

# Annual Report 2013/2014

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*Faculty Council, Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University*

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## Introduction

The Faculty Council of Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University is an elected body that represents the interests of the RSM Community, including employees (academic staff, PhD candidates, support staff, and managers) and (bachelor and master) students. This Council advises the Management Team on all issues pertaining to RSM’s educational and research activities, as well as its role in society at large.

RSM’s Faculty Council formally convenes about ten times a year with the Vice Dean and the Director of Operations. These meetings are in principle public and can be attended by any interested RSM Community member (schedule: see right side bar on this page). Twice a year, the Council meets with the Dean.

The Faculty Council has selected a number of issues that are considered as deserving special attention. These focal issues include the quality of educational programmes and exams, diversity of gender and ethnicity, internal collaboration and cohesion, transparency and inclusiveness of hiring and promotion, sustainability, and facilitating the living conditions of international community members. For information about past and current issues, please visit our [news page](#).

The Faculty Council is permanently open to issues that are of general interest to the RSM Community. Students and employees are encouraged to flag relevant suggestions, incidents, and

other events that can contribute to prioritizing issues and providing well-informed advice to the Management team.

Please feel free to contact the RSM Faculty Council through the secretary to the Faculty Council, Ms. Joy Kearney MA ([fc@rsm.nl](mailto:fc@rsm.nl), Telephone: 010 408 96 90).

## **Members 2013/2014**

### **Representatives for faculty members**

- Dr Juup Essers - Chair of the Faculty Council
- Dr Jan Sirks
- N.N. (empty seat)

### **Representative for administrative employees**

- Dr Gabi Helfert

### **Representative for PhD candidates**

- Jelle de Vries

### **Representatives for students**

- Jules Maitrepierre - Vice-Chair of the Faculty Council
- Miruna Carlugea
- Chandro Kandiah
- Patrick Lefèbre
- Joost Vlot

### **Official secretary to the Faculty Council**

- Joy Kearney

### **Student Assistant to the Faculty Council**

- Karin Bongers

### **Contact**

- E-mail: [fc@rsm.nl](mailto:fc@rsm.nl)

## Activities

### Education

#### Teaching and Examination Regulations

The previous Faculty Council 2012/13 was asked in May 2013 to approve the Teaching and Examination Regulations 2013/14. After a number of discussions and negotiations with the Dean and the Examination Board, the approval was finally given by the Faculty Council 2013/14 in November 2013. The 2013/14 Faculty Council was asked in May 2014 to approve the Teaching and Examination Regulations 2014/15. The council gave positive advice in June 2014.

#### Discontinuation of the MSc Chinese Economy and Business (CHEB)

The Faculty Council was asked in November 2013 to give advice on the discontinuation of the MSc programme in Chinese Economy and Business (CHEB) due to a lack in student numbers. After conducting a survey with the current students of the programme as well as personal talks, the Council gave positive advice on the discontinuation of the programme, but at the same time issued criticism about the process, particularly the lack of institutional support to gather a critical mass of students for this programme and the manner in which the Master Programme Committee reached its advice to support the closure even before informing the students and the FC, and urged the Board to review the procedure that was followed in this case.

#### Nominal is Normal (N=N) Pilot Evaluation Report

In November 2013 the Faculty Council received a research report on the effects of the EUR-wide N=N pilot that aims at a reduction of the average study time on the intake of Bachelor students. Contrary to expectations, the new procedure did not negatively affect the student intake numbers, but instead 100+ additional Bachelor students were taken in this year compared to the previous period. The Board asked the advice of the FC to make N=N a standard procedure and to close down the pilot, a request which the Faculty Council complied with.

#### New MSc Thesis Trajectory and Master Thesis Manual

In 2013 a new, highly structured master thesis trajectory was introduced at RSM. The new Thesis Online Platform (TOP) plays a central role in this. The Faculty Council wanted to get an overview of any potential issues and complications that might emerge as a consequence of this redesign and created online surveys for students and employees to gain more insights in how students evaluate the new process and TOP which they presented to the Board and MSc Programme Management. The FC was asked in June 2014 to give advice on the related Master Thesis Manual which it gave in July, pointing out a number of regulations that should be further clarified or improved.

