



IDEA League Universities 2030

Visions of IDEALiStiC

Imprint

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Table of Content

1	Introduction	3
2	Digitalization	4
2.1	Transforming (Large Scale) Lectures	4
2.2	Video and Basic Courses	4
2.3	Teaching Award	4
2.4	Joint Degrees	5
3	Fellow Feeling	6
3.1	Advertising	6
3.2	Accessibility.....	6
3.3	Championship/academic tournaments.....	6
4	Cluster & Cooperation	7
4.1	Joint degrees.....	7
4.2	Simplified access.....	7
5	Integration	8
5.1	Cultural sensibility	8
5.2	Segregation.....	8
5.3	Buddy Program	9
5.4	Women in Technology.....	10
5.5	Conclusion	10
6	IDEA League & IDEALiStiC	11
6.1	How do we expect our ideas to be handled by the Joint board	11
6.2	How can we work more continuously.....	11
6.3	How can we integrate Chalmers in 2016	12
7	Timeline.....	13
8	Sources.....	14

1 Introduction

At the IDEA League joint board meeting in Zurich 2015 the joint student board meeting, called IDEALiStiC, was asked to create a vision for IDEA League Universities 2030. To fulfil this task the IDEALiStiC conference in December 2015 in Aachen discussed five major aspects, we think are important in the future.

First of all, Digitalization can substantially change the way of teaching and learning. Our universities have introduced countless new teaching formats which are more or less useful. This may also present an opportunity of enabling flexible studying space or less obligatory attendance. The questions you have to ask are dealing with existing digital teaching formats at the universities, a demand for basic education which can be fulfilled through digitalization and the possibility to use digitalization to make studies more flexible. [1]

Because each university has its own specific profile and strengths which make them to top universities of their respective country the strengths need be focused by IDEA League to improve its network and to create new formats which enriches the portfolio of IDEA League, like the joint master programme Geophysics as an excellent example. To cluster and have good cooperation that are suitable for a future we have to ask what field of research/education a university is not offering and can profit by corporations. And how can collaboration on different levels be institutionalized. [1]

Identification with the institute is the desire of administration and also promoted by the student boards. However there is often a lack between wished fellow-/community feeling and reality on each level: university and its subdomains. But especially at IDEA League level there is no feeling to see students from another university as a fellow or colleague. To achieve a fellow feeling you need to ask what could shape the identity of IDEA League and are alumni meetings a good tool to address this topic. [1]

University are their own microcosms. They, too, carry a responsibility to face today's social challenges. This can be maintained on different levels. The increasing number of international students enhances the diversity, but they may not always be as good integrated as desired. On an individual level cultural sensibility is an important soft skill and work qualification which is not always be taught at university and it has to be discussed whether and how this can be maintained. Therefore you have to ask how a university can foster cultural sensibility at your studies and how IDEA League can offer an add-on. [1]

At last, Students are the major group at universities and to ensure that the quality of education at the universities is the best student councils need to be integrated into the workflow. On the university level an integration of the student councils in the quality management is already achieved. The questions are how IDEALiStiC can work more continuously to get heard by the joint board and what does IDEALiStiC expect ideas to be handled by the joint board.

2 Digitalization

The world is changing and we believe that education needs to change, too, if we want to continue offering excellent teaching for our students. Digitalization can substantially change the way of teaching and learning. Our universities have introduced countless new teaching formats which are more or less useful. During the IDEALiStiC Conference in Aachen the following questions were discussed:

- * Which digital teaching format exists at your university?
- * Is there a demand for basic education which can be fulfilled through digitalization?
- * How can we use digitalization to make studies more flexible?

During the conference several interesting ideas arose on digitalization, how they could help with common issues and cooperation opportunities.

2.1 Transforming (Large Scale) Lectures

Traditional lectures with hundreds of students offer little opportunity for individual interaction between students and teaching staff. Especially introductory and foundational courses tend to have a set curriculum, which can easily be recorded and reused. Live streams of lectures and supplemented with direct feedback opportunities (chats, etc.) allow students to access the lectures content independent of the physical limitations of lectures halls. Furthermore students can access course materials in their own time, allowing different learning speeds and individual learning. Parallel to the digital lecture materials, exercise groups should be offered on campus. Professors who do not have to give a weekly lecture, now have more time to offer question hours and to counsel students with their individual problems.

