

# The Rise of University Colleges in Europe: A New Future for Liberal Arts & Sciences in the Twenty-First Century?

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*Starting in the late 1990s, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of liberal arts and science colleges in the Netherlands. Primarily international and often residential colleges, they became the selective or honors branches of virtually all Dutch research universities. Why did they emerge then and there? How can this innovation be characterized and understood in the context of the Dutch higher-education landscape of the time? And why did the model become more popular in the Netherlands than throughout the rest of Europe? The model benefits from being embedded in strong research universities, and having ample financial support and autonomy. Yet their future success will depend on their ability to uphold their liberal values and mission, throughout illiberal storms hitting the continent and against internal threats to academic freedom.*

Many have compared the challenges of embarking on innovative change in universities to “moving cemeteries”; you can’t expect help from within.<sup>1</sup> Yet it was precisely *from within* that significant change in university education emerged from the late 1990s onward in the Netherlands. The higher-education landscape was characterized by long monodisciplinary first degrees and little differentiation, and had been criticized only a decade before by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as “parochial” for its low degree of internationalization. It was in that context that Utrecht University launched its first “university college” (UC) in 1998, an English-taught three-year liberal arts and sciences bachelor program, which would select its students and be delivered in a newly developed residential campus.

University College Utrecht (UCU) was a brave initiative and gained strong national interest. It had impact because it was led by the country’s top comprehensive university, which added two new Nobel laureates to its track record a year later. It quickly generated success by attracting significant international talent. At the same time, as a real innovation, it thus did not fit existing regulatory frameworks, and well in line with Dutch egalitarian culture, it was criticized for being elitist.

But time was ripe for change. The Bologna Declaration, also signed in 1998, would allow for such curriculum reform and system-level harmonization in higher education throughout Europe.<sup>2</sup> Expectations were high for Europe's position as a leader in the knowledge economy in the new millennium. The Netherlands, which had broken away from its Christian-democratic traditions and had recovered from more than a decade of economic recession, was now internationally recognized as a model open economy with modern third-way politics.<sup>3</sup> It was self-confident, economically strong, and "in the mood for change."

Over the next few decades, a whole series of endeavors emerged. By the mid-2010s, virtually every Dutch research university had established a UC as an "honors branch" for its undergraduate programs, and they have since become regulated as a characteristic of the Dutch higher-education system.

Before we explore this successful journey and its essential conditions, let's take a look at the innovation that evolved into the emergence of university colleges in the Netherlands. And from there, we can ask whether we should expect it to be really future-proof.

Interestingly, what was seen as an innovation was in fact a small renaissance of liberal arts and science education, which stood at the basis of Europe's oldest universities. Their curricula were organized around the seven *artes liberales*, divided into the *trivium* (literary arts: grammar, logic, and rhetoric) and the *quadrivium* (mathematical arts: arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy), all together focusing on the education of the "whole" or "well-rounded" person.

Yet the introduction of university colleges in the late 1990s was not at all seen as a return to the origin of the European university. Instead, it was presented as *the* successful model of undergraduate education in the United States, with some additional flavors of the Oxbridge collegiate model, in particular its intensive tutoring concept.

Liberal arts and science education in Europe had indeed lost the continued prominence it had retained in the United States. And the UCU initiative was in fact modeled on the curriculum of a U.S. liberal arts college. Choosing to label it as a "university college" helped boost it as an internationally flavored innovation and avoid confusion around the term "liberal." While Dutch policymakers, or even modern educators, might not immediately (or at all) recognize the concept of "liberal education," the term *liberal* is ambiguous enough to cause confusion across the political spectrum of both the United States and Europe.

At the same time, "university college" was somewhat of an unfortunate naming in the European higher-education context. Various countries use the term as the international name of their nonuniversity-type institutions or in the name of their full-fledged research universities (such as University College London and University College Dublin).