#### MSc Programme Committees

The previous Faculty Council 2012/13 was asked to give consent to a newly introduced structure of Programme Advisory Committees which would partly replace the individual Programme Committees for the MSc programmes, an option which didn't sufficiently empower the committees or the academic community they represent unless the overarching Programme Committee would adopt the issue as its own. This, in practice, would lead to programme communities without sufficient representation and adequate legal recourse. Even though a lot of energy was spent on settling this issue already by the previous Faculty Council 2012/13 and again by this Council, including an effort to seek mediation from the EUR Executive Board, the Faculty Council was not able to reach settlement

with the Dean on this matter during its term. The issue had to be handed over to the next Faculty Council 2014/15.

### **Name Change MSc Entrepreneurship**

In February 2014 the Faculty Council received a request for advice on the intended name change of the MSc Entrepreneurship and New Business Venturing to MSc Strategic Entrepreneurship. The Faculty Council gave positive advice on this matter.

### **Independent accreditation of the MSc Accounting & Financial Management**

In June 2014 the Faculty Council received a request for advice on the independent accreditation of the MSc Accounting & Financial Management. After discussing this proposal in the public meeting of July 2014, positive advice was given on this plan; however, the FC expressed its concern that the academic foundation of the MSc programmes should still be safeguarded, independent from the requirements of the labour market.

## **Research**

### **Scientific Integrity**

Price Waterhouse Cooper had conducted research at RSM two years ago, which led to the appointment of a task force and a special procedure for researchers with regard to scientific data storage. According to the Board, all recommendations in the report have been implemented and the school is planning additional improvements, in particular the appointment of two integrity coordinators. The Faculty Council expressed its interest to have the opportunity to talk to the appointed integrity coordinators about their role once they have been appointed and trained, which was approved by the Vice Dean. Due to timing issues the matter was handed over to the 2014/15 Faculty Council.

## **HR and Finances**

### **Budget advice**

The Faculty Council received the budget for 2014 in September 2013 and gave its advice on the presented figures in October 2014. While the Council didn't see any particular reason to dispute the figures and the projections for the coming years, it shared a number of concerns with the Dean, such as the apparent lack of a long-term HR policy and an insufficient account of project-based revenues and costs. This advice led to an improved budgeting process with a multi-year approach for the 2015 budget, which was already announced to the Council in June 2014, but finalized in the autumn of 2014 and approved by the 2014/15 Faculty Council.

### **Transfer of several support staff contracts to RSM BV**

A number of administrative employees with temporary contracts were approached in late 2013 by their supervisors regarding a transfer of their employment contracts from EUR to RSM BV, the commercial part of the school, which is not part of the Faculty, and they approached the Faculty Council for advice. According to the Berenschot Benchmark issued by the Dutch government, EUR has to drastically reduce support staff by the end of 2015, because the ratio between support staff and faculty members is too large, or be faced with a multi-million € penalty. Moving the contracts to the commercial part of the School ensures that they are not part of the payroll of the Faculty anymore, but can still continue working for RSM. The FC had a number of concerns about the

differences between the EUR and the BV in terms of salary scales, pension regulations, commuting rules, bonus regulation, and the number of holidays, and urged the management and the HR departments involved to create transparency as well as a harmonization of conditions for the respective employees.

### **Appointment of a new Vice Dean**

As of January 2014 a new Vice Dean, Professor Abe de Jong, was appointed, who from then on regularly participated in the Faculty Council meetings. The Faculty Council only received notice of the appointment *a posteriori*. There was no clarity about the tasks, responsibilities, and rights of the Vice Dean, so the Faculty Council asked the Dean to deliver a job profile for this role. This was delivered by the Director of Operations in March 2013.

### **Lack of diversity in senior functions at RSM**

The Faculty Council asked the Board in February 2014 for figures on diversity in senior functions at RSM, both in the academic as well as in administrative employee body, and asked the Board to implement a Diversity Policy which aims at increasing the number of females and internationals in senior functions in both areas of the Faculty. The Director of Operations forwarded this request to the Shared Service Centre Human Resources and Finance (SSC HRF) in February 2014. A number of discussions and proposals were exchanged during the summer, but no tangible outcome was reached before the end of the term, so that the matter was passed on to the Faculty Council 2014/15.

