

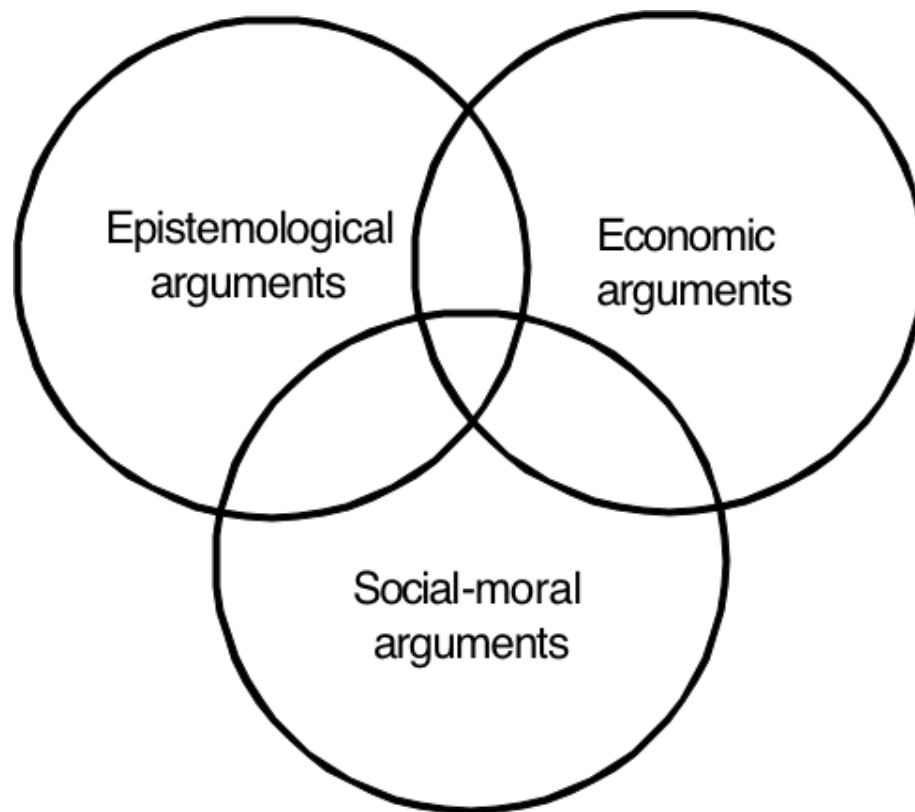
# Emerging International Models of the Liberal Arts

*Amsterdam University College*

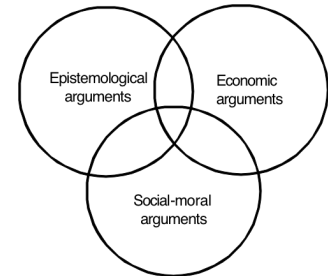
# Outline

- **Drivers for liberal arts education in Europe/The Netherlands**
- ***Amsterdam University College (AUC) – mission and profile***
- ***The use SERU data at AUC***

# Drivers for liberal arts education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century



# Drivers for liberal arts education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century



## Interdisciplinarity and the role of disciplines

- Real-life situations, broad themes and “big questions” motivates learning
- The need for rigorous teaching of the disciplines
- The role of the humanities and the sciences

## Generic skills and the specificity of regional contexts

- 21<sup>st</sup> century skills: creativity and innovation, critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, information, IT, and media literacy, social and cross-cultural skills, leadership and responsibility.

## Citizenship and the need for a truly global perspective

- Democratic citizenship
- Global citizenship

*"Many of our students will later be in a position to make important decisions, whether in business, government, policy, or academia. The scientific way of thinking and approaching life could be valuable if not crucial for their success."*

**Prof. Dr. Robbert Dijkgraaf,  
Director of Institute for  
Advanced Study, Princeton**



the Sciences

University of Amsterdam

# The Dutch Context: Liberal Arts as an Approach to Excellence

**Greatest number of LAS initiatives (8 UCs in 2014)**

**OECD (2008): *"Dutch higher education demonstrates an insufficient level of differentiation, excellence is underrepresented, the international dimension should be enhanced, and too-early specialization should be avoided"*.**

## **Excellence initiatives**

- Bottom-up institution-driven innovations (honours programmes and "university colleges")
- Formalized experiments
- National Programme for Excellence in HE (targeted funding)
- Adjustment of legislation (special status for UCs)
- Government push for further differentiation of HE

