

Annual Report 2014/2015

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 public and can be attended by any interested RSM Community member (schedule: see right side bar on this page). At least 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, Telephone: 010 408 96 90).

Members 2014/2015

Representatives for faculty members

- Drs Jan Sirks
- Dr Samer Abdelnour
- Dr Magdalena Cholakova

Representative for administrative employees

- Dr Gabi Helfert (Chair)

Representative for PhD candidates

- Jelle de Vries

Representatives for students

- Lance Cosaert - Vice-Chair of the Faculty Council
- Andrea Petrini
- Frederieke Dijkhuizen
- Nicole Morgan
- Youming Ma

Official secretary to the Faculty Council

- Joy Kearney

Student Assistant to the Faculty Council

- Liz Derks

Contact

- E-mail: fc@rsm.nl

Activities by area

Education

Hardship clause and exceptional cases

During the public [meeting in November 2014](#) the Council invited the study advisor of the IBA programme, Thea den Hartog, and the secretary of the Examination Board, Carla Dirks, for a discussion of the hardship clause and exceptional cases. While regulations and procedures are in place, it became clear that many students are not aware of these. The study advisor promised to work on improved ways of promoting this information.

- The Faculty Council recommends that the 2015/16 Council requests an update on additional measures during the November 2015 meeting.

Evaluation new MSc Thesis Trajectory

During the [January 2015 public meeting](#) the Council discussed the evaluation of the new MSc Thesis Trajectory with the MSc programme director, Anne van de Graaf, including figures from the evaluation study. Major points of concern acknowledged by programme management were the relatively high number of resists due to a 'strategic fail', the number of students not being able to find a co-reader in time, students having to complete the supervisor evaluation survey before completion of the thesis, and particularly ambitious students having to apply for exemption from the very tight and standardized trajectory to be able to conduct their research projects. The programme director suggested observing the situation for another year and then re-evaluating it.

- The Council asks the 2015/16 Faculty Council to put this on the agenda for the December 2015 or January 2016 meeting.

Name Change MSc Global Business and Stakeholder Management

In [January 2015](#) the Faculty Council received a request for advice on the intended name change of the MSc Global Business and Stakeholder Management to MSc Global Business & Sustainability. The Faculty Council gave positive advice on this matter.

Selectivity of master programme admissions

In April 2015 the Faculty Council received a request for advice on the plan to introduce selectivity for master programme admissions also for students who graduated with a BSc from RSM. After discussing this proposal in the [public meeting of May 2015](#), positive advice was given on this plan because the increased quality of students will very likely result in higher quality of the master programmes and therefore an enhancement of RSM's overall reputation.

Teaching and Examination Regulations

The Faculty Council was asked [in June 2015](#) to approve the Teaching and Examination Regulations 2015/16. The council gave its consent in July 2015, but pointed out two concerns which the Examination Board promised to address. One concerned the thesis regulations which will in the next update contain regulations for the event that a supervisor becomes unavailable due to sickness or other unforeseen events during the thesis period. The other issue concerned the case of incorrect examination questions, an event for which no clear regulations exist. The Examination Board promised to create a separate section on their website where students can find all kinds of

information about processes and procedures concerning examinations, including complaint procedures in case of violation of these regulations.

- Since both actions are still pending, the Faculty Council 2015/16 is requested ask for an update in the September 2015 meeting.

New Premium Finance MSc programme

The Faculty Council was asked [in July 2015](#) to give advice on the establishment of a new premium Finance MSc programme. Following the advice of the Master Programme Committee, the Council gave positive advice on the establishment of the new programme, but also raised a few concerns. In particular important for the Council is that the strength of the regular Finance MSc will not suffer from the establishment of a new premium programme. The Council was also concerned that the study fee for non-EEA students will be extremely high, a concern which Programme Management has promised to meet by cooperating with companies who sponsor scholarships for talented non-EEA students without sufficient financial means. Since the new programme will only start in 2017, a first evaluation of both the new programme and the consequences for the existing MSc FI is recommended for the academic year 2018/19.

