



UC Student Council
Report on the Sale of the ICU's Dining Hall
December 2025

In response to the proposed sale of the International Campus Utrecht's (ICU) Dining Hall for use by the Dutch Ministry of Defence, the UC Student Council would like to outline its concerns regarding the situation. The Dining Hall serves as an integral communal space at the University College Utrecht, valued by students for its shared study spaces, recreational facilities, and functional capacities. The building is vital in establishing and maintaining student life, providing the central space for students to uphold the tightly-knit community, sometimes called "the heart of our community", that motivates students to apply to the college. A strong community is what makes UCU the place and programme it is and is essential for our philosophy of learning from and with each other. Dining Hall is one of the only and simultaneously the most important "third space" on campus able to foster active community building.

As the efficiency of the Dining Hall has been called into question, we would also like to emphasize the multifunctionality and potential for increased efficiency that the building possesses. Additionally, the practicalities of finding a replacement for the Dining Hall give rise to a number of issues which we want to raise to your attention in this report. Finally, the UC Student Council would like to stress the moral and ethical objections we hold to selling the Dining Hall to the Dutch Ministry of Defence. The UC Student Council has elaborated upon these points in detail in the following report.

Table 1: Summary of Dining Halls functions and their value for UCU and UU

Room/Space in Dining Hall	Function and Usage	# people using the space (per week)	time usage (per week)
	Value of Dining Hall as academic, practical, and social space		
<i>Dining Hall Main</i>	Study Space (UU and UCU students); group meeting space; large events: e.g. lectures, intro week; ONLY space on campus that can host groups larger than 150 students making it essential	about 1000 (>200/day)	Open all day
<i>Beach Party Area (BPA), Room 0.32</i>	Performance studies classroom; storage; UU classes; committee, students board, individual, and external events venue	About 200	35-40h
<i>Drama Room, Room 0.12</i>	Performance studies classroom; dance classes; used for performative representation	About 300	35-40h
<i>Malala Lounge, Room 1.22</i>	Remindo space (only available exam space on campus for large groups); (staff) meeting space; space for events such as infosessions	2-3 large event per week outside of exams is about 60	6-13h
<i>The UCSA Bar</i>	Social and recreational space, fully volunteer-student run committee, essential "third space" for UCU community, only such space on campus, dependent on location in Dining Hall	About 450	32h
<i>Music Room, Room 0.52</i>	Music production; instrument storage; only noise isolated room on campus	About 30	20h
<i>UCSA Gym, Room 0.64</i>	Workout/sports space	About 150	Open 8:00-21:00 every day
<i>UCSA Community Kitchen</i>	Committee and individual events by UCU; also used by Eurest	hard to approximate	4-10h
<i>Student Board Offices</i>	University College Student Association office, University College Student Council office, Campus Affairs Representatives office	About 16	45h
<i>Service offices</i>	Housemaster, Landlady, Security and Federated Service Connectivity	About 8	30h
<i>International student storage, Room 0.19</i>	only storage option for international students, essential for UCU's international composition; music equipment, gym equipment, photography and videography equipment, sports equipment, cooking equipment, Rooms are very full and the material is often used	Capacity for about 300 students at a time	NA

<i>Dining Hall Lounge</i>	950 mailboxes + event space	About 500 (events every evening + meeting/work space)	Open at all time
<i>Cafeteria</i>	Eurest catering location; only food purchasing option on campus	Currently unknown	Eurest working hours
<i>Classrooms, rooms M1.34, M1.35</i>	UU classes	10 UCU + UU classes	Used from 9:00 to 20:00
<i>Barbeque Area (outside)</i>	Committee, Student Boards, individual and external events	average varies extremely	between 0 and 20h (Weather dependent)
<i>Sports field (outside)</i>	only actual sportspitch on campus and multifunctional: Volleyball, basketball, football, tennis, and more	About 100	Open at all time
	Landlady's and House Masters Office	N/A	N/A
	Security Offices	N/A	N/A
	Repairshop and Storage for tools of repair team	N/A	N/A
	Value of Dining Hall in Advertising UCU		
<i>Committee work</i>	Most of the advertising surrounding campus/social life is based on the community UCU student build around committees, of which all events take place in DH	NA	NA
<i>Community</i>	Campus and the community it fosters is a major selling point to students; the loss of DH is also the loss of an enormous selling point for UCU as it will mean the loss of the heart of the UCU community	NA	NA
<i>Study spaces</i>	Many UCU and UU students use DH as a study space, if we were to lose it, hundreds of students will start looking for alternatives, like the ones offered by UU at Drift and Science Park	About 850 students who study all around campus	NA
	Practical Concerns for Replacement		
	Please see section 4 of this report		
	Ethical Concerns for Replacement		
	Please see section 5 of this report		

1. Value of Dining Hall as a Communal Space

a. Academic and Study Spaces

Dining Hall is valued by University College Utrecht (UCU) and non-UCU students alike for the study space it provides. Students appreciate the possibility to study outside the classrooms, which are not suited for that use. Almost all meetings for group work are held in the Dining Hall, either in the variety of study spaces in Dining Hall main or the café area. Through this, Dining Hall becomes a space of chance encounter and creates an atmosphere of shared learning and conversation. Especially during the time of midterms and finals, Dining Hall provides students with extra space as the silent study area in Voltaire and all classrooms are filled with students. Efforts in recent years by Student Council and the University College Student Association (UCSA) to open Dining Hall during the weekend in those busy periods further show how sought-after they are.

