

Attendees

FC Members	Guests	Executive Board	Official Secretary
Gabi Helfert	Steve Kennedy	Abe de Jong	Joy Kearney
Jan Sirks	Joep Elemans		Liz Derks
Frederieke Dijkhuizen	Anne van de Graaf		
Andrea Petrini	Yvonne Jules		
Lance Cosaert	Robbert Brouwer		
	Marcel Tuijn		

1. Opening

Gabi opens the 164th meeting at 10.37 pm.

2. Agenda

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

3. Minutes

As the last FC meeting was cancelled, there are no meeting minutes that formally need to be approved.

4. Announcements

The EB makes one announcement:

1. The University Board has approved the reorganization plan and the EB is currently waiting for the formal letter to be received.

The FC makes one announcement:

2. The diversity policy for support staff has been approved by the EB and has already been communicated to faculty members through the intranet and during the last Steef of the Union meeting. There are still some points to be completed on behalf of the EB, such as the appointment of a diversity officer and the definition of concrete measures, but overall this has been a great start. The next step is the development of a diversity policy for faculty members, which falls within the responsibilities of Abe de Jong.

5. Master Thesis Trajectory Evaluation

Anne van de Graaf has sent the master thesis evaluation report, which she briefly introduces. After much debate, the new master thesis trajectory has been implemented for the first time in the academic year 2013-2014 and it is now time to evaluate.

The main aim of the new master thesis trajectory was to speed up the one-year completion rate for all RSM masters. Anne explains that when looking at this goal, the results have been very positive. However, there are some issues of concern, of which the main one is quality; is RSM able to warrant the same level of quality as before now that more (time) pressure is put on the students? To verify this, the grades distribution has been analysed and various stakeholders have been asked their opinion, however, this will be subject of further research. The Examination Board will select about 100 theses from this cohort which will be evaluate by a third reviewer. This way they will be able to see whether the opinion of this third person concurs with the grades the coach and co-reader have provided.

There are some other smaller topics of concern, such as the relatively high number of resits. The resit gives students the possibility to hand in their thesis in August if they fail at the first attempt. However, the high percentage (28%) of resits indicates that many students and coaches consider the resit a possibility for a strategic fail; handing in an incomplete version the first time, simply to have more time to complete the final thesis. To avoid such situations, the original plan included the provision that there would be a cap on the grade for the resit. However, this provision was taken out during the decision-making phase as a compromise. Although the cap on the grade is an obvious solution to the problem, it is also quite a crude solution. This is also the reason that it is currently being discussed with the various stakeholders involved, such as the programme directors of the different masters and the Examination board. The opinions vary greatly, which might lead to the decision to postpone the implementation of the provision this year.

Andrea brings forward several points of concern from the FC regarding the report. He points out that the report is on some subjects overly optimistic, such as overall thesis quality and student satisfaction. Additionally, the survey data indicate that students feel less prepared when compared to the year before. Moreover, although the new trajectory has increased the one-year completion rate significantly, the FC is concerned about students that might want to do more extensive research, possibly to prepare for a PhD afterwards. The system is currently designed in such a way that it helps the “weaker” students to graduate faster, but on the other hand it penalizes ambitious students that want to pursue a more elaborate research approach. Such research requires more time, so it might be an idea to set up two tracks, one as it is right now and another one for students aiming at doing more extensive research. Also, some of the masters are more quantitative, whereas others are more of a qualitative nature. The new master thesis trajectory does not make any distinction between these research orientations, which might be something to take into account. Lastly, Andrea mentions the fact that the survey needs to be completed by the students before they hand in their final master thesis. Even though the survey is said to be anonymous, the results might be flawed by students doubting this anonymity and therefore providing more positive responses.

Anne replies that the survey is indeed a difficult problem to tackle. Whereas the students feel they might be penalized for giving negative responses before handing in their final thesis, giving the survey after the defence makes the coaches and co-readers think they will be penalized when giving a lower grade than expected. The only measure that can be taken is to emphasize and reassure the anonymity of the responses to the students. In addition, as mentioned before, the quality issue will be further investigated and as soon as the results come in, these will be presented to the FC. Next, she mentions that there is an exemption policy for ambitious students who want to take on an increased thesis workload. This exemption policy means the first deadline can be moved or extended. However, Anne also mentions that this does not happen very often, which is why this is currently being discussed with the academic directors. During these discussions they will also try to find the best way on how to communicate this option to the students. Furthermore, it is hard to make a distinction between quantitative and qualitative research as there are many programs doing both types of research. Some master programs are moving their trajectories to start earlier to provide some extra time, which is a better solution than postponing the deadlines.

