


30 dilemmas and paradoxes of TU Delft Team

Date: 2022 07 04
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 Stimulating and developing teams.
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From October 2021 until the end of May 2022, the project leader on the TUD Delft project on developing teams and collaborations identified the dilemmas and paradoxes related to teamwork listed below. Some of them are partially intertwined. The dilemmas are classified according to the four TU Delft leadership levels. For all four levels, teamwork relates the most by the first leadership component, called 'ownership and collaboration'.

Dilemmas and paradoxes at TU Delft leadership level:	<p>1. PERSONAL LEADERSHIP</p> 
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A. Individual team members

- Differences between national/ international reward systems.** If TU Delft employees follow Dutch national policy/ TU Delft policy and embrace the diverse career tracks in education, valorisation and/ or leadership, this might endanger their international career prospective, as internationally universities mainly still hire and promote based on research.
- Individual team members' internal dilemma (within the team). **Team oriented contributions may costs time¹.** This means the team member who contributes (more) to the team (i.e. perform the desired Organization Citizen Behaviour or Pro Social Work Behaviour), sometimes does this to the detriment of his/ her own (research) time and results. Thus, the division of tasks across the team may lead to individual loss of career possibilities, workload pressure and feelings of unfairness. This means employees might want/ have to make an effort for the team's goals but cannot really afford to do so.
- Participating in several teams/ work groups simultaneously with conflicting loyalties.** Employees probably have a primary team where they officially work from and where the R&D appraisal takes place. However, employees are usually members of several teams at once, for a longer or shorter amount of time, as a permanent or temporary member, of project teams and/ or permanent teams and in teams with colleagues within or outside of the university. All these teams might have goals and interests that can conflict each other. Employees thus must negotiate the different loyalties and the possible contradictions these team memberships bring.
- A PhD candidate can be awarded a joint degree from the TU Delft and another Dutch university simultaneously². **However, it seems that only one PhD candidate can claim the publication of an article for their promotion quota of articles.** Hence, if two or more PhD candidates do joint research, the time and effort invested in the collaboration, will not yield benefits across the candidates equally.
- There are less journals that publish about transdisciplinary research and they have a lower impact factor.** Thus, transdisciplinary research in teams is less attractive as doing this might actually lower chances of professional success.

¹ Some teams actually make sure that teamwork saves team members' time, f.e. by sharing datasets or a lab or by consciously spreading the attendance of seminars across the team.

² TU Delft Doctoral Regulations 2018, p.39.

Dilemmas and paradoxes at
TU Delft leadership level:

