

Minutes 253th FC meeting (ext)

Thursday January 18th 2024, 10:30 AM – 12:00 AM

FC members

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Myra van Esch (**ME**)

Werner Brouwer (**WB**)

Daan Stam (**DS**)

Claudia Rutten (**CR**)

Guests

Amy Janssen-Brennan (**AJB**) - Executive Director of Recruitment & Admission RSM

Karolina van der Werff (**KW**) – RSM policy advisor and manager of accreditations

Agenda

Inhoud

Agenda 1

Opening.....	2
Minutes	2
To-do list	2
Announcements.....	3
Internationalisation	3
Faculty model	3
communication	4
Timeline.....	5
Investing 20% in own development.....	6
Tenure Track.....	7
Finance.....	7
Starter grants	8
IBA Numerus Fixus	13
Profile external chair.....	19

Opening

LV: Since both or vice chairs are not present, I took the opportunity to chair this meeting today. Welcome in the first meeting of this new year. We are looking forward again to a year of good collaborations between the Faculty Council and the Board.

Having said that, is there any wish or suggestion to change the order of the topics?

All: No

Minutes

Regarding the minutes, I think we made some minor changes to the ones you have received, but that is only in how we refer to certain people. Instead of putting people with their names in there, we figured that it's better to put in their roles. Are there any comments from your side?

All: No

To-do list

LV: It seems we are ahead of our to-do list. For example, some meetings are scheduled with the Finance Committee.

There is one thing from the follow-up to-do list. We have been discussing also the Faculty Council email, but there are some further actions that need to be taken from our side. Another meeting is scheduled for that as well with ICT. So that is solved then.

We go to Daan for the announcements.

Announcements

DS: I think by and large, announcements won't amount to a lot because the last time we met was right before the break. And we are now a week after the break, so not a lot has occurred in between.

Internationalisation

DS: Let me take three out of those four announcement topics to mention something about, with first internationalization. The language courses have started, so that's really good. I haven't had any feedback yet, but I also think we have to wait a little bit for that. Also important is that we are talking about additional initiatives for language development. So not language courses, but language development.

We don't have anything really concrete yet, but as soon as it gets more concrete, we'll come to you. Generally, in language development the thoughts are much more in terms of how we can also build up something like a small community that kind of does social activities and utilize those to teach Dutch. I think that would be useful, because there's so much demand for it.

We also talked about the bias in the housing market that is being felt by international students. We have discussed this with the CvB and we said we wait first until there's an initiative there. There's nothing yet there, so it's still on the agenda and we're still waiting, essentially.

In terms of another meeting for internationalization, we haven't planned it yet. Maybe in a month or two from now, we'll do an additional meeting again and discuss internationalization with the staff again.

Faculty model

DS: Then let's go to the faculty model.

Right before the break we had the breakthrough with the educational profile, which was then accepted by both the EB and the heads of departments, and also your advice was positive.

So, what we've done with it is we have immediately implemented it in the Spring P&T. We now have four candidates that go up for the position of associate professor of education, which is really nice. They are meant to go up in March already, so that's pretty quick.

Most of the efforts in the faculty model are now oriented on making sure that that process runs, because it's quite a big process: All the candidates need to apply, they need to provide a lot of information, we need to get external reviewers to write letters, we need to have reviews from internal people in our school, we need to design and there is the P&T committee to read all the files, et cetera. So it's quite a lot of work and that's where most of our efforts are at this moment. But it looks good and I think we'll be ready in March to assess those four candidates.

LV: And those four candidates, they now know that.

DS: So let me put it this way, I assume they know this, but I've only had the names of those four candidates from the heads of departments so far. What is part of the process is that I meet all of them next week, or the week after. I meet them before they apply and I think that's important as well. because they don't understand what's going on. So, our assumption is that no matter what we do, some things will be unclear and some things will go wrong and therefore, we try to get some additional meetings to make sure that when there's questions or uncertainties, we kind of try to deal with it that way.

communication

LV: So we had one question about it. But I have one extra question about it. The first one was: Now you've selected those four, which is great, others may also start willing to have this promotion. So, what is happening in terms of communication of this breakthrough that people know of?