Most students have different learning speeds. Delft will start using FeedbackFruits to cater to student needs. Besides that the student will be less influenced by events that are beyond it's control, an example of this is the death of a relative. FeedbackFruits will allow a lecturer to set different "learning paths", where the program will analyze homework and test results and suggest follow up exercises. That way every students gets a tailored learning path to the same end terms. It will also tremendously help the university and lecturer with learning analytics.

One of the common issues of the IDEA League universities is capacity. Digitalization and Blended learning will help with creating more flexibility, which will empower universities to use their current capacity more efficiently.

2.2 Video and Basic Courses

As IDEALiStiC we value the IDEA League not only as a research alliance, but also as a teaching alliance. "transforming large scale lectures" happens at each university individually. Yet we believe that selected common foundational courses offer valuable opportunities for students, too.

MOOCs with a common curriculum both ease exchange between IDEA League universities and help foster fellow feeling. Furthermore pooling teaching resources allows us to make the most of the very best lecturers the universities have to offer.

Media awareness is crucial to make the most of new digital teaching formats. Although school curricula tend to include media awareness more and more, we consider the average freshmen to be lacking skills regarding the effective and reliable use of new media. We believe it be necessary to offer courses which teach both efficient learning strategies using new media and the effective use of new media for (re-)searching.

2.3 Teaching Award

Excellence deserves recognition. It is a good tradition within each of the IDEA League universities to honor extraordinary teaching. From a student point of view recognizing extraordinary teaching serves to foster a mindset, in which teaching qualification is not just an additional qualification for junior professors but a pivotal qualification for all senior academic staff.

Since we would like to offer more joint degrees, more common courses and shared MOOCs, we believe that teaching at the different universities can be comparable. For the same reasons teaching excellence at one university can have an impact upon students of all of IDEA League. And finally a common teaching award is a valuable resource for any post-graduate aiming to move to a different IDEA League university.

2.4 Joint Degrees

The common applied geophysics master's program is has proven that there is a demand for joint degrees. Similarly we have seen that such a degree is manageable from an organizational point of view.

We would like to introduce similar masters programs in areas of common expertise. We believe that the international focus and the cultural competence gained in such a course of study are more than precious. The IDEA League is in a position to make a unique to students: Learning from the very best and getting to know the professors and research staff from each of the universities provides a valuable opportunities for young professionals.

3 Fellow Feeling

3.1 Advertising

In order to achieve a fellow feeling between the universities, the IDEA league has to be known with as many students as possible. This could mean adding the IDEA league logo and information to all the communication of the universities. Another benefit would be a common feeling of proudness. A fellow feeling between the students can be achieved when all the students are proud to be part of the IDEA-League.

Advertising within groups of students is often effective through word-of-mouth advertising. Therefore the programmes offered by the IDEA-league should reach as many students as possible. The challenge programme for example is only accessible for a small group of the elite students. The IDEA-league should offer one programme which is accessible for all students.

3.2 Accessibility

The IDEA League itself should be comprised of elite European universities which set a high level for their students. However, the exchange between its students should not be prohibited in any way or form. One of the goals of the IDEA League is to promote communication and to expand the network between students. With this said, every student should be given the same opportunity to take advantage of what the IDEA League has to offer.

This starts by making sure that IDEA League is known among the students, which can also be achieved with advertising, nicely explained above. To get to know what this is all about, there has to be a relatively good presence at the university. We have already planned to put road signs at each of the IDEA League universities, pointing in which direction its fellow universities lie and how far away they are. These signs will be placed in a crowded area on campus, in hopes to attract students attention and curiosity.

Right now, the main attraction for being part of this league are the summer schools and the joint Master's in Applied Geophysics. Students part of the IDEA League are exempt from having to take an English language proficiency test, which is a very good start. However, these students should also be given a higher priority than students coming from outside universities. Most definitely should outside students be given a fair chance to get into the program, but giving precedence to an IDEA League student would further strengthen ties within the league; one of the reasons for establishing the league.

