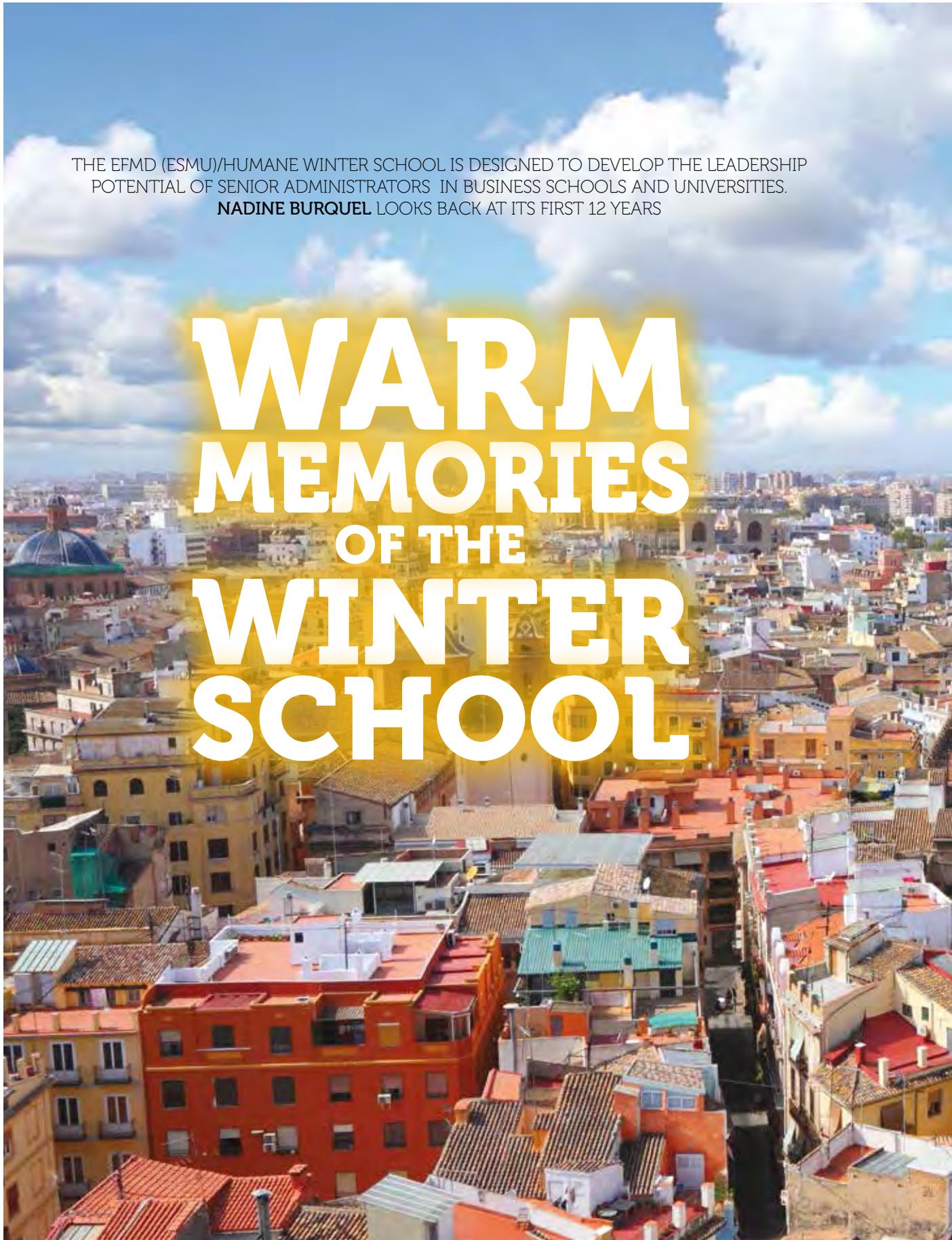


THE EFMD (ESMU)/HUMANE WINTER SCHOOL IS DESIGNED TO DEVELOP THE LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL OF SENIOR ADMINISTRATORS IN BUSINESS SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES.
NADINE BURQUEL LOOKS BACK AT ITS FIRST 12 YEARS

WARM MEMORIES OF THE WINTER SCHOOL





When the European Centre for Strategic Management of Universities (ESMU) and the Heads of University Management and Administration Network in Europe (HUMANE) launched their Winter School in 2003 they were eager to train the next generation of European university senior administrators. The aim was also to develop a cadre of professional senior university administrators and encourage them to network across Europe.

The belief was that senior leaders and managers must be able to understand the global challenges facing their institutions; and acquire the necessary skills to lead their institutions through complex developments.

The HUMANE network was launched in the mid-1990s to promote the professional development and networking of university heads of administration in Europe. Through the integration of the activities of ESMU into EFMD in 2013, the Winter School is now undergoing exciting new developments in the global context of EFMD's activities.

Business schools and universities have seen tremendous changes in the last few years. Global competition for talent has risen significantly while public funding has decreased and new information technology offers opportunities to address new markets. It has more than ever become vital to face complex changes and establish a strong brand and reputation.

The Winter School is a major international leadership development programme in higher education management which is unique at the European level. It brings together senior administrators from business schools and universities from all over Europe.

Participants are supported by their heads of administration or heads of school. They submit a detailed application to their school or institution outlining their interest and their reasons for wanting to attend the Winter School. This often follows an internal selection procedure.