DS: So, I mean this is also for us somewhat of a trial in a sense, to go through this and make sure that the process is optimized and well done. Essentially, we're going to incorporate it into the P&T from fall onwards. So from fall onwards, people can apply and it's an open process like the normal P&T processes. That is also what is going to be communicated. In our process before this spring P&T we'll also have a communication to the entire school about this, so that everybody knows what's going on and that this is happening. The problem here is, of course, that the decision moment that we would do this was one day before the break. At the moment now, we're preparing everything, but at the same time, we also need to communicate this to the school as a whole as well, so I think that will occur in parallel.

But we will make sure that we have a meeting with all the faculty in the school that are interested to talk about an education track before the actual Spring P&T takes place. I think that's really important. And then afterwards, there will be communication with the entire school and this will be integrated into the normal P&T cycle.

LV: I think communication is always very important. If you wait too long with this, then people say: oh, why are you going up? What's going on? And it seems that at least those candidates now are knowing it now or next week. So, I think you can even already invite people for a meeting.

DS: What is important, I guess, is that I wanted to have the talks with these four candidates first before we have a communication to the school. So, as soon as we had that and we know that the candidates know, I think that's the moment that we will plan the communication to the entire school, but I assume that that takes place early in February.

LV: There will at least be a way that there will be at least some communication to the school via our minutes.

DS: That's fine, I think it's not a secret at all and if people ask me at this point, I also tell them that this is what we're doing
But I think we also need a meeting, like normally, physically again, where we can sit and people can join and people can ask questions about this. There's always going to be

questions. Although I think there's broad support for this, there are also people that might not support this idea and they need to be able to voice their opinion as well.

Timeline

LV: OK. And our second question was more on your last remark, since there is more parts of the faculty model on which we do not have anything new. But when can we expect something for these other parts of the faculty model? And then can you add a realistic timeline? We have had timelines, but they were not always that realistic.

DS: I can't say now. And I think one of the elements of that meeting when we talk about education would also be to place that in a bigger context of other changes. I think the main other changes will be in the area of engagement. In all honesty, I do think that the engagement part of the model is going to be more difficult to work on than the educational part. Even though the educational part, I can tell you, was already quite difficult, I think this might be more difficult.

I think that the expectation that we need at least another year again seems to be very realistic. So I hope that by the spring P&T in 2025, we might be able to add engagement to that as a first trial.

LV: At first you were so positive, saying that we can do this before summer 2023. So, what has happened that changed this completely to: this takes at least one more year?

DS: If we look at what happened in this process, a lot of people had to be involved. In all honesty, I think if we would have to do something again like the educational profile, I think it would be faster. There is two things in there:

One is that we have to implement the educational profile, which takes up a lot of capacity already and that is capacity we can't use for building the engagement track.

At the same time, I think there's more contentiousness in the engagement track. So, there's less clarity about how it should look, and I think there's less platform for a single solution at this point. So, I think it takes more time to get people involved, and I do think that aligning people around this idea is always very important. I would rather take more time to make sure that we get to a new design that is widely supported than to do this faster and get something that's not so widely supported.

I think the good thing for me about this whole process with the education profile is that we now have a profile that has been widely supported, at least already in the top of the organization. If it's not widely supported, will it ever be implemented? I doubt it. But now, with this, getting immediately four candidates constitutes a good sign that people want to implement this, and they're open for it.

WB: I think it's also the learning from the first part with the educational track that just indicates how important it is to keep everybody aligned in the process. And just like Daan said, I think spending more time on that process in the beginning, really helps in subsequently moving forward quite quickly. Because if you look now between setting the

profile and actually starting to implement it, there's only a few months, and then people can prepare and already be appointed.

I think that would not have been possible if we had cut back on the time spent beforehand. I also think in some ways it's slow. On the other hand, if you look at the fundamental changes that you're now making to the organization, I think it's also just important to keep people aligned.

