

MINUTES 156TH FC MEETING – 3 APRIL 2014

Attendees

FC Members	Guests	MT	Official Secretary
Juup Essers	Wilfred Mijnhardt	Frank van de Kruk	Joy Kearney
Gabi Helfert	Adri Meijdam	Abe de Jong	Karin Bongers
Miruna Carlugea	Anne van de Graaf		
Chandro Kandiah			
Jelle de Vries			
Joost Vlot			

1. Opening

Juup opens the 156th meeting officially at 10.30am and welcomes everyone.

2. Agenda

There are no questions or further points to be added to the agenda.

3. Minutes

Page 2: 'economic goals' should be changed into 'performance targets'.

The minutes are approved without further remarks or amendments.

4. Announcements

Abe makes eight announcements:

- Financial result: the faculty made a loss of €1.75M (€1.5M of reservations, €0.7M of revenues taken in 2014). The BV made a profit of €0.8M, of which €350K will be paid out as dividend to the faculty. In 2014 RSM expects a loss of €500K.
- Developments in the BV. Dean of Executive Education to be appointed from T-faculty; Advisory Council with member from each academic department; committee is currently inviting candidates and will propose a candidate to the Dean.
- Internal Communication: three initiatives will be taken:
 - Organise informal staff meetings to attract attendance where more information can be communicated. First 'Steef of the Union' lunch on 22 April 2014. The objective is to give all RSM employees an update on everything that is happening in our school – news, organisation, finance, research & education, etc. These lunches will be organised on a quarterly basis from now on. Faculty Club H-building - 22 April from 12:00 to 14:00hrs.
 - The Dean and Dean of Faculty to meet with Department Chairs once per year each for a similar meeting.
 - Newsletter with message from the Dean/Senior management and other important messages.
- The report on the Employee survey (Oct 2011) has been submitted to the university; a new survey will be held in May, with mainly the same questions, allowing a comparison.
- Equis accreditation is in progress, visit 9-10 June with light procedure.
- On April 15, a P&T committee session has been scheduled with two midterm reviews and three promotion & tenure reviews.

7. Group working on implementation of mentoring scheme (Dirk van Dierendonck, Eric van Heck, Peter Elsing, Eveline Wijnmaalen, Abe de Jong)
8. Visit of the International Peer Review Committee to ERIM in September 2013. Report January 2014 over 2010-2012. Very positive about achievements, but also constructive ideas about further improvements such as financing the vouchers and valorisation/impact. Currently discussions in ERIM about follow-up.

Frank makes three announcements:

1. There has been a big investigation regarding the organisation of the shared services within the EUR. At first it seemed that all shared services (including OOS and UL) would be concentrated in one Shared Service Organisation (SSO) but in the very last stage OOS and UL were not included in this SSO, because of a difference in maturity and development as an SSC. OOS and UL might become part of the SSC in a later stage, when they are more developed. Details about the organisations are not defined yet.
2. There is a big meeting planned on 10th of April for all managers at EUR. During this meeting, the CvB will present the plans on the budget cuts for the long-term financial planning until 2018 including the consequences for all parties involved. As soon as all consequences for RSM are clear, the MT would like to discuss the plans with the FC.
3. Reorganisation Finance and HR: For finance there is already an informal plan how to organise the Finance function within the EUR. This plan will be finalised within a week and this will be discussed in a meeting with a delegation of the FC on April 14. For HR there is a good process and discussion, but the reorganisation will take some more months. It is not known yet if the reorganisation of Finance and HR will take place at the same time, or if the reorganisation of Finance will happen earlier than HR.

5. EUR-RSM covenant 2018

Abe: This covenant states where EUR and RSM want to be by 2018. It is a strategic document with extensive information about programmes, development of personnel, etc. The job for RSM was to incorporate the strategic guidelines from the university into a document where we commit ourselves to developments that are going to happen within RSM. This is interesting, because RSM is not only a faculty of EUR, but a combination between a public and a private limited company. Therefore, the dynamics in the document are a bit different than what you see on a daily basis.