**Trends in secondary education: bi-lingual education, growth of IBs & EBs, re-valuing of elite tracks**

# A

Amsterdam university college

# UC



# Amsterdam University College

*Excellence and Diversity in a Global City*



## **Mission**

**Two major research universities have joined forces to create a liberal arts and sciences undergraduate experience in Amsterdam that demands excellence from its students, preparing them for high-level performance in a 21st century knowledge economy that is fuelled by innovation, and equipping them for today's globally engaged and culturally diverse society.**

# Aims and Objectives

- Provide academically challenging study programmes for **highly talented, ambitious and motivated internationally-oriented students**.
- Develop scientific, academic and **strong analytical skills** in students who will be future leaders and CEOs.
- Equip these students with the **intercultural competences** they need for success in an increasingly multicultural and **globalised society**.
- Stimulate students' **interest in science**, thus enhancing their potential for entry into science-oriented graduate programmes and research.
- Support the ambitions of the Dutch knowledge economy and the performance of Amsterdam as a **"knowledge hub"**.
- Attract **more international students** at bachelor level to Amsterdam and to the Netherlands.
- Offer young people with an international and/or English-taught secondary school education in the Netherlands an opportunity to follow an international bachelor (honours) programme in Amsterdam at a **top quality liberal arts and sciences educational institution**.

# Profile in short

**Selective honours college**

**Liberal arts & sciences bachelor**

**Taught in English**

**Small class size**

**Tutor system**

**Residential**

**Joint degree from two major research universities**



**International campus**

**Science focus**

**Research-based teaching**

**Internships**

**Community service**

**Study abroad**

**Global knowledge, international competence**

# Liberal arts and sciences programme

- Crossing the boundaries of languages, cultures and academic disciplines
- Focus on “Big Questions” in science and society
- Leading to in-depth study in a wide range of disciplines
- Majors in sciences, humanities, social sciences
- Focus on scientific reasoning and undergraduate research



