

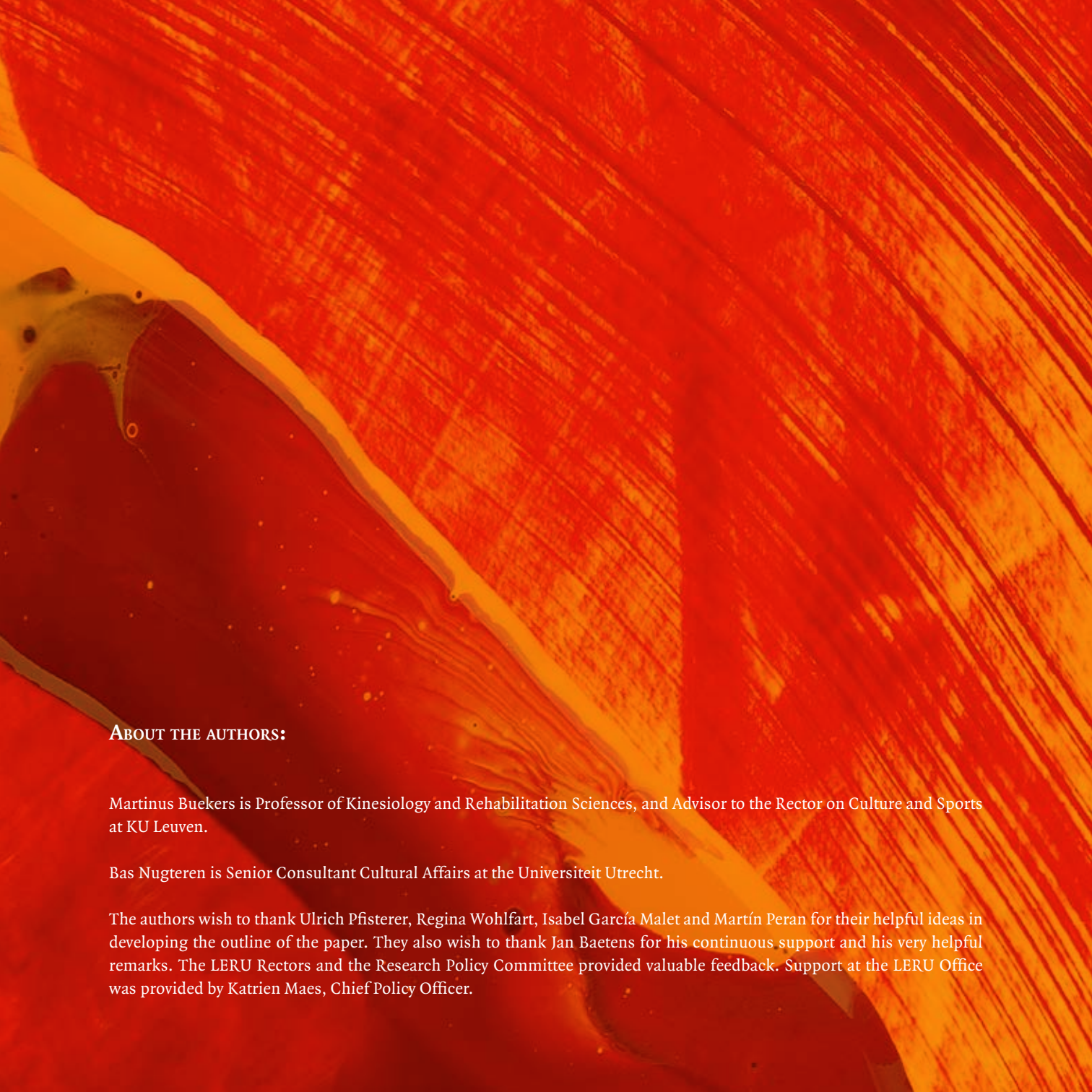


# CREATIVE ARTS AND RESEARCH-INTENSIVE UNIVERSITIES: A CRUCIAL PARTNERSHIP

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## INTRODUCTION

In his foreword of the conference reader *Culture and the policies of Change* Robert Palmer states that ‘There is a current debate about the relative value of much of the existing cultural practice, as well as the relevance of our present institutional structures that historically have been created to support and manage culture’ (Palmer, 2010). This statement has an interesting appeal as it challenges the different cultural actors to exactly do what is needed when pressure hits: ‘Act on these threats and adapt to the new external and internal conditions’. The actors are manifold, and even though it is not the core business of higher education, universities can and must play a vital role in this transformation process.

The validity and relevance of this latter statement can be found in the stimulating debate on the *Two cultures* ignited by the 1959 Rede Lecture of Charles Snow (1959) and tackled in recent years in a number of publications (for an interesting overview see Carafoli, Danieli & Longo, 2009, 323). Apparently, the links between the artistic and the scientific cultures are much stronger and multitudinous than originally expected. The underlying competences, abilities and processes are particularly compatible even though they lead to different outcomes, i.e. an artwork or a scientific paper. A very compelling illustration of this close relationship can be found in the article of du Sautoy (2009). His journey into the mathematics of symmetry perfectly visualizes the common grounds of science and arts. This observation is of particular interest for the LERU universities as they thrive on research excellence. By taking the lead in this process of cross-fertilization between science and creative arts<sup>1</sup> the LERU institutions will stimulate a very remarkable dimension of research creativity. The fact that the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) considers this type of creativity as extremely important, and even designed a specific programme on Art, Culture and Technology (ACT)<sup>2</sup>, adds to the (face) validity of our argument.