The procedure started with the strategy of the university as a whole, and then RSM management was invited to spell out all the implementations within RSM. To get a good understanding of what the boundary conditions are and what is expected from us in terms of implementation, there has been contact with the central bodies of the university. Now it is important to discuss the covenant with stakeholders like the FC, to get a dialogue and to get an understanding if this is indeed the direction we aim for. This covenant will impact both the academic and support departments to eventually meet the formulated goals.

Wilfred: The covenant serves as a vehicle for interaction between the two levels within the university. This (second) covenant includes more performance indicators compared to the first one that was set up in 2008. The university delivered the document as a format in Dutch to all faculties; therefore the one of RSM is in Dutch too. With this document, RSM also wants to show the university that we are internationally oriented and to tell the story about RSM. The first function of this covenant is to create this understanding. The second function is to have a match with the strategic process RSM is in (McKinsey, research strategy, and the implementation of our own internal strategy). The covenant is more or less a bridging document between two governance levels in university.

The goals of the bachelor programmes are very specific in the part on education. The university has agreed with the ministry to achieve a specific performance level. Performance is delivered in 2015, and this mainly concerns the bachelor programmes. The university is thus mainly focused on the pre-experience programmes, whereas RSM focuses on post-experience programmes. The FC asks what exactly performance means in this context. Wilfred explains that it is about the number of students who graduate within a specific time period, dropout rates, etc.

The level of detail differs per part on purpose. On the one hand, we need details for arrangements and on the other hand we don't want to give too much detail when it is not necessary to prevent the RSM from making unrealistic commitments. For that, a dialog is needed between the two boards. The covenant will live for five years and also evolve in that period. The long term goal of the covenant is to specify more and more in time. The document can be seen as a business enhancement tool.

The goals of the university and RSM are not different, but Wilfred thinks they have different priorities. RSM is further developed on topics like life-long learning as opposed to the university that has just started discussing the concept and hasn't made a plan for implementation yet. The interaction between the university and RSM as business school within the university is interesting in terms of how they can learn from each other. Therefore, it is important to have dialogs with each other.

The FC asks what influence the covenant has on RSM's own strategy and what RSM at this moment expects from the FC in reaction to this covenant. The covenant will be signed by all deans and with that they share the responsibility to implement the strategy of the university. In that way, it moves from symbolic to cooperative governance. Wilfred thinks that the covenant of 2025 will be a joint responsibility and that the goals will be increasingly specified and measurable to make a comparison possible with the other faculties and international peers. The status of the covenant is growing in terms of formal function in the system and towards RSM it helps to bring all elements together. It is important though that the covenant stays on a business level.

Diversity is currently only addressed in the section about research, under the heading of HR. The FC thinks this is too narrow an approach, since a lack of diversity, both in terms of gender and cultural background is even more blatant in the senior levels of RSM's staff departments. In the covenant, RSM promises to stimulate diversity, but without listing any measures or specific goals to measure after five years whether RSM met the goals. The FC is convinced a culture change is needed to solve the diversity issue rather than making a large amount of resources available. The FC would like RSM to add diversity ambitions to the covenant for all its departments to stimulate the university to broaden their perspective on diversity. In addition, the FC thinks that an increase of diversity in leading positions in both faculty and staff will also support the attainment of goals regarding internationalisation of the university.

The FC thinks quality assurance is lacking in the covenant. Wilfred explains that this is already clear to the CvB because of all the efforts of RSM in for example the Equis update. Adri says that it is hard to use measures that are generally applicable for all schools within the university as a whole. There are internal targets, but these are not included in the covenant. Anne adds to this discussion that this does not mean that the university thinks quality assurance is not important, because there are midterm accreditation reviews. So at EUR there is a control circle. The reason why EUR did not include quality assurance might be that it is not a strategic goal or target as such.

