Minutes 231st FC meeting

FC members	Guests	EB
Jacomijn Klitsie (JK) (C)		Ansgar Richter (AR)
Silvija Prancane-Verhoef (SPV)(VC)		Peter Roosenboom (PR)
Marja Flory (MF)		Myra van Esch (MvE)
Xena Welch Guerra (XWG)		Claudia Rutten (CR)
Shihao Lin (SL)		
Jasper Oosting (JO)		
Cesar Wapenaar (CW)		
Bas Crombag (BC)		
Stephan van Roon (SvR)		
Edward Oldenburger(EO)		
Boudewijn Pieterson(BP)		

Thursday November 11th 2021, 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM, Online on Zoom

1. Opening
2. Agenda
3. Announcements

AR We are very much looking forward to the strategic platform meeting next Monday. It has existed for some time but it was not very comprehensive in my point of view. We have recomposed it and made it a much more multi-stakeholder group. We are going to meet on Monday for a workshop and workload also features highly on the agenda there.

4. Follow-up to-do list 230th meeting
5. Approval minutes 230th meeting
6. Work pressure

JK Peter, you were working on a plan to relieve work pressure. Do you want to give us an update?
PR We are working on a communication concerning data. Marja and Silvija participated in the discussion that led to the drafting of that communication. I can run you through a number of things that we will indicate in that communication. One is about reducing administration and reducing administrative workload. Second one is about fair and justifiable teaching allocation. The third one is about training managers to recognize work related stress early on. Fourth one is HR support for departments and teams to facilitate the discussion within their teams. Fifth measure is about tailored career pathways which links to the recognition and rewards. Sixth one is to ensure sufficient opportunities to take rest and holidays. We are going to explore the possibility of introducing a period in the winter and summer holidays, during which minimal teaching activities and email traffic will take place. The seventh point is about taking care of ourselves and our colleagues with custom approaches.
MvE We should also move forward on this by gathering data and information. We are looking into this and we want to have more indicators that we can use across the school to look at the current situation and get a clearer understanding of when workload in some positions tends to rise. We see

that everyone at RSM is very committed to striving for the best, but this creates change sometimes and it adds up to the stuff that we are already doing. We should have a clearer picture of the cost of a trajectory that we are starting. Then we can make educated decisions on what projects to postpone and prioritize. Apart from the measures that Peter already mentioned, we want to have a long-term view on how we can control this very difficult issue and understand how it is evolving. There is a long-term strategy to this. Furthermore, there are going to be listening sessions where we stay in touch with different teams to see what problems they have and see what we can do now. Also, we have this project with an outside company on a more personal level. They will help people to recognize rising stress levels and with coping mechanisms. All of these elements are part of this very complex workload element that we want to get a grip on.

XWG Peter, would it be possible to elaborate on points one and two that you mentioned? I think that was reducing the admin task and fair allocation of workload. How do you currently think this could be achieved?

PR One of the things that that we also have discussed with the faculty council and also within the UB concerning the reduction of administrative workload is to revisit the organizational services. Also, there is a project going on that is looking into the number of assessments that are being done in the different courses. That is looked at as part of renewed educational strategy in the next few months. We want to streamline administrative processes, especially when it comes to educational services. For example, by also introducing new platforms and options for automation to facilitate information for information sharing within the school. When it comes to a fair and justifiable teaching allocation that has to do with the teaching allocation of tasks within academic departments. We want to enter into discussion and better understand the differences in teaching allocation models that apply within these different departments as a starting point. We do this to make sure that people that are in the same job roles also have similar type of workloads, allowing for sufficient time to do research, teaching, administrative and management tasks. Also, we are looking into caps on student numbers as you know, many of which have already been approved and will be applying to most of our large master programs as of next academic year. And that should also allow for a better planning of capacity, and thereby also managing workload because there's a at least an anchor point of the maximum number of students that will be flowing into the different programs. That hopefully will help to do some better capacity planning than in the past.

MF Myra, you say that employees of the school strive for the best but there is something else. We should do something about the culture. We just heard in the internal meeting that people have a big loyalty towards their students. For instance, if a very busy Dutch PHD student is asked to give the course, they find it very hard to say no. I hear a lot of stories like this and that is because of the culture. At our school, we find it really important to say that we are busy and strive for quality but we also have to take care of ourselves. This is something that I missed, Peter.