A second argument in favour of integrating creative arts in the experience package of students in tertiary education lies in its transversal character. Universities have for many years recognized the importance of transversal education. The omnipresent philosophy courses and the desire to make the students fit for good citizenship are clear examples of this aspiration. Obviously also creative arts has a prominent role to play in this mission as it is the perfect drug to cure the lack of an interdisciplinary approach in many educational programmes. This cannot be done by simply imposing the paradigms from the field of arts, but by cultivating the dialogue between the ideas, models and concepts of both the humanities and the sciences. Given its significance for research-intensive universities, the LERU members and other institutions can use this additional tool to widen the path of inter- and multidisciplinary research. Therefore, this briefing paper intends to inform univer-

<sup>1</sup> In the remainder of this paper the term creative arts will be used instead of artistic culture to emphasize the crucial role of creativity. Note that the term creative arts refers to the artistic, including heritage, expositions and related activities in musea, as well as the issue of creative industry.

<sup>2</sup> The Art, Culture and Technology Programme operates as a critical studies and production based laboratory, connecting the arts with an advanced technological community. (<http://act.mit.edu/about-act/mission-statement/>)



sity policy makers on how to stimulate the interaction with the field of creative arts in extra-curricular activities, as well as integrate it in the curriculum itself. As we will explain later, the availability of a course that could broadly be labelled as ‘Arts, Creativity and Culture’ is instrumental to a successful implementation of the abovementioned mission.

A third and final argument relates to the arts schools with their unique position within the larger landscape of higher education. Despite some initial signs of hesitation - originating from the idea that artists should not be constrained by strict research methodology - a number of these schools moved into the direction of scientific reflection and theory building, resulting in the establishment of full-fledged doctoral programmes. Inviting the arts schools into the core of the universities is not only a great idea because it has the potential to prompt a natural interaction between the different layers of the university tissue. Even more vital is the fact that the art education will find some (un)expected profit in the confrontation with the scientific approach and methodologies, without losing its statute of irritating border crosser (Laermans, 2012). Indeed, arts schools, and by inclusion artists, are designated border crossers as they have to turn to the hard sciences to better capture the characteristics and the potential of the (new) materials they modulate into specific art products. Yet they also irritate in their conviction that subjective rights of the artist cannot be buried under the responsibility of objective criteria.

A very recent and inspiring example of this uniting strategy can be found at the University of Edinburgh. The merger of the university and the Edinburgh College of Arts (ECA) in August 2011 aims at creating exciting opportunities for new programmes of studies combining the expertise and range of disciplines within both ECA and the University<sup>3</sup>.

The overall purpose of the present paper is to analyse what can be the main policy principles for the creative arts at research-intensive universities. As noted before the focus on this immensely rich field of creativity has a great potential of ‘collateral advantage’ for our ‘prominent places of education and research’.

Let it be clear from the beginning. The authors of this paper consider creative arts as an irrefutable component of educating young people. Moreover, from a historical point of view, arts and culture are impregnated into the DNA of the university. So the question is not: ‘Do we’ but ‘How do we’ integrate creative arts in the life of the university student. As there are many roads leading to Rome, there are also many paths that steer students towards active and/or passive participation in this artistic field reigned by creativity and beauty. Before exploiting this entry map we will briefly focus on the function of the universities as cultural institutions. In a second section the role of culture as a key driver of modern universities will be highlighted. Section three focuses on the ‘University Cultural Policy’. Starting from the premise that each and every institution of higher education should have a strategic cultural policy plan, we propose a model that can be used for developing such a plan. The fourth section concentrates on the implementation of the policy plan and the principles that underlie it. In the fifth section examples of good practices are described, to illustrate the variety of methods brought into play to turn general principles into everyday actions, events and programmes. The sixth and final sections present a list of specific recommendations.

3 <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/edinburgh-college-art/about/eca-merger/eca-students>.

## THE UNIVERSITY AS A CULTURAL INSTITUTION

*“A second and equally important point of special interest for the future of society is the threat of the decline that culture and the humanities are experiencing in both secondary and higher education. It seems that across the world, these studies and the skills that their students acquire are declining. This is often justified by the claims of economic priorities, but in fact, it threatens the survival of democracy itself.” (Mark Waer, 2010)<sup>4</sup>*

The above quote is a perfect illustration of one of the major theses of Bernard Stiegler, as developed in his “Ars industrialis”<sup>5</sup>, an organization that aims at fostering a new dialogue between culture and technology and at reinventing new forms of social and personal development through education.

The quote also marks the position of the universities vis-à-vis the value of creative arts for education. Increasing the cultural capital of students, and by extension all citizens, is considered crucial. The question then is what role these institutions of research and education play in this tremendous mission.

First of all, universities are cultural institutions *an sich*, characterized by their scientific foundation. The methodical and methodological approaches used to comprehend, explain and where possible predict a plethora of phenomena and events, guarantee a neutral and objective generation of new knowledge. It is clear that this knowledge generation goes beyond the borders of the cultural domain as such (see footnote 1), as it touches on each and every branch of the university.

