

MINUTES 179TH FC MEETING – 2 JUNE 2016

Attendees

FC Members	Guests	MT	Official Secretary
Dominik Scherrer (DS)	Anne van de Graaf (AvdG)	Abe de Jong (AdJ)	Absent due to illness
Kevin Ren (KR)	Taco Reus (TR)	Steeff van de Velde (SvdV)	
Marina Arnaudova (MA)	Suzanne Bickers (SB)		
Andrea Petrini (AP)	Janet van der Woude (JvdW)		
Mike Jennekens (MJ)	Juup Essers (JE)		
Paolo Perego (PP)	Maria Rodriguez Lopez de la Calle (MRLdIC)		
Marja Flory (MF)	Dominica Salzar (DS)		
Joey Johannsen (JJ)			

1. Opening

MF opened the meeting at 10.30. A round of introduction was made to introduce the two new student members who will start their role in September.

2. Agenda

There were no further points for the agenda.

3. Minutes

Minutes of 4 May will be approved at the next meeting on 30 June.

4. Announcements

MF thanked AdJ for his much appreciated attendance of FC meetings and asked if he can invite the new Vice Dean (if known) to the next meeting. AdJ replied that the identity is not yet known but he will invite the candidate when known. He also added that it is very important to have a good relationship with the FC, he has had a very good relationship over the past two and a half years.

5. Programme Committee composition

MA led the discussion by asking TR what he thinks works well for the PC and what are the drawbacks. TR replied that they have done a self-evaluation. There is representation in the PC of all the programmes, but it is difficult to find representatives. Students are only with them 10 months, there are improvements necessary, and visibility needs to be improved. They are doing something to improve these issues, making a short list of things the committee think are important, being more proactive than reactive. There is now a shortlist of 15 points. Representation is important, recruitment of student members is slow. TR feels he should be more involved but didn't know the caveats, only started May 2015 and did not know if it should be his responsibility. TR feels the community should be involved in this. Community should bring the reps to the committee, Faculty member reps should be more involved. Student reps can be part of first meeting, this will ensure more student motivation. Recruitment process planned in 1st wk of academic year, motivation needed from student side, website being

made for more visibility, links to FB also being used to promote. 11 programmes with 2 representatives, very different interests sometimes but nice to bring it all together, lively discussion of topics.

MA – Sounds good but self-evaluation form not complete enough, strengthening relationship with STAR will be important. MA asked, “What exactly are you planning in the recruitment process? Will it be initiated by the professors or how will it be done?” TR replied that more control is needed to ensure room is full of reps, can’t ask too much of students as they are not around yet, STAR Master Study Clubs are recruited at the same time, it’s too late. It took a while to figure out the best way to approach recruitment. Student reps were asked to design a process and we are putting in a very early deadline for application. There will be an announcement about it.

MF asked what about Faculty representation since only students have been mentioned? There seems to be a feeling of ‘what are we doing here’ and therefore no clear direction. TR replied that there are members who are not attending and this could be due to the meeting being on a Monday. Student members were also asked if it’s important to them or to the community, a lot of them do show up and it’s very clear to them what the intention is. It’s important to bring them in early, some joined too late. It’s a very large group, some are core members and very committed, some less so and give reasons such as that they were very busy and could not make it. Keeping track of attendance and reporting to department chairs may help. Those who come find it important. There are 10 sessions per year, actively asking all members what is important to them and showing them they can participate.

MA asked, “how would you like to boost that?” TR answered by saying a more proactive committee will result from a good recruitment process. Bring them in early is important, but we can only let the various depts know, lack of attendance is not the cause of the state of the committee. TR emails them and they give the reason of being very busy but then they still don’t show up. All he can do is signal this to the chair and perhaps a replacement will be provided. There are quite a few very vocal representatives; one of whom was present at this meeting (Juup Essers).

AP asked are the same reps usually missing (absent)? TR pointed out that since there is only one Faculty rep and one student rep, if both are missing then there is a problem. AvdG added here that whenever advice is to be given these are the people you need most. TR also pointed out that there is email complication. MA agreed, saying that when we email members they often don’t reply, also the size of the committee is too big to be efficient.

TR replied that he does not know why they do not respond to the FC but they do respond to him. Those who attend make a good contribution to the meetings. Members are kept informed because if Programme Management come looking for advice it is essential to be aware of topics. However, sometimes the students have a clash between their studies and the committee – he asked a student rep to be present at this meeting for example, but he had interviews for his thesis.

MA stated that the FC is concerned about the alignment of motivation because one of the PC agenda points is to cover the differences between the Master programmes. If all Master programmes will not be represented it will

be difficult to cover this topic. Also one point is 'Programme Management is reviewing alternatives but no clear solution is emerging'. This worries the FC. MF brought up the topic of changes in the examination regulations - first it goes to Programme Committee and then to the FC. TR mentioned that he thinks he can draft a letter of advice now. It's important to them to be able to represent the departments.

There is resit in case of no registrations for example. JE expressed some misgivings about the regulations. MA added that the FC were concerned about giving consent on some.

JE signalled a "slightly different diagnosis". We are addressing education management issues instead of quality issues. Many parties would not appreciate receiving comments from outside the PC about the quality of their programmes. It also has to do with training – knowing your mandate within the PC – as well as lack of time and availability. Has to be prompt and timely so students know the seriousness of the tasks. MA reiterates that these should be discussed within the PC and then discussed what needs to be done and what needs changing. JE –added that what can go wrong concerns evaluations of programmes, courses, specifications of examinations formats etc. These issues cannot really be addressed as information is not there on a timely basis and also many members do not know what to do with it. This raises the issue of outside members for one particular Master programme who cannot speak out on these issues because either they do not feel authoritative on these issues or simply lack the knowledge of the other programmes to be able to judge and come to a deliberate idea of what is at stake. If quality is to be addressed you should ask for example what are all Master programmes doing at this moment in terms of Business Ethics. We all think it's important, but a couple of years ago we started changing what was included in the Bachelor courses but it should be addressed in every course and every programme. However in many programmes it plays no role whatsoever. That could be a quality issue to be addressed, but the attitude of 'Don't start meddling with our internal affairs because we'll decide what is best for our programme' will be an issue so a programme committee would have a problem raising the authority of the body as a whole and be talking about individual programmes and their content, that's a major issue. TR agreed that this is a really wonderful issue to raise and members probably feel they have no voice.