MvE Yes, I completely agree. I think this is one of the most important elements in this, but it's also one of the most difficult. Changing a culture is a big, long term goal, but we have to do it step by step. The faculty council also plays a very big role in mentioning this and making it something we have discussions about. The EB has made it top priority right now, to look at these elements. This is also part of a focus point as a long-term goal, but there are also some concrete measures that we can take right now to reduce some of the burden.

MF I completely agree that it is difficult, but what the school needs are role models. I really wish someone of the EB would come forward and say that they also have these days that they need some type of help. The head of departments and the EB should be role models.

JK I am glad that you are talking about the overall culture and change that needs to happen. We would like to intensify the conversation a little bit. Peter, we are on the same page with feeling that there are steps to be made in terms of unity across all departments for teaching allocations. We would like to know more about how you take steps there and also what the timeline is.

PR I think it first begins with getting an overview of the different teaching allocation models that exist in these different departments. Also, how these different allocation models might or might not lead to different workloads for people in the same roles across different departments. I think the first

attention should be paid to, for example, tenure trackers. we do see a variety of tasks that are being asked from tenure trackers into different departments. I would like to start with seeing what people in the same roles do in the different departments and how these teaching allocation models work. For that, I need to talk to the people who are in charge of making these teaching allocations. As the next step, we might start thinking of setting some base rules.

JK We see three categories that we need to be mindful of. The tenure trackers, the PHD population and the tenured faculty. I would really welcome indications as to what would be reasonable from the EB.

AR To add to what Peter said. As a school, we need basic workload rules that are being applied with a degree of conformity. We don't want to move towards a system where we measure every hour of workload that is rendered. The art will be in finding an appropriate middle ground. We can specify rules to the individual departments, but at the same time have common broad standards that we can also reinforce. I think the suggestion that Peter made was that we a have set of simple rules and then check the reality against those simple rules.

JK Sometimes it is measured by number of courses taught and sometimes it is measured in income per course as paid out by EURcentral. Is your plan to have a central unit of analysis in measuring this?

AR I think we cannot give a definitive answer to that. I can say that I think time is a more appropriate unit of analysis than the finances associated with a particular course. I think we have reached the limit to which we can steer the department through a financial steering mechanism.

EO RSM is a high-performance organization and has a high-performance culture. Are you also taking into account that we do have to manage this workload? How can we still achieve these goals while being a little bit more relaxed?

AR I think some part of the answer will revolve around a good understanding of our portfolio of activities. We need to differentiate so that we do not optimize across the entire portfolio of activities. We have to optimize where it is really needed. Not every program needs to be managed according to exactly the same expectations. I know it is a bit of an uncomplete answers, but I think that it is something that we need to take into account.

XWG I wanted to go back to the question about the timeline. I certainly understand the complexity of the issue. You were highlighting that you first actually need to collect data to get a clearer picture on how the situations is looking. I also understand that it is difficult to come up with a good system that people agree with. However, you were mentioning talking to the departments and I believe this is all documented quite well. I assume this is something where one could request those files and look into them. You should then be able to get an understanding of the situation quite fast. What do you think about that? Because we certainly want to see this happening quite fast.

PR That is also what I am planning on asking them. Having been a department chair for many years, I know it is difficult to understand this. I do need to have some more information. It also requires talking to the people in charge about how it all actually works. For me, the allocation model itself is not something I am most interested in. I am more interested in how this model leads to outcomes. I am planning on doing the data, beginning December to get an overview. This will require some analysis across these different departments. I have to get all the information and put it together to get an overview. That is something that I planned to ask from departments on a fairly short notice.

MvE I want to add something based on what Edward was asking about the balance between being a top accredited university and workload. I am by no way diminishing the problem, but workload is also a positive thing. It creates a situation where you can do your absolute best. We want people to excel in many different ways, but we do not want them to experience too much stress or even fall out sick because of workload issues. We now tend to navigate towards the negative effects of workload. I think we should also recognize this makes us who we are. We have a lot of perfectionists at RSM and we are very proud of that.

