

## MINUTES 171<sup>ST</sup> FC MEETING – 30 SEPTEMBER 2015

### Attendees

FC Members	Guests	MT	Official Secretary
Gabi Helfert	Anne van de Graaf	Steef van de Velde	Joy Kearney
Samer Abdelnour		Frank van der Kruk	Liz Derks
Marja Flory		Abe de Jong	
David Unterdorfer			
Paolo Perego			
Marina Arnaudova			
Mike Jennekens			
Andrea Petrini			
Kevin Ren			
Dominik Scherrer			

### 1. Opening

Marja opens the meeting at 10.35 am.

### 2. Agenda

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

### 3. Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting are approved without further remarks or amendments.

### 4. Announcements

There are no announcements, neither from the FC, nor from the EB.

### 5. New Faculty Regulations

Frank has sent the latest version of the new Faculty Regulations last week. This version is the result of multiple in-depth discussions with Gabi and Jan and agreement has been reached regarding all discussion points. As such, Frank would like to ask for the consent of the FC. Gabi mentions there is still one point that has not been changed, which is the wording of the role of the academic directors. The current words used are “wordt bijgestaan”, which according to the academic directors is not correct and does not do justice to their tasks and efforts. Frank explains that “bijgestaan” has been used in previous versions and has never caused any problems. He is willing to look for an alternative word in consultation with the academic directors for next year’s version of the Faculty Regulations, but hopes this will not keep the FC from giving consent to the current version. Abe mentions that the word “bijgestaan” does not even refer to the academic directors, as for them the word “geassisteerd” is used. In addition, the role of the academic directors has been specified and is explained in more detail in the role description part of the new Faculty Regulations. Frank emphasizes that legally it does not make any difference to change “bijgestaan” into any other word. Gabi explains that it is not a matter of legal difference, but that some academic directors feel undervalued as a result of this wording and using the word “geassisteerd” will most probably not make a difference. She suggests Frank to meet with the academic directors so he can ask them for an alternative wording. Frank promises to do so, but for the next version of the Faculty Regulations. Abe adds that now that the particular responsibilities of each role have been outlined the wording used in this particular sentence becomes quite irrelevant. Adding these responsibilities is a major improvement in the regulations and ensures justice is done to the work these academic directors do. The members of the EB and Anne van de Graaf step out of the meeting room for 5 minutes to give the FC some time to discuss. The FC decides to give consent on this year’s Faculty Regulations, but as they feel the word “geassisteerd”

is even weaker than “bijgestaan”, they recommend changing it to “ondersteund”. Moreover, in the letter of consent it will be mentioned that the EB will consult the academic directors to find a proper wording for their role for next year’s version of the Faculty Regulations.

## **6. Discussion with Steef**

### *Quality of Academic Programmes*

Marina explains that there are mainly two issues. The first issue refers to the fact that too many students graduate with a too high GPA, which might on the one hand be the result of stricter intake requirements but might also signal a decreasing quality level of education. Steef explains that in order to have a “too high number” of students graduating with a too high GPA, one needs to have a benchmark; a certain number of students that can graduate with such high grades. As far as he knows such a benchmark is not in place. As such, the question would be what is “too many students” and what is a “too high GPA”? Moreover, students have become more ambitious over time and grades have become more important. Together with more stringent intake requirements for most programmes one would expect an increasing GPA. Lastly, every five years all education programmes are accredited by accreditation bodies by means of an evaluation of all courses and exams and none of the programmes were found to have too high grades. Anne adds that that within the MSc programmes there is no proof of grade inflation, but there are strong differences between the programmes. However, these can be explained, such as the CEMS and MiM programmes having a high GPA as a result of the stricter selection requirements. Some of the other master programmes, such as HRM, OCC and GBSM also show higher averages in some years. However, this could possibly be explained by the fact that these are niche programmes attracting very motivated students. In addition, most of these programmes appoint a thesis co-reader from a different department, avoiding a systematic bias. When looking at the bachelor programmes one can notice strong differences between BA and IBA. This is again a result of the selective intake. However, these programmes have only become harder over the past few years due to more stringent regulations, such as a limited number of resits and the BSA ensuring all students obtain 60 points in their first year. Steef explains that, as there is currently no benchmark, a solution might be to use “curved grading” as is done in the MBA programmes. This means only a certain number of people can have a particular grade. Nevertheless, both Anne and Steef feel like this would disadvantage the students compared to other Dutch universities. Gabi states that during the January FC meeting Anne indicated that an investigation would be carried out among the master theses of last year to research the effects of the new master thesis trajectory and wonders what the outcome of that investigation was. Anne explains that this investigation was particularly focused on the lower end of the grades and looked at whether theses that were awarded a pass in the end also really showed the quality of a pass. The results are finalized at the moment and as soon as it is published it will be sent to the programme committee and the FC.