The deadline of 2025 sounds also for me far away, but let's put it like this: If for some reason along the way we get the feeling that it could be quicker, then you can always go quicker, but you ask for something realistic.

LV: Yeah, we prefer something realistic indeed.

DS: It's also hard to predict. If you look at the process so far, I think before summer we thought: hey, this could be before summer. Then it was clear just before summer that was certainly not going to happen. After summer, we decided to focus more on the educational part first. We thought: ah, we can do that before January, because that's only one part. And during that process, even that was slowed down a lot. If you would have asked me end of November, I would probably have thought we would get the first people maybe end of this year. And then all of a sudden, within the time span of a couple of weeks, things sped up again, and it was much faster. So it's so difficult to predict.

That is the honest answer, but I do think that the priority for us is to get something very good, solid and sustainable, and that we get a lot of platform for these decisions.

Investing 20% in own development

LV: So, one last thing about this, since I cannot remember it that well anymore. I think in the past, it was the idea that people get 20% of their time, in discussion with their supervisor, to invest in their development. Is that also still in this new educational track? Say, if you want to become an associate professor of education, you get time to do research?

DS: The question is how to implement it.

One thing is that as part of the educational profile, an associate professor of education gets 20% of the time allocated to research. So in our school, that means that your research voucher is 20%, which is something that we are building to.

At the same time, we're looking at the HR process. I think that's really what this is about as well. So if you get into the profile directly, then you get that 20%.

The additional part of it is that we create an HR process where if people indicate that they want to move towards this associate professor of education, and they're in a position where they don't have any research time at this point, and their department backs this up, and there's also formation in the school, we would like this person to move towards that position, that at that point they can get development funding, to go and do research for that 20%. That's still in the plan, and I think it's a necessary thing as well.

The profile's there. Now everything around it to make sure that it works needs to be done, and I think that's also part of the learning curve for us. We've not developed a new profile

for anyone in the last 20 years or so, so doing this and implementing it right is also a difficult job, but I think it's still part of the job.

LV: Okay, thanks.

Tenure Track

DS: About the tenure track, I think I can be short. The main difference in the tenure track is to get an education P&T meeting. In terms of the tenure track itself, the new regime email that we talked about before the break is going to go out soon, so that will be in the next weeks, and so far we have six or seven candidates for that to go up.

We are making slight changes to the operational process. I think nothing that the candidates will notice too much, but I think we will make the process a lot better.

We are also making slight changes to the formatting of their application, mainly to make things easier, so it won't mean that they have to do things completely differently. Rather, it's more to help them put the right information in there. We'll talk about that tomorrow with the P&T, and then hopefully next week we can send that also to the candidates.

One final thing: we've met with all the candidates that got tenure last year. In December, we had one meeting, and this week we had a meeting to explain also the procedures around the starter grants, and also, most importantly, to celebrate that they got tenure. I think that's something that we don't do enough in our school, so that was actually quite nice, and it's really great to see. It was a very nice meeting. That's the updates.

LV: Okay, thank you. Anyone who wants to add something on the points of Daan before Myra goes to finance?

Finance

ME: In terms of finance, there's not a lot of updates. We have some meeting schedules around the budget, and we're working towards a plan for the long term. It seems like a while ago that we sat here, but in between, there was a lot of vacation time, so not a lot has happened.

We're using the categories research, education, engagement, and professional services as some of the framework to work along, where we sometimes realize that professional services is on the receiving end, so if you change something about education or you change something about engagement or research that has implications on the professional services side. So, despite that there's no news, there's a lot of work going on, so it's not like we're leaning back thinking this will be okay. I did have a meeting with the CvB, where I kind of updated them on what we were doing, and they seemed quite content, but obviously they haven't seen anything. I updated them on the process, and they seemed to be fine with it, and the deadline to deliver at least a plan is still at the end of March.

LV: Okay, and if I'm right, you now have received our approval for the budget.

WB: I have seen it.