Liberal arts and science (LAS) was presented as a curriculum model that allowed for interdisciplinarity and flexible individual learning pathways that students could choose themselves. With English as the language of instruction, no translation or equivalent term in the national language was required.

Elsewhere, I have analyzed why LAS had lost its prominence in Europe.<sup>4</sup> The related Latin terms were long-forgotten and, consequently, the historically significant French and German influences on Dutch higher education had weakened, although von Humboldt's liberal education value of *Bildung* had its own short revival in the Netherlands (also without translation into Dutch). Yet the fact that this innovation was, in a way, a revival of the classical European curriculum and of traditional European values was overshadowed by the perception that, as a modern U.S. model of undergraduate education, university college could fit well in an increasingly competitive and globalized context of higher education.

I will try to explain why this innovation seemed to fit so well in the timeframe around the turn of the millennium, a context in which Dutch pragmatism and economic optimism spurred an innovation-driven and future-orientated zeitgeist. The Berlin Wall had come down, the "world was flat," "history had ended," and freedom was taken for granted. Utilitarian benefits dominated the educational policy debate more than historical and philosophical notions. But ultimately, we have to ask: what is the value of a liberal arts and science education? It is an essential element of any education, after all, which we are refacing as we realize that liberal values are under attack in Europe, as part of a painful return to ideological conflict.

**L**ike in many Western countries, massification had taken its toll in Dutch higher education. General dissatisfaction grew with poor learning outcomes, student disengagement, low retention levels, stagnant or decreasing graduation rates, and lengthening time to degree. Employers criticized a lack of differentiation (no excellence) and the rigidity of monodisciplinary programs. Excitement around the new millennium and the role of digital communication generated fashionable new ideas about "twenty-first-century skills."

The shaping up of the Bologna Process, which allowed for the (re)introduction of distinct undergraduate and graduate degree cycles in European higher education, paved the way for curriculum reform. Internationalization was spurred both by the European Union's aspirations to become a significant player in the global knowledge economy and by the rise of global university rankings.

Yet the first emergence of UCs in the Netherlands was not caused by Bologna. The Utrecht initiative preceded it, and it was motivated from within by critique of monodisciplinary fragmentation, massified instruction, poor attention for personal development, and low retention, hence the value seen in broader standalone undergraduate degrees and collegial small-scale instruction and tutoring.

The Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) had already launched this idea in 1995, but with no follow-up.<sup>5</sup> It seemed that the status quo had become stale. But Utrecht set a leading example by launching it bottom-up, while followers such as Maastricht University and Utrecht University were facilitated by the Bologna reforms (implemented in Dutch higher-education law in 2002).

The idea of university colleges thus became popular as they would contribute to the aims and expectations of the time: namely, internationalization and interdisciplinarity of the curriculum, the development of “twenty-first-century skills,” more selectivity (excellence), and differentiation at the system level. Their introduction in the Netherlands continued with the establishment of university colleges by Maastricht University (2002), a second one by Utrecht University (2004), and Amsterdam University College (2009), followed by university colleges established by the universities of Leiden (2010), Rotterdam (2013), Twente (2013), Groningen (2014), and Tilburg (2016).<sup>6</sup>

A successful journey showed UCs as standalone structures within a larger research university, benefiting from available resources and infrastructure. But like all innovations, the new model did not fit existing regulatory, organizational, and cultural frameworks. Skepticism regarding elitism and the value of the LAS degree for employment and graduate study remained. Reluctance to reforming the disciplinary organization of universities persisted by creating UCs as standalone structures, which left the mainstream mostly unchanged. Hence the hurdles and resistance that I experienced as the founding dean of Amsterdam University College.

**I**n 2004, the Rector Magnificus of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (in English, abbreviated as VU Amsterdam, hereafter VU) invited me to join its professorate with a special brief to develop a university college. I accepted and engaged in a feasibility study in 2005.

