



## Blog from Abroad

### Day One



The Stadsschouwburg & Philharmonie is an historic theatre and concert hall which regularly hosts concerts, ballets and orchestras in Haarlem, the Netherlands. For several days this week, it will also host the week-long seminar we are experiencing alongside graduate students from the University of Georgia's Institute of Higher Education. In addition to the performance space, the Philharmonie also features meeting and entertainment space that may be utilized by individuals or groups.

Representatives from the University of Twente's Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) secured an area for our group, and we spent the day learning from administrators with expertise in European higher education. We started with Prof. Harry de Boer explaining the history and current state of the European Union (EU) and ended with Prof. Jon File, former CHEPS director, discussing higher education governance among EU institutions.

Although many of the European policies and procedures are different than the United States, there are many similarities. For example, resource allocation, academic reputation and faculty engagement appear to be universal.

## Day Two



Today was chock full of adventures for the graduate students from the University of Georgia's Institute of Higher Education. Organizers from the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) at the University of Twente in the Netherlands set up a series of special tours and activities for our group.

The students started with a morning seminar that included a lecture and panel discussion. The lecture focused on Leiden University, the oldest institution of higher learning in the Netherlands, and the panel highlighted differences between the former Soviet Union countries of Estonia, Lithuania and the Czech Republic.

Along with the students, we learned the impact of Communism on nations varied greatly, and it uniquely impacted higher education. Many once state-controlled institutions continue to recover more than two decades after their independence. Also, we learned Leiden was founded in 1575 as a "Bastion of Freedom." It is an international research university with a large medical centre and campuses in both Leiden and The Hague.

The Hague is a city on the North Sea, and is home to the Dutch parliament and the Peace Palace. After touring both Leiden University and the surrounding community, we were treated to a special behind-the-scenes experience at the palace. The palace was completed in 1913, and was a response to the wars and conflicts that plagued society in the 1800s. American steel magnate Andrew Carnegie provided funds for the facility, and the Carnegie Foundation continues to support its activities, which are meant to promote peace and justice between and among countries around the world.

## Day Four



As we near the conclusion of our visit to the Netherlands with graduate students from the University of Georgia's Institute of Higher Education, today we participated in a series of presentations focused on the structure of higher education in Europe. Organizers from the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) here at the University of Twente discussed the country's binary system that includes research universities and universities of applied sciences. The former are quite comparable to the 14 SEC member institutions, and there is no direct American equivalent to the latter, making that quite a lively discussion amongst the students.

The host venue for our session was InHolland, a Dutch university of applied sciences with six campuses and a total of 30,000 students, including 4,000 on the Haarlem campus where this week-long seminar is behind held. InHolland offers bachelor's degrees, master's degrees and is engaged in applied research initiatives. The overarching goal is to "educate the new European professionals for the knowledge society."

Within the context of the binary system, our group also received an overview of the entire educational system in the Netherlands, which begins with children entering primary school by age 5 and being tracked into either a higher education or vocational track by about age 13, based on recommendations from teachers, an evaluation of test scores and parental engagement. Once students graduate the secondary level, they may take additional courses that prepare them for the labor market or begin an academic degree program.

In listening to the comments from UGA students, it appears that although the American system is more diverse in the types of institutions available and the way students may access those institutions, like other areas reviewed this week, we face many of the same challenges as our European counterparts.

## Day Five



The University of Georgia's Institute of Higher Education summer seminar in the Netherlands has ended, and we are thrilled to have had an opportunity to participate with the UGA graduate students.

The final component of the program was a simulation exercise in which teams of students were asked to review and adjust the admissions standards for their assigned universities in the fictitious country of Imaginalia. They were given important details about the universities and were strongly encouraged to use the information they had gleaned from the week's presentations on higher education in a host of European nations to shape their decision-making.

To succeed in the game, as it was also described by Prof. Jon File from the Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) from the University of Twente, teams needed to consider cost implications in increasing or decreasing enrollments, labor market trends related to certain programs, past student performance and the university mission in making their recommendations to the Imaginalia Minister of Education.

Although there were no right or wrong answers in the exercise, CHEPS facilitators were quick to point out instances in which American practices infiltrated the team's approaches in ways that might have been harmful in Imaginalia's environment or impracticable in the European context.

Following the simulation, both CHEPS and UGA representatives offered final remarks (including clarifying expectations for the students' final assignment) and left the students to explore the city of Haarlam before returning to the U.S., and to the remainder of their own academic program.