Lack of entrepreneurship education in the BSc IBA

In its public meeting of [June 2015](#) the Faculty Council invited the IBA Programme Director, Adri Meijdam, to discuss the lack of an entrepreneurship course in the International Business Administration Bachelor programme. While there are no concrete plans to implement such an option for international bachelor students, the Programme Director acknowledged the need and promised to discuss options with the Department of Strategy and Entrepreneurship as well as the Dutch BSc, which offers such an option. He promised to deliver an update for the Council at the end of the calendar year.

- The 2015/16 Council is requested to invite the Programme Director IBA for an update on this issue in the December 2015 meeting.

Research

Scientific Integrity

One of the three newly appointed integrity counsellors, Dr Monique van Donzel, was invited to the public Council meeting [in July 2015](#) to provide insight to the Faculty Council about their role, responsibilities, and way of working. The Faculty Council expressed its desire for better communication about the existence of this role, in particular toward students, and the integrity counsellor promised to work on this with her colleagues, specifically on an update of the website over the summer months, but potentially also other means of communication. Furthermore the counsellor promised to issue a guideline on authorship.

- The 2014/15 Council asks the 2015/16 Council to follow up on these matters in November 2015 and to re-invite the integrity coordinator for a brief update on the state of affairs.

HR and Finances

Budget advice 2015

After several months of meetings of the previous Council as well as a concluding meeting end of September 2014 with the controllers and members of the Executive Board, the Faculty Council gave advice on the 2015 budget in October 2014.

Diversity policy for administrative employees

Following an initiative of the 2013/14 Faculty Council, RSM introduced a diversity policy for support staff in December 2015, including the appointment of a Diversity Officer (Yvonne Jules from the HR department). This was communicated during the [public meeting in January 2015](#). In the subsequent months the Chair of the Faculty Council repeatedly discussed the implementation and further development of this policy with the Diversity Officer and the Director of Operations. Initial targets were set for the different employee groups, and some fine-tuning was put into place. In July 2015 the Director of Operations informed the council that the targets still needed to be approved by the Employee Council of RSM BV, which is why communication has not yet taken place.

- The Council asks the 2015/16 Council to follow up on the communication of diversity targets and adjustment of the policy with the Director of Operations in November 2015.

Diversity policy for academic employees

Due to repeated pressure from the Council the Dean of Faculty implemented a diversity task force end of March 2015, consisting of three female (two of who are internationals) and one male faculty member to work on an update of the diversity policy for academic employees. This was communicated to the Council in the [public meeting of April 2015](#). Results were expected by July 2015.

- As of to date, the results of the task force have not yet been communicated to the Council, which is why the 2015/16 Council is asked to follow up with the Dean of Faculty in the meeting of September 2015.

Mentoring programme for faculty members

In the [public meeting of January 2015](#) HR officer Yvonne Jules introduced the new mentoring programme for faculty members to the Faculty Council and promised an evaluation of the programme after 18 months.

- The 2015/16 Faculty Council is asked to follow up on the results of the evaluation in the spring of 2016.

Training budget for employees

In its [January 2015 public meeting](#) the Council brought up the insufficient and intransparent training budgets for employees. The Dean of Faculty announced to investigate the issue together with the Director of HR and come up with a more structured way of handling training budgets, but has so far not delivered any update to the Council.

- The 2015/16 Faculty Council is asked to follow up on this in the autumn 2015.

Reappointment of the Dean

In February 2015 the EUR Executive Board approached the Chair of the Faculty Council with a request for advice on the reappointment of Steef van de Velde as Dean of RSM for another 4 years. Representatives of the Faculty Council held over 30 personal and confidential talks with RSM stakeholders from all domains, hierarchical levels, and areas of responsibility, including students from different programmes, administrative employees, junior and senior faculty, academic directors, department chairs, and board members. The findings of these discussions were presented in detail during a confidential meeting in April 2015 with the Rector Magnificus, followed by a confidential written summary, in which the Council [gave positive advice on the reappointment](#). As a result of the discussions, the Executive Board [reappointed Professor van de Velde for another 4 years](#).