Dining Hall is the only space that can host a large-scale event or lecture, and is vital to maintain to ensure that those can still take place on campus. The capacity of Dining Hall is by far the largest with a capacity of at least 400 people. Meanwhile, the Auditorium can only host 150 students and is not suited for events where an open space is needed, such as Master or Internship fairs or the Track and Thesis market. As a consequence, those events will have to be hosted in off-campus facilities, which will significantly reduce the ease of organization and the amount of students attending them. This will have a large impact on our community as many of such events are organized here every year (lectures, symposiums, University Colleges Student Representative of the Netherlands (UCSRN) events, etc.). Moreover, it will not make sense for welcoming events, such as our intro week ceremonies, dinners, workshops, and UCU Open Days to happen off campus.

Furthermore, a multitude of spaces within Dining Hall are utilized for UCU classes. The performance studies track heavily relies on larger spaces like the Drama Room and the Beach Party Area (BPA; Room 0.32) for its classes, and its teachers also store performance studies equipment there. Research in Context lectures are often given in Dining Hall Main. The

Malala lounge (Room 1.22) also provides a large space for multiple classes to take an exam at the same time or to organize lectures for larger groups.

b. Recreation and Sport

Integral to UCU is community. This is made clear in its advertisements, recruitment process, introductory time, and more. This community will be significantly impacted by Dining Hall's sale. The Dining Hall building holds a number of incredible social spaces that create bonds and friendships outside of academics: the UCSA bar, the Dining Hall Lounge, the drama room, the music room, the UCSA gym, the UCSA community kitchen, and the BPA.

To start, the UCSA bar is open all days of the week. It is a place to unwind, relax and see each other in a manner that is entirely social and recreational. While students come to party nights on Thursday, students also use the bar as a meet up spot or study space on other nights of the week. The UCSA Bar is a UCSA member's exclusive bar that is fully student run by the Bar Committee and a group of over 30 trained student volunteers. Therefore, it offers a unique learning space and opportunity for students to gain management and work experience. The UCSA Bar is also one of the most important 'third spaces' on campus, which acts as an events hall for countless important committee events, hosting open mic nights, pub quizzes and so much more, allowing committee events to take place in a central location. Additionally, the bar is used to host academic and institutional events, such as Meet the Staff events or the networking event hosted by the Alumni Office this October.

Additionally, the UCSA Bar also functions as a safe environment for UCU students and functions as a central point for alcohol consumption and parties. In order to improve social safety for UCU students, the Bar committee and the UCSA have developed procedures in order to investigate and sanction those who transgress the bar's house rules and the UCSA's Policy Manual. These articles include no smoking, no consumption of illegal substances, and stress the importance of consent as well as other measures to safeguard physical and psychological safety. Ultimately, the sale of Dining Hall will be a loss of oversight and control on the well-being and social safety of UCU students.

UCSA's Dance Committee offers 16 different dance classes throughout the week. All of which are hosted in the drama room in Dining Hall (room 0.12) which is set up as a dance studio (large mirrors, adapted flooring, dance bars, soundproof walls etc.) More than 200 students come together to participate in these weekly dance classes. Similarly, the Music Room (room 0.52) is a space where students come together to expand their creativity through music. Its isolated location on campus and set-up are designed for music production, including a recording booth. These events often produce a lot of noise and can thus not easily be moved to another building.

Also located in Dining Hall is the on-campus gym (room 0.64), to which access is regulated by the UCSA through the UCSA membership. This gym is used extensively by many UCU students as a replacement for expensive gym memberships. The UCSA Gym Committee has made a commitment to make this Gym as accessible and open as possible, including organizing workshops and specific open hours for women and queer students. The space is thus crucial to the health of UCU students.

The BPA is a space that is rented out by both committees and individuals to host events, for example the Enactus kick-off dinner, the Fashion Design Team model workshops and Introduction week ceremonies and events.

The UCSA community kitchen inside Dining Hall has also become increasingly popular among committees and individuals. As many events revolve around food, including those organized by the Gastronomy, Humanitarian, and People of Color Committees, having a large space in which students can cook together is important. The kitchens in individual units are unable to offer the facilities nor the capacity to host such events.