It quickly became apparent that the capital city wanted a UC in its own way. Despite the fact that several academic leaders had their own children enrolled at UCU, there were two reasons why a simple copy of it would be unthinkable. First was the perceived elitist image of UCU, which its own students called “a gated community.” The Amsterdam approach would have to be more open to and engaging with the city as its direct environment and acknowledge the socioeconomic diversity of Amsterdam, then already the world’s second most multicultural city in terms of the number of nationalities among its citizens. The second reason was the need to overcome the city’s “science deficit,” a problem that had been hindering the Amsterdam universities for several decades. The city’s high school graduates with a science orientation would choose to go to Leiden, Utrecht, or Delft, rather than stay in Amsterdam, despite the fact that the city hosted a majority of the national science research facilities. Moreover, as the country’s only

city with two universities (with multiple science faculties), increasing the number of students majoring in science was becoming urgent. Competition between the universities was pointless. Collaboration was stimulated by the Amsterdam city government and its business community in the context of the development of the Amsterdam Science Park.

With a view to these parameters, Amsterdam University College (AUC) thus had to combine excellence with diversity, be open to and engage with the city around it, develop a strong science profile (able to attract at least half of its students as science majors), and bring the city's two universities, VU and the University of Amsterdam (UvA), together in a new joint venture. Neither of them was supposed to be dominant, yet it had to have an Amsterdam signature, different from its predecessors in the country. It was therefore decided to develop both its curriculum and a new building for it from scratch.

My feasibility study was well-received, and the number of challenges and rate of complexity made it interesting and attractive enough for me to decide somewhere halfway through 2007 to become AUC's founding dean.

**F**ounding dean, in Dutch *bouwdecaan*, which literally means “building dean,” is a term that characterizes my experience at AUC quite well. Building anything in an extremely densely populated city like Amsterdam is a challenge, let alone a residential college able to host nine hundred students. The Amsterdam Science Park became the obvious location, with a view to the desired science outlook of AUC and because of newly available student housing.

Building a new curriculum from scratch was a hugely inspiring task that I shared with my cofounder, renowned physicist Robbert Dijkgraaf.<sup>7</sup> The science faculties and medical schools provided strong support, and quickly succeeded in designing their part of the curriculum. The social sciences were constructive, but needed more time to discuss. The humanities struggled the longest to find their focus across their varied fields.

Over €40 million had to be raised for the initial phase and costs of the new building. The city of Amsterdam provided a matching grant, as it saw AUC as an important step toward the desired collaboration between its two universities and the development of its Science Park, and as an asset for attracting multinational companies.<sup>8</sup> Their CEOs engaged successfully in fundraising for the AUC Scholarship Fund. Clearly, without the constructive role of the city's highest officials, AUC would not have come together, as “it took three to tango.” It helped to build trust between VU and UvA, whose relationship had previously been mostly characterized by competition, thus realizing a joint venture across organizations with distinctly different cultures and histories. Mutual (mis)perceptions had to be overcome and internal processes integrated across different IT systems, financial allocation, and HR processes.

In building broad institutional support, I had to become (and stay) friends with some twenty faculty deans who were concerned that AUC would attract their best faculty, which would be systematically confirmed. Luckily, I was free to choose my own core team from across the two universities and outside, thus composing an interdisciplinary, international, creative, and resilient group. There is a lot of fun but little luxury in a start-up, especially one in the public sector, for which an endless amount of red tape needed to be overcome. In the hierarchy of obstruction, administrators were more reluctant than academics. Advisory committees had to be overruled. The students were my best advocates in these processes and convinced the university councils and even the minister to side with our goals at critical moments.

The largest multimillion-euro grant was finally won in national competition from the Ministry of Education and Science's initiative for stimulating excellence in university programs. AUC's long-term financial sustainability was ensured by negotiating a higher funding level for UC students and the autonomy to raise differential fees. These adjustments to funding and regulatory provisions for accreditation required legislation changes at the national level and were obviously to the benefit of all existing and future UCs. With that and the support of both Amsterdam's universities, the city, and its corporate sector, the establishment of AUC in 2009 confirmed the significance of the new liberal arts and science model in Dutch higher education.