The second role is closely linked to this issue of knowledge generation. By applying the scientific process to the field of creative arts the research departments add to the understanding of this domain. In doing so these groups also explore new routes and models for distribution of ideas and (cultural) goods.

The last but certainly not the least important role relates to the enhancement of students’ cultural capital (Bennett & Silva, 2011, 427-443). In fact universities should be the engines that fuel the students’ cultural participation. It is crucial to also focus here on the significance of the indirect relationship between arts, culture and science on the one hand and the formation of students on the other hand. In this respect the availability of a general creative context outside of the classroom is of great importance to inspire students. At the Universiteit Utrecht this message was well understood as it adopted a cultural policy aimed at reinforcing the creative surroundings. In addition students, staff members and members of the community are invited to interact and meet both inside and outside the existing academic structure. A similar outreach to the community is accomplished by the Université de Strasbourg as it organises cultural events throughout the year, in partnership with various university structures and with regional cultural associations and institutions<sup>6</sup>.

4 [http://www.kuleuven.be/openingacademiejaar/1011/openingstoepspraak\\_en.html](http://www.kuleuven.be/openingacademiejaar/1011/openingstoepspraak_en.html).

5 <http://arsindustrialis.org/lassociation>.

6 <http://www.unistra.fr/index.php?id=7717>

## CULTURE AS A KEY DRIVER OF A MODERN RESEARCH-INTENSIVE UNIVERSITY

The *raison d'être* for integrating creative arts in tertiary education can be found in different elements of university functioning. The most obvious and the most inspiring part of this functioning is anchored in the educational process. According to Richard Levin (2008) a major objective of this process of change is “*educating students to be capable of flexible, adaptive, and creative responses to changing conditions*”<sup>7</sup>. To achieve this objective, sufficient elements stimulating adaptive and creative behaviour need to be incorporated in the curriculum. Evidently the field of creative arts takes up a pole position in this pursuit. Another convincing and very elegant argument in favour of integrating creative arts in the university context lies in the similarity of the underlying processes driving both the artistic and the scientific employ. This line of thinking is elaborated in a very gaudy way in a paper by Carafoli with the evocative title ‘Scientific and artistic creativity: in search of unifying analogies’ (Carafoli, Danieli, & Longo, 2009, 239-264). In his paper the author states that the structure of the scientific and artistic creativity process is alike. This observation corroborates Menger’s reflection that art and scientific research are connected in a specific relational dynamic, that is to say, creativity in an open yet extremely challenging environment characterized by the basic notion of uncertainty (risk, invention, competition, innovation, personal development) (Menger, 2009). Creativity thus, as the force that propels the thoughts, ideas and the ‘output’ of the artist and the scientist. This latter element is precisely why research-intensive universities should set an example and welcome the benefits that are waiting to be disclosed. LERU universities can lead the way in this transformation process that will change the scope of creative arts in higher education from an isolated element in the life of students to an integrated part of the creativity process serving both scientific and educational purposes.

In the following paragraphs we will not only take a closer look at this powerful engine of the inventive mind, but also explore the added value of creative arts for tertiary education.

### The educational value of creative arts

University education represents much more than just preparing students for their later life through a well-designed professional and theoretical training. University education reaches much farther. A perfect advocate for this statement can be found in the following passage of the mission statement and core values of Lunds universitet<sup>8</sup>: “*Critical and constructive thinking shall be encouraged. We shall develop an innovative, creative university environment, with space for change and employee development. Humour, constructive scepticism and humanism are key concepts.*” Not only LERU universities are attached to this idea. For ins-

7 The University in service to society. Speech by Richard Levin on May 5, 2008 at Costos Hall, Athens University. <http://communications.yale.edu/president/speeches/2008/05/05/university-service-society>

8 <http://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/about-lund-university/vice-chancellor-and-management/mission-and-values>

tance, a similar position is taken by the University of Toronto<sup>9</sup>, or the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)<sup>10</sup>, as these institutions allocate a prominent place for culture in the context of education. In fact, most institutions highly value the beneficial effects of integrating elements of creative arts in the curriculum or the extra-curricular activities. A charming example of how this can be achieved is depicted in a paper by Goulding (2009). The author describes how construction students, working under the supervision of an artist, built and dismantled a replica of an art gallery. The effect of working in this project was not only a reassertion of the students' identity as builders, but also an increased appreciation for the world of art. In addition, students were eager to participate in future artistic projects. Another successful strategy to enhance the interaction is through the organisation of workshops in which students and artist(s) work together on specific projects. At the Universiteit van Amsterdam these workshops are organized by a special foundation called CREA<sup>11</sup>. It is interesting to note that at KU Leuven the laureates of the biennial KU Leuven Culture prize are requested to take part in similar workshops, although at a smaller scale than in Amsterdam.

Even though these examples illustrate how meaningful the interaction between artist and students can be, other approaches can also be very valuable. For example, scheduling a special (general) course on 'Arts, culture and creativity' in the first year of the bachelor curriculum could prove to be a perfect strategy. In addition, extracurricular activities can be equally rewarding as well, as shown in a study by Schaefer, et al. (2011) revealing beneficial effects on the formation of new friendship for students who participated in extracurricular cultural activities. Moreover a study by Kuh (1995), reporting benefits ranging from gains in critical thinking to relational and organizational skills, indicates that the access to these extracurricular activities should be facilitated.