# Building AUC's Curriculum

*"Empty sheet"*

## Who?

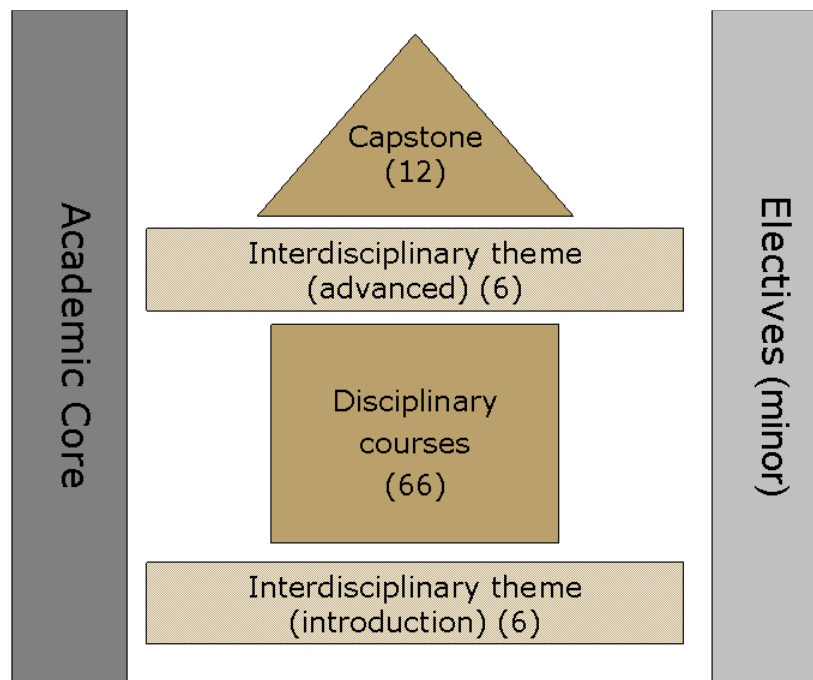
- *VU, UvA 'top-professors'*

*(Robbert Dijkgraaf, James Kennedy, Johan van Benthem, Halley Ghorashi...etc)*

- *Members of VU, UvA student council*
- *AUC team*

# Building AUC's Curriculum

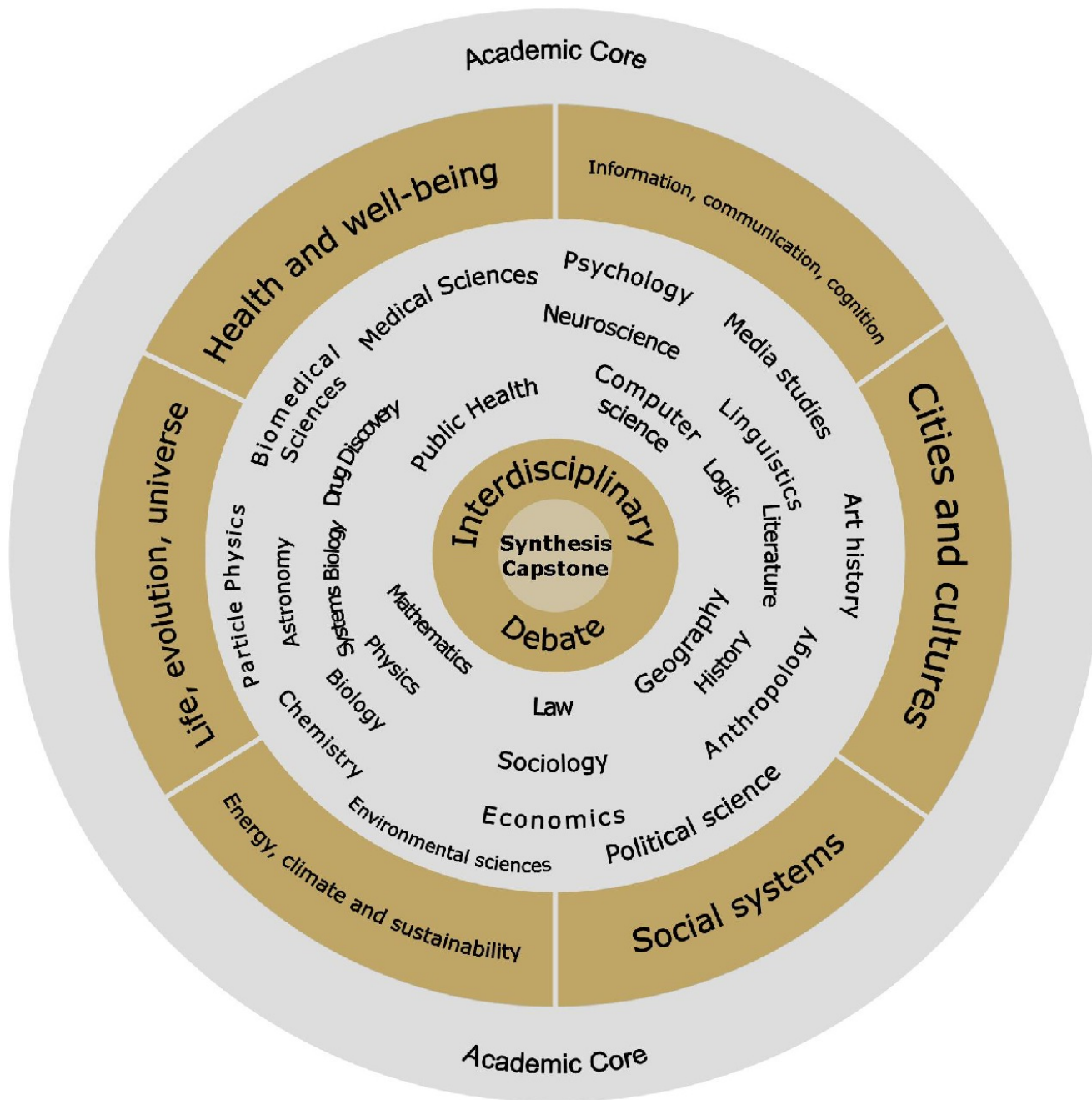
First drawings...



AUC's Interdisciplinary Approach: Combining Breadth and Depth.