Going along with this idea, mobility between the universities should be made much easier. For example, at TU Delft there are certain admission quotas which could be waived for IDEA League students. Making transfers easier in general is a most vital aspect. This could be done by rewarding all credit points acquired at the host university or aiding in ensuring a successful "bridge year" when certain subjects need to be caught up when switching to a different Master's.

In order for the IDEA League to really function as a unit, it needs to be made accessible to more students and to have a focus on students part of IDEA League universities.

3.3 Championship/academic tournaments

In a future IDEA League there are various championships and academic tournaments between the IDEA League universities where students compete athletically and in the research fields of the IDEA League in teams within or across universities.

The basic ideas championships and academic tournaments should address are getting to know each other, the IDEA League universities and exchanging knowledge. As a benefit for the participants in such championships or tournaments an international view on problems in the future globalized world will help to solve problems and to think as a team of IDEA League students. Furthermore participants can network and exchange ideas and knowledge in a competitive and non grade-driven environment. For non participating members of the IDEA League universities it is a good opportunity to see what IDEA League is up to and what other universities can do better than the own university.

4 Cluster & Cooperation

“Naturally exchanging between the IDEA League universities.”

4.1 Joint degrees

Joint degrees are programmes based on the cooperation of two (or more) different universities on the same research subject. It is common that the universities have a complementary area of expertise, which could be within the same research area or in different research areas. An example of this can be found in the cooperation between the TU Delft and the medical faculties of the Erasmus University Rotterdam and University Leiden.

At the moment, is the IDEA League universities only have one joint programme, being the master geophysics. In the future we envision joint bachelor programmes, joint minors and more joint master programmes.

If joint degrees between the IDEA League universities are established, this would be an amazing opportunity for exchange between the universities. The universities each excel in different topics in the same research niche (technology), which offers an opportunity for students to experience the best of each university.

4.2 Simplified access

Nowadays it is complicated for a student to switch university even if the field of study is the same. If a student applies for a consecutive master's program at another IDEA League university, only in some cases students will be accepted without any requirements. To ensure students can switch university between their bachelor's and master's program as intended by the Bologna Process, the IDEA League needs to simplify access for their students. A method to simplify access for exchange students and to ensure they will not be delayed in their studies, is synchronizing the academic year of all IDEA League universities.

5 Integration

In the current globalized world, universities with ambitions to excel are aware of the necessity of a global mindset among students, employees and on board level. Universities begin to internationalise rapidly. With a growing number of international students, the question arises if there should be limitations on the extent of internationalisation of universities. In order to give a founded answer on this question, it is necessary to ask some even more basic questions.

The first question that requires clarity is whether a university has any social obligations to the local society (or government) or to the entire world. If one gives fully favour to the national obligation, in case of limited capacity of the university, national students will not encounter any negative effects of international inflow. On the other hand, if global obligation takes the upper hand, selection measurements can be introduced selecting the 'best student' regardless of the nationality. When selecting, a university should make the decision whether to devote to diversity or to strive for the best students.

In spite of numerous unanswered questions, one observation holds undisputedly: For students to be successful in the international academic or business community, a strong cultural sensibility and cross cultural understanding is crucial.

5.1 Cultural sensibility

Borders disappear and companies are spread over different countries as their operations go global. For this to be possible, knowledge of other cultures is needed. It is likely that a student will face other cultures after his/her graduation. This may be due to the employment of foreign workforce, international clients, or even because of the student's own emigration. Such contexts foster the broadening of a student's view and they consequently seek success elsewhere.

Therefore, cultural sensibility is important not only as a skill set for future business life, but also for the personal development of the student during their studies.

Each university in the IDEA League is aware of the importance of cultural sensibility. Each university also has its own approach to improve this sensibility.