## Creativity

For modern research-intensive universities in general and LERU universities in particular, creativity and innovation represent a sturdy cornerstone of their functioning and success. The recent impact of globalisation triggered an even stronger international hunt for the 'promising' student, a phenomenon well documented in 'The great brain race' written by Ben Wildavsky (2009). From a traditional line of thinking much of the potential of these students has been linked to their intellectual capacity and their rational thought, a capacity associated with the 'strength of the analytical left hemisphere of the brain'. The right hemisphere was believed to be associated with the artistic pursuits. According to Goldberg and Bougakov (2009), this observation is a "neuro-myth". Actually, many recent studies show that the right-left specialization can be at-

9 <http://www.arts.utoronto.ca/Page2271.aspx>

10 <http://web.mit.edu/life/>

11 [http://www.crea.uva.nl/index\\_en.php](http://www.crea.uva.nl/index_en.php)

tributed to a novelty versus routine difference. In the words of Goldberg and Bougakov (2009, 154-155): “Thus, it appears that the right hemisphere, ..., is the one that mediates exploratory behaviour and novelty. The left hemisphere, ..., mediates exploitation of cognitive routines, stereotypic behaviour.” This argument is congruent with the findings of a study by Mihov, Denzler and Förster (2010). Their meta-analytical review of the literature on the lateralization of creativity showed the right hemisphere to be more equipped to handle creative tasks.

Even though further confirmation is needed, this observation is fascinating as it fosters the assumption that regardless of the field of application (arts or science) the brain processes steering the search for novelty are the same. Presuming that creativity and exploration behaviour cover the same load, it is tempting to argue that stimulating artistic creativity might engender a beneficial effect on the scientific enterprise and vice versa.

The significance of this process of creativity has also been revealed in the concept of the *Creative Class*, as defined by Florida (2002). According to the author the presence of members of the so-called creative class (e.g. artists, professors, engineers, students and other workers in the cultural/creative field) generates (economic) benefits for cities betting high on creativity. The value of the creative processes and their explicit presence in the practice of (artistic) culture clearly emphasizes the necessity of lending a more prominent position to this field of creativity in the university, for instance by generating ‘creative spaces’ where students, researchers, engineers and artist can meet and interact. This was exactly the intention of a contemporary art project labelled ‘Parallelepipida’<sup>12</sup> in which prominent artists and senior scientists tackled a common problem. The beneficial effect of this challenging cooperation can best be illustrated by the comments of one of the scientists who stated that he was profoundly influenced by the artistic insights as it enriched the way he looked at the scientific problems. This example clearly shows that universities taking on the challenge of knowledge generation must validate this opportunity and embrace these extra creative insights as they bring a very valuable tool to the scientific table.

## Culture and creative industry

Although the step from creativity to creative industry appears to be small, this latter concept has only captured full attention in the last few years. Exemplar for this increased interest is the voluminous Creative Economy Report 2010 of the United Nations in which the creative industries are described as *the cycles of creation and distribution of goods and services that use creativity and intellectual capital as primary input*. Note that the creative industry refers to a larger context than arts as such, illustrating that cultural creativity is not an island in society.

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.mleuven.be/en/contemporary-art/past-events/parallelepipida/index.jsp>



To a certain extent this inflated concern might have been caused by the financial crisis, resulting in a reduction of the subsidies for the arts sector, putting the budget of the artists and art centres under pressure and pushing them into the direction of a more entrepreneurial approach. Despite its negative initial impact, this situation also had a number of attractive opportunities, as it fuelled the discussion about creative industries, leading to a large number of research reports and publications on this topic. All these papers arrive at the same conclusion, i.e. the huge economic value and impact of the creative industries. In Germany for example, this value represents € 63 billion in 2007, corresponding to a share of 2.6% in gross domestic product (Soendermann, 2009). For the United Kingdom the creative industries employment totalled 1.9 million jobs in 2006 (Banks & Hesmondhalgh, 2009). Similar optimistic figures are presented in the United Nations' Creative Economy Report 2010 for other countries and selected creative cities in the world. These data need no further explanation except to highlight the role universities can play in this important matter. Research-intensive universities are particularly well placed to be part of this process, not only for their focus on innovation and technology, but also for their role in the process of knowledge transfer, a theme perfectly elaborated by Debackere (2012) in the LERU advice paper *The TTO, a university engine transforming science into innovation*. According to the author universities and other public research institutes are now expected not only to be producers of basic knowledge. The know-how they generate should, whenever relevant, be better and more quickly transferred into commercial activities. This statement highlights the increased importance of the university-industry/business link. It is fascinating to apprehend that the role of creative arts also extends to this issue. The first support for this claim comes from the observation that an increasing number of companies is trying to enrich their products with new cultural values. Or, as stated by Dell'Era (2010), "Several new organizations have aimed to link arts and business to improve both society and corporate performance". The second argument relates to the need to stimulate the entrepreneurial competence of students. Cultural projects can provide a great opportunity for students to mark their first steps into this complicated field.

At present, many links already exist between research departments, companies and the cultural sector. Strengthening these links and creating new connections should be a basic responsibility of the different stakeholders.