JK I do not think our concern is with the people who are doing their absolute best. Our concern is with the people that need to be protected.

MvE I agree, but what I heard in Edwards questions is if we are going to let go of our current top-level if we reduce the workload. This is by no means the goal.

MF I would like to say to Peter that getting the data is not that difficult. Every year I get a list from the treasurer and I can see how much other people have brought into the department. I can send you this list of department 2, it is quite simple. Do you want it?

PR This is indeed very transparent but I also know departments where this is less so. That also does not tell me the process, only the outcomes of the process.

JK I think our point is very clear and we are trying to convey the urgency. We had this conversation multiple times but we want to know when this analysis is planned to be done?

PR As Myra mentioned, this is a top priority. We will also be having a workshop about work pressure and we will also have workshop on reprioritization.

JK I am happy that this is top priority and your list is very comprehensive, but we really want to see it start happening.

PR The communication will go out shortly. This is just the starting point of the conversation. There is no silver bullet solution, it is a complex problem. It is not a general, applies to all type of solution that you can come up with. There are also custom approaches that you should take in individual cases sometimes.

XWG We discussed that there are two sides to workload. The subjective one that you were mentioning and the objective one. The objective one should be treatable and analyzable. We would really like to see this move fast.

JK We will put on the to-do list that we discuss the timeline for the fair and justifiable workload allocation across departments.

PR As I mentioned, I will start gathering the information shortly.

JK That is not concrete enough.

PR End of November, beginning December. That is the starting point before you can move ahead any further.

AR May I add another point to this context which does not have to do with the workload allocation model? However we divide this up, there is a shortage of staff. Our resources are limited, but if there is a concrete shortage of staff somewhere, we are willing to address this and find the additional resources that are required. What we are missing in this respect, is a good system for deciding where the need is greatest. Also, just hiring a person to fill in shorter need, oftentimes has a series of consequences which might end up increasing the workload. It is not the unwillingness to back our commitment up with resources, but rather the need to make wise choices and appropriate investment decisions. That is the difficulty that we are facing.

MF I was wondering if there is something you can do about the budget planning. Every year, I hear that we are going to have a deficit. Then suddenly the deficit is gone. We are now working with the figures of last year and therefore it is difficult to show that we need extra people.

AR We share the same problem. We are working on a new kind of budgeting and financial controlling system that hopefully enables us to do better and more realistic predictions. This is difficult because it also depends on the university.

MvE That seems to be a cycle that is coming up every year on different levels. We are trying to analyze where it comes from and create more predictability. It is not entirely up to us because sometimes there are funds that alleviate some of the deficits that we are expecting. The different departments should be provided with more help on how to deal with this yearly cycle and to be able to predict better. We are creating a new team for this and we want to up what we are providing as a service to the different departments too.

PR I can also respond to Marja's point. I very much recognize this because this is about departments having more teaching income in the future for which they need to hire people now in order to be able to do that. This is indeed not in last year's budget. If there is teacher income being generated in the future, then I enter a conversation with the department and typically the hiring does take place. It is not like we are going to look at last year's budget and see if there is a deficit or not. There is always a conversation with the department chair to see what additional teacher income they are expecting and what workload that entails. I do agree that we have to move more to capacity planning, rather than having this financial logic.

JK I am glad to hear that we are getting more support in the individual departments because that will be really helpful. Also for decreasing the diversity for workload allocation.

7. BILO update

MvE The BILO has a yearly cycle of one in the fall and one in the spring. In the one in the spring, the faculties are in the lead more. The CVB is more in the lead at the other one. The important topic for the CVB is the budget. For us there are three elements that we want to discuss. The first topic that we added is work pressure. The second topic is finances. We want to show the CVB that we are looking at the finances from our own perspective but also as an integrated school. We also want to take some of the elements on the BV side into that as well, especially on the income side. The third topic is on the educational model, including assessment and going towards programmatic assessment.

AR I want to make a small addition to what Myra said and it relates to the integrated financial model. We actually agreed with the CVB that we want to take this integrated perspective on the finances of RSM. Even though we have two units, we want to take a perspective as one school. Now we have a new CVB, it is important for us to push this message.

8. Any other business
9. Closing