# AUC's Interdisciplinary Themes

- Energy, Climate and Sustainability
- Life, Evolution, Universe
- Health and Well-being
- Information, Communication, Cognition
- Cities and Cultures
- Social Systems





# Curriculum structure

Academic Core (60), major (90), minor (electives, 30)

	S2	M	M	Theme	Capstone	
Year 3	S1	AC	M	M	M	E
	S2	AC	M	M	M	E
Year 2	S1	AC	M	M	M	E
	S2	AC	AC	M/E BQ	Theme	M/E
Year 1	S1	AC	AC	BQ	AC	M/E

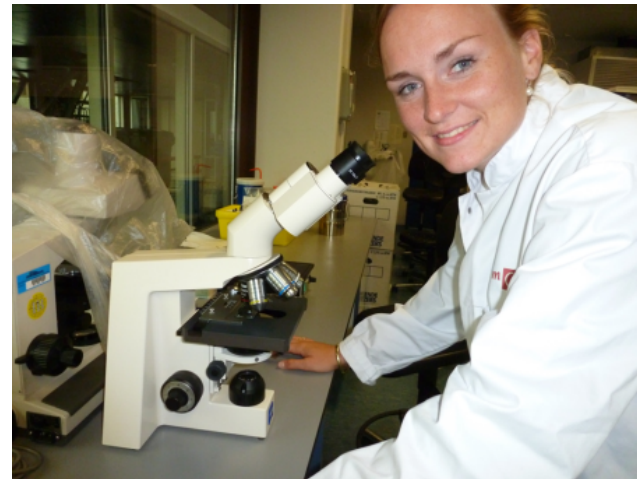
Minor declaration (bracketed around Year 2 S1 and S2 E boxes)  
 Major declaration (bracketed around Year 1 S1 and S2 M/E boxes)

AC = Academic Core, BQs = Big Questions, M = major, E = elective

# Students & Study Success

## AUC's student population

- Currently around 750 students
- 50% international; 59 nationalities
- Gender ratio: f/m = 63%/37%
- Up to 50% science majors
- 10-15% ASF scholarship
- 20% selectivity rate



## Study Success

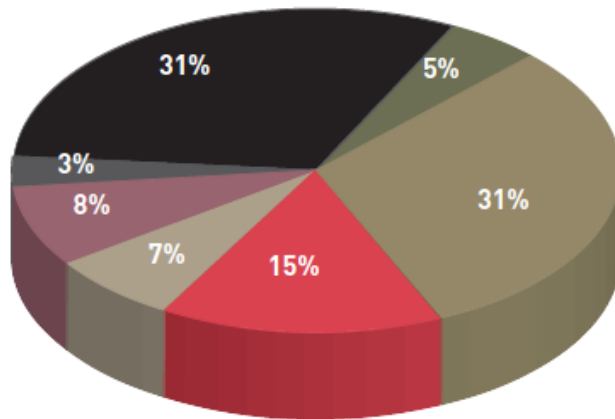
- > 90% retention (drop out < 10%)
- > 80% graduation in 3 years
- > 90% achieved full credit load (=60 EC)
- > 80% honours level (GPA of  $\geq 3.0$ )



Graduation of class 2013

# Students & Graduate destinations

## GRADUATE DESTINATIONS



Amsterdam (UvA, VU, Duisenberg)

USA/Canada (Columbia, Washington, Michigan, Toronto)

Other countries (France, Italy, Israel)

Other universities in the Netherlands (TUD, RUG, UM, UU, WUR)

Germany (Freiburg, Humboldt/Freie)

Sweden (Karolinska, Uppsala, Lund)

UK (Oxford, Cambridge, Kings, UCL, LSE, Imperial, Edinburgh)

Data from graduate survey 2013

# Faculty facts & achievements

## FACULTY & SUPPORT STAFF

“AUC sets high standards when recruiting personnel and this bears fruit: it does not come as a surprise for the committee that in student evaluations, faculty score well on academic expertise, accessibility and commitment to students.” NVAO 2013