ETH Zurich knows international organisations and an international student support. All of the Bachelor programmes are held in German, but most of the Master programmes are taught in English. However, there are some programmes which are only held in German or which have two tracks: English and German. This causes a separation in national and international students on campus. This also applies to RWTH Aachen, where there is a separate international academy with high tuition fees. English courses are in addition to German language courses. Is this true? Or how otherwise? This is unlike the TU Delft, where all of the Masters are English and even some Bachelors are English or bilingual. Because of this, every student will encounter other cultures at their own campus. Cultural diversity is something the university is actively promoting, clinging to the goal of achieving 40% of internationals on the Masters' level. The TU Delft also has international associations, founded and managed by (international) students.

To improve the cultural sensibility of the students, the university has a responsibility in supporting the acquisition of the following skills: Communication, open mindedness, cultural knowledge, flexibility and teamwork. These skills may be acquired on campus, when national students meet international students in projects, or off campus through exchange and study projects abroad. The university should provide enough international, social projects, so that students can work on their personal development besides their study. The IDEA League partner universities could work together by offering joint projects abroad, for example: Zurich, Aachen and Delft meet in China. In such a project the knowledge of each university is combined, while learning about other cultures and their differences (both the differences between western cultures and the differences between western other cultures). The university can also offer cultural lessons for incoming and outgoing students, to prepare the students and optimize their exchange.

5.2 Segregation

By improving the cultural sensibility of the students, not only the personal development is improved, but also a quite different matter is improved: segregation. Despite our global mindset we are still facing problems with the differences between races. At the university this often occurs by innocent jokes or

irritation because of a misunderstanding of the cultural differences. Segregation or even racism is not a big problem at our universities, but there are cases in which students can judge each other on their race and not on their personal qualities (selecting the project groups, integration in classrooms etcetera). By improving the mutual understanding, more respect for other cultures is created and thereby the misunderstandings are minimized.

5.3 Buddy Program

The Buddy Program is an initiative in which national students are coupled with international students to enhance cultural understanding, cross-cultural integration and local know-how experience for foreign students. National student volunteers are assigned to a group of international students or a foreign individual student in order to help with several aspects of the student life.

First, cultural understanding. The coupled students can participate in cultural activities typical to the place or country the hosting University is situated, as group or as couple. In doing so, the cultural exchange is of course bilateral; local students get a notion of a foreign culture and international students get a first-hand experience of the culture of their new place of residence. At activities, Buddy Program participants will find themselves in a socially open setting with people eager to connect to new people, improving cross-cultural integration. At last, the local students are able to help the international students with practical question. How to enrol for courses, where to look for a room, or advice on local activities for instance.

The ETH Zürich, RWTH Aachen and TU Delft all have their own version of the Buddy Program where the concept is generally the same. The implementation, effectiveness and the popularity, however, differ much between the three universities.

At the TU Delft, the Buddy Program was introduced in 2013 as a student initiative. The program rapidly gained popularity within the international student community but the successfulness among Dutch students stayed behind. In the current situation it is not possible to match one Dutch student with one international student since there are not sufficient Dutch applicants for the program. To increase the number of Dutch volunteers, the student organisers of the program will focus more on students returning from an internship or study abroad the coming years. For 2016, the wish arises to introduce the Buddy Program as an integral part of the International Introduction Week. At the end of this week, the Buddy Program will continue by organised activities throughout the year. Noticeable is that the whole program is based on voluntary work of students, even the organisation committee consists solely of students.

The RWTH Aachen has established a remarkably successful Buddy Program over the last seven years. Every new international student can register for the 1 semester program and be matched with a Buddy on a one-to-one basis. Subscription is realized via a dedicated website where preferences for a Buddy can be indicated. The International Office is responsible for the organisation of the program. Every local Buddy has to follow a mandatory intercultural training. For the foreign Buddy's, English language courses are organized. The duties of being a Buddy, among other activities, are: welcoming the international student at the main train station, a city and campus tour, and searching for an accommodation. Last semester 766 pairs were matched. And even more remarkable, 98% of the national Buddy students would like to participate in the program again. Where other universities have trouble finding local Buddy's, Aachen has a noteworthy strategy that has been proven successful. National participants of the program receive a certificate after completion of the program. It is no secret that this certificate is highly appreciated when applying for a study abroad.