Lastly, Jan mentions the problem with co-readers as some of the students are not able to find a co-reader. Anne explains that this problem is also tough to tackle and was recently discussed with the Examination Board. The Examination Board is currently drafting a document on the policy for finding a co-reader. This document will also state that a department is allowed to provide a co-reader from the same department as long as there is no hierarchical relationship between the coach and the co-reader. This will provide the departments with more freedom to assign their students co-readers. Before Christmas, Anne had a meeting with the academic directors and they indicated this measure should be sufficient to solve the problem. Jan suggests another solution whereby finding a co-reader becomes part of the thesis process. Anne mentions that this is already actively done by the thesis coordinators, who

“chase” the students that do not yet have a co-reader. She concludes by stating this year will be another opportunity to observe whether the trajectory works, also with the implemented improvements.

6. Name Change Master GBSM

Steve Kennedy, assistant professor in the Business Society Management department and assistant academic director of the Global Business and Stakeholder Management program, gives a short presentation on why the name of this master program should change. The main takeaways from this presentation can be summarized as follows:

- There has been a need to evolve the programme to reflect wider changes in management thinking on business-society relationship and issues.
- Both external and internal factors have led to a decreasing number of students applying for the program.
- Therefore, there have been made a few alterations to the programme's curriculum over the past few years.
- The new name of the programme, MSc Global Business & Sustainability, is needed to reflect the changed content of the programme (sustainability focus) and to attract prospective students.

Anne states that as a teaching institution they are very happy the department has taken on the challenge of coming up with such an in-depth plan of action. She believes that with this name change and the other measures the program will be improved and become more successful. The FC agrees with these statements and has no comments on the content. However, Andrea recommends to use 'and' instead of '&' in the name, at least on the website, in order to be able to optimize search engine rankings. A positive formal letter of advice will be drafted by the FC and sent out to the Dean's office as soon as possible.

7. Career Services

Frederieke briefly introduces the issue about career services. As a third-year BSc student one can choose between the options of doing a minor, going on exchange or doing an internship. The first two options are very much supported by the university; however, students have indicated that finding an internship is rather difficult, even though we have the career services department. Joep Elemans, Director Careers, Corporate and Alumni Relations, wonders which services the students are actually looking for. Andrea explains that the internship options, in particular for international bachelor students, are fairly limited and even more when taking into account the specific time period (max. 5-6 months from approximately August till December). It would therefore be great if career services could increase the number of short-term internships available to (international) bachelor students. Joep mentions that the job board is currently not really promoted due to improvements that were made over the last year. However, soon the website will be promoted and be further developed. These remarks will be taken into account and effort will be put into increasing the number of both short-term internships and internships available to non-Dutch students during that particular time of the year. Gabi asks for an update in about 3 months during the April meeting and Joep agrees to provide this.

8. Mentoring Programme

During the last internal meeting an announcement was made regarding the introduction of the mentoring programme, which means every faculty member will be assigned a mentor. Yvonne Jules, HR officer, explains that this initiative was launched as a result from the PWC report and is meant to continuously develop the faculty. Over the past few months the goals, procedures and principles regarding this programme have been developed. Additionally, the plan has been presented at the EB meeting where it has been approved and has been discussed with various stakeholders, such as the strategic platform, the Marketing Department and some faculty members. One of the bottlenecks involves the matching of mentors and mentees. It was ultimately decided that mentees can choose their own mentor and an online mentoring platform will be used for this. The role of the mentor will be to provide support and feedback to the mentee; however, the mentee will set the agenda and decide what he/she would like to talk about. With this program, RSM would like to promote a more open and transparent culture. The programme will be

evaluated, probably by means of a survey and interviews after 18 months. Yvonne will share the documentation regarding the programme with the FC.

9. Any other business

1. Status of the faculty regulations

Gabi asks when the FC can expect to receive the updated faculty regulations. Abe mentions that this is Frank's responsibility, but that to his knowledge they only still need to be approved by the Dean. So far, about 7-8 people have read and revised the document. As soon as the Dean has read and approved the current draft it will be distributed to the FC.

2. Education and training budget for employees

Jan explains that most of the current training budget is used for the basic educational trainings, or the so-called BKO (Basiskwalificatie Onderwijs). However, this means that people who want to do things other than these basic trainings find it hard to get approval for this. Jan suggests creating some sort of guidelines for the department heads to give an indication about how much budget is available for these types of trainings. Abe agrees and explains that most of the courses are teaching related and are taken from RISBO. However, there is no extensive list of other courses that can be taken, nor is there a specific dedicated budget. Abe proposes to make a list of courses they are aware of and distribute this list every year among the employees. Gabi adds that there is currently very little transparency; everyone needs to organize trainings by themselves and the non-clarity of the budget makes this harder. Abe will talk to Peter Elsing to see how they can handle this in a less ad hoc and more structured way. Abe will give an update on the progress during the next FC meeting.

10. Closure

Gabi closes the meeting at 11.39 pm.

Next FC meeting February 5th, 10.30 am at T03-42

To do before the next meeting

Task	Person Responsible	Progress
Drafting and sending out positive letter of advice regarding GBSM name change	Gabi	DONE
Sending documents Mentoring programme	Yvonne	
Distributing new faculty regulations to FC	Frank/Abe	
Talking to Peter Elsing about training budgets	Abe	