**A**UC's curriculum was developed from scratch, focusing on the big questions in science and society.<sup>9</sup> These questions are addressed through overarching themes, which guide students' choices through the curriculum and help integrate knowledge gained from disciplinary courses. As a result, they achieve depth of knowledge in their chosen major(s) as a basis to participate meaningfully and creatively in interdisciplinary debate and a personal capstone project. The process reinforces Howard Gardner's advice on the importance of gaining fluency in one subject in order to incorporate others: "If no single discipline is being applied, then clearly interdisciplinary thinking cannot be at work."<sup>10</sup>

A substantial academic core supports the personal learning process with skills (such as logic, research methods and statistics, mathematics, foreign languages, intercultural knowledge) and courses in the liberal arts tradition (for example, philosophy, philosophy of science, ethics). Based on a firm belief that the most important and urgent questions of our time require a science education that connects and transcends the disciplines, AUC offers all students ample opportunities to focus on science and science-related majors, and to develop strong analytical (logic) and quantitative skills.

This belief and ambition were presented by Robbert Dijkgraaf in his speech at the opening of AUC in 2009. Quoting chemist and novelist C.P. Snow's plea for reconnecting "The Two Cultures" of the sciences and the humanities, Dijkgraaf said:

Snow was right. There are many great crises or challenges facing the world: food, energy, climate, pandemics, all driven by globalization. Science and technology might have been part of the cause of these problems, they are also absolutely key to the solutions. A complete education should be a multidimensional experience, since students, teachers, schools, and research are all multidimensional. It is a challenge for universities to offer such an environment and be a proper reflection of the talents of its inhabitants.<sup>11</sup>

AUC's academic success in this respect was confirmed by then-president of the European Research Council and member of the AUC International Advisory Board Helga Nowotny, who observed in 2012 that AUC

seeks to link the parts of our globus intellectualis that seem to have become separated, much like oceans dividing the continents ...reconnecting the natural sciences – physics, chemistry, and the life sciences – with the humanities and social sciences. These innovative features of the AUC curriculum are supported by an emphasis on “big questions” and how to approach them, namely through a research-oriented style of inquiry.<sup>12</sup>

But the social positioning of AUC had more substantial challenges. As mentioned before, Amsterdam's global outlook, the diversity of its population, as well as its international business community were important parameters for AUC's mission, expressed in its motto, “Excellence and Diversity in a Global City,” and based on the belief that both excellence and diversity matter, as both competition and cooperation are key to success in a globalized world. Leadership does not only require excellence, but also the understanding and valuing of diversity.

As dean, I explained multiple times to different stakeholders that AUC's motto actually meant, “AUC shall never be a white middle-class college in an otherwise half Black city.” I felt the task was to position AUC as a collective of “the winners and losers” of globalization, who are well represented in global cities like Amsterdam, though often living quite separately in almost parallel universes.<sup>13</sup>

Among the greatest challenges in this area was the difference between UvA and VU in recognizing diversity as an important dimension. Most support came from the VU leadership, in line with VU's much more diverse student population, as compared to that of UvA. International business representatives and U.S. academic leaders in AUC's International Advisory Board pushed for more diversity in the student population and more local community engagement by the students, in particular those who were more affluent.

Despite the Dutch anti-elitist attitude, AUC became immediately popular among Dutch students from the best-ranked secondary schools (for example, local gymnasia: six-year top programs that train students in math and sciences, as well as classical and modern languages) with Amsterdam as a global brand, and

also among those from international schools around the world. Fifty percent of the student body was international, a cosmopolitan global elite, but far less diverse in economic and cultural terms. Attracting local minority students, often equally talented but with significantly lower social and cultural capital, proved more challenging. Setting up a special outreach program for students who attended Amsterdam's suburb schools, as well as a Diversity Award Program, helped recruit applicants from these communities.