The FC asks how the concept of online education will be implemented in the long term. RSM is currently developing modules for online learning together with central. Wilfred proposes to make it a bit more specific in the covenant by adding that RSM will take a leading role in this process. The plans on the development of online

education are not very concrete yet in terms of working groups and processes. Bas Giesbers is working on a proposal at this moment regarding e-learning, distance learning and digitalisation. In addition, Wilfred and Bas are thinking about enhancing case-oriented research and education by adding technology in cooperation with TUDelft.

The FC will send a letter of advice with regard to the RSM-EUR covenant.

6. Thesis Online Platform (TOP)

Master students have had their first deadline for their master thesis proposal and first used the TOP-system. The FC set up a survey for students to get a picture of what students think about the TOP-system and the new thesis trajectory, and so far there are 84 responses. Main issues are that students have problems with finding a coach and/or co-reader and the inflexibility of deadlines. The FC is curious about how programme management experienced the TOP-system so far.

It is relevant to make a distinction between TOP and the thesis trajectory. The Thesis Online Platform supports the new thesis trajectory. From a process point of view, nothing really changed besides that the paper forms changed into online forms for all three stages in which both the coach and co-reader need to give their approval. The advantage of TOP is that the deadlines are much clearer because they are in a system. The thesis trajectory as such, namely having a thesis trajectory as a sort of course with a pass/fail system and no longer an open-ended trajectory, is completely new. Anne thinks the introduction of the TOP system went rather smoothly; there were some minor problems but nothing major. Technically, everything is expected to go OK because students have to use the system very infrequently (only twice to upload a file). Coaches and co-readers use the system much more frequently, and so far their feedback was positive.

At this moment, 1,000-1,100 students got a pass and 80 students a fail in the thesis proposal stage (old and new cohort students). In total, around 1,500 students are in the TOP-system. The biggest issue was finding co-readers, which has been a problem for a number of years, but is now an aggravated issue due to the increased time pressure in the new master thesis trajectory. As a temporary solution, students without a co-reader could upload their thesis proposal by making use of a dummy co-reader, but in a later stage they obviously do need to have a real co-reader. There is a difference between programmes; some programmes provide students with a co-reader (FI), others don't. Programme management is working on a solution on this problem for next year.

The FC noticed that coaches and co-readers don't know how to work with the TOP-system. There are coaches/co-readers who use the text box almost as a substitute for a meeting, others leave it blank because they prefer to discuss the progress of a student in a meeting. Programme management monitors these kind of things to see if there is room for improvement or something should be added in the thesis manual. It is important that a third person can understand why a specific decision (pass or fail) was taken through the feedback that is written down in the system. The examination board will do a random check by taking out 10% of the theses, read the theses, look at the grading, and see if there is a match and also look at the documentation that is now gathered in TOP whether that makes sense and also how the defence was, etc. TOP is not meant to be a communication forum, but it is important that a third party should be able to track the process – especially if it is a fail.

The FC thinks it is interesting that there were never really standards for a failed proposal, and that these standards still don't exist; neither for the new system nor for in the master redesign as a whole. The burden of proof has increased for the coach and/or co-reader. A coach and co-reader might also have given a pass to a student with a not very strong proposal, because it might improve significantly in the two months after. The FC would be interested in the numbers per department in terms of failed/passed thesis proposal. Anne thinks it is important to communicate the standards for a fail, because a proposal that is not of sufficient quality can still receive a pass.

Basically it is like taking a photo of where the student is now, and what is the likelihood of he or she can finished or deliver a good thesis mid-June. That assessment should be made.

The expectations of the students are managed through the thesis manual, which for example states that they will meet their coach six times and their co-reader three times during the thesis trajectory. The responsibilities of the coach, the co-reader and the students are also written down in the thesis manual. At the end of the trajectory, students are asked fill in an evaluation form just like for other courses. Due to a technical issue, it is not possible to make filling in the evaluation form mandatory for students. Perhaps this is possible as soon the new evaluation system is introduced.