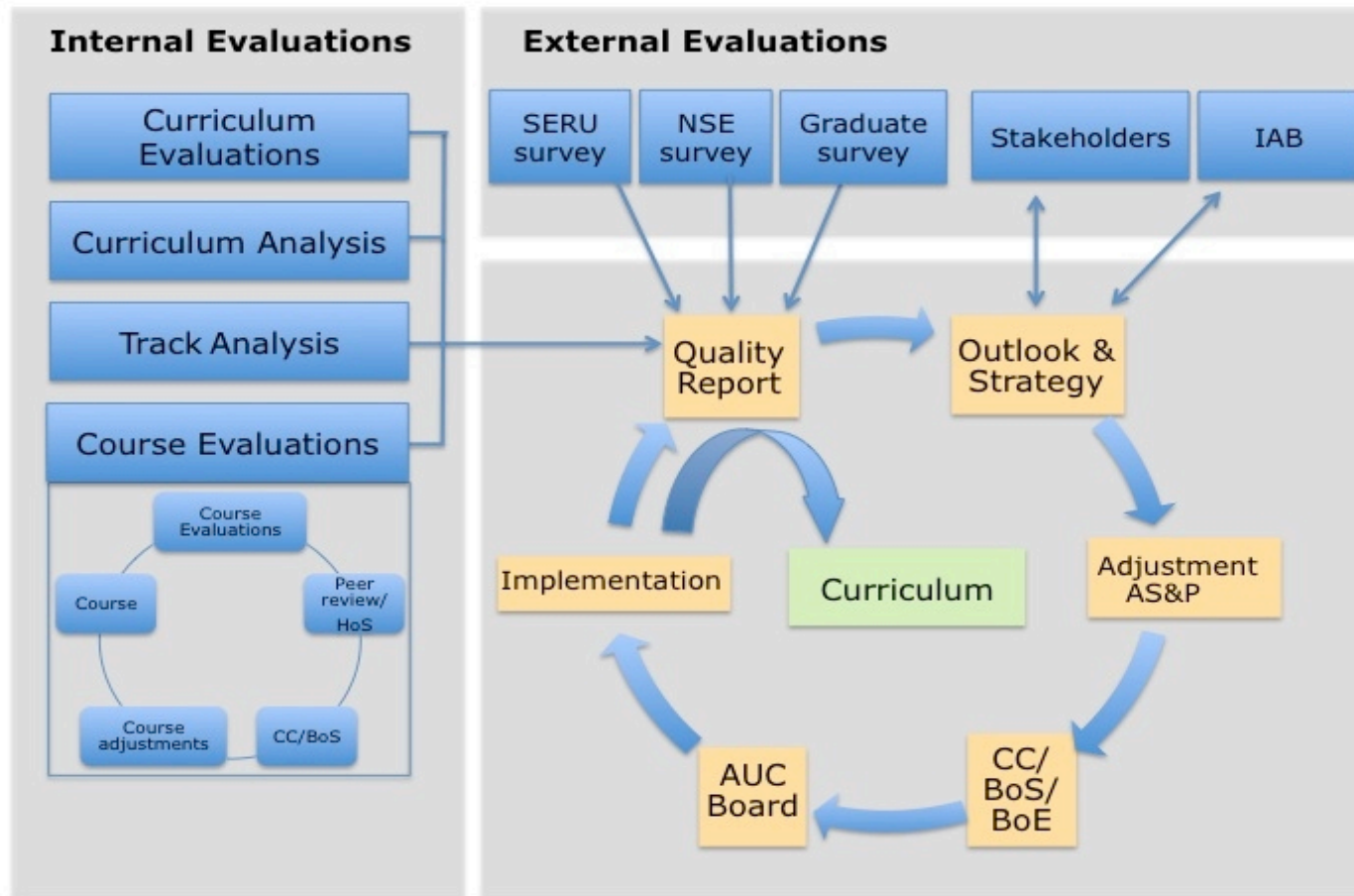
## COURSE EVALUATIONS 2012–2013

Number of courses*	314	
Number of teachers	210	49.4 fte
Teacher quality	4.1	
Course quality	3.9	
Response rate	67%	