At Zürich, the international Buddy Program is run by the local ESN group (Erasmus Students Network), which is a student's association collaborating with VSETH. The ESN offers a wide range of events and activities for international students to meet and connect with local students, such as the mentoring program, international pub nights and field trips. Although they mainly target mobility students, students from every university in Zürich are welcome to participate. ESN is content with its program, because every international student who requests a mentor is assigned to a local student and as surveys indicate, participants are satisfied. It is common that mentoring students take care of more than one international student. Due to the fact that 166 international students have enrolled in the program since autumn 2015, VSETH wishes to enlarge the work force behind it, as the program services students from ETH Zürich, University of Zürich, Zürich University of Teacher Education and Zürich University of Arts. Combining the total number of international students from each of these 4 universities, approximately less than 20% of

all exchange students apply for the Buddy Program. Our goal is to set up a larger, sustainable Buddy Program, using TU Delft and RWTH Aachen as examples.

5.4 Women in Technology

Besides the integration of foreign students, it is important to foster women in technology. The authors see an increase of the women to men ratio at the technical universities. Technology is becoming more popular among women. Still some engineering programs only receive a large minority of women. The IDEALiStiC members interpret this as the consequence of historically grown stereotypes causing a still existent association of technical studies to men. This is an effect that may only be beaten by time, but that can be speeded up by certain incentives.

The TU Delft is base to the “Women in Science” group DEWIS. This organisation is committed to gender diversity, gender equality and gender awareness. There are special introduction days for female high school students at the university but also at student organisations, to show these pre-students how great it is to be a woman in science and engineering contexts. This so called ladies night is a small initiative, but it lowers the barrier for women to peek into technical universities as the TU Delft.

IDEALiStiC advises a thoughtful strategy on the attraction of women to technical universities to realize a change in society.

5.5 Conclusion

At the IDEALiStiC conference of December 2015 the three present student representative organisations of the TU Delft, RWTH Aachen and ETH Zürich came to the conclusion that an IDEA League strategy on stimulation of integration does not have any additional value over a university specific strategy. Similar struggles and questions around internationalization arise but there is no added value of synchronizing strategies. To stimulate integration, the best approach for the IDEA League universities would be to exchange good practices such as the successful Buddy Program of the RWTH Aachen or the Women in Technology events of the TU Delft. At last, the collaboration IDEALiStiC would like to emphasize the necessity of enriching the present-day student with a global mindset and cross cultural understanding.

6 IDEA League & IDEALiStiC

We see ourselves as the student representatives of the IDEA League. As such we help the IDEA League Board with feedback from the student perspective and come up with our own plans for fruitful partnership. We want to make sure that both benefit as well as the universities from this. When an IDEA League student visits another IDEA League University, he or she should feel at home, just like at his/her home university. When one is going to an IDEA League university he or she should feel welcome as if it was their own campus. We can learn from each other's universities in many ways and together so we will search for new tools of teaching and research in the League's IL universities, which we could implement in all of them to ensure a better learning experience for all students.

In this paper you will find some of our ideas which will improve our collaboration, and we hope that together we can make the IDEA League a name with recognition and a fluid student exchange. For this goal we will give a helping hand and expect feedback from the IDEA League board regarding our ideas.

6.1 How do we expect our ideas to be handled by the Joint board

In general we would like there to be a consultation process for some topics like teaching and some general strategic issues concerning the IDEA League or the IDEALiStiC itself. The procedure is inspired by the consultation process ("Vernehmlassungsverfahren") in the Swiss political system. [2]

The questions on the matter should be sent to all the organizations (Delft, Zurich, Aachen and Chalmers Student Unions) together with a due date. We, the students unions, will then discuss the topic among ourselves and then send a report with our answer to the joint board. The specific consultation period doesn't have to include an IDEALiStiC conference per se as we can also discuss certain topics in-between the different conferences.

Sometime after this process we would like to get some information on what has been done with our input. This should include a short summary, which parts of our ideas have been adopted and which ones have been rejected as well as a short explanation why it has been handled this way.