A national self-image of an egalitarian culture, denying existing discrimination and inequality, hindered attempts to overcome these stark cultural and socioeconomic barriers. Initially, there was little understanding of AUC's ideal to combine excellence and diversity. A former Dutch rector in a national review panel bluntly asked, "If you want to be excellent, why then would you be diverse?" An AUC student answered, "How could we be excellent without being diverse?" In 2013, an international panel underlined the strengths of aiming for diversity and the opportunities offered by a global city, saying that "both features have been embraced by AUC, its constituent universities and its many partners in academia, business, administration and civil society."<sup>14</sup>

Yet excellence continues to be challenged. Proposals to abandon such labels are underway. And diversity is now writing university history in Amsterdam and beyond.

**A**UC's foundation, alongside the changes in national regulation and funding conditions, confirmed university colleges' integral position in the Dutch higher-education system.<sup>15</sup> Virtually all Dutch research universities established a UC as a branch of international excellence to their profile. With their performance in terms of retention and study success, UCs can indeed be seen as a successful bottom-up innovation.

But their impact was limited, enrolling hardly 5 percent of the student population, relegating them to a small-scale college niche. Although more interdisciplinary, international, and honors programs were opened in Dutch research universities, their core organizational and disciplinary structures remained mostly unchanged.

This is in line with higher-education scholar Arthur Levine's view; he positioned the establishment of new colleges as the easiest way to establish a non-traditional institutional mission, while avoiding change to existing structures within the university.<sup>16</sup> Some innovative spillover into the mainstream can be expected, but diffusion throughout less so. This applies to UCs to a large extent, as well as their modest innovative impact, although three aspects should be distinguished.

- *Interdisciplinarity*: Despite its position as a key belief in the research programming of Dutch universities, interdisciplinarity still seems to be more diffi-



cult to implement in teaching. Stifling requirements for accreditation and access to graduate programs, especially in professional fields such as law, are impeding factors.

- *Selectivity*: Excellence may have been embraced as a principle for more differentiation, since selective admission of students has been adopted in legislation for these kind of programs, and though the option to select undergraduate students was established in the Higher Education and Research Act, few undergraduate programs other than UCs have opted to implement it.<sup>17</sup> While selective admission to graduate programs has become more common, there is still some reluctance surrounding such practices in undergraduate programs because it is seen as “elite” and runs counter to the idea(s) of equal access and widening participation.
- *Internationalization*: Internationalized curricula and international classrooms became mainstreamed in both legislation and accreditation, and teaching in English became broadly popular in Dutch research universities in around one-third of undergraduate programs and three-quarters of graduate programs. However, the use of English should not be attributed to the UC model. Rather, internationalization has been encouraged since the early 1990s, and was spurred by the implementation of the Bologna Declaration. Brexit further increased the number of international students in the Netherlands, up to 40 percent of first-year students in research universities.<sup>18</sup> This is a contested trend due to funding and housing issues, resulting in a political pushback on teaching in English and international recruitment.

With their special legal status, higher student funding level, and residential housing, UCs seem to be well protected against these and other pushbacks that may occur. The impact of the UC model on the European higher-education scene has also been limited. Some liberal arts colleges already existed in Eastern Europe (accredited by U.S. institutions) and some initiatives were undertaken in Germany, the United Kingdom, and France.<sup>19</sup>

In the rest of Europe, such initiatives are less likely to emerge bottom-up, as they did in the Netherlands. This can be explained by more top-down steering and/or lower levels of autonomy. System change in Germany is driven more by regulation, may fail (for example, the Gesamthochschule reform), or may be more formal and slower, as in the implementation of Bologna.<sup>20</sup> In France, the drive for differentiation is limited due to the existence of the *Grandes Écoles*, which already provide an elite branch of higher education, but with a more professional focus.