\* Including parallel groups

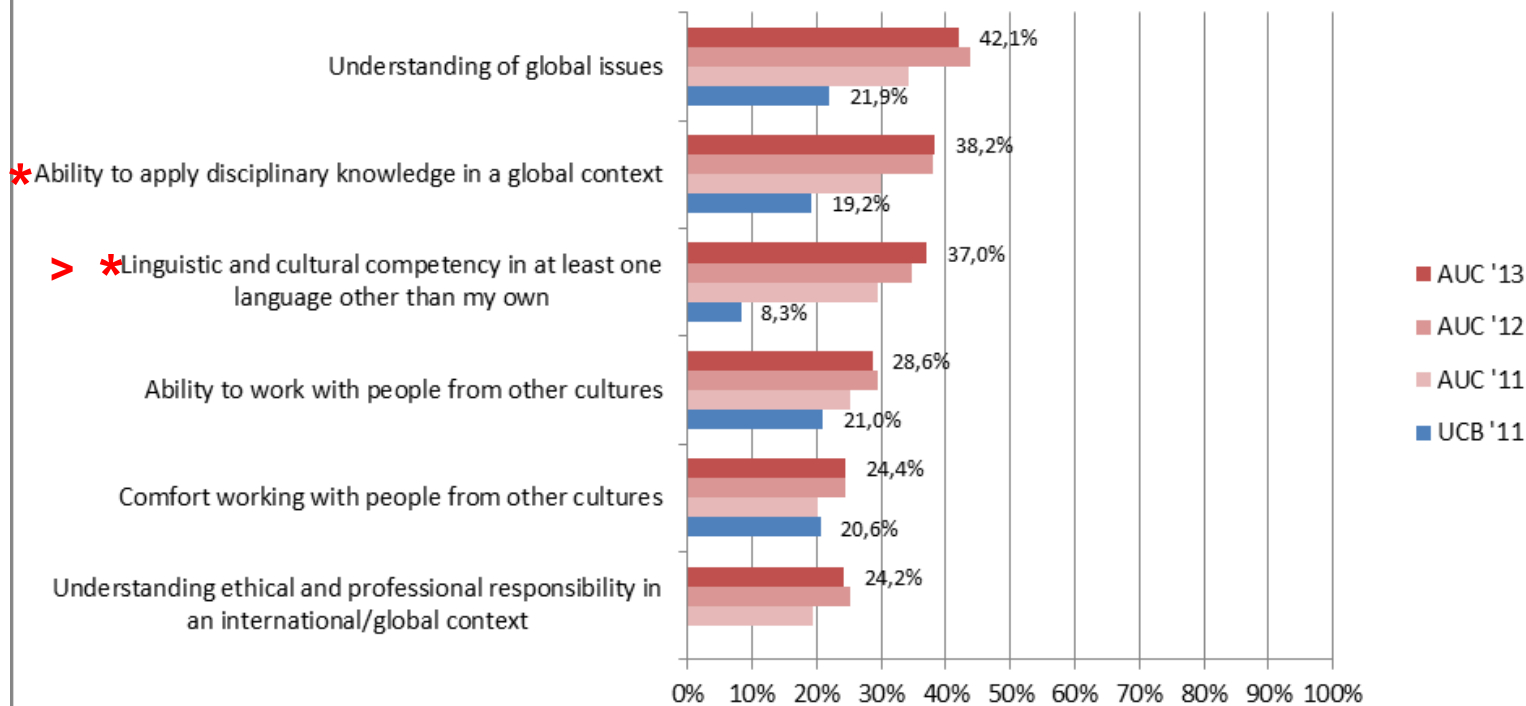
Staff-student ratio: 1:15 (1:12 including admin)

# Quality Assurance – the washing machine



# Global/International Competencies

Increase of Level of Global/International Competencies Start to Current  
(%Very good and Excellent)



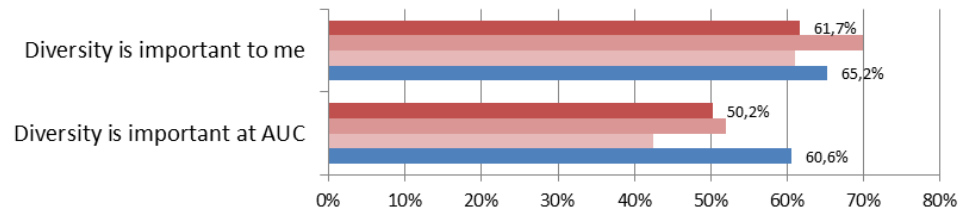
- ***Linguistic and cultural competency improved compared to last year***
- ***Some items show an increase between year cohorts (esp. year 1-2) (\* = sign.)***