## Service to society

Universities do not work in splendid isolation, but are part of, and imbedded in, a swiftly changing society. This 'local' attachment puts them in a perfect position to interact with the members of this community, to share its knowledge, to engender the debate and to be involved in common projects. The involvement in the field of culture can take different forms. For instance, exhibitions in museums can be prepared in cooperation with colleagues from the art department; university choirs, ensembles or student bands can play for the local residents; events and festivals can be organized in cooperation with the city or the art centres. All these individual actions have the merit of creating vital links between citizens, academics and students. Without any doubt, these activities represent the notes that set the tone for the cultural service to society. Yet, putting these notes into

the scheme of a symphony would take this mission to a higher level. Therefore universities who aspire to such a mission should design and implement a strategic plan encompassing the different essentials of the university cultural policy.

## Creative arts and research

Integrating the art schools into the scientific habitat of the universities is not a managerial power trick. On the contrary, it offers the art schools the additional scientific tools to enrich the passionate field of arts. Moreover, the benefits of the integration are not loaded onto a car driving in a one-way street. In contrast, the universities and their researchers can strongly benefit from the creative processes that flourish in the art schools.

One of most the visible effects of positioning the art schools under the scientific umbrella of the universities are the doctoral programmes. In these PhD programmes arts students elaborate a specific topic under the supervision of an academic advisor of the university and an artistic advisor of the art school. In a number of cases a professional artist is added to the supervision team, resulting in a perfect mix to guarantee the highest quality of what Laermans (2012) labels as interpretative action research. An additional advantage of this type of cooperation lies in its appeal to young researchers. Since universities need to attract young potentials, betting on the science / creative arts mix might be very rewarding.

## Conclusion

University strategy and cultural policy do not compete in a zero sum game. On the contrary, investing in this field of creativity provokes additional benefits for the institutions and, even more importantly, for their students. Multiple benefits that range from scientific insights and educational quality over societal value to economic profit accrue. Hence, developing and implementing a solid university cultural policy plan is not to be considered a redundant luxury. In the next chapter we will investigate how such a plan can be conceptualized and formulated.

## UNIVERSITY CULTURAL POLICY

Instrumental to a successful cultural policy in higher education is the development of a strategic plan. Without a clear strategy the different individual cultural events and activities will only be loosely connected and lack the quality of internal consistency and more essential sharp focus. For university A the focus could be on the educational value, whereas institution B concentrates on a strong interaction with regional stakeholders. Not to forget the international focus, a dimension that has always been an obvious focal point for the LERU universities.

The decision to follow a specific strategic path depends on many constraints as there are among others the size of the institution, the presence of an art school and a department for cultural studies and the cooperation with regional authorities. Regardless of this focus, the best way to proceed and start with the policy plan is to use a specific model that integrates the various aspects of interest.

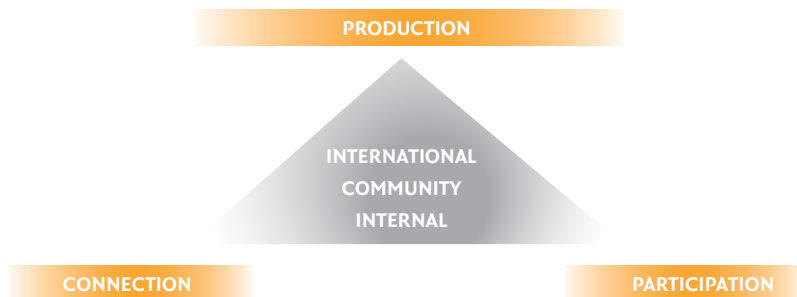


Figure 1. The cultural policy triangle

As can be seen in figure 1, the model we propose is based on three elements each representing an essential objective of the cultural policy, namely Participation, Production and Connection. Actually, these three building blocks can be weighted differently according to the overall strategy. This will lead to a particular focus that matches the needs and aspirations of the institution. In the next few paragraphs we will take a closer look at these building blocks.

An additional valuable criterion for outlining the university cultural policy relates to the idea of globalization. This term proposed by Robertson (1995) refers to the reciprocity between processes occurring at the global level and those influencing the local level. Universities are certainly touched by this reality as they shape and serve both the local community and the global society. For this reason the scope of the cultural policy plan should include the international dimension. As Buekers (2010) stated: “International developments and tendencies must therefore be allocated a place in the organisation of cultural activities. Yet at the same time, culture is an ideal opportunity for local discoveries and experience”.

The implementation of this criterion leads to a possible differentiation between three organization levels. First is the *intramuros* level, referring to how the cultural policy is internally organized (e.g. designated academic person, culture coordination unit, allocation of a specific budget). The second level represents the link with the local serving area: the city, the surrounding community and the region. The third level corresponds to the international scene. Thanks to the creation of specific networks, universities can exchange people, ideas and enthusiasm, with all the benefits (benchmarking, exchange of good practices, common projects) it represents.