6.2 How can we work more continuously

As the members of the different boards frequently change, information gathered during the idealistic meetings might get lost and the same topics will be discussed again without knowing about former conclusions. Because of the differences between universities problems won't be discussed on a deep level as too much time is spent on explaining the situation at the different universities. These problems can be tackled by working on our vision, better documentation and better understanding between the universities. This will be discussed in the next couple of paragraphs.

First of all, to assemble and discuss a topic without a clear purpose or vision is difficult. By formulating, having and knowing about the long-term vision of Idealistic and IDEA League we have a better sense of purpose during the meetings. Setting clear and achievable goals will help us focus. These goals need to be evaluated throughout the years. We can start our meetings with looking at what we already have achieved or discussed and how to move forward.

For this to work we need to document our visions and goals as well as the outcomes of our discussions and information about the joint problems. These documents need to be available for everyone in the different boards.

We've noticed that for a couple of our subjects the discussions were difficult, as the problems and organisation of the topic were too different. As a result, time was spent on explaining the situation of our own university rather than trying to find a solution or a common position. To work better and more continuously we need to know more about what's happening at the different universities. We've decided to send each other updates, about our university as well as our work. Before a meeting, the boards can send a brief resume of the status quo of the subjects at their universities.

On an organisational level, it would be better to make more decisions and plan more over skype with a small group of students. The boards need to evaluate for themselves who is responsible for Idealistic and what responsibilities and tasks that entails.

6.3 How can we integrate Chalmers in 2016

The participating IDEALiStiC members from Aachen, Delft and Zürich strongly encourage the Chalmers Studentkår (Chalmers Student Union) to take part in the IDEALiStiC conference. The conferences and the student perspective of the IDEA League will only be complete with their participation, as it currently lacks the point of view of an entire part of the IDEA League student culture.

The IDEALiStiC estimates the Studentkår's reasons to not take part to be a missing realization of the importance of international networks such as the IDEA League and/or of international education. The authors estimate the value of the latter to largely overcome the cost in time and resources for taking part or organizing an IDEALiStiC conference.

During the 2015/2 conference, the participating IDEALiStiC members elaborated a series of plans with which the authors plan to slowly, but steadily integrate the Studentkår into the active members of the IDEALiStiC.

As a psychological preparation and - to a certain share - inception, we plan the IDEALiStiC plans to stay in contact with Ben Kadereit, a former AStA Aachen board member, who will be studying at the University of Chalmers in 2016. He will try to introduce the Studentkår to the ideas and benefits of the IDEALiStiC in order to convince them of actively taking part in the conferences.

In parallel the Studentkår will be invited to the upcoming conference in Zürich by means of personal invitations (through bilateral Skype sessions with each active IDEALiStiC student union) and with support from the board of Chalmers University as well as from the other IDEA League universities and the administration.

Willemijn Dicke has pointed out that the IDEALiStiC will be invited to Chalmers University at the end of 2016, where the IDEA League Joint Board will meet, visit the campus and, in particular, the Chalmers Konferens och Restauranger (Chalmers Conference & Restaurants). The latter are joint-stock companies owned by the Studentkår, which develop and create conditions for meetings on both Chalmers' campus, Johanneberg and Lindholmen. It includes several restaurants and cafés as well as conference venues. [3]

Following the mentioned meeting at Chalmers University, the IDEALiStiC hopes to be able to have convinced the Studentkår of the importance of their participation in the conferences. Finally, a family reunion would hence be imminent.

7 Timeline

- Feb. 2016: parallel invitations and Skype meetings to/with the Chalmers Student Union
- Mar. 2016: IDEALiStiC conference and Joint Board Meeting in Zürich
- Oct./Nov. 2016: IDEALiStiC conference and Joint Board Meeting in Göteborg
- 2017: Different learning speeds & IDEA League Teaching Award
- 2018: IDEA League Buddy Program
- 2019: Championship/academic tournaments
- 2020: 5 basic courses open for all students of IDEA League (e.g. statics, dynamics, calculus...)
- 2025: Same academic calendar

8 Sources

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