A Steering Committee of EFMD and HUMANE representatives selects the best candidates out of each year's applications and accepted 40 applicants (a record number) for the 2014 session.

The Winter School will expand as demand grows and is now considering offering multiple editions in different parts of the world.

The programme is delivered over five days, currently at the Continuing Education Centre of the Universitat Politècnica de València in Spain, a dynamic university that has had a significant impact on regional innovation.

Its purpose is to develop the leadership potential of fast-track administrators and make them fully aware of the importance of integrating academic matters with financial, human resource and quality assurance issues. It also emphasises the importance of strategic management in European and global contexts.

The programme offers short, mainly informal lectures delivered by higher-education experts and "reflective practitioners." There are many opportunities for networking through case study and group learning as well as social events throughout the week. The first day of the Winter School aims to give participants a sense of the internationalisation and globalisation of higher education and the implications for institutional strategies.

Over the years Frans van Vught, a leading higher education expert, (former Rector of Universiteit Twente in the Netherlands and former president of ESMU), has taken participants through EU policies in education, research and innovation and the practical implications for their institutions.

The programme also discusses changes at systemic and institutional levels such as national stratification strategies, rankings, accreditation and benchmarking as well as the need for institutional profiling and branding.

During the week participants are placed in small groups to work on a case study. This is an important experience as senior managers from different contexts, types of institution, senior positions and management styles are challenged to work together and propose a strategy to merge a large university with a large research centre, looking at the implications for staff management, finances, properties and communication.

"We learned that what we took for granted had to be renegotiated," says one former participant. "We had to find the best collaborative approach. It took us quite some time before our international team could be fully effective. This was the great learning point in the Winter School."



Another defining moment is when participants go out to find good tapas bars in Valencia old town and work on the case study that runs throughout the programme. With good food and wine, groups debate the challenges of the strategic management of higher education institutions in a creative environment.

Though there are some stressful moments experienced by the groups in delivering their written assignment to the School Steering Committee there are other similar moments of fun in sharing ideas and working on collaborative solutions.

The Steering Committee reviews all proposals based on the case study and offers valuable feedback. A strong learning point is the final session on "What really happened with the merger".

The case is based on the collaboration between Karlsruhe Universität and a large research centre in Karlsruhe to form the new Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT).

The merger received major initial funding through the Excellence Initiative of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the German Research Foundation. This aims to promote high-quality innovative research and enhance the international presence of German universities.

Several other sessions also touch on the issue of mergers in higher education since strategic partnerships, acquisitions and integration are now common around the world.

From one Winter School alumnus we heard about the challenges related to the communication strategy of Aalto University in Finland, the result of a merger between Helsinki University of Technology, the Helsinki School of Economics, and the University of Art and Design Helsinki.



40

A Steering Committee of EFMD and HUMANE representatives selects the best candidates out of each year's applications and accepted 40 applicants (a record number) for the 2014 session



A highlight of the March 2014 edition was the contribution of Hubert de Neve, Vice-President of IMEC, a major R&D company specialising in nanotechnologies. IMEC started more than 20 years ago as a spin-off from Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Belgium. It now employs almost 2,000 staff around the world.

His presentation explained how to organise the work of professionals in a way that combines their professional and individual passions with the need for alignment, procedures and regulations in large organisations.

Leadership, governance and management always feature highly in every Winter School through case studies (the last one was on how to tackle the increasing problem of academic fraud), external and internal governance arrangements such as higher education systems at national and supranational levels and the impact on institutional autonomy, and personal leadership issues and styles.

Participants often dread “the finance day”. That is before experiencing the fun of the financial session delivered by Ian Creagh, Head of Administration and College Secretary of King’s College London in the UK. The session discusses the principles and practices of strategic financial management, the critical success factors for institutional financial health, and the need to align financial and academic strategies, often in a very amusing way.

300

There are now more than 300 Winter School alumni, with talent and expertise in higher-education management ranging from HRM, finances and quality management to communication and internationalisation



By the final day participants are friends for life and always part with heavy hearts after such an intensive week together.

But this is only the start. Every year, the Winter School Alumni Network (WSAN) organises a seminar that reconnects participants. There are now more than 300 alumni, a tremendous pool of talent and expertise in higher-education management ranging from HRM, finances and quality management to communication and internationalisation.

In 2013 WSAN held its annual seminar at Oxford University in the UK looking at the challenges of globalisation. In the autumn of 2014 alumni will meet at Utrecht University in the Netherlands.

The Steering Committee is instrumental in shaping the developments of the Winter School and the week’s programme. The Winter School take great care in evaluating what it does, listening to feedback from participants and making regular adaptations to the programme.

When the Winter School meets each spring School staff will have been working on the programme for the previous year with the local hosts and with speakers.

Inès Proenca, the Winter School Co-ordinator, develops a close relation with all the participants in the months prior to the programme, first at the application stage then during the pre-course tasks and readings assigned to participants.

Eric Cornuel, Director General and CEO of EFMD, believes the Winter School is a powerful programme that allows leaders and managers in business schools and universities to enhance their institutional capacity to build strength in global contexts.

We need to adopt strategic management approaches. We need to promote strong leadership and management to take our institutions further in new directions. And we need to measure the impact of what we do.

gf

“”

Leadership, governance and management always feature highly in every Winter School through case studies

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Nadine Burquel is Director of the Winter School for Senior Administrators. She has worked on higher education developments in Europe for the last 20 years and has directed the Winter School since its launch in 2003.