

Exit, Cynicism or Voice?

Strategies against the near privatization of academic education: Lessons from the Verontruste VU'ers.

Boris Slijper

Lecturer Sociology
VU University
0,7 FTE, permanent
contract



Lecturer Political Science
UvA University
0,3 FTE, temporary
contract

The near-privatization and the results

- Competition between universities
 - Individual competition within the university
 - Professional management
 - Instrumentalization of research and education
- 1. Publish-or-perish culture:** production of irrelevant articles
 - 2. Reputation management:** window dressing by communication offices and demands for corporate loyalty
 - 3. Educational success rates measured in EC:** production of degree's leading to credential inflation
 - 4. Demands for efficiency in education:** abolishment of tutorials, smaller courses and smaller programs

A Short History of Verontruste VU-ers

April 2012

- First series of Public Meetings

May 2012

- Published Manifesto “Decolonize the VU”, open letter to students, Facebookgroup and Blog
- 23-may Manifestation at public assembly of the Works Council (OR) with the Board. Negotiations over the Reorganization plan.

June

- Second Manifestation (reaction of the Executive Board)
- Petition on Petities.nl (1052 people signed)

Juli

- Combined meeting with OR and Unions, Press coverage



The poster features a central graphic of a blue eagle with its wings spread, set against a white background. The eagle is composed of a grid of squares, giving it a digital or pixelated appearance. The word "MANIFESTATIE" is written vertically in white capital letters on both the left and right sides of the eagle graphic. Below the eagle, the text "Verontruste VU'ers Manifestatie" is written in large, bold, white letters. Underneath this, the date and time "23 mei 2012 om 11:15 | Atrium, Medische Faculteit" are listed. A QR code is located on the right side of the poster. At the bottom, there is a list of values: "De VU is van ons allemaal!" followed by "Medezeggenschap", "Visie", and "Hart voor wetenschap: Kennis, Onderwijs, Onderzoek". Below this list, it says "Aansluitend Openbare Vergadering OR en CvB over de bezuinigingsplannen". At the very bottom, there are two lines of small text: "Manifest © www.advavas.vu.nl/opinies/1749-verontruste-vu-ers.html" and "Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/379785065389962/", along with a small Facebook logo.

MANIFESTATIE

MANIFESTATIE

**Verontruste VU'ers
Manifestatie**

23 mei 2012 om 11:15 | Atrium, Medische Faculteit

De VU is van ons allemaal!

- Medezeggenschap
- Visie
- Hart voor wetenschap:
Kennis, Onderwijs, Onderzoek

Aansluitend Openbare Vergadering OR en CvB over de bezuinigingsplannen

Manifest © www.advavas.vu.nl/opinies/1749-verontruste-vu-ers.html
Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/379785065389962/



A Short History of Verontruste VU-ers

August

- More press, questions in parliament by Jasper van Dijk (SP)

September

- Alternative Opening Academic Year
- Short presentations before lectures
- Invited by Rector Magnificus

October

- 4th October Protest Breakfast before office of Board
- 31 oktober **Unions reach agreement with the VU, and the OR withdraws its case** at the “Ondernemingskamer”.

November - now

- Unions and OR monitors the agreements
- VU'er focussed on “concrete alternatives”



The poster features a central blue graphic of a stylized bird or winged figure. The word 'MANIFESTATIE' is written vertically in white on both the left and right sides of the graphic. Below the graphic, the text 'Verontruste VU'ers Manifestatie' is written in large white letters. Underneath, it says '23 mei 2012 om 11:15 | Atrium, Medische Faculteit'. A list of bullet points follows: 'De VU is van ons allemaal!', 'Medezeggenschap', 'Visie', and 'Hart voor wetenschap: Kennis, Onderwijs, Onderzoek'. A QR code is located to the right of this list. At the bottom, it says 'Aansluitend Openbare Vergadering OR en CvB over de bezuinigingsplannen' and provides website and Facebook information.

MANIFESTATIE

MANIFESTATIE

**Verontruste VU'ers
Manifestatie**

23 mei 2012 om 11:15 | Atrium, Medische Faculteit

De VU is van ons allemaal!

- Medezeggenschap
- Visie
- Hart voor wetenschap:
Kennis, Onderwijs, Onderzoek

Aansluitend Openbare Vergadering OR en CvB over de bezuinigingsplannen

Manifest © www.advalvas.vu.nl/opinie/1749-verontruste-vu-ers.html
Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/379785065389962/





Lessons

- More people than expected were receptive to our message
- Abstract agenda was not enough
- Many in the management are still in denial
- Support from OR and Union was crucial
- Importance of coordination between OR, Union and “unorganized Platform” in goals underestimated
- Students difficult to mobilize
- Faculties other than Social Science were difficult to mobilize

What is to be done?

1. Development of very concrete alternatives.
Proposals for a new law?
2. Connect people in different universities (in and outside the Netherlands)
3. Address the mainstream
4. Teach our students about educational politics
5. Take advantage of the crisis

... and we shouldn't miss the moment this time

Trouw.nl

Nieuws | **Opinie** | Groen | Religie & filosofie | S

Nederland | Buitenland | **Politiek** | Economie | Sport | Cul

Bussemaker 'ontregelt' het onderwijs

Romana Abels - 07/02/13, 07:01



© anp. Minister Jet Bussemaker van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap.

Boetes uitdelen of controleren hoeveel uur een school precies lesgeeft: haar voorganger kwam ermee aanzetten, maar de nieuwe minister van onderwijs Jet Bussemaker wil er zo snel mogelijk van af. Er moeten juist minder regels voor de scholen komen. Gisteren maakte zij bekend dat ze een voorstel dat door de vorige staatssecretaris Halbe Zijlstra werd ingediend, intrekt.

Zijlstra had, nadat was gebleken dat studenten op sommige hogescholen afstudeerden op halfbakken werk, bedacht dat de Inspectie van het Onderwijs continu controle moest houden op de kwaliteit van het onderwijs. Periodiek zou dan ook, zoals altijd al het geval was, een andere instantie controleren of de opleiding nog voldeed. Maar meer controle is niet het juiste antwoord, meent Bussemaker.