# Diversity and Ethnicity

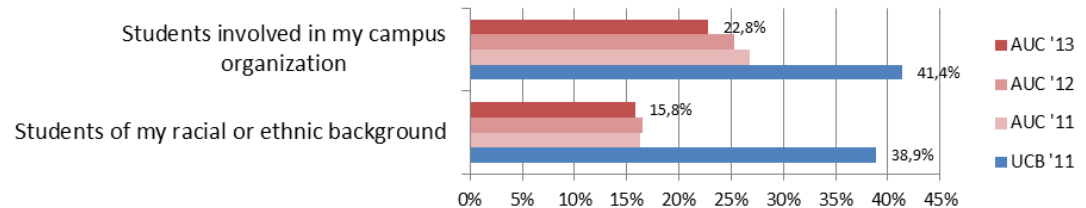


- No sign. differences in importance of diversity (to me and at AUC)
- Diversity at AUC valued by all year's students , and comparable to UCB (NS diff.)
- Involvement with campus organisation still low (23%)
- Highest in Year 3 (32%)
- but over-all lower than UCB
- Ethnic identification is much lower than UCB (better?)
- Understanding through different ethnic background strongest in Year 1 (29%), but lower than UCB (37%)

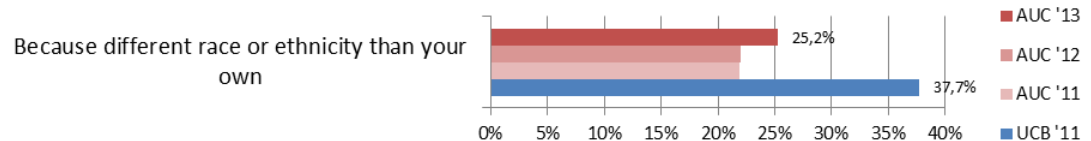
Diversity at AUC (% Agree and Strongly agree)



Student Self-Identified Types (% selected)



Gained deeper understanding (%Often & Very often)





# Graduate Survey 2014 (May 2014)

Table 5. Academic and professional skills acquired at AUC

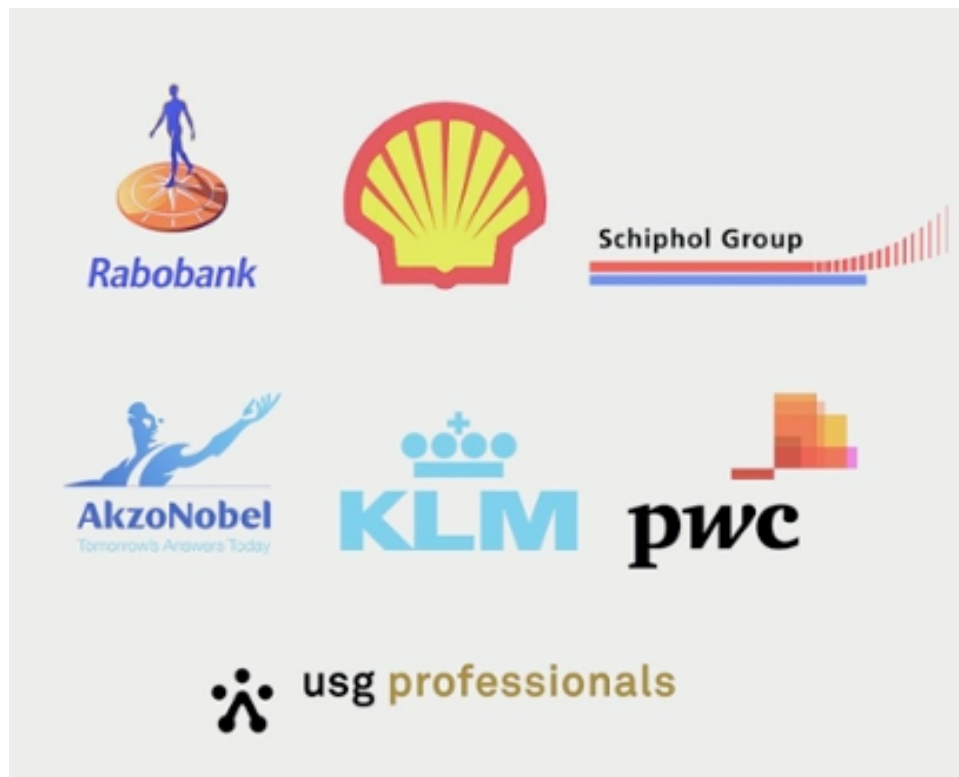
	1	2	3	4	5	N	mean	st.dev.
Carry out research in the chosen field.	2,3%	7,0%	16,3%	47,7%	26,7%	86	3,90	0,92
Understand the broader context of research.	0,0%	0,0%	7,0%	47,7%	45,3%	86	4,38	0,38
Analyse and solve problems, methodological skills.	2,3%	0,0%	15,1%	50,0%	32,6%	86	4,10	0,68
Evaluate which disciplines are involved in the solution of complex issues.	0,0%	1,2%	15,3%	47,1%	36,5%	85	4,19	0,54
Obtain and evaluate information.	0,0%	1,2%	1,2%	58,1%	39,5%	86	4,36	0,33
Work in (international) teams.	0,0%	0,0%	9,3%	40,7%	50,0%	86	4,41	0,43
Communicative skills	0,0%	0,0%	4,7%	38,4%	57,0%	86	4,52	0,35
Appreciate diversity	2,3%	7,0%	24,4%	37,2%	29,1%	86	3,84	1,01
Work diversity	3,5%	4,7%	15,1%	46,5%	30,2%	86	3,95	0,96
Personal and social responsibility, leadership	0,0%	12,8%	30,2%	33,7%	23,3%	86	3,67	0,95

