

MINUTES 106TH FC MEETING – 3 NOVEMBER 2008

Attendees

FC Members	Guests	MT	Official Secretary
Frank Wijen	Kees van Lansbergen	George Yip	Catheleyne Jurgens
Robin Claushuis	Bas Takens	Steef van de Velde	
Linda Huinink		Dominique Campman	
Gianna O'Brien			
Martine Schey			
Jan Sirks			
Bart Ariëns			
Vinay Tiwari			
Jimmy Tseng			
Erik van Veen			

1. Opening

Frank opens the 106th FC meeting and welcomes everyone.

2. Agenda

The dean attends today's meeting for half an hour to meet all new members and to present RSM's strategic plan. There are no questions or further points to be added to the agenda.

3. Minutes

The vice-dean comments with respect to the draft minutes of the 105th FC meeting that he did not mean: *"...that there is no written strategy because of the numerous contingencies in the land of higher education, which render crafting such a document a difficult exercise with relatively imprecise outcomes.* The sentence will be adapted to: *"The vice-dean argues that there is a strategy, albeit not necessarily in written form. Moreover, the numerous contingencies in the land of higher education render the crafting of such a document a difficult exercise with relatively imprecise outcomes."*

The minutes are approved without further remarks or amendments.

4. Announcements

The board makes two announcements:

- RSM's budget has been approved by the Executive Board in the annual bilateral meeting. The deficit has been reduced to one million euros, instead of the estimated deficit of 1.8 million euros. A surplus is even expected for 2010 and 2011.
- EUR will receive a so-called "small university" funding from the national government, which will be allocated in part to the different faculties.

5. Housing international staff and students

The FC has prioritised "facilitating the living conditions of foreign students and staff, in particular by providing access to adequate housing, guidance and information". This focal issue has been pursued with special attention by Vinay and Gianna, who have held a survey among international IBA students and who have prepared a presentation.

Vinay first presents a quick review of previous discussions. Today's central question is whether there is really a mismatch between the demand for and supply of adequate housing. Kees argues that housing of international students is an important issue. Therefore, EUR has decided to outsource this activity to Stadswonen, a professional housing agency. If Stadswonen cannot meet the demand, they are the linking pin to other corporations with whom they have contact.

The forecast of the faculties about the number of incoming international students was correct. The housing supply was definitely the problem in September this year. Three explanations can be given:

- "Wilgenborg" has turned out to be the only adequate "flexible supply" accommodation, which could house 70 international students. All the other options were too expensive;
- The F-building was not yet available due to legal procedures;
- A letter has been sent to 180 private landlords last March, asking if they would like to continue renting in 2008-2009; only 32 of them agreed. This was a major drop in supply for unknown reasons, possibly related to (more stringent) legislation.

EFB has studied several alternatives for housing, which turned out not to be suitable. Nevertheless, last July EFB made a proposal to 820 international students for a room. Because many students decided not to accept this offer, the accommodation need for the international students could be met, while the supply was only about 500 units. A similar situation also prevailed in the past five years. Some 300-400 international students manage to find their own accommodation every year. It has been decided by all faculties to wait until June before starting to offer rooms to students and then operate on a "first come, first serve" basis.

Out of the Stadswonen-EUR contract, the FC concludes that no adequate incentives exist for Stadswonen to deliver: a sufficient number of rooms; an excellent service to students; good accommodation; flexibility as to the terms of the housing contract. Transparent rules exist on providing a mix of housing units with an acceptable price/quality ratio. Students always prefer lower prices but a lot of other factors, including neighbourhood and distance to the campus, play a role. EFB and Stadswonen have considered several places, the distance to the university and the prices. EUR is not in favour of penalties for Stadswonen and prefers to evaluate and consult how things can be improved. The FC is not convinced that the contract is the best possible contract without any (quantified) target for Stadswonen and the nature of exclusiveness of the contract (ruling out the possibility for EUR to work with alternative parties). Furthermore, it is not their but EUR's (including RSM's) reputation that is at stake. Therefore, the FC is all but convinced that Stadswonen provides a good service that meets student needs. This is evidenced by not only the price/quality ratio which students perceive as unfavourable but also by the lack of flexibility in the contract that Stadswonen offers. It should be kept in mind that private landlords offer more flexible arrangements (for example, in terms of rent termination), so why can't Stadswonen do likewise? After all, if students were offered accommodation with a good price/quality ratio, there would be no reasons for students to leave prematurely.

To conclude, the FC is in favour of better governance arrangements for housing, including the possibility of an EUR housing agency and the simultaneous use of different housing corporations. Kees indicates that EFB is doing its utmost to prevent the same situation next years, but cannot provide any guarantees that no future problems of the same kind will occur. A formal committee with faculty representatives will evaluate the problems and should come up with some recommendations next month. EFB will keep the FC updated about the issue.

6. Office space T-building

At RSM, the usage of office space in m² per employee is relatively high, as compared with other educational institutes. Furthermore, RSM cannot accommodate the fast growth of the School. The shortage of space can be solved by two solutions: build another building or use existing space better. RSM prefers the latter option. If RSM uses its office space better, this will save much money for other purposes. Before thinking in terms of solutions, a consultancy agency will audit and reflect on the current situation. Many more solutions exist than just smaller rooms or allocating rooms to two persons. For instance, employees with a part-time job may not need their own offices, while persons with multiple functions within RSM do not need several offices. The FC emphasizes that clear communication is key in situations like this, so that employees do not get a wrong impression.

7. Fire security T-building

Last month the Chair of the FC had a meeting with Koos Hogervorst and Cock Michels about the fire security plan. EFB has improved several technical deficiencies, which were identified during an earlier meeting. All persons present during the latest meeting opined that the fire security of the T building seemed to be adequately taken care of. However, one RSM employee, who had earlier on raised the fire security issue in the T-Building, is not convinced that the present fire security situation is adequate and has asked for an external audit. The Vice-Dean argues that he wants to receive a written formulation of the remaining concerns before proceeding to such an external audit.

8. Any other business

No further items need to be discussed.

9. Closure

Frank closes the meeting at 15.00 hrs.

Next FC meeting: 8 December 2008 13.00hrs in T06-67.

Action points FC meeting 3 November 2008

1. Vinay and Gianna will prepare a letter of advice regarding the focal issue: "Facilitating the living conditions of foreign students and staff, in particular by providing access to adequate housing, guidance and information", to be sent to RSM's MT and relevant EUR bodies.
2. Frank will contact the employee worried about fire security and ask him to provide a written explanation of his remaining concerns.