Students gave the thesis trajectory a 4.8 on average. The survey of the FC is still open to fill in for students, but the response rate is rather low up until now (84 out of 1,500). The main outcomes are that students don't like the inflexibility of the thesis trajectory. The deadline is not hard-coded, but they can be altered by the thesis coordinator if there is an exemption case to be made. Deadlines have been altered frequently already. A potential issue of this possibility is that it might happen that the whole trajectory slides away into an open-ended system again. That conclusion can only be made at the end of the trajectory, because then you can see what went in and what comes out of the cohort and how the funnel looks like.

To get a first impression of how supervisors experience the TOP-system and the thesis trajectory, the FC will set up and send out a similar survey. Anne would like to know what the FC would like to know in terms of student satisfaction, hard numbers, etc. in order to be able to decide on whether the new thesis trajectory was a good or a bad thing.

The FC wonders what the philosophy is behind the fact that the student can only see her or his result after both the coach and co-reader examined their thesis (proposal). Sometimes there are only two weeks between the initial and the resit deadline, which might be too short for students to improve their thesis proposal. Anne thinks departments have been too optimistic in this respect, because it sometimes takes some time to make the assessment. The decision about a pass or fail has to be a unanimous decision, because programme management does not want to expose a potential disagreement between the coach and co-reader to the student.

Another issue that was brought up by the respondents of the survey send out by the FC, was the difficulty students sometimes have to reach their coach and/or co-reader. Anne thinks faculty members have to get used to the new rhythm throughout the academic year. On the one hand, students cannot expect their coach and co-reader to be available 24/7. On the other hand, a coach and co-reader should respond as soon as possible because of the deadlines and increased time pressure for students in the new thesis trajectory.

Theoretically, the work load for the students should be fine throughout the year. Because the requirements per deadline differ per master programme, students might be confused and even perceive it as an inconsistency between the master programmes. Anne states that there are indeed differences between the master programmes in deadlines and also in the requirements per stage, and there will be looked at the differences in evaluations at the end. It might turn out that a certain programme works better for students compared to another. Another potential issue is the change of the number of ECTS from 10 to 6 per elective in how that relates to the real work load for students.

Abe calls the new thesis trajectory a revolution, because it is a change in the mind set of students and faculty members. He expects everyone to be used to the new system in two years. The FC has doubts about this, because it is only RSM having the strict thesis trajectory and students will have contact with students from other

faculties and see the differences between the schools. The thesis should be graded based on the substantial quality and not on the amount of time invested. Now, it is ambiguous what you should strive for in the thesis trajectory: writing a thesis with a sufficient quality given the time available or a learning experience for students in which a research is conducted unrelated to the time available. This has an impact on the perception of the quality of a thesis.

7. Any other business

Due to the spring break, the FC meeting planned on 1 May will be rescheduled.

8. Closure

Juup closes the meeting at 12.00 pm.

Next FC meeting 14 May 2014 10 am in T07-67.

To do before the next meeting

Task	Person Responsible	Progress
Ask the examination board to clarify standards for a failed thesis proposal	Anne	Pending
Figures about pass/fail for thesis proposal per department	Anne	Pending
Send out the thesis manual to all faculty members	Anne	Pending
Send the evaluation form students are asked to fill in at the end of the thesis trajectory to the FC	Anne	Done
Send the link to the FC survey to Anne and spread it via sin-online	Jelle, Anne	Done
Set up and send around a similar survey about TOP and the thesis trajectory for faculty members	Jelle	Done
Make up a list with questions the FC would like to be asked in the evaluation of the thesis trajectory	Joost, Chandro	Pending
Send a letter to the board about career services and Eship	Juup, Jules	Eship done
Send a letter of advice to the board about the EUR-RSM covenant	Juup, Chandro	Pending
Reschedule the FC meeting of 1 May	Karin	Done: 14/05
Make an overview of all labour conditions at the EUR and the BV to make comparison possible	Peter	Done
Share the white paper from MT with FC about faculty regulations	Eric	Pending
Respond with any amendments to the faculty regulations	Eric	Pending