(1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree)



# Driver of the 'diversity agenda' / 21<sup>st</sup> century skills at AUC

- International Advisory Board
- AUC sponsors



# Diversity Agenda

## **Strengthening the diversity agenda at AUC based on SERU report, IAB and sponsors' recommendations:**

- Extra efforts have been directed at promoting the participation in community projects, led by a Community Project coordinator
- A new Diversity Coordinator has been appointed to further strengthen the diversity agenda of AUC
- Outreach activities have included projects in the neighbourhood of AUC with our partner schools, such as offering master classes to secondary school students.
- AUC's Think Tank on the 'Zesjescultuur' involving Dutch secondary school students presented solutions for this phenomenon under the auspices of six AUC students
- New course *Global Leadership*
- Community Project Student Award 2013

Highlights of 2013



**Who's in Town with Dr. Michael Sandel** – In April, as part of our Who's in Town seminar series, Harvard University professor Dr. Michael Sandel engaged in a Q&A on his most recent book 'What money can't buy: the moral limits of markets'.



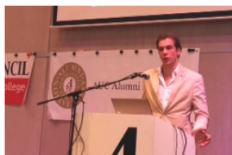
**Randy W. Berry gave Commencement Address** – The 2013 Graduation Ceremony, held in the Aula of the VU University Amsterdam in July, was addressed by the US Consul General to The Netherlands, Mr. Randy W. Berry.



**AUC Scholarship Fund (ASF) research seminar** – Around 11% of the Class of 2013 were ASF scholarship recipients. They presented their capstone research projects to the ASF sponsors in a special seminar before the Graduation Ceremony.



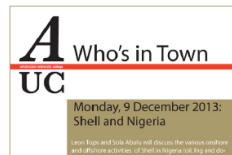
**Dr. William Kirby addressed Dies Natalis** – The keynote speaker at our 4th Dies Natalis in September was Prof. Dr. William Kirby, Professor of China Studies at Harvard University and member of the AUC International Advisory Board.



**Meet the Masters** – In October, AUC presented postgraduate options in cooperation with the AUC Alumni Association and Student Council, AUC faculty, the Ivy Circle, American Consulate and Fullbright Center.



**Think Tank** – AUC presented a report on excellence in secondary education to Deputy Minister Sander Dekker, from a Think Tank chaired by AUC Dean Prof. Dr. Marijk van der Wende involving AUC's partner schools, alumni and corporate partners.



**Who's in Town on Shell and Nigeria** – Léon Tops and Sola Abulu from Shell International discussed with students and staff the various onshore and offshore activities of Shell in Nigeria and the company's contribution to Nigeria's economy.



**Amsterdam Architecture Prize (AAP) 2013** – The new AUC academic building, designed by Mecanoo architects and commissioned by the University of Amsterdam and VU University Amsterdam, was awarded the 2013 Golden AAP.

# A

Amsterdam university college

# UC

# Curriculum

## Curriculum and the city

- Connect to projects in Amsterdam (course manual)
- Involve various stakeholders
- Organize debates (preferably controversial topics!)
- Extracurricular activities (TedX, Student Research Conference...etc)
- Who's in Town seminar series (>100)
  - What's in the World (March 2014)
    - Ukraine
    - Greece
    - Venezuela
    - ...etc.