## Participation

Since long participation has been a major issue in cultural policy. Numerous studies involving interviews and surveys were conducted to analyse the participation level of various target groups. In this connection, it is worth mentioning the Eurostat 2011 edition on Cultural Statistics, and more specifically the observed link between education and cultural participation, showing that people with a high education level tend to participate more in cultural activities. A clear illustration of this effect can be found in the data for the percentage of people who attended a live performance (concerts, opera, ballets, plays and dance performance) at least once in the preceding year. While the percentage is only 25% for persons with low educational attainment, it increases to 44% for medium and even to 66% for highly educated people (data for the 27 EU-countries). Similar observations were made for performing arts by Decraene, Vander Stichele and Laermans (2007), as they noted participation percentages ranging from 4% over 13% to 25% for the aforementioned educational attainment groups. Without entering into a debate on the causality of this difference and the possible social backgrounds involved, these findings underscore the importance of creative arts in higher education, especially since the reinforced democratization process in higher education also opened the doors for students of social groups with less ‘cultural capital’<sup>13</sup>.

As such these observations are extremely valuable for the conceptualization of a university cultural policy plan as they push it towards actions that enhance the participation level of the students.

## Connecting

In a previous paragraph the universities are characterized as being very beneficial for the exchange of ideas, people and enthusiasm. Referring to this notion of exchange, universities adopt the label of network institutions, positioning themselves in the middle of society, using a variety of networks. Through this finely meshed web of interaction, an extremely power-

13 For relevant information on the issue of social classes and cultural capital see: Bourdieu (1994). Also see Lahire (2008) for a viewpoint questioning the relevance of the social class and stressing the importance of the individual process.

ful and crucial element of the cultural policy can be accomplished, namely, to interconnect students and make them experience a variety of ideas. This mixture of thoughts and viewpoints is furthermore amplified by the international diversity of the student population. Given the globalization of education, most modern universities attract a large number of foreign students, coming from a variety of countries and cultures. However, the mere presence of ‘foreign’ students is no guarantee for a successful exchange or a better understanding of the insights and opinions of the other. It is tempting to assert that this process can be improved or upgraded through artistic content and events.

A study by Seltzer-Kelly, Westwood and Pena-Guzman (2010) tried to tackle this problem by examining the effect of implementing an introductory arts course in the curriculum. Interviews and observations were used to find out whether students would change their attitude towards understanding other perspectives. The conclusion was that: “...works from among the contemporary popular arts and works drawn from the artistic ‘canon’ alike must be considered and employed for their instrumental value to the educational process – especially for their ability to prompt an intersubjectivity that is accompanied by a heightened awareness of difference.” Although the finding of this study is reassuring, it also points out that the involvement in cultural events or project guarantees no free ride to real interpersonal connection. Regardless of the format, intra- or extra-curricular, lots of energy is needed to incite communication and cooperation between students with different backgrounds.

## Production

Linking the element of production in the field of creative arts to the university setting might look a little awkward at first glance. However, these products do exist. Actually the most valuable output of the university education are the students. The impact of the educational process on the intellectual capital of these youngsters is huge and compelling. Moreover, embedding this process in a context of culture and creativity will also strongly raise their cultural capital. From this line of thinking it is tempting to state that universities mould the future society through the education of their young citizens. Focussing on creative arts during this education will therefore affect society in the long term.

The second element, closely linked to the first, relates to the universities as centres of reflection. The fact that universities create and provide new ideas, values and frameworks is of great importance for our present society where the impact of technology has a huge and accelerating impact (for an interesting view on this topic see Brynjolfsson and McAfee, 2011). As discussed earlier, research-intensive universities do not limit their functioning to knowledge generation as they are also heavily engaged in knowledge transfer. The impact of the scientific institutions in this journey from knowledge to product can hardly be overestimated, an argument corroborated by the many spin-off companies originating from within the research departments of the universities. That arts do matter in this process is documented in a study by Petrie (2011) revealing the benefits of blending the skills of ‘designer makers’ with science and engineering.



A third and final element relates to the interaction between researchers and artists. As we explained previously (see pages 7-8 on Creativity) this cooperation can be very fruitful. Given the present focus on creative industries, the interaction between the world of science and the world of creative arts will only increase in the future.

## Conclusion

The cultural triangle presented in the previous chapters provides a suitable frame of reference for university policy makers. When conceiving a cultural policy plan, the three composing elements can be used as anchor points. It is very well possible to develop activities in all three segments, but it is evenly conceivable that specific universities aim at one specific objective. Also the organizational levels (internal, local, international) can be selected according to the specific needs. What is truly essential is the plan itself, since allotting time and energy in a cultural policy plan will have a huge and beneficial impact on the entire university.

## IMPLEMENTING THE PRINCIPLES

The formulation of mission statements based on theoretical reflection and practical experience is a prerequisite. However, only the actual implementation of action lines will make a difference at the end. The accomplishment of this mission is only possible when a number of contextual constraints are met. In the following paragraphs the major contextual factors will be analysed briefly.

### Commitment of the entire university

One of the key drivers of a solid cultural policy at the university is the commitment of the university board. Even though the field of creative arts has entered into a phase of increased attention, there is still a lamentable lack of general policy plans in many universities. Two reasons might explain this observation. First among them is the absence of a specific academic appointed for this task. Most universities do have Vice-Rectors or designated academics for the core domains (e.g. research, education, student affairs) of the university business. For the field of culture this person is often lacking. Clearly, this has a huge impact on how internal reports will be treated by the board. The second reason, closely linked to the first one, is the personal mind-set of the Vice-Chancellors or Rectors towards the value of (artistic) culture for their university. In the last decade a shift has been observed towards a more encouraging attitude. University leaders that embrace and proclaim the benefits of culture for their institutions do make a difference.

