Managing the University Campus in an Urban Perspective: Theory, Challenges and Lessons from Dutch Practice
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University campuses are considered more strategic than ever. Not only university boards acknowledge their role in achieving institutional goals, city councillors are increasingly recognizing their value in the regional knowledge economy. Campus planners and managers are faced with many challenges.

In the global knowledge economy countries need “engines” to create, attract and retain knowledge workers. Universities play a key role in keeping these engines running, educating the knowledge workers of the future, collaborating with industry in innovative research and creating economic clusters that generate employment. But with increasing mobility and ICT developments – making every place a possible workplace – students, professors and researchers can easily be tempted to go elsewhere.

In a time like this “building community” and “creating a sense of place” are on the agendas of many university boards. Paradoxically, place matters more than ever for relatively “place independent processes”. Campus planners are increasingly joining forces with city planners to align their planning processes to reach mutual goals. The physical campuses are changing from places to study in places to meet and are increasingly becoming very vital and essential parts of cities. Decision making on campus management is getting more complicated by all the stakeholders involved, but is becoming more challenging as well.

Beside the opportunities that put the university campus in a broader context, there are threats. Campus buildings are aging, both technically and functionally, in need of reinvestment, while many developments cause more uncertainty in future space demand, making flexibility a necessity on building and campus level. With input from Dutch practice and from theory on managing real estate this paper describes the changing context and challenges for campus management of the future.

Shift in Campus Management
Managing the university campus has gradually changed from monitoring the technical condition of campus buildings and reducing costs to effectively supporting education and research processes and adding value to university goals. For campus management in the Netherlands the shift has been accelerated by the transfer of economic ownership of the campus from the government to the universities, in 1995. While research shows that Dutch campus managers all agree that adding value to institutional goals is the ultimate objective (Heijer and Vries 2004b; Heijer 2007a) – which is endorsed internationally (Kenney, Dumont et al. 2005) – it has made campus management much more complex. Not only does it add more variables to the comparative assessment for every campus decision, it also brings more stakeholders to the campus management process. Perspectives of technical managers and controllers, focusing on real estate, are connected with perspectives
of users and policy makers focusing on the primary processes of the institution. Those involved with respectively the physical campus and the costs, values and available resources are not only confronted with changing goals from policy makers, but also with demands from students, academic and supporting staff. Based on the theories of corporate real estate management the basic framework connects 4 types of stakeholders and the variables they represent in managing the university campus.

Accordingly, campus managers need to involve these stakeholders in various steps of the decision making process, either passively, informing them about the consequences of various alternatives, or actively, making them participants in defining the brief and selecting solutions. But whatever participation form they choose, they will need more decision support information to weigh different alternatives on various variables.

Methodology
In this paper the most influential developments that affect the university campus are described, illustrated with examples from Dutch practice and translated in opportunities and threats that are also relevant for campus management internationally. Basis for this paper is a series of research projects analysing all Dutch campuses (see figures above), using a data collection format that covers technical, functional, financial and organisational aspects, and in-dept interviews with campus managers at Dutch universities (Heijer and Vries 2005; Heijer 2007a; Heijer 2007b). For the international context many publications were used of associations of campus planners and facilities managers – SCUP and AUPA in the United States, AUDE in the United Kingdom – and input from international conferences on (managing) the campus of the future.

Conclusions
For decision making references of projects of other universities are essential. The scale and character of these projects can differ dependent on trends and topical matters. It is important to describe these references, not just on their physical aspects and initial costs, but also on operational costs, user satisfaction rates and the added value to organisational goals in time. This will give a complete assessment of a reference project, on all campus management variables: technical, functional, financial and organisational. In Dutch practice a start has been made with a database of all fourteen campuses (Heijer 2007a) and a database of twenty-six projects on these variables (Heijer 2007b). Given the developments on the knowledge city a database on urban level will be the next step.