


Towards an International Campus:  
The Struggle of a Specialized Dutch  
Institution to Internationalize its Services


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TILBURG UNIVERSITY  UNIVERSITY

Understanding Society

## Set the Scene

1. The Question: what needs to be solved?
2. The Context: Tilburg University
3. The Program: Towards an International Campus and its four domains.
4. The Results: and what did we learn



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## 1. The Question

- International Strategy is in place
- Are international students and staff satisfied?
- Basic question: do they feel at home?
- This program did not focus on education and research aspects

Purpose of the program

“To make international students and international employees feel welcome and at home”

## 2. The Context: Tilburg University

- Founded in 1927
- Fully accredited as research university

*Specialized in*

- Economics
- Business
- Law
- Social Sciences
- Psychology
- Humanities
- Theology



## City of Tilburg

- Situated in the south of the Netherlands
- In one of the fastest growing economic regions of the Netherlands
- 6<sup>th</sup> largest city in the Netherlands
- Cultural city
- 210.000 inhabitants
- 25.000 students



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## Some Figures 2014: Students

Total Students Tilburg University	12113	
Graduate Students	4887	
International Graduate Students	754	16%
Undergraduate Students	6477	
International Undergraduate Students	484	7.5%
Nationalities	95	



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## Some Figures 2014: Programs

Bachelor Programs	19
English	5

BA/MA Degrees Granted	4285
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Master Programs	48
English	27
Research Master	7

MA Degrees Granted	2608
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Total English Taught Programs	39
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PhD Programs	5
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## Some Figures 2014: Staff

Total Staff	1500
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Full Professor	167
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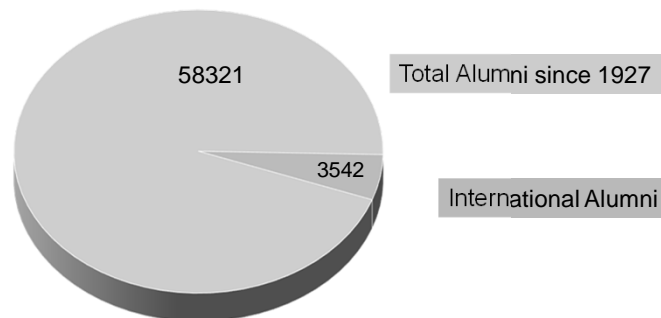
Academic Staff	850
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International Academic Staff	220
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## Some Figures 2014: PhD's

Total PhD Students	323
International PhD Students	41%
PhD Degrees	132

## Some Figures 2014: Alumni



### 3. The Program: Towards an International Campus

#### Purpose

“To make international students and international employees feel welcome and at home”

### Program Towards an International Campus

- Program officially ran from 2007 – 2013
- At the start and half way workshops with international students and staff to discuss needs
- Practical: implementation of projects, workshops, training, hands-on practices, change and improve services etc.
- Integrated approach
- Steering group with stakeholders, chaired by Rector Magnificus
- Yearly budget
- Reporting to stakeholders and university council
- Not only international community will benefit, all students and staff
- One program manager responsible
- Defined four domains: language, culture, integration and services
- Involvement of ALL departments and ALL student organisations
- Learn from examples in Denmark, Sweden etc.

## Domain 1 - Language

### How do we communicate on campus?

- Dutch/English as language of instruction, of production and in social context students and employees
- Simple checklist: what language do we use?

### Outcome:

- Dutch only (rare)
- English only (often)
- Dutch and English (often – with either one in summary)

## Domain 1 - Language

### Dutch

- (Free) Courses for students and employees

### (Use of) English

- English Language Assessment for all employees is mandatory since 2009
- (Free) Courses for students and employees
- Signage on campus: only English
- Name of institution, schools, buildings etc

## English, unless?

# GENDER

Male vs Female

# MARKETING

*Gender*  
*Cross-cultural*

**Battle of the sexes**

Costs: €3,- Dutch Students only Tickets: €102  
 Free barrel of beer 5th of October 19:30  
 Goodie bag Café Philip

**P&G** **Philip** **MARS**

## Domain 2 – Culture

### Difference in culture = difference in communication?

- Create cultural or international awareness

### International Awareness training

- Employees
  - For academics and non-academics
- Outgoing Exchange students
  - Mandatory workshop on intercultural awareness
- Degree students
  - In degree programs (Liberal Arts and Sciences, Economics)
  - In specific courses (Cross-Cultural Psychology etc)
  - For student/study organisations



## Domain 3 - Integration

### Integration is a difficult change process

- On and off campus
- At social and academic level

### Integration – examples of implemented project and changes

- Tilburg Orientation Program – introduction program for all new incoming students
- International classroom - group work set up
- Role of student & study organisations
- Buddy system for employees and students
- Host family project in the city
- Integrated alumni approach

## Domain 4 – Change in Services

### Services

- Inventory of accessibility of all services for (international) students and employees

### Services - changes over the years as a result of the program

- Longer opening hours library and sports center (evenings, weekends and holidays)
- Catering services
- Pastoral care
- Career services for international students (but needs more improvement!)
- Volunteer work possibilities for international students at university and city
- Yearly teacher meetings on international classroom issues
- Meet the world (bi-weekly lunch discussion program on international issues)
- Language café (bi-weekly) to speak and learn new language
- Support services in the city: from the city hall to (cultural) activities
- etc

## 4. The Results and Learning Points

### Results

- Acceptance that English being used more often outside the classroom
  - “Medezeggenschap” is still a problem
- Commitment from across the schools, staff and students
- Awareness of constant change process
- All students and staff profit from the changes not only the international community
- International Student Barometer clearly shows increased satisfaction on various aspects
  - Improvement is still needed in some areas such as career services and on integration
- Employee survey shows increased satisfaction as well
  - Improvement on integration needed
- Awareness of rethinking providing services and there are more, new, better and different services

## 4. The Results and Learning Points

### Important for the success

- Connect to overall strategy not only the ‘international’ part
- Integrated approach
- Understand that there will always be resistance – at all levels
- Long term commitment – change takes time
- Financial commitment – matched funding
- Attach to the stakeholders – feed back and involvement in next steps
- Be flexible over time
- Commitment from all stakeholders within the institution
- Benefits for whole university community - not only international
- Involvement of local community
  
- Continuity after the official end of the program