Thus, the disciplinary orientation of most curricula remains dominant, with no general return of liberal arts and science education in Europe, staying far away from the status it has had in the United States. Moreover, pushback on the liberal aspects of the model is emerging across Europe.

American universities can draw three lessons from the European UC experience. First, liberal arts and science education can be offered as a more affordable model. Even though U.S. students pay full fees in Dutch UCs, the whole experience (including room and board) would generally cost half the price of its U.S. equivalent. The three-year European bachelor's program is publicly funded, in contrast with the mostly private four-year programs in the United States.

European UCs benefit from the breadth that European secondary education offers, especially the Northwestern European type of gymnasium (six-year top programs that train students in math and sciences, as well as classical and modern languages) or schools offering the International Baccalaureate. Both types cater already at the secondary level to a substantial part of the general education that is offered in four-year U.S. undergraduate programs.

Second, a twenty-first-century liberal arts education requires an integral science component. These competencies cover scientific reasoning, formal logic, numerical and statistical skills, and digital readiness for engaging with artificial intelligence; natural science insights for addressing climate change and other global challenges beyond opinions; and problem-solving skills necessary to really “help make a better world,” so desired by many students.

In other words, narrow humanities-based programs would fall short, even more so if they are exclusively English-taught and predominantly oriented on Western intellectual traditions. Because, third, a modern liberal arts education needs a genuinely global scope for which intercultural and foreign language skills are indispensable. The twenty-first-century version of the “well-rounded person” is definitely multilingual and digitally savvy. It goes without saying that for offering such an education, the faculty body needs to be at least as international and diverse as the student population, both key conditions for a twenty-first-century college with a global mission.

In this final section, I return to my analysis of why the (re)introduction of LAS fit so well in the timeframe around the turn of the millennium. I offer three types of arguments in favor of LAS in the twenty-first century.<sup>21</sup>

- An *epistemological* argument favoring interdisciplinarity as the way to approach the “big challenges” both in science and society.
- An *economic* argument emphasizing the importance of “twenty-first-century skills” with a view to the employability of graduates.
- A *moral and social* argument underlining educating the whole person, both intellectual and personal development, emphasizing social responsibility and democratic citizenship.

At the beginning of this essay, I sketched the utilitarian approach by which the promises of LAS for interdisciplinarity and twenty-first-century skills were

easily embraced into a converging agenda for undergraduate education serving the needs of the global knowledge economy. However, the social-moral dimension, relating to the humanistic tradition of the liberal arts, was more complex to (re)define in the “new global century,” as it seemed to be characterized by divergence in the political and ideological sense. Tensions between the economic/utilitarian and the social/moral arguments may undermine humanistic traditions and values.<sup>22</sup>

In this new global (neo)liberal era, how were *liberal* values to be assessed? And how should citizenship be understood? As national (citizenship for nation-building), patriotic even, regional (for example, European or Asian), global, or cosmopolitan? Could it be taken for granted that it always implies democratic citizenship and that liberal values would be seen as global values indeed? The question of whether a liberal education can actually exist in an *illiberal* context at all deserved further reflection with regard to recent and seemingly ongoing developments in Europe and beyond.<sup>23</sup>

As much as liberal values and democratic citizenship were (too easily) taken for granted in the early 2000s, the more they have come under attack in the following decades through today. From a backlash against globalization, and throughout a series a social and economic crises, populism and (neo)nationalism regained support around the world and are increasingly affecting higher education.<sup>24</sup>

Europe is back from its “holiday from history,” and learning the hard way that liberal values are not globally shared, not even within Europe, as was expected after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The world is not flat and history has not ended after all.<sup>25</sup>

Liberal education became a target of illiberal regimes. The Central European University was banned from Hungary. Smolny College (St. Petersburg) was closed as “an undesirable organization,” not seen to be feeding into “patriotic citizenship.”<sup>26</sup>