Marina then states the second issue, which refers to the imbalance of what students want and what the academic staff is being incentivized to do. An example of this is the wish of students to receive more interactive education in smaller groups, whereas the academic staff is “rewarded” more to give large lectures. Steef recognizes this problem and explains it is mostly a consequence of the reduced government funding per student. One way to absorb this trend was by putting more students in the classroom. Recently, the Dutch financial support for students, or “studiefinanciering”, was abolished. As a result of this change a structural investment will be made to improve the quality of education and for RSM this will be an amount of approximately €1.5 million. Plans on how to use and spend this money are currently being developed and part of this investment will definitely go to the creation of smaller-scale classes. Marja then explains that currently the remuneration of classes is based on the number of students participating in the class, which makes it more attractive for lecturers to teach bigger classes. She suggests changing

the model to incorporate the number of hours you spend on a particular class or at least to change the incentive system in such a way that it stimulates lecturers to give smaller classes. Steef explains that Abe is currently looking at the possibilities for changing this system. Anne adds that, in addition to being a matter of funding, it is also a matter of workload. Ideally, students would only receive small-scale interactive classes, but the school simply does not have the resources to do so. Marina wonders why, if this is the case, the school increased the intake of students over the past few years. Steef answers that this again is a result of the decreased government funding received per student. Anne explains that the school is currently also looking into smarter ways of offering education, for example by the principles of “flipping the classroom”. This implies, amongst other things, that the delivery of instructional content is done outside of the classroom, often online. As this is another discussion point, Marja suggests to talk about this later. Abe mentions that it is also a matter of looking at the overall programme. Whereas in the first few years one indeed has quite some big lectures, in a later stage one definitely receives more individual attention. Examples of this are the bachelor thesis in one’s third year of the bachelor and during your masters by choosing small-scale electives. Nevertheless, he is currently working on changing the incentive schedule for lecturers and can give an update on or discuss this during the next FC meeting in November.

#### *Employee workload*

Marja explains that, in line with the previous discussion point, the employee workload is too high and not only for academic staff, also for support staff. Steef answers that for academic staff the €1.5 million will hopefully help. Marja then mentions the differences between departments in dealing with human capital issues, such as someone getting ill or hiring decisions. She indicates that an overall HR policy holding for all departments is currently lacking, which gives the departments room to solve human capital problems the way they please. Steef explains that the plan Abe is currently working on will partially solve this problem. However, one also needs to understand that each department has its own “DNA” and as such its own decision-making process. Gabi states that it is nevertheless important to have an overall policy that outlines clear rules and regulations regarding hiring policies. Abe mentions that the extended Strategic Platform meeting might touch upon some of these issues. This extended Strategic Platform will take place on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October and a large number of senior people from RSM will gather and think about human capital issues and how to make RSM a better place to work.