In the slipstream of this driving force, strong support is needed from staff and students. Only when they are committed to this mission will a *culture of cultural awareness and action* prevail. Instrumental to this success is the opportunity individuals get to engage in these activities. The added value of this participation has been documented in many studies (e.g. Grossi et al., 2011; Goulding, 2009) and is of particular interest for students.

### Creative arts and creativity in the classroom

A very challenging but even more promising idea is to bring creativity to the classroom. Many colleagues and teachers pursue this trail, implementing procedures to establish a context of creativity in their courses. Although the options to do so are manifold, an interesting example can be found in the article 'Art inside chaos' published on the Leonardo on-line website<sup>14</sup>, illustrating how technology can be used to enhance creativity. The bottom line is that creative teaching should be high on the agenda.

Another option is to engage artists and give them a specific role in the learning process. Even though the studies examining the effect of this approach are rather scarce, the work of Goulding (2002) and Seltzer-Kelly, et al. (2010) corroborates its

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.leonardo.info/isast/journal/bilotta-chaos-article.html>

effectiveness. Taking this idea even further, specific courses should be planned in which students and artists work together in a thematic setting, mixing the scientific procedure with the intuition of the creativity approach. The integration of this specific course into the regular curriculum would be a perfect example of a solidly constructed bridge between the two cultures. This latter element is *a fortiori* relevant for the Science and Technology departments of the university as their students bear the burden of being formatted in the harness of exact scientific thinking. The encounter with the world of creativity and creative arts is of great interest for these scholars.

### International exchange: *du conflit des idées jaillit la culture*

Most universities, and certainly the institutions of the LERU network, thrive in an international context. A significant part of the student body and many staff members originate from different countries, bringing different cultural backgrounds. Needless to say that this richness of thoughts, attitudes and viewpoints provides an ideal instrument for boosting creative interaction. However, often this interaction falters as the integration of foreign and local students is lacking. So special programmes should be conceived and implemented to facilitate this interaction. This can be achieved both through classroom (see previous section) as well as extra-curricular activities. As far as the extra-curricular activities are concerned, foreign students should be encouraged to actively participate in for example university choirs, orchestras or theatre groups.

Note that not only the artistic creativity can benefit from this interaction. An additional asset lies in the context of multilingualism, inviting students to express themselves in other languages than their native tongue.

## GOOD PRACTICES

A solid and well-designed strategic plan is the perfect guide to create and define the different action lines that bring the policy into existence. Additional oxygen to increase the viability of this process can be found in the so-called good practices; these include actions, events and procedures that have proven to be productive in the past. In the next few paragraphs we will focus on a number of these success stories. To do so we will use examples described in literature or websites as well as action lines developed in our own universities.

### University Museums: from research to exhibition

Many universities and arts departments in particular closely collaborate with the local museum or museums. Some universities even own one or more museums, permitting them to make use of their special assets for education and research. A fine illustration can be found in the Finnish Museum of Natural History, which operates as an independent research institution under the aegis of the University of Helsinki. The collections include botanical, zoological, geological and paleontological specimens from all over the world, serve research in the fields of biology and geology as well as educational purposes<sup>15</sup>. Another prominent example of world-class collections used as a resource for research, students and members of the public can be found in the University of Cambridge<sup>16</sup>.

### A culture card as a tool for increasing participation

At the beginning of the 2006-2007 academic year, the KU Leuven launched the concept of the Culture Card. By purchasing this card students are given access to an extensive range of cultural activities. These activities are not solely aimed at passive participation but also try to stimulate active cultural involvement. Vital in this project is the active participation of the cultural actors and art houses of the city of Leuven. Thanks to this cooperation a wide spectrum of activities and events can be offered to the student body at reduced rates. An observation worth mentioning is the strong interest in the culture card amongst international scholars. In the academic year 2009-2010 more than 20% of these students were card holders. This corroborates the assumption that creative arts can be a powerful mediator for connecting students of different cultural backgrounds. A similar encouraging observation can be made for students of socially fragile groups as they represent 10% of the card holders, a figure consistent with their overall presence at the university.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.luomus.fi/english/about/>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.cam.ac.uk/museums/>

Apart from the overall beneficial effects (e.g. the links with the art houses and cultural partners; the mosaic of cultural possibilities) these two findings illustrate that the concept of a culture card also adds to the ambition of connecting students of different backgrounds and cultures.

## Culture with(in) the city

A smart and thriving example of cultural cooperation within the context of the local community can be found at the Universiteit Utrecht. An enriching and structural cross-fertilization has been set up by embedding the university programme in the broader framework of the cultural activities of the city. This cooperation materializes in different projects as there are the Cultural Sundays and the Cultural Festival ‘De Beschaving’<sup>17</sup>. This latter festival is located in the Botanical Gardens of the university, in the midst of the university Science Park. In this surprising environment the university Medical Centre and other research groups provide the scientific ingredient of this multifarious programme. Specific scientific topics, touching important societal issues, are brought to the public by top researchers and scientists in an accessible and stirring way. In combination with the artistic programme that opens the scene for young talent, these lectures invite both students and citizens to submerge in the sea of curiosity that symbolizes both science and culture.