MF expressed concern at discussing this in too much detail here. MA agreed that the PCs need to discuss this internally with all of the members and see where they should go and what the issues are to be discussed and maybe draft some ideas for changing and how to address those issues objectively. MF emphasised that we can always ask questions as FC, it's also important for the FC that the PC is working well with all the input. We also have members leaving and it's up to the Management Committee to push and insist that we have sufficient members and this should be the case with all committees. We should be using our right to participation in this way. AvdG pointed out that there has to be intrinsic motivation, it's not good if Dept Chairs are telling employees 'you have to go to this meeting'. MF asked 'what do you mean by intrinsic motivation'? How do you get it?

AvdG replied that this can be by addressing the points in the mid-term review. MF added that you also get intrinsic motivation when your boss is saying 'that's a good job you're doing in the PC' thus appreciation is needed. MA added this should be a point of discussion at next PC meeting.

AvdG had a question, remarking that this sounded like a very hypothetical discussion and wondered if there are instances that have reached the FC where things are really going wrong, where quality is not being reached and standards are not being achieved and where these situations are really being left unattended, in fact the other way around. AvdG also asked what signals the FC received about things going wrong, where the quality is not meeting the standards, about the programme committee not being satisfactory, indicating that the quality of the education programmes is at risk because of the programme committees. DS remarked that based on the info we have, we are not sure how the dynamics and the governance is working in these issues, we ask if this has been thoroughly discussed, is it broadly supported by the community? It puts a heavier workload on the FC. AvdG asked if it's about not knowing the procedure more than receiving signals things are going wrong? MA added that it's also the size of the committee, because each programme should be represented by a Faculty member and student member. The lack of proactivity is because of those people not knowing if our voices will be heard. AvdG explained that the quality of our programmes does not depend on the functioning of the programme committee, there are more quality mechanisms happening than merely the Programme Committee. When they see an issue arising in a programme they talk to the Director of that programme and ask what is going on and what is going to be done about it? MF pointed out however that it states clearly in the Laws on Higher Education that the Programme Committee is the watchdog of the quality? AvdG admitted they are, but they are not the only watchdog. MF emphasised that we as Faculty Council have an obligation and we have the right to question this and ask about quality control.

DS added that the community must be involved and it's important the students are comfortable with how PC represents the views and interests of students throughout the community in order to approve these documents. AvdG explained that both mechanisms of the PC and the Examination Committee are responsible for quality issues. MF commented that this point has now been made clear. MA then indicated this discussion should be wrapped up. MA added that regarding the Teaching and Exam Regulations more discussions are needed in the PC and we should have an update at a future meeting on the quality issues that have been addressed here.

MF thanked the attendees for being present and addressing these issues. TR thanked the FC and mentioned that the points raised have also been raised in the PC and they are working on them. The committee is improving and doing a good job and the concerns the FC may have now will hopefully just have been a temporary glitch. TR hopes to provide an update in September on the new and highly authoritative committee.

6. 'Studievoorschotmiddelen'

MA asked JvdW to introduce herself for the benefit of the new student members. JvdW was present as project leader of the 'Studievoorschotmiddelen' issue. MF mentioned point 1 Structural Funds and point 8 Budget is up to the discretion of the department to utilise. AvdG added that this is provided they have a plan, it's not a free for all. The spending of this money is less regulated than the redesign of courses, they will look at how substantial the plans are for expenditure in each case. AvdG: "Programmes can come up with a variety of things such as an Honours Programme. We are not prescribing how the money will be spent." MF remarked that she was relieved

because she thought it might go to the departments who will then say they have a deficit. MF asked if the words “provided there is a plan” can be added in the document. This will be adjusted.

Second point – the future increase in structural funds. In the larger Master Programme. MF asked for clarification regarding the reference to ‘larger’, and asked who decides what is larger and what is not and that the Structural Funds will be allocated with ‘larger programmes’ getting more. ‘Smaller programmes’ will be at a disadvantage and therefore we would like the word ‘larger’ to be removed. AvdG explained “what we are proposing is to have this fund for two years so that Master programmes can have extra money to do experimental things. If we find after 2 years that it doesn’t work or that programmes don’t need that money then we will redirect. In the 2 years we will have had the redesign of the larger programmes, we will see how this goes and how this innovation fund will unfold and basically decide if we will continue. KR remarked that for the upcoming 2 years this innovation fund will be available for the 6 larger programmes?

AdG replied that the innovation fund will be available for each and every Master. KR asked if money is distributed according to the number of students attending? AvdG –added that it’s quite a hefty fixed fee, they want to make it relevant to the programmes. MF verified again that the word ‘larger’ must be removed and this was agreed upon. JvdW confirmed that there will be an update on how this innovation money is working. DS mentioned the excel file on amounts to spend – what results are exactly expected? JvdW replied that it depends on plans, on student feedback, on implementation. It is not allowed to make it too complex, based on information from students, from lecturers and from the organisation.

7. Any other business

No further points.

11. Closure

Marja closed the meeting at 11.35 hrs.

Next FC meeting 30 June at 10.30 in T03-42.