Illiberal reactions to higher education are a threat to academic freedom, but may also come *from within*, associated with “wokeness” and “cancel culture.” Some UCs are considered hotspots of such trends. Why would LAS students especially go against liberal values, academic freedom, or freedom of expression? Academic freedom is a foundational right to free inquiry, as well as the value of respecting divergent opinion. It is the cornerstone of an academic culture of civility, now endangered by the polarization besetting society at large.<sup>27</sup> Is it ignorance, freedom taken for granted, or a lack of awareness that radicalized individualism, identity politics, cultural wars, can lead to fragmentation or even atomization of a college community?

Is liberalism’s ever increasing stress on personal autonomy trumping the academic community as a collective good? There is little optimism for LAS if it is both challenged from outside and demolished from within.

Hence UCs are faced with the challenge to reconsider the LAS mission in this new reality, and support students in being truly inclusive, in finding nuance and intellectual humility, in understanding the validity of other perspectives, and in overcoming value judgments and national(ist) lenses to develop empathy. It is a formidable task for university leaders to ensure that future generations are aware of the virtues and values of an open and democratic society, ready to engage in a world where Western universalism and liberalism are being challenged, and to commit to the international solidarity needed for the world's most pressing problems to be solved. The best hope is a liberal one indeed: that the best brains will remain free from being domesticated by national or disciplinary boundaries.

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#### ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> For a history on the phrase, see Jelena Brankovic, "'Changing a University Is Like Moving a Graveyard': A History of an Analogy," June 17, 2020, <https://eher.org/changing-a-university-is-like-moving-a-graveyard>.
- <sup>2</sup> The Bologna Declaration, a shorter name for the Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education, is the guide for a series of meetings and agreements between the ministries of European countries, which convene to discuss methods that ensure consistency of the quality across institutions of higher education in Europe. See the European Ministers of Education, "The Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999," The European Higher Education Area, [https://web.archive.org/web/20080211212119/http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main\\_doc/990719BOLOGNA\\_DECLARATION.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20080211212119/http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/990719BOLOGNA_DECLARATION.pdf).
- <sup>3</sup> "An economy is 'open' when it trades with other countries in goods, services, and financial assets." Asbjørn Rødseth, "Introduction," in *Open Economy Macroeconomics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1. The "third way" is sociologist Anthony Giddens's term for the search to reconcile social democracy with neoliberalism. Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy* (Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons, 2013). See also Fred Powell, "Third Way," in *International Encyclopedia of Civil Society*, ed. Helmut K. Anheier and Stefan Toepler (Berlin: SpringerLink, 2010), 1554–1557; and Anne Mellbye, "A Brief History of the Third Way," *The Guardian*, February 10, 2003.

