

**Meeting Huug & Maaïke - Alina, Zeynep and Pum present from Student Union, guests Lena, Simaa, Joëlle, Photography 2nd year - 14.02.2024 - 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM - Director's room**

**What we planned to discuss about:**

Agreements

1. After some discussion about the positions taken, it is agreed at the suggestion of the student union that board and management will work with the student union to find a form to facilitate 'the difficult conversation' for the KABK community in a way that is manageable and does justice to all participants.
2. A follow-up meeting will be planned by the Executive Board. **(this meeting we are in).**

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**What we received on the day of the talk was an agenda from Management that contained the additional issues under no. 3 and 5, not agreed upon in advance:**

Location: directorate KABK

Present: delegation of the board of Student Union, Maaïke, Huug, (Arthur as secretary)

1. Opening and announcements
2. Adoption of report 30 January.
3. Alignment between SU and Directorate on communication to KABK community
4. Exchange of ideas on how to organise a meeting on 'the difficult conversation'.
5. Annual plan SU until September 2024.
6. Questions and closure

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1. Opening and announcements

There is an agenda sent over by Maaïke (from management) on the day of this meeting, at 10:00 AM. There were however hiccups in communication due to the Inbox of SU not working - no emails could be sent as a reply on the day before the meeting, to another comment from Maaïke.

During the meeting, the SU notes that there are items on the agenda that do not belong in the present meeting, such as "5. Annual plan SU until September 2024".

SU and management agree to make an appointment on this. An appointment must also be made to discuss the "Anti-discrimination day" program, which is a separate matter brought up by Maaïke.

Huug remarks that he had not expected people to join other than members of the SU board. Alina answers that the SU wanted to not be the only people at the table bringing in ideas during the exchange of ideas on how to organise a meeting on 'the difficult conversation'. This is the reason why the SU invited Lena, Simaa, and Joëlle. It's not an opening of the

meeting to the entire community, but it is the start of a working group to plan the event. For the management this action came as a surprise. After all, there had been no consultation about it. Alina calls it a misunderstanding. Huug then welcomes the added members of the meeting.

## 2. Adoption of report 30 January 2024

Following the previous meeting, a report was drawn up, and there was a clash between notes. How notes were written by management changed the content of the discussion that we had. The suggestion from the SU was to then use a hybrid form of note-taking that integrates both the summary used by management and the one made by SU. This was agreed upon by Arthur (taking notes from management) and Alina (taking notes for SU) via email.

The report of 30 January is adopted as a true reflection of the discussion. It is agreed to communicate reports in the future only after they have been finalized.

## 3. Alignment between SU and Directorate on communication to KABK community

The fact that we are talking about how we report to the KABK community has a meaning. We need to talk about how we report what we are talking about. By reporting in a style with quotes - as in the first version of the SU version - it happens often that things have to be rephrased before they can be published. So adopting is a double-check that we are on the same page.

## 4. Exchange of ideas on how to organise a meeting on 'the difficult conversation'

What we took on from the last meeting is that KABK needs to do more to create more open spaces for discussion and dialogue. Not specifically for the Israel-Gaza war, but for other cases also. Last year there was a tent to have discussions about the situation in Ukraine. We can do more on this, hopefully together with partners. There's the chance to do all kinds of stuff also with partners. The question is how can we make more space to organise such sessions? And how can we include the petition in such a dialogue? It would be helpful to have more ideas to open it up more.

In the exchange of views that follows, the following is noted:

- There are multiple discussions in parallel and separated. We could focus on things, not in the abstract but to have an all-encompassing discussion.
- It's OK to have multiple small groups. But at the same time, you can open it up.
- The SU thinks the petition to break ties with Bezalel is not an excuse for an assembly. It should be the core of a community-wide conversation.
- From a somewhat reserved attitude the management responds that if you want to organise this, it should be made in such a way as to allow everyone to voice their opinions without polarisation.
- The SU thinks this can be done by learning from other events of this sort. For example, in the form of what Utrecht University did around the topic of the war in Gaza in the event: *"If not now, then when? The University's Responsibility in the face of genocide"*. <https://x.com/LayalFtouni/status/1755517978357981690?s=20>  
What we can learn from there is having, to begin with, a code of conduct for the event. Nothing too complicated, a simple A4 can do, listing coordinates for no discrimination, no recording, etc. Then we could present the situation in Gaza,

present what Bezalel is doing, and present what Birzeit University - which KABK also has a collaboration with - has asked the educational community. We can present the moral obligations of the art school within the current configuration.

- Simaa thinks there are a lot of students who are struggling with the fact that this is happening. Ukrainian students also. It would be great to listen to the stances of students in KABK like what happened during the SU 's conversation about decolonization last November. It was such a nice space in which things can be discussed. This would be a reminder that we're all humans and things happen. We all have feelings, and a lot of people are struggling.
- How do we make a space that allows all opinions to exist? Such discussions risk polarising really fast. It can become unpleasant, even scary. It would be good to find each other in all the pain that goes around. What would you need to feel that you can speak up? But also we might need a person outside of the academy to moderate the conversation.
- In a meeting like this one, emotions would be there, and that's fine. But if you have problems dealing with those emotions, you have to moderate and be aware of what happens. Anger, emotions, shouting. Trying to maintain a physical safety that we are responsible for. So that nobody feels threatened. We can't avoid hurt. But you need to organise it in such a way that you find the best way possible to organise it. We can find that expertise if we don't have it.

#### About the petition to break ties with Bezalel

Huug emphasises the management has already responded to it. An increase in the number of signatories will not affect this position. This should be clear beforehand, as it now seems that by re-offering the petition, the SU seems intends to increase pressure on management. For clarity: there is the open meeting and there is the petition. After that meeting, there is still the petition. These are separate things. We are going to continue talking. Even if we totally disagree it's important what can be done.

Alina is looking for democratic tools to address this situation. For instance by voting as it is possible in the US on issues that concern the entire institution. Signing a petition only which might not lead to much makes people just feel powerless.

Huug and Maaïke underline not to underestimate the discussions that are happening at all kinds of levels, also in management. Simaa brings in that she finds it part of the institution's role to start this conversation and to raise awareness already from day 1. A lot of students are struggling to come to school and are glad the SU took the initiative.

#### Agreements

In the coming meeting SU-management we'll define

- what we are talking about;
- how we'll set the scene, maybe with images or any other work we are doing here;
- who would be the guests, maybe a Palestinian and an Israeli speaker,
- and set a date.

As applies to organising any other activity, we need to plan back from the date what steps are needed.