Results of the EUR employee survey from May 2014

In its [February 2015 public meeting](#) the Council brought up the insufficient communication and action following the results of the past EUR employee survey. The Executive Board promised in the public [meeting of April 2015](#) to communicate the results of the survey more thoroughly on the Intranet, and to collect action points from the department heads regarding areas of improvement. While the results were communicated on the Intranet in more detail in May 2015, the Council still hasn't received further information on the action points.

- The 2015/16 council is therefore asked to follow up on the action points with the Director of Operations after taking office.

Evaluation of Personnel Appraisals

In its [June 2015 public meeting](#) the Faculty Council discussed the evaluation study of the personnel appraisals with the Executive Board, which identified a number of critical issues in the Personnel and Development (P&D) process. The Director of Operations announced a new P&D procedure, which would address these issues, as well as a related P&D policy, which will be delivered at the end of the calendar year.

- The 2015/16 Council is therefore requested to ask the Director of Operations to present the new P&D policy and procedure in the December 2015 meeting.

Budget advice 2016

In June 2015 the Faculty Council received the EUR *Kadernota* and preliminary budget figures for 2016. During a non-public meeting in early August 2015 with the Dean, the Director of Operations, and the Controllers, information about the budget for the strategic projects at RSM was delivered to the Council, but no information yet on HR figures, expected income from the 2nd and 3rd money streams, and other relevant decision criteria. These figures were requested by the Council as necessary for budget approval and were delivered in late August 2015.

- Due to a recent change in Dutch higher education law, the Faculty Council 2015/16 will be asked not only to give advice on the budget, but also to give consent on the main features of the budget.

Operations

Reorganisation generic support staff

The previous Faculty Council was asked to give advice on the planned reorganisation of generic support staff. Due to the Berenschot Benchmark imposed by the Dutch government, all universities who have a higher ratio of generic support staff to academic staff than the Dutch average have been asked to reduce their generic support FTE by the end of 2015 to a value that is not higher than the average, which for RSM results in a cut of 4.4 FTE. Members of the personnel section of the 2014/15 Council discussed the plans of the Executive Board extensively with the Director of Operations, provided input to the plan, and [gave positive advice in November 2014](#).

Internal Communication

The previous Council had taken the initiative to ask the Dean for an improvement of internal communication. The issue was discussed in detail with RSM's Media and Public Relations Manager Marianne Schouten from the Corporate Marketing and Communications (CMC) department during the [public meeting in October 2014](#). As a result of this discussion CMC organized three focus groups with employees in January 2015, and the Faculty Council was informed of the results in its [April 2015 meeting](#). The results triggered a number of action points: Twice a year there are introduction days for new employees, during which they are made familiar with the organisation of RSM, the programmes, and the different support departments and initiatives. In addition to the existing Steef of the Union meetings, which were established in the previous year, RSM started a monthly employee newsletter in July 2015. Furthermore an improved intranet was promised; this, however, is still not in place to date.

- The Council recommends a follow-up on this issue in the first half of 2016.

Career Services for international students

In the public [meeting of January 2015](#) the Director of Careers, Corporate, and Alumni Relations (CCAR), Joep Elemans, was present to discuss career services from the perspective of Bachelor students and international students. The number of internships available for Bachelor students is extremely low, and even lower for international bachelor students. Joep Elemans promised to work on options to increase the number of internships. A follow-up meeting with Frieda Franke, Senior Career Consultant, provided the Council with a detailed overview of the tasks and activities of the CCAR department, but also acknowledged the need for internationalisation, so that international students can be better assisted in finding internships and employment in the Netherlands. Frieda Franke promised an update of the RSM Student Job Board, the central platform where companies advertise their employment opportunities for RSM students and graduates, as well as further efforts to better cater to the needs of international students and graduates.

- The Council recommends that the 2015/16 Faculty Council follow up with Frieda Franke on the promised improvements in the Student Job Board as well as specifically for international students and graduates in November 2015.

