



# Universiteit Utrecht

**UR, Postbus 80125, 3508 TC Utrecht**

Universiteit Utrecht  
Aan het College van Bestuur

**Universiteitsraad**

**Bezoekadres**  
Heidelberglaan 8, Utrecht

**Uw kenmerk**

**Ons kenmerk**

**Telefoon** 030 253 44 44

**Fax**

**E-mail** griffiesecr@uu.nl

**Website** www.uu.nl

**Datum** 13 november '17

**Onderwerp** Layman's Talk

Dear University Board,

As you know, every PhD candidate must publicly defend his or her work at the end of the PhD. A layman's talk is part of this ceremony at almost every university in the Netherlands. A layman's talk precedes the actual defence of the dissertation; it is a short presentation of the work to be defended, which can be understood by a general audience without specialized knowledge of the subject.

In Utrecht the layman's talk is not part of the defence ceremony. If a UU PhD candidate wants to give a layman's talk, this must be done on his or her own accord at a self-arranged location. This means that money must be paid for renting a space in the Academy Building and that the audience needs to change rooms between the two parts of the ceremony. Usually this means that the layman's talk is not held at all.

We believe however, that a layman's talk is of such importance that it should be facilitated and stimulated. Not only does it give PhD candidates the opportunity to explain to friends and family what they have been doing in the last few years, but it also allows candidates to communicate the importance of their research to the broader public. The promotion is often funded with public money and as such, the candidate must be enabled to explain to society what the importance of this research is.

We therefore ask the University Board to provide all PhD candidates the opportunity to give a layman's talk in the Senaatszaal preceding the defence.

Best wishes,  
On behalf of the Utrecht PhD Party

Nico Naus