#### *Strategic HR policy for academic positions*

Marja explains that there are currently many people in the tenure track and RSM might have a problem if all of these people fulfil the requirements. Abe responds that this is not the problem, the problem is rather that many tenure trackers leave as soon as they are promoted to associate professor. From this moment onwards they are very visible to the outside world and having tenure at RSM really has a certain meaning internationally. As a consequence, soon after their promotion to associate professor these people become full professor at different universities. Gabi wonders whether actively countering this problem by means of forecasts, statistics and analyses would not help to solve this issue. It has been three years since she has been involved in budgetary discussions and every year a proper multi-year forecast is lacking for the tenure trackers. By now there should be enough historical data to create such a forecast, including probabilities. This, in turn, can then be used to counter this trend and find ways to make RSM a more attractive place to stay, especially for internationals. Abe states that this is indeed very important, which is also why there is currently a diversity task force looking into the matter of making RSM more attractive for, amongst others, international employees. Samer wonders whether the mobility among tenure trackers is significantly higher compared to other faculty members. Steef explains that much of the international mobility can also be explained by the 30% tax advantage for expats, which usually lasts for 8 years. This means that after those 8 years, the difference between what RSM can offer and other top business schools can offer becomes quite substantial. Moreover, it usually concerns

people in the age class of mid-30, thinking about when and where to settle down and start a family. As the tenure track system was only put in place in 2007, there are some numbers, but they are not very extensive. Moreover, in the case of tenure track numbers do not always reflect the individual cases at hand. However, Steef agrees to provide the FC with these numbers.

### *Rankings*

Marina explains that as an international student rankings are very important as these are a major decisive factor for choosing between universities. However, over the past few years, RSM has dropped within some of the rankings and the FC would like to know why this is. Steef explains that rankings are only partially a reflection of the quality of an education programme. Other factors that are taken into account are, for example, the amount of money graduates make in the first three years after graduation. Moreover, Steef stresses that it also very much depends on which rankings one is looking at and that different types of rankings should be compared instead of only looking at the Financial Times rankings.

### *Online education*

Mike explains that online learning and the “flipped classroom” are becoming more important concepts in today’s education systems. However, RSM barely makes use of these methods and only very few lectures are published on the webcast. Samer made inquiries regarding the infrastructure and legal framework that is needed to support an online learning environment approximately one year ago, but it seemed at that time nothing was in place. This means copyright and infringement issues might arise. Steef explains progress is being made, although he is not sure about the status of the legal framework. Anne confirms this and promises to look into this.

### *Diversity and internationalisation*

The Council sees it as problematic that a business school that wants and needs to attract international students, and where about half of the student and junior academic staff as well as most of the administrative staff are female, has practically no representation of women and internationals in the senior academic functions and hardly any internationals in senior support functions. All but one full professor are male, and almost all are Dutch, and all members of the Executive Board and Strategic Platform are white and male and, with the exception of one black American, Dutch. A diversity policy for support staff was issued last year, and a junior staff member was appointed as Diversity Officer 9 months ago (at 0.2 FTE), but there is no visibility of this role at RSM, and practically no communication has taken place about the progress she made in the last 9 months, even though the policy itself hinted at a number of steps to be taken. Furthermore, in the academic section of the school, we are losing a lot of good-quality international associate professors, in part, as the Council believes, because the climate for internationals at RSM is perceived by many internationals as unfavorable, or even hostile. The Council believes that the issue of diversity is not taken seriously enough by the Dean and the Executive Board, and that there is a lack of awareness among senior Dutch male executives at the school. The Dean responded by saying that two female associate professors will be appointed full professor still this year, and that that is a good start. The Council thinks that this can hardly be viewed as progress, because two female international full professors recently left the school, one because of retirement, and the other because she took up a position at a UK university. Due to time constraints, further discussion was adjourned to the next FC meeting.

### **10. Any Other Business**

No points are brought up as any other business

## **11. Closure**

Marja closes the meeting at 12.02 pm.

### **To do before the next meeting**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Put new incentive plan from Abe on agenda for meeting November	Liz Derks	
Draft letter of consent for new Faculty Regulations	Marja Flory	
Ask EB (Peter Elsing) for numbers/statistics regarding tenure trackers	Liz Derks	
Inquire about legal framework status for online learning	Anne vd Graaf	