Update Faculty Regulations

During the [April 2015 public meeting](#) a draft of the new Faculty Regulations was presented to the Council and subsequently discussed in different follow-up meetings in great detail. The Faculty

Council has given extensive feedback to the Executive Board in July 2015, but hasn't yet received a version of the regulations for which it can give its consent.

- The Council therefore asks the 2015/16 Faculty Council to further discuss the Faculty Regulations with the Board and, when consent is reached, to communicate this in writing to the Dean.

Renaming RSM

The Marketing Manager, Astrid Huisman, approached the Faculty Council in May 2015 about plans to potentially rename RSM. A delegation of the FC met with her and the Director Corporate Marketing and Communications (CMC), Willem Koolhaas in June 2015, where both gave detailed information about the considerations so far. In the [public meeting on 2 July](#), both colleagues were present and informed the Council that even though the EUR Executive Board has committed to take over the considerable costs of such a project, the plans are currently on hold. There is still no widespread consent among faculty members, and the consequences of such a step for the brand and reputation of the school are yet unclear. More research is required.

- Even though this is still an open issue, the Council recommends that the 2015/16 Council waits for CMC to deliver further input.

Strategy

The Dean, Steef van de Velde, was present during the meeting of October 2014 to present RSM's strategic goals and their implementation in the academic year 2014/15.

For the next academic year, the Council has delivered in July 2015 an extensive list of strategic issues it would like to see discussed during the meeting in October 2015, which the Dean will attend. Issues include:

- The quality of academic programmes
- The increasing workload of the employees
- Strategic HR policy for academic positions
- Teaching appraisals
- Rankings
- Online education
- Diversity and internationalisation
- Sustainability

- The 2015/16 Council is requested to follow up on these questions in the October 2015 meeting.

Extracurricular activities and student organisations

Course evaluations by the RSM Student Representation

In June 2015 a non-public meeting took place between three employee representatives of the Faculty Council and three members of the Student Representation. The purpose of this meeting was to clarify the role of the Student Representation and to discuss the survey forms, timing, and the process of collecting feedback via surveys as such, including alternative forms of teacher feedback. The parties agreed that the current way of collecting information about course quality is neither the most valid nor the most suitable way and could use improvement.

- A new meeting was scheduled for mid-September 2015 with representatives from the next SR board and representatives of BSc programme management to give the SR the opportunity to present the changes, additions and improvements they are currently working on. The Council is handing this matter over to the members of the 2015/16 Faculty Council.

Internationalisation of STAR and the STAR Management Week

The Faculty Council entered talks with STAR about the internationalisation of their activities. The chairman of the STAR Management Week, Julius Regeer, was present during the [public meeting in July 2015](#), giving insight into their activities and asking for ideas on how to attract more international students as well as more companies with employment options for international students. In a follow-up meeting with Julius a representative of the Council delivered such input. A second meeting with the new president, Suzanne Bickes, is scheduled for September 2015, where the Council, together with the Director of Operations, will discuss possibilities to increase the attractiveness of becoming STAR board members for international students after their studies.

- The 2015/16 Faculty Council is requested to pick up this subject after September.

Internal and External Affairs

Employee elections

The nomination period for the upcoming office period was held in March/ April 2015. For the 5 seats for employees, only three candidates applied (two faculty members - **Samer Abdelnour** and **Marja Flory** - and one administrative employee – **Gabi Helfert**), so these candidates were declared elected at the end of the nomination period. After the elections in May, a call was published for candidates for the remaining two seats, and two candidates (**Paolo Perego** for faculty and **David Unterdorfer** for PhD students) submitted their candidacy and were as well declared elected due to a lack of competition.

Student elections

The student section of the Faculty Council has elections every year. During the candidacy period in March 2015, 14 students applied. 5 of them were elected to be part of the 2014/15 Faculty Council to start in September 2014: **Maria Arnaudova**, **Mike Jennekens**, **Andrea Petrini**, **Kevin Ren**, and **Dominik Scherrer**.