## The Faculty STARS: boosting the artistic talent among students

A second and very recent project of the KU Leuven is firmly fixed in the inspiring soil of active participation. The programme endeavors to promote and support talented students in the different arts disciplines, including literature, music, design, fashion, painting, performing arts, photography, dance, etc. A panel of professional artists evaluates the student portfolios. A positive consequence of this procedure is that it strengthens the ties between the university and the cultural organizations in Leuven. The final selection is carried out by the respective deans and the students’ cultural representative. Each selected STAR is matched with a mentor-artist from the Leuven cultural and artistic scene, providing the student with both coaching and real-world exposure to life and work as a professional artist.

## The university of ideas

In his sociological case-study ‘Educating art in a globalizing world’, Pascal Gielen (2006) focuses on *The university of ideas* (UNIDEE) as an exceptional international artist in residence programme. An appealing element of this project are the possible links

<sup>17</sup> The Civilization: <http://www.debeschaving.nl/>

created between artists and the educational system. Or, as the author states: “..., the residents are strongly encouraged to organize artistic projects within a non-artistic environment.” The educational system is labelled as a possible habitat.

## Conclusion

It is not the intention of this paper to present a comprehensive list of good practices. The examples that were elaborated in the previous paragraphs should be considered as teasers that invite the readers to implement good practices from other universities. By scrutinizing the university websites many other good practices can be found. The following list of websites could be a resourceful starting point.

**Leonardo Online:** <http://www.leonardo.info/>

**Universitat de Barcelona:** <http://www.ub.edu/aclt/welcome.htm>

**KU Leuven:** <http://www.kuleuven.be/cultuur/culture/index.htm>

**University College London:** <http://www.thebloomsbury.com/>

**Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München:** [http://www.uni-muenchen.de/studium/stud\\_leben/kunst/uni\\_galerie/index.html](http://www.uni-muenchen.de/studium/stud_leben/kunst/uni_galerie/index.html)

**MIT:** <http://arts.mit.edu/>

**Universiteit Utrecht:** [www.uu.nl/university/utrecht/NL/cultuurenacademie/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.uu.nl/university/utrecht/NL/cultuurenacademie/Pages/default.aspx)



## CONCLUSION

The main objective of the present paper is to reveal the importance of creative arts for modern research-intensive universities, and to inspire decision makers at the LERU members and other universities to establish a strategic policy for creative arts at their institutions.

Clearly, as shown in the different sections of this briefing paper, the firm link between creative arts and science is solidly anchored in the realm of creativity. Bringing together the actors of both worlds leads to inventive perspectives and appealing new ways of thinking. This prospect should not be overlooked but calls for increased interest and attention by university policy makers. In particular the leaders of research universities should (continue to) embrace the possibilities of this unique tool of innovation.

Actually universities need a cultural policy plan as much as they need a policy plan for research, education and internationalization. The paper we present describes a model that can be valuable for designing such a plan. Needless to say that this model is only a framework that needs to be adapted to the constraints and objectives of the individual institutions. In the following items we recapitulate a number of actions which universities wishing to develop or strengthen such a plan could usefully undertake.

- Appoint a designated person, preferably an academic, as Head of Culture. This person takes up the responsibility for the development of the cultural strategy. For a successful functioning a direct link to the head of the university (Rector, President, Vice-Chancellor) is required.
- Link the scientific potential of research departments with the creative capacity of the cultural field (exhibitions, science museums, common projects). This is of particular interest for the science and technology departments as the cooperation between these scientists and dedicated artists provide a perfect application lab for testing new materials.
- Conceive and implement a strategic cultural policy plan based on well-defined objectives and circumstances. For the conception and the elaboration of the plan it is preferable and useful to involve different colleagues. The formation of a specific target group is a valuable option.
- Develop the policy plan according to a model that encompasses the crucial building blocks. The model proposed in this paper offers a suitable framework.
- Confront the students with the creative thinking of the artistic world. This can be achieved both in the classroom (design a specific course) as well as through extracurricular cultural activities.

- An important emphasis of the strategy must be the interaction with the local community (city, region) and its cultural stakeholders (Cultural centres, Museums, Music Halls, Art Houses, Bookshops, Libraries...). Setting up a structural interaction platform with these actors is a valuable strategy.
- Student participation should be a major objective in the policy plan. Both active and passive participation must be stimulated.
- Integration of the international scholars is an essential part of the policy plan.
- Develop a system that facilitates access to the different cultural activities for students and staff members. The creation of a university culture card has shown its merits and is easy to implement.
- Appoint a contact person as cultural officer or liaison in each faculty. This will provide a very versatile and necessary internal network. In a similar context the link to the student body must also be close.

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## ABOUT LERU

LERU was founded in 2002 as an association of research-intensive universities sharing the values of high-quality teaching in an environment of internationally competitive research. The League is committed to: education through an awareness of the frontiers of human understanding; the creation of new knowledge through basic research, which is the ultimate source of innovation in society; the promotion of research across a broad front, which creates a unique capacity to reconfigure activities in response to new opportunities and problems. The purpose of the League is to advocate these values, to influence policy in Europe and to develop best practice through mutual exchange of experience.

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