### **Internal Communication at RSM**

In May 2014 the Faculty Council sent a letter to the Dean, asking for improvements in internal communication within the School. Specifically the Council criticized that RSM employees have to rely on the competence and goodwill of their supervisors to receive information regarding issues discussed and decisions taken by RSM top management. The Council therefore asked the Dean that minutes of the MT meetings should be published internally on the RSM Intranet, so that all RSM employees can access them in an equal manner. The Council did not receive a reply before the end of its term, so that the matter was handed over to the Faculty Council 2014/15.

## **Operations**

### **Reorganisation Career Services and Corporate & Alumni Relations**

The Faculty Council was asked in November 2013 to give its advice on the planned merger of the departments *Corporate and Alumni Relations* (CAR) with the former departments *Career Services* and *Career Development Centre* of the RSM BV to a new department *Careers, Corporate and Alumni Relations* (CCAR) as of January 2014. The Council gave positive advice on the merger, but criticized procedural issues in senior-level staffing processes in general. The Faculty Council asked the Dean to create a policy for a fair and transparent staffing process in which diversity considerations are included and which should be followed whenever a senior management function at RSM is about to be staffed.

### **Reorganisation Finance Department**

In April 2014 the Faculty Council was asked to give its advice on the reorganisation of the Finance Department which consisted of the integration of all financial departments at EUR into the Shared Service Centre Finance. After evaluating the proposal and talking to the three employees affected by

the reorganisation, the Faculty Council saw no reason to object to the planned reorganisation and gave positive advice in May 2014.

### **EUR Covenant**

The Faculty Council was asked in March 2013 to give advice on the EUR-RSM Covenant 2018. The covenant was discussed in detail during the Faculty Council Meeting in April 2014. In its letter of advice from May 2014 the Faculty Council specifically pointed out that diversity at RSM should receive attention not only in the academic section, but also for senior support staff functions, both in terms of gender and cultural background. Furthermore, the Faculty Council asked the Board to be more specific about the implementation of concepts regarding online education.

### **Vegan food options on campus**

In December 2013 the RSM Faculty Council partnered with Sustainable RSM, the EUR student and employee interest group Vegans@EUR, and the RSM Director of Operations in sending a letter to the Erasmus Facility Board (EFB) who are responsible for the upcoming EUR catering tender, asking for an inclusion of a range of requirements to offer more sustainable and healthy plant-based food on campus. The RSM Faculty Council and its partners asked to include specific criteria in the European tender for the new caterer that was to replace Albron from mid-2014 on.

Although the motion found a lot of support within the University, even by the President and the Executive Board, EFB decided to not include any of the criteria into the tender, but instead to rely on the rather general sustainable public procurement requirements of the former Agentschap NL (now RKO) and leave the availability of plant-based food options at EUR to the market. They advised the signatories of the letter to lobby with the new caterer and ask for more vegan options directly.

Even though the Faculty Council, the University Council, Sustainable RSM and the EUR Sustainability Hub undertook numerous attempts to influence the new caterer, Vitam, to offer more plant-based food options since they started their operation on campus in July 2014, the selection remained unsatisfactory.

## **Internal Affairs**

### **Staffing of the employee section**

The third seat for academic employees in the Faculty Council was unoccupied during the whole electoral term due to a lack of candidates who volunteered to run for office. Furthermore, the Chair of the Faculty Council fell ill in March 2013 and resigned in summer 2013 from his seat. The Faculty Council partnered with the Vice Dean of RSM to make sure that the 2014/15 Faculty Council would again be complete by having personal conversations with a number of potentially interested faculty. Two faculty members, Dr Magdalena Cholakova and Dr Samer Abdelnour, could finally be found in September 2014, so that the 2014/15 Faculty Council was again fully staffed.

### **Student elections**

The student section of the Faculty Council has elections every year. During the candidacy period in March 2014, 9 students applied. 5 of them were elected to be part of the 2014/15 Faculty Council to start in September 2014: Youming Ma, Frederike Dijkhuizen, Andrea Petrini, Lance Cosaert, and Nicole Morgan.

## **Member training**

Training was provided to all members in September 2013 by a training consultant from TAQT, a company that specializes on training representative bodies in the Netherlands.

## **Meetings**

The Council held 10 public meetings in total with an internal discussion preceding each meeting. All public meetings were attended by either the Director of Operations or the Vice Dean or both.

Meeting minutes of all these meetings are available [online](#). Furthermore, internal meetings were held to discuss certain individual points that needed clarification or extra fine-tuning.