncil>

Are you interested in the organization of the WUR Council and are you perhaps interested in joining, then go here:
<https://intranet.wur.nl/umbraco/nl/weten-regelen/medezeggenschap/>

Are you not an employee but are you nevertheless interested in the participatory bodies of WUR, then you can find more about us here:
<https://www.wur.nl/nl/Over-Wageningen/Corporate-Governance/Centrale-medezeggenschap.htm>





Preview 2021

Also in 2021, the participatory bodies are active. Wageningen University & Research is in full swing to be and to stay as the university with an international top position and research that impacts both on local and global scale. This requires good investments, good facilities, safe working environments, a welcoming environment for students, staff and visitors and requires internationalization and open and understandable communication. It is also important to have a culture in which is being strived for "gender-equality" and where there is no place for discrimination or 'sexual or gender-based violence'.

In 2021 the foundations will be laid for the new Strategic Housing Plan (SHP) and agreements will be made on 'Remote Working', something that affects all staff and students. The WUR Council will put much of its energy into this and thus invites staff and students to put forward ideas or objections at the many opportunities offered by WUR and the WUR Council. In line with this, it is important to point staff to the "Staff monitor" that will be used throughout WUR. This monitor helps WUR and the WUR Council to paint a picture of the satisfaction rate of staff and to implement potential actions where necessary. So, feel free to join!

COVID-19 will also take hold of WUR in 2021. As WUR Council we will stay in constant contact with the Executive Board about measures or relaxation of those measures. The National Program Education (NPE) will be important because of extra spending that will free up to give perspective to what was lost during the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of education. Here, the executive bodies will give necessary advice.

The topics above are a mere selection of the many topics that will be coming down the road of the participatory bodies of WUR or that have been set in motion by ourselves. Are you interested in a specific topic? There is always room for you as a WUR employee to take part in a specific topic as an external member of one of our committees. The participatory bodies stay in full motion in 2021!

We are looking forward to your reaction via wur.council@wur.nl

