



Annual Report 2015-2016

University College Alumni Association, February 01, 2016.

1 About the UCAA

The University College Alumni Association (UCAA) is the official representative body for all alumni who have graduated from University College Utrecht (UCU). UCU was founded in 1997 and is the pioneer college in Liberal Arts and Sciences in the Netherlands. UCU, as the Honours College of Utrecht University, has an established alumni network which members are spread around the globe. UCAA is an independent foundation (*stichting*) established by the alumni to facilitate the connection within its members and also among members and UCU community as a whole. The board of UCAA, consisting of five members, is in charge of determining and pursuing the goals and ambitions of UCAA.

2 Message from the UCAA Chair

Somaye Dehban (Dutch/Iranian), Class of 2007, MA: Comparative Women's Studies in Culture and Politics, founder of Dehban Consultancy

For the UCAA, 2015 was a year of moving a step closer to sustainability and securing income from external sources. We have reached out to form partnerships with organisations outside of the UCU/UU sphere, which has been successful; although it requires further nurturing and maintenance which is on the agenda of the UCAA for 2016. This is a shift we have been working on for the last few years, and we have reached the last stretch of our journey towards becoming a more professional operation. The UCAA is a collaborative effort aimed at cultivating strong relations between UCU and its alumni and in order to ensure its continued survival, we have focused this year on expanding and improving on our activities and events. This year, we have strengthened our workings as a foundation and team, working together and ensuring that knowledge and ideas are passed on between boards, rather than have them stay with the individual board members responsible.

My personal goal, stays the same: creating a fund that would eventually benefit the prospective students as well as the alumni. This goal requires not only commitment but also – even more importantly – dedication to the college community.

3 UCAA ambitions

The UCAA's ambitions can be divided into five categories:

- Identification: to know who alumni are, what they do, and how to reach them.
- Bonding: to facilitate ongoing contact between alumni.
- Involvement: to assist alumni to contribute to UCU, financially or otherwise.
- Opportunities: to provide alumni with opportunities fitting with their needs and interests.
- Representation: to represent alumni interests before UCU and third parties



4 UCAA Strategic Outlook 2015-2020

Last year, we noted a renewed interest within the UCU community and College Hall in the UCU alumni. With the ever-growing alumni base, the UCAA took this opportunity to focus anew on its core mission: to build a strong and active network of alumni that engages in a multitude of relations, both within and outside that network. Central to this approach was and is the effort to shape and foster the UCU alumni identity.

However, we also recognised that the alumni community is no longer one homogenous group. Rather, we identified two general archetypes of alumni: the *young alumni* (roughly up to age 30) and *experienced alumni* (older than 30). These groups have different expectations from UCU's alumni network and also have different things to offer. Therefore, the UCAA has begun differentiating between these two groups to offer more focused activities, in line with the different lifestyle, opportunities, and interests of those groups. We will continue in this vein, expanding upon the foundations that have now been put down.

5 UCAA Events in 2015

In 2015, the three annual UCAA events took place successfully:

- The New Year's Drinks, where alumni from many different years – though mostly more recent graduates – come together.
- The PubQuiz in March, which was organized on the same day as the College Hall alumni event, as a collaborative effort to bring alumni back to campus;
- The Summer BBQ in June, where we traditionally welcome the new UCU graduates into the alumni community, in an effort to establish alumni involvement right from the start.

Next to these events, we were also involved in the following:

- The Career Conference, where the UCAA organized a session on entrepreneurship, inviting alumni to come and share their experiences. This was, however, the last year that we will be participating in the Career Conference;
- The TEDxUU event, where we assisted the organizing team in finding prospective speakers;
- The setting up of a series of small-scale events on the topic of career coaching, which will be co-hosted by the U-fonds.

6 Online Platform

The UCAA alumni blog is a project which follows in the footsteps of both Post Magazine and previous attempts to digitalize the Post. The previous attempts to digitalize have been unsuccessful, thus the UCAA board is trying a new approach: the creation of an editorial team only responsible for the set-up and maintenance of the blog. We also decided to have a dedicated blog-team to promote self-sustenance and independence from the UCAA board.

The aim of the blog is to be an interactive platform where alumni create a tangible online community reminiscent of their experiences at UC. An online space of reflection on what University College Utrecht means to alumni, and an opportunity to share what alumni are doing at the moment, linking their experiences back to UCU. Furthermore, the blog offers opportunities of creating and maintaining networks with other alumni. By fostering a shared alumni identity, it facilitates connections between UCU itself and the alumni community, as



well as it helps the alumni association develop a more active alumni network, who are more responsive to alumni events and more engaged in the alumni community.

7 Post Magazine

The 10th edition of Post Magazine came out in December, which we celebrated in various ways. The final product was sent to companies, to inform them of the possibilities for collaborating with the UCAA and working with UCU alumni. We also sent it to the parents of alumni living in the Netherlands to tell them about the opportunities open to them to help sustain the alumni network. This edition was a big achievement, with contributions ranging all the way to members of editorial boards of Post Magazine's predecessor, the QuaQuaVersal.

8 Finances

This section concerns the financial performance of the UCAA in the 'long financial year' 2015. In 2015, the UCAA board to transition its financial administration from an academic calendar-based year (running from September 1st until August 31st) into a regular calendar-based year (running from January 1st until December 31st). The reason to do was simple: this is the standard practice in almost all firms and organizations in the Netherlands. The key advantage of this new financial administration is that it is easier to align the UCAA's financial management with the schedules of its key financial partners, including UCU. The last 'academic calendar year' of the UCAA was 2013-2014, ending on August 31st 2014. The UCAA used the common accountancy practice of an extended or 'long financial year' to complete the transition while keeping all expense periods covered. The UCAA's long financial year 2015 ran from September 1st 2014 until December 31st 2015. The new financial year will run from January 1st, 2016 until December 31st, 2016.

8.1 Income and expense patterns and overhead

The income and expense patterns of the UCAA during the long financial year of 2015 have been stable, with one exception (Post Magazine). The Association has maintained a similar expenses pattern on its events as it did during the 2013-14 financial year, with minor fluctuations for specific events but no major derivation on the whole. A number of new donors registered this year, but some donors from earlier years also decided to cancel their donation, leading to an overall modest increase in revenue through donations.

With regards the expenses on Post magazine, it has to be noted that these have been very steep in the long financial year of 2015. Looking ahead, the financial sustainability of this pattern is questionable and would likely lead to liquidity problems per December 2017. From a treasury perspective, it would be wise to discontinue funding the second edition of Post magazine out of own pocket as soon as Winter 2016, or seek alternative means of funding. We have started attracting external sponsors. While this is a long-term process, we are positive that we will find enough sponsors to cover these costs. As for the option to discontinue the Winter editions of Post Magazine, at the time of writing this report no conclusive decision had been reached yet.

On the positive side, the UCAA has managed to significantly improve its overhead to expenses ratio. This ratio expresses the percentage of the UCAA's overhead to its total expenses. Overhead includes travel costs for board members, service fees of the association (e.g. bank,



webhosting, etc.) and other miscellaneous expenses. For the financial year 2013-14 this overhead percentage was 19.9%. For the long financial year of 2015 it has been reduced to 9.8%. Although it should not be expected to reach any lower, an overhead of less than 10% is a solid achievement for an association such as the UCAA.

9 UCAA Board 2014-2015

Chair – Somaye Dehban ('07)
Treasurer – Thijs Olthof ('14)
Secretary – Tereza Stupková ('13)
Public Relations Officer – Marina Lazeri ('13)
Events Coordinator – Esther Kieft ('11)