In the case of Dining Hall's sale, UCU students will also lose access to the barbecue area behind Dining Hall and the sports fields beside it. The barbecue area acts as a very social sphere, many events are hosted here, including Smores with the Student Boards during

Introweek, as well as committee events and more personal events. The volleyball, basketball, and the multipurpose fields are used by many students and the UCU sports teams' weekly practices. It is a location where students can engage in sports with a low threshold and in an entertaining manner. The fact that there are free and very accessible sports facilities on campus contributes to the physical and social health of many students.

The loss of this space will significantly impact how students can get together, stay healthy, and build their community. Ultimately, events of about 35 UCSA committees and teams and about half of the UCSA Board events (including introweek) are dependent on the space that Dining Hall provides.

c. Practical Functions

Dining Hall currently houses all of the Student Board offices, which greatly benefit from their location in a space that is visited this much by students on a daily basis, encouraging interaction. Additionally, Dining Hall houses the vast majority of equipment that is utilised by students: music equipment in the Music Room, gym equipment in the UCSA Gym, photography and videography equipment in the Focus Room, sports equipment in the Hermes office, cooking equipment in the UCSA Community Kitchen, drama props in the Prop Room, and general UCSA equipment in the UCSA office hallway, and multiple other storage rooms. Dining Hall also houses the housemasters and landlady's office and the Security and Federated Service Connectivity office. Over 950 mailboxes are in the Dining Hall Lounge (Room 0.35) that will have to be moved. Dining Hall also serves as a storage space over the summer and for exchange students during the semester they are away (room 0.19). This will be impossible to move to the residential or academic buildings since they are all cleaned and used over the summer. External storage units are very expensive and many students have bad experiences, emphasizing the importance of having storage space on such an international campus.

d. Cafeteria

On top of academic, functional, and recreational facilities the Dining Hall building offers the UCU community, it also holds a Eurest catering location. This cafeteria in Dining Hall is the only option for catering and food and drink consumption for UCU students at their campus/faculty. The sale of this building will therefore take away this sole option, and while for some this might be considered a luxury, it is typical and common for UU faculties to have at least one catering option available to its students. As UCU is a particularly intensive program, we believe that an option for catering during stressful or busy times should not be removed. Finally, the cafeteria acts as a meeting place and a spot to unwind for both students and staff - both UCU and UU.

2. Dining Hall and UCU's Image

a. Community at UCU

A driving force of UCU's educational model is our campus' focus on social opportunities, residentiality, and community. Dining Hall, as discussed above, is the central hub for a great number of activities, both academic and extracurricular. With this role, the Dining Hall contributes enormously to the spirit of community at UCU. Should the space no longer be available to students, the educational model of our institution will undergo a major disruption. Without a centralized community space, the community on which our campus prides itself will not only lose UCU's largest symbol of togetherness, it will also lack a physical meeting point. We have additional concerns about the impact that a lack of such a community space will have on the wellbeing of students, including impacts to students' academic performance.

b. Advertisement of UCU

Much of prospective students' intrigue towards UCU is based on the college's tight-knit community and social opportunities on campus described above. Alongside the liberty of a Liberal Arts and Sciences curriculum, UCU's campus is cited as a major contributor in

students' decision to come to our college. Should the space no longer be available to students, UCU will lose an enormous selling point in its advertisement to prospective students. Dining Hall is also a central point during the UCU Open Days and campus tours. Our school's promotional team will have to rethink how UCU is described to students without providing false expectations.

3. Multi-functionality and Increased Efficiency

a. Use of Dining Hall by non-UCU Faculties

In this report, we argue for the importance of the Dining Hall building for the UCU community. Its usage, however, is not solely limited to UCU students and staff, as already touched upon quickly in previous sections.

The classroom spaces M1.34 & M1.35 are mainly - and almost exclusively - used for UU classes. Additionally, the open study spaces and the cafeteria that Dining Hall provides are used by UU students alongside UCU students. We believe that having such a collaborative and shared space is important for both UCU and UU students. This communal space acts as a bridge between UU and UCU students, making students feel more connected to the wider student body and university. The use of the BPA is also not limited to only UCU students, whereby for example UU Honours Courses take place in the BPA.

We believe that every space is useful to maintain considering that many faculties are facing issues with the capacity of their building and struggle to provide space for classes.

b. Collaboration with Other UU Parties

Understanding the UU wide struggle of rethinking tight spaces under budget cuts, we are happy to come together with the UCU Management Team and the UU to discuss ways in which the Dining Hall could be used more efficiently by further integrating other UU faculties. While we believe that such processes should be done in collaboration with a dedicated

working group, below we have listed preliminary ideas to increase the efficiency of the building's usage.

