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**To** Executive Board  
Universiteit Utrecht  
Postbus 80125  
3508 TC Utrecht

**Date** May 19, 2015

**Subject** Status of bursary PhD candidates

**CC** University Council  
Chinese PhD Council CUSA

Dear Executive Board,

We would like to draw your attention to the problems that especially bursary PhD candidates of Utrecht University encounter. These PhD candidates neither have an employee status nor a student status within the University, causing them to find themselves disadvantaged legally and socially.

Bursary PhD candidates, especially those from abroad, encounter problems with regard to housing. They are not able to make use of housing facilities for students because they are no students. At the same time, they are not able to find accommodation through the social and private rental sector because they do not have a labour contract due to their non-employee status. This has a significant impact on their functioning as a researcher. Moreover, much relevant information about rights and duties and other practical issues with regard to the University is hard to access. Bursary PhD candidates often do not have access to this information because they neither have an employee status nor a student status, whereas non-Dutch PhD candidates find themselves confronted with this information not provided in English. With regard to Chinese bursary PhD candidates, the Chinese PhD council CUSA has written a report that mentions many of these problems. CUSA has discussed this report with Prout and also with the Executive Board recently. Prout is glad to hear that the Executive Board wants to address these problems, but also emphasizes that these problems do not only apply to Chinese bursary PhD candidates but also to other, both international and Dutch bursary PhD candidates. Therefore, we hope you address these problems in an integrative way.

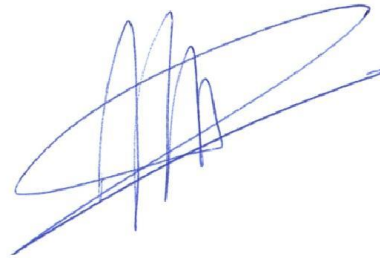
The recent elections for the University Council and Faculty Councils made clearly visible a second problem. Because bursary PhD candidates neither have an employee status nor a student status, they do not have a right to vote. They consequently do not have influential power on decision-making that relates to research and other issues that concerns PhD candidates. A second group of PhD candidates that turned out to do not have the right to vote consists of PhD candidates employed by the UMCU. Recently, two Prout members (Jeroen Goudsmit on behalf of the University Council and Remco Molenhuis on behalf of the O&O council of the UMCU) sent a letter to the Executive Board in which they raised this issue. Prout supports the content of this letter, but urges the Executive Board to address the problem of not being able to vote for both bursary PhD candidates and PhD candidates from the UMCU at the same time.

Prout welcomes the statement of the Executive Board in which it indicated not to participate in the bursary experiment, as initiated by the Minister of Education. At the same time, there are already hundreds of bursary PhD candidates that are disadvantaged legally and socially within the University. With regard to voting rights, this is also true for PhD candidates employed by the UMCU. Therefore, Prout would like to see the Executive Board striving for bursary PhD candidates and PhD candidates employed by the UMCU being given the same rights and resources as their fellow PhD candidates employed by the Utrecht University. We look forward to your reply and are happy to think of possible solutions together in a constructive way.

Sincerely, on behalf of Prout,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Nico Dogterom', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nico Dogterom  
secretary

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Marco Derks', with a large, stylized loop at the top and several vertical strokes.

Marco Derks  
representative