Member training

Training was provided in September 2014 by a training consultant from TAQT, a company that specializes on training representative bodies in the Netherlands. Members who were not able to attend this training had the opportunity to participate in a training organized by the University Council for all Faculty Councils at EUR.

- The Council has already organized a similar training for the 2015/16 Council which will take place on 15 September 2015.

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, and the Dean participated in two of the meetings. 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.

Communications and public relations

Video

The Council had a professional video produced in November 2014 to inform its constituents about its members and activities. The video was embedded [on the FC website](#) and furthermore communicated via RSM corporate social media channels and on the RSM Intranet.

- The video received quite a bit of attention and feedback from students and colleagues, so the Council recommends that the 2015/16 Council creates a similar piece where they introduce themselves and their ambitions and action points early in the academic year.

Information drinks

Two information drinks were organized in September 2014 and February 2015 in the Erasmus Pavilion, where interested students and employees could get in touch with Faculty Council members.

- The Council recommends that the 2015/16 Council organizes such events in the new academic year as well and communicates them via the website, the Intranet, RSM corporate social media (via Webservices@rsm.nl), and on SIN Online (via the Programme Managers of the different RSM study programmes).

Online communications

The Faculty Council website was updated at least monthly with announcements, reports, agendas, and meeting minutes. Minutes were additionally sent out at least a week before the next public meeting to all participants of the previous public meeting by e-mail. On several occasions the Council published news also via the RSM corporate social media channels and on the RSM Intranet, as well as on SIN-Online (via the respective programme managers). In addition to publishing the monthly meetings on the FC website, they have also been announced in the events section on the RSM Intranet since April 2015 (the Council did this already for the academic year 2015/16).

- The Council recommends that the 2015/16 Council continues to regularly update the website and sends all newsworthy results of their work to Webservices@rsm.nl who can share them on the corporate social media accounts of RSM, the Intranet, and to the programme managers who can share them on SIN-Online. The Council ***strongly advises against opening new social media channels***, because it requires too much effort to generate a critical amount of followers; instead, the corporate social media channels of RSM with thousands or even tens of thousands of followers should be used. Should the 2015/16 Council still want to pursue this route, please contact Webservices@rsm.nl for social media guidelines at RSM.

Presence in lectures

The student members of the Faculty Council spread the word about the Council in lecture breaks of several study programmes during the nomination and election period, which resulted in increased interest among the students to run for council and a higher number of candidates.

- The Council recommends that the 2015/16 Council continues to create awareness and personal contact with students, particularly first-year students, during the introduction days or in large lectures, as well as during the nomination period for the student elections for the 2016/17 council.

Introduction days for new employees

In June 2014 the FC Chair [presented the Council to the new RSM employees](#) during the introduction day for new employees. These introduction days from now on offer an ongoing opportunity for the Council to present themselves to new employees every 6 months, so that awareness about the Council and its activities is expected to grow within the employee population over time.

- The Council strongly recommends that the 2015/16 Council presents itself during the next New Employee Introduction Day which is scheduled for 8 October 2015, and during subsequent introduction days when they are announced.

Conclusion

Communication and public relations still remain difficult, particularly toward students, also because the Council doesn't have a way to directly communicate with all students at RSM.

- The Council recommends that the 2015/16 Council puts special attention to this area of activity and works on a communication plan. Discussing this issue with the Executive Board in order to collaborate on better ways to reach more constituents is also recommended.

A good discussion

Triggered by the nation-wide student protests in spring 2015, a project was set up by the University Council and the EUR Executive Board to increase participation within EUR, named “[A Good Discussion](#)”. Two meetings with representatives from all faculties and participatory organs at EUR took place in the first half of 2015, in which [issues that hamper participation were inventoried and first suggestions for solutions were discussed](#). From the 2014/15 RSM Faculty Council, Jan Sirks, Andrea Petrini, Frederieke Dijkhuizen, and Gabi Helfert took part in the discussions.

- The 2015/16 Faculty Council is requested to determine representatives who would like to participate in the good discussion during the next school year. So far, Marja Flory and Dominik Scherrer have already volunteered to participate in this discussion.