- <sup>4</sup> Marijk C. van der Wende, “The Emergence of Liberal Arts and Sciences Education in Europe: A Comparative Perspective,” *Higher Education Policy* 24 (2011): 233–253.
- <sup>5</sup> Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid (WRR), *Higher Education in Phases* (The Hague: WRR, 1995), [http://doi.org/10.26530/OAPEN\\_439518](http://doi.org/10.26530/OAPEN_439518).
- <sup>6</sup> The second UC established by Utrecht University was the Roosevelt Academy, now called University College Roosevelt. See also “What Is a University College?” University Colleges of the Netherlands, <https://universitycollege.nl> (accessed March 21, 2024).
- <sup>7</sup> Robbert Dijkgraaf later became President of the Dutch Royal Academy of Arts and Sciences, Director of the IAS Princeton, and Dutch Minister of Education, Science, and Culture.
- <sup>8</sup> The next planned step, merging their science faculties, failed after student protests in 2014.
- <sup>9</sup> “AUC’s Academic Programme,” Amsterdam University College, <https://www.auc.nl/academic-programme/academic-programme.html> (accessed March 21, 2024).
- <sup>10</sup> Howard Gardner, *Five Minds for the Future* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2008), 55.
- <sup>11</sup> “Impressions of the Grand Opening,” Amsterdam University College, September 22, 2009, <https://www.auc.nl/downloads/downloads.html#anker-publications>.
- <sup>12</sup> “The Global Trends in the Attainment of Excellence: The Liberal Arts and Sciences Experience in the 21st Century,” Amsterdam University College, November 2014.
- <sup>13</sup> On the phrase “winners and losers” of globalization, see Nicholas Lamp, “How Should We Think about the Winners and Losers from Globalization? Three Narratives and Their Implications for the Redesign of International Economic Agreements,” *European Journal of International Law* 30 (4) (2019): 1359–1397. For details on AUC’s stance, see “Amsterdam University College Liberal Arts and Sciences for the 21st Century: AUC’s Experiences and Achievements 2009–2012,” Amsterdam University College, September 22, 2009, <https://www.auc.nl/downloads/downloads.html#anker-publications>.
- <sup>14</sup> Internal reports, unpublished.
- <sup>15</sup> “University Colleges in the Netherlands 2023–2024,” Study in NL, <https://www.studyinnl.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/University%20Colleges%20in%20the%20Netherlands.pdf> (accessed March 22, 2024).
- <sup>16</sup> Arthur Levine, *Why Innovation Fails: The Institutionalization and Termination of Innovations in Higher Education* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1980).
- <sup>17</sup> See The Higher Education and Research Act of 1993, Wet op het Hoger Onderwijs en Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek.
- <sup>18</sup> “40 Percent International First-Year Students at Dutch Universities,” CBS Netherlands, March 28, 2022, <https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/news/2022/11/40-percent-international-first-year-students-at-dutch-universities>.
- <sup>19</sup> See van der Wende, “The Emergence of Liberal Arts and Sciences Education in Europe: A Comparative Perspective” for an overview and a few more recent examples, some of which have since been closed. See also, “Home,” Université Libérale de Paris, <https://paris-u.fr> (accessed March 22, 2024); and Forward College, <https://forward-college.eu> (accessed March 22, 2024).

- <sup>20</sup> Johanna Witte, Marijk C. van der Wende, and Jeroen Huisman, “Blurring Boundaries: Bologna and the Relationship between Types of Higher Education Institutions in Germany, the Netherlands and France,” *Studies in Higher Education* 33 (3) (2008): 217–231.
- <sup>21</sup> Marijk C. van der Wende, “Trends towards Global Excellence in Undergraduate Education: Taking the Liberal Arts Experience into the 21st Century,” *International Journal of Chinese Education* 2 (2013): 289–307.
- <sup>22</sup> Martha C. Nussbaum, *Not for Profit. Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010).
- <sup>23</sup> William C. Kirby and Marijk C. van der Wende, eds., *Experiences in Liberal Arts and Science Education from America, Europe, and Asia: A Dialogue across Continents* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).
- <sup>24</sup> Marijk C. van der Wende, “Neo-Nationalism and Universities in Europe,” in *Neo-Nationalism and Universities: Global Perspectives on Politics and Policy and the Future of Higher Education*, ed. J. Douglass (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2021), 117–140.
- <sup>25</sup> Francis Fukuyama, *Liberalism and Its Discontents* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2022).
- <sup>26</sup> The mission for higher education to “instill patriotism in young people” was part of the statement published in early March 2022 by Russian rectors backing up Putin’s invasion in Ukraine.
- <sup>27</sup> Michael Ignatieff, “The Geopolitics of Academic Freedom: Universities, Democracy & the Authoritarian Challenge,” *Dædalus* 153 (2) (Spring 2024): 194–206, <https://www.amacad.org/publication/geopolitics-academic-freedom-universities-democracy-authoritarian-challenge>.