

Open letter: Sustainability in the Campus The Hague Development Strategy

Date: 8 October 2020

Dear Executive Board and University Council of Leiden University,

We understand that the university is discussing a new Development Strategy and Implementation Plan for Campus The Hague for the next decade (timeline: 2020-2030). We, co-participation and staff of Campus The Hague, applaud the existing attention to sustainability, but are of the opinion that this critical theme should be **more prominently addressed** in the upcoming years.

Finding solutions for the climate and ecological crises requires effective local and international governance strategies. This means sustainability cuts across many (if not all) the programmes offered at the Campus, from Bestuurskunde to Internal Security Studies, from Global Challenges to International Studies. Therefore, in collaboration with Leiden University Green Office (LUGO), we propose the following additions to increase the attention to sustainability at Campus The Hague.

1. We suggest making 'sustainability' one of the core substantive themes (inhoudelijke thema's) of Campus The Hague. – Like the current five themes proposed in chapter two of the document, sustainability is of utmost and growing importance in the next decade. What we do in the next 10-20 years will dictate the future of this planet and human civilization for generations to come. If we are to avoid the significant impacts on environmental and human systems, we will need to see unprecedented transitions across society. The transition will require students with new skills and knowledge on sustainability across many different disciplinary domains. This represents a huge challenge to research and education in keeping up with the depth, breadth, and speed of change and should be a core substantive theme in what we do. *(See page 3 to 4 of the draft strategy.)*

2. We suggest starting one or more research programmes on sustainability with its core in The Hague. – Campus The Hague has the potential to deliver excellent solution-oriented research to sustainability challenges from the expertise located at Campus The Hague. For example, research into climate policy, sustainable cities, the geopolitics of climate change, and environment and public health are just a few examples of how Campus The Hague can be a relevant knowledge partner on sustainability. Such research is happening, but should be further stimulated by means of a research programme with its core that is based in The Hague. *(See page 8 to 10 of the draft strategy.)*

3. We suggest connecting with local partners on sustainability by involving students and staff as knowledge partners to valorise our expertise for sustainable development. Whereas the current draft of the Development Strategy only mentions connecting with the city on justice, safety, technology, health, and internationalisation, we think of sustainability as a large cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary challenge. One that is exceptionally relevant in the international city of peace and justice given ecological and climate upheavals driving large-scale migration, potential conflict, and inequality/injustice. *(See page 5 of the draft strategy.)*

4. We suggest having a climate neutral and circular campus. – The climate and ecological crises demand that we, as Leiden University, show leadership. We must take the environmental and social science research we produce seriously and act accordingly. The Development Strategy shows great accommodation ambitions, but does not specify how this can be realised sustainably. (See page 27 to 29 of the draft strategy.)

We hope you will keep our proposals on sustainability in consideration in the new Development Strategy and Implementation Plan for Campus The Hague. The best time to act on climate change has passed, the second-best time is now. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

*The Faculty Council of Governance and
Global Affairs* (contact person: P.E. Hutten MSc)

*The Faculty Council of Humanities, student
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