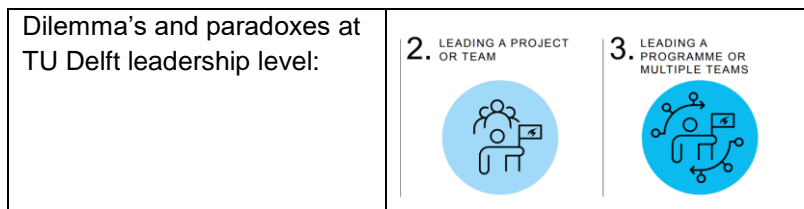


B. Team level dynamics

6. **Homeostatic systems.** So far, research usually is recognized & rewarded more than education, valorisation and/ or leadership. So if this changes as a result of new Dutch policies on Recognition & Rewards at universities, team dynamics may change as well (team members with educational and valorisation tasks may start to play a more important role in team decision making than they did previously).
7. **Senior and junior staff.** The team dynamics may change as existing senior staff probably achieved their status/ position because of the old system (with benefits being awarded for research), whereas the newer, junior staff face more uncertain career prospects. The newer staff also wants to carve career tracks for themselves. So perhaps this juxtaposition can create a divide in teams.
8. **Temporary and permanent team members.** At universities in general, a relatively large part of employees do not have a permanent contract. Organizations invest less in talent development of temporary employees so access to development opportunities possibly are not evenly distributed across the temporary and permanent team members. This is equally true for access to sources of knowledge and the systems that host such knowledge, such as datasets, the SIG's at SURF or –in times of transition from one job to the other- to other relevant places where knowledge is shared (such as international seminars). So if access & opportunities vary between team members, perhaps expectations & requirements of team members should vary as well.
9. **Short term/ long term effects of doing tasks for the team.** A supervisor might redistribute some tasks to a PhD or Postdoc candidate, by asking them to “take one for the team” and therefore teach their case classes for them or perform a valorisation task in their place. For candidates it is difficult to refuse such requests. Fulfilling the request might indeed lead to short term gains (a positive yearly review from the supervisor), but could be costly in the long run (they have less available time to do research, which may lead to less favourable outcomes for the 1 year go/ go decision or midterm review).
10. **Shift from vertical to horizontal authority.** In keeping with general developments in organisations in general, the more traditional vertical authority relations (between team leader and team members), university teams and collaborations might shift to more horizontal authority relations (between team members). These altered interactions can result in a redistribution of tasks within the team.
11. **Efforts and rewards of societal relevance' for one/ the team.** Drawing attention to the societal relevance of specific research findings, for example by giving interviews or writing non-academic articles, takes time, usually an individual employee's time. This effort however, can benefit the entire team as this effort may yield more access to data, better collaborations and/ or interest to the work the team does. This could also be true the other way around; the efforts of an entire team are not recognized as much when only one team member shines in the media and/ or is credited by the media and/ or by the TU Delft.
12. **Need for robust decision making in peer-reviewed systems.** When reviewing publications, team members (in a team science setting) have to decide how much **time to invest in improving their own work versus in improving the work of others.**
13. This also brings up the subject of **how to design team decision making in a more qualitative/ intersubjective way.** Teams such as hiring & selection committees or career evaluation committees might struggle somewhat to evaluate the performances of candidates in a qualitative and/ or increasingly intersubjective way.
14. **Team science collaborations with partners outside the TU Delft.** Increasingly research grants can only be gained by collaborating in the application process (the consortia research


grands proposals). Therefore, a TU Delft's team outcomes might to a considerable degree depend on parties outside their department or even outside of the TU Delft.

15. **There might be essential, yet not official, members of the team.** The team's performance might even to a greater or lesser extent, depend on colleagues who are not part of the team officially, but that are of vital importance to the team's success, nonetheless. Examples of these roles given in the interviews to identify the success factors of high performing teams are; the receptionist of the Robohouse and the lab techs that keep various labs going.
16. **Some team members might have other commitments next to their work at the TU Delft.** Architects for example might work for both the university and for a commercial organization (or be self-employed). They might therefore have different commitments and divide their time and efforts differently from employees who work exclusively for the university.
17. **Changing processes require time.** In the short run, changing the importance and the ways teams work in the different ways as described in this document, requires extra time and attention. Workload and overtime increased due to the pandemic as well so time is in short supply as it is.
18. **Changing processes also require psychological safety.** After all, going true finding new common ground becomes much easier if all team members feel safe and included.



