

MINUTES 135TH FC MEETING – 23 FEBRUARY 2012

Attendees

FC Members	Guests	MT	Official Secretary
Juup Essers	Anne van de Graaf	Frank van der Kruk	Joy Kearney
Marlies Koolhaas	Han van Oosterhout	Eric Waarts	
Kerren Radvany			
Shiko Ben Menahem			
Jan Sirks			
Sharmayne Schneiderberg			

1. Opening

Juup opens the 135th FC meeting at 10:30 am.

2. Agenda

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

3. Minutes

The minutes are approved without further remarks or amendments.

4. Announcements

The FC makes four announcements:

1. A mail has been received by the FC from BIT regarding the worries about the reorganisation. The BIT staff members are irritated and frustrated about the planned reorganisation. We are planning to meet them to get to know from BIT what exactly the problem is.
2. We need more information about the workload of staff. What are the consequences if the level is not met? It mostly concerns academic staff but support staff is also affected. The emphasis in academic departments is on earning per department and there is no money for extra supportive personnel. The workload is therefore spread among support staff even when staff leaves and are not replaced. There is a clear policy needed to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
3. We have to do some research on curriculum change. A proposal has been set up by the Onderwijsbureau.
4. There is a clear message that the OCs do not work.

5. Update Nominal is Normal

Jan gives an overview of the problems with N=N. We need to know exactly what the problems are for students. Important modules must be passed in order to keep quantity, but we need to make this possible for students. More students than ever were in first exam sitting last year. There was a meeting for teachers of first years last week; more tests are needed but a lot of extra time as well. This is good, but there are also more resources needed. Centrally there must be support and resources for testing and monitoring, but this is not in place unfortunately. Fraud was not explored as an issue in home exams, but what is being done to protect quality and issues of fraud? Jan explains that they only talk about punishing being not motivated and rewarding being motivated.

Sharmayne remarks that it is not a good signal that the Dean and Vice-Dean are missing; we need them in the FC meetings for information and discussions. There must be someone with whom we can discuss N=N.

6. FC Weblog

The participation corner has enthusiastic reactions. Marlies asks about payment of staff members to compensate for missing member.

7. Master thesis curriculum change

Hans explains there is a special task force in place. The problem is that the graduation numbers are poor and therefore the task force brainstormed to find a way of improving this. This discussion concerned the whole master, not just the graduation. The whole programme was reviewed. Courses that run parallel need to be reinstalled. Methodological course should be done in January. Graduation rates are very bad; in 2010 to 2011 only 24%. Some improvement in time was seen, but not enough (goals are included in PP). Thesis is the most important aspect. Before Christmas, students should have a research question ready for their supervisor. The basic structure for the master thesis should be the same for all masters: 'comply or explain'. Each master should follow this programme. Exchanges are a source of delay, as are internships. We have to make do with budget, because it can happen that the subsidy disappears. The thesis becomes like a regular course. There is a strict submission deadline; failure is possible, remedial thesis trajectory after summer. The mentality is not fully in line with doing research; we have to help students through the whole trajectory. January is never used for courses but it should be. There must be incentives for students to finish within a year. Therefore a strict deadline is necessary. As faculty we must be prepared; there will be a lot of theses in the summer when people are on holiday or at conferences. A 'cohort' structure should be created, with social pressure and using the "I WILL"-campaign for example to motivate master students.

Sharmayne comments that if everyone finishes together, this will create too much pressure for supervisors and co-readers. Hans replies that this will be split up: a convocation ceremony will be implemented. Juup asks if there will be an individual defence. Hans replies that the co-reader and supervisor will meet with student. Anne asks how we can ensure this is going to be a formal process. We want to preserve the quality as it is. Hans comments that the tool to judge theses is already in place, with critical questions for students. Anne comments that students have intense contact with supervisor, but Shiko questions the intensity of this process. Hans envisions more course related materials in the future, but remaining the same as at present. Students will be invited for meetings more often to check progress. Juup comments that there is a major difference in how much contact students had with supervisors, organisationally there are now problems, such as in finding co-readers. This can be seen as having a negative impact.

Hans comments that before Christmas all students should have the same basic level of knowledge. Teachers should be more motivated. Hans remarks that in January they have a coach, a methodology course of 4 ECTS, totalling 24 ECTS. The deadline for the proposal will be similar to present situation. Methodology should be part of the proposal and part of thesis. There will be three electives; two programme electives and one free elective. There is a hard deadline at the end. Juup asks how it is possible to involve co-readers more. Hans replies that the co-reader is more a quality checker and not a second coach. There is more transparency and more supervision needed. There should be investigated which coaches are responsible for delayed students. Marlies asks at what moment the co-reader will be involved. Hans replies that this has not been fixed and has to be decided.

Shiko asks what sanction will drive the hard deadline. Anne replies that we can incorporate a time factor in the deadline. Anne remarks that the structure has to be that when you start you will finish. Sharmayne remarks that we all agree that the thesis should be implemented in the final phase, but also that more structure is needed by students. Only 20% of students will finish their thesis in one year. Anne remarks that the implementation will be in 2013. There will be fair transition arrangements. Nine weeks in total are occupied by exams and resits. Sharmayne

feels it is too much pressure to do this all in the same session. Hans says that all grades should be scored in one go. No possibility to re-sit to get a better grade. Most master programmes have this already. Marlies comments that smaller master programmes may combine their research clinic and if it is possible to make it broader and offer it twice a year. Small scale classes help students with methodology part. Last elective is six weeks. Would it be possible to do an internship instead? Hans comments that we accept exchange leads to delay, but you can only go if the thesis is finished. Average run time is seven or eight months. A number of formats will be created. Juup says there is a bias towards different methods. Anne adds that they will have to work faster. Hans suggests creating a pool of data from servers and some hand-collected. He suggests that in the end we increase the reputation of our master programmes. Anne adds that they will come back with a final proposal, decision needed before summer.

8. Programme Advisory Committees

Shiko comments that there are clear signals that the current structure doesn't work properly.

9. Shortage of 'afstudeerplaatsen'

Sharmayne explains that exam committee are looking into this. Juup asks if there is more information needed for this. Marlies suggests contacting Ilonka.

10. Double-sided printing on T3

Shiko suggests doing a pilot. Juup will repeat this request to Hans Heger.

11. Any other business

Eric asks if next meeting can be postponed or rescheduled. This will be investigated.

12. Closure

The meeting is closed at 12:00 pm.

Next FC meeting 29 March 2012 10.30 am in T03-42.

To do before the next meeting

Topic	Task	Person Responsible
Double-sided printing	Request Hans Heger to do a pilot	Juup
Reschedule next meeting	Check with Dean's Office	Joy
Shortage of 'afstudeerplaatsen'	Contact Ilonka for information	Sharmayne