Dining Hall spaces could be rented out to other faculties for lectures like the UU honours course that is using the BPA. The spaces could also be rented out to external parties, perhaps even being a potential source of small revenue: e.g. UWC Nederland uses Dining Hall for their selection days, student association SPIN organised a large scale arts event there. This space could also be suitable for use of UU committees such as the bridge club, debate club, UU MUN, and de Kleine Consultant that currently uses UCU classrooms. The BBQ area could be used for UU/UCU staff borrels and the UCSA Bar could be rented to external parties more regularly.

Considering the possibility of other faculties using current UCU buildings such as Voltaire, UCU could also host more classes in the Dining Hall itself.

4. Practical Concerns for the Replacement of Dining Hall

While we are happy to hear that the Management Team has suggested Canteleer as a replacement to the Dining Hall, we have concerns regarding the feasibility of this endeavor for a number of reasons. Canteleer is substantially less accessible than Dining Hall and is not equipped with an elevator. Many of the residential buildings, including K, V, L, and G are not accessible to students with mobility issues. The loss of Dining Hall will add to this list of inaccessible buildings on campus. This is especially concerning considering its role as a community space.

Broader concerns exist in the logistics of transforming Canteleer into a space that can be used for the wide array of social, academic, and practical purposes described in previous sections. We do not only expect significant renovations to be necessary, for which the source of funding is unclear, the building may be insufficient in size to accommodate these purposes. Canteleer will not be able to offer one single gathering space in which students can come together. While it might be possible to move practical spaces, such as the classrooms, offices, storage and

mailboxes, it is unclear if enough space for the community related facilities will remain. As outlined above, vital parts of campus life, such as the music room, the UCSA bar, or the cafeteria cannot be moved to Cantecleer and will be experienced as a significant loss by the student body.

Additionally, social hubs such as the UCSA bar, the dance room and the music room all produce excessive amounts of noise in their day-to-day functioning. Due to the location of Cantecleer at the entrance of the ICU, we hold the concern that the activities and events which are crucial to UCU's social life will result in noise complaints from the neighbourhood. Additionally, we fear that the storage of equipment of both the UCSA gym and the music room will not be possible in Cantecleer.

Noticing the vast amount of spaces that will have to be found outside of Dining Hall, either in Cantecleer or the academic buildings, we doubt the feasibility of finding alternatives for all of Dining Hall's practical functions. This is all the more important in light of the reevaluation of how academic buildings are used and the prospective loss of Voltaire. This places a higher demand on the space available in Newton and Locke and potentially even Cantecleer. We therefore recommend the renovation of Cantecleer as a separate opportunity rather than as a replacement for the Dining Hall.

Additionally, students will be looking for study spaces in other UU facilities, increasing the pressure on already tight spaces. Considering UCU's conversations on aligning the UCU academic calendar further with the UU academic calendar this will lead to increasingly overlapping exam periods.

5. Moral and Ethical Objections

At the level of the UC Student Council, we hold concerns over the morality of the Dining Hall's sale to the Dutch Ministry of Defence. 1.2 billion euros were cut from Dutch higher education in late 2024, while military spending in the Netherlands will be increased by 3.4

billion euros in 2026. The UC Student Council sees this both as a moral injustice and a symbol of far-right politics. The Dining Hall's sale for use by the Dutch Ministry of Defence will be an active acceptance of these two issues. Our moral objections also arise in light of concerns surrounding the military and sustainability, as well as a concern for ever-increasing militarization around the globe. Similarly, the UC Student Council views the sale of the Dining Hall to the Dutch Ministry of Defence as incompatible with the UU's 2025 theme "Healthy Planet."

At the university level, the UC Student Council notices further discrepancies in the values that we hold as an institution in the consideration of the Dining Hall's sale to the Dutch Ministry of Defence. There are a number of courses at UCU which focus on critical reflection on militarization, including UCHUMHIS37, UCSSCANT26, and UCHUMLIT36. The UU has also organized projects, including the Contesting Governance platform, which focus on the military through a critical lens. In light of both our moral and educational values as a greater institution, the UC Student Council views the Dutch Ministry of Defence as a party with which business cannot morally be conducted.

At UCU, students engage actively in various forms of activism, including protest, fundraising, and boycott. UCU Students for Palestine, though independent from the University College Student Association, is composed of a significant number of students on the UCU campus. A similar organization, UCU Teachers Against Genocide, exists among staff as well. Students have also organized to attend protests for various causes together, including protests for migrant workers' rights and against cuts to the Dutch higher education budget. Seen most evidently through these cases, there is a strong culture of activism among students at UCU. The Student Council believes that the sale of Dining Hall to the Dutch Ministry of Defense will spark a great amount of backlash from the student community, including UU students and UCU alumni, as a result of the campus' culture of social justice.