C. Team leader

19. Navigating the interdependencies above is vital for team success. Team leaders might be increasingly responsible for leading these changes. Navigating them however, might not entirely be within **their circle of influence**. Therefore, if this is an increasing part of their role, being appraised for this task should be included in the R&D cycle (even more) and additional training in the skills needed to do this properly should become available.
20. **A focus on familiar similarities versus on necessary differences.** The R&R program is a paradigm shift, which causes uncertainty, at least temporarily. Therefore, team leaders may become more risk avoidant. They might hire new staff very similar to themselves (even more than usual). This tendency is at odds with the required thought diversity necessary for innovation & for solving Wicked Problems in the five focus areas of the TU Delft.
21. Hiring and promoting effects on the team's composition. The idea of a narrative resume (i.e. in which more qualitative outcomes are described), perhaps in particular for staff at a TU, is perceived as fuzzy/ more difficult to identify, than outcomes such as the amount of articles published and impact factor (the more quantitative outcomes). **The transition to the qualitative approach might therefore make it more difficult for supervisors to substantiate decisions on which team members to hire and promote.** This may affect the team's composition/ equilibrium.
22. Increased teamwork may cause a **shift from formal to informal leadership and/ or team leadership tasks being executed by team members.** So this may change the position of the team leader in the team too.
23. **The team leader's views on teamwork and their leadership style/ habits.** The team leader can see teamwork as important or not. This impact on the team's chances of success.
24. **Facilitating teamwork is the responsibility of the team leader vs. of the team.** Even if the team leader emphasizes teamwork, team members often seem to consider facilitating teamwork and collaboration as (mostly) the responsibility of the team leader. In order for such teams to become more versatile and effective, the team leader might have to make more of an effort to get all team members involved.

Dilemma's and paradoxes at TU Delft leadership level:	<p>4. LEADING AN ORGANISATION</p> 
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D. Organizational level

25. **The R&D cycle currently focusses on individual goals & progress** so individual contributions to team goals are not included in the evaluation & promotion process of employees yet.
26. As an employee type, **university staff are characterised as professionals that prefer to work relatively autonomously**³. Therefore, the university should facilitate varying degrees of collaboration to suit different situations and employee collaboration styles.
27. **New processes and policies have to be developed to measure efforts and results on a team level.** On the other hand, introducing these new team related procedures (as mentioned in the previous dilemma), creates extra administrative workload and takes away time from the work itself. So unwillingly, prescribing procedures around teams can act as a punishment for teamwork.
28. **TU Delft and scarcity of talent.** The developments described in this document could mean that the position of Dutch universities in the international war on talent worsens so new team hires may be of a lesser quality -and therefore contributing less to overall team results-.
29. Currently, when research & education teams from two or more departments collaborate, their **joint efforts and outcomes cannot be registered the university's financial systems**. So sharing of financial rewards for interdepartmental achievements is complicated.
30. Team science and collaboration have been assigned considerable importance in ZonMw⁴ and KNAW⁵ plans and reports. 'Teams' as such, however, yet, **teams aren't a formal tier in the organisational structure of universities or in the Dutch Collective Labour Agreement**.

The implementation of the Dutch position paper at the TU Delft by means of the R&R program should take these dilemmas and paradoxes into account. Hence, the proposed pathway is to identify which factors help the different parties concerned (i.e. team members, team leaders and the organisation at large) to address these issues as best as possible. This starts with awareness of the existence of the dilemmas and paradoxes. Furthermore, TU Delft R&R project 11 aims to identify and develop means with which the TU Delft can clarify and counter some of these issues. This will be done by selecting tools and processes for TU Delft teams approach and toolbox that are based as much as possible on the success factors of successful TU Delft teams and on the different kinds of for teamwork (the so-called reinforcement mix of TU Delft tangible, social and content rewards).

³ Wierdsma, A.F.M. & Swieringa, J., (2002), *De lerende organisatie. Als meer van hetzelfde niet helpt*. 2nd edition. Stenfert Kroese publishers. ISBN 978-90-207-3099-9.

⁴ ZonNW. (2021). Team science for ground breaking fundamental research receives boost of 12.5 million euros. ZonMw Open Competition 2021: funding of sixteen interdisciplinary teams. Consulted on May 9th, 2022 at <https://www.zonmw.nl/en/news-and-funding/news/detail/item/team-science-for-groundbreaking-fundamental-research-receives-boost-of-125-million-euros/>

⁵ The Recognition & Rewards Committee of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW). (2022). Recognition and rewards agenda for 2022 – 2025. Consulted on February 7th, 2022 at <https://www.know.nl/en/news/publications/recognition-and-rewards-agenda-for-2022-2025>.