LV: Okay. And I would say any questions about the finance, we can put in our meeting next week.

Starter grants

LV: So then we can move to the starter grants. I give the word to Karolina van der Werff (manager of RSM Accreditations)

KW: Yes. Where do we start? Has it ever been presented to you, anything about the student support?

LV: I think we have received the information. We also received the slide deck and the documents, but not yet on this detail.

KW: The student support, there are three parts of it. One is the internationalization, the other part is our well-being, student and staff, and the third part is called starter grants. We use the starter grants words for it, but it's meant to lower the workload of the assistant professors.

All universities in the Netherlands get money for it. So there is €300.000 per grant available. There are 15 grants available to RSM. 20% of it is kept at the Erasmus level for indirect costs. So basically what we get here is €240.000 per person times 15. Pursey (Prof. dr. Heugens, Dean of Research) and Daan have been very much involved in developing the framework. And in this framework the idea is that the money is free to spend, although there is a kind of a channeling.

So then we can assure all the assistant professors make the best use of the money they receive. I can just keep talking about how the money is spread. Basically it's shared in four parts. €60.000 is kept at the Erasmus level for indirect costs. And then there are two parts. Two parts of €120.000: One part goes to the departments and the other part is meant for the researcher: of which €80.000 via the ERIM structure. That's basically the formal parts.

LV: Okay. That was not so clear from me from the presentation for me. I was wondering how does it reduce the workload, since it looked a bit like this €120.000 comes instead of the research voucher.

DS: No, the honest story about the starter grants is also that the starter grants are meant to create a school where people that have an assistant associate full professor title can do fundamental research, have the time to do this, so where the workload is such that they have time to do research, where there is a research infrastructure so that they can do it and that they have the resources to do it. That's the eventual goal of all of this.

On the one hand, we're getting this money of the starter grants and soon also the incentive grants to accomplish this. On the other side of the story is that we're also bleeding money from the same donor, so we're also losing money on the back end that we now utilize for instance to create lower working times and work pressure. The difficulty for us now is how do we utilize this money to create a system where people can do research, where we actually know that part of the money is probably needed to create the situation that we

already have. That means that as tenure tracker you have 50 percent of your time to do research, that there is a research infrastructure, for instance our research lab where people can do research and where people can do investments into their own research and that's been the struggle.

And we've looked at two things: One is that we want to at least keep the system that we have alive because I think it's really conducive to what people are doing and improve upon it. A second logic that we've always used at RSM and at ERIM as well is that collective investments are always better than only individualized investments and that's a really important one. If we had given one third of our people 100,000 euros every five years, we would not get the Erasmus Behavioral Lab, but random stuff. What we actually did is taking that money and creating the Erasmus Behavioral Lab. As a result, now one third of our people are super well-funded to get the research, to do the research they want to do through that lab. So, I think we're all convinced that if we can collectively invest, that's really the best.

That's also been our aim with this scheme, to say: half of the money is actual additional money, so it's not instead of, but rather actual additional money that goes to the departments or to hiring more people so that the workload goes down and it's very clear that that workload for juniors needs to be no more.

They need to get 50 percent research time and I think we're trying to get monitoring systems in there as well, for instance, by meeting with all the first year tenure takers to see whether this is also the case. This is something that we are planning at the end of their first year. I'll talk with all of them and see how they are doing, whether they get enough time to do research. So, once again, this is additional money and the department's already got that last year and they'll get it again this year.

The second part of the 120k is split, 80k goes through ERIM, so that's the collective investments. With that 80k, we're saying that part of that is also needed to keep up the stuff that we're already doing, but it's also additional investments. For both, we're saying: on the one hand we need that to be collective investments, because that's how we all benefit the most from them. At the same time, we want ERIM to be a little bit more democratic and to have much more direct voice from users on how to invest this. So the goal is to have starter grant receivers and also other people with their communities much more directly involved by ERIM, through for instance surveys and soon also through other tools. They're building those as we go, because as for ERIM, for us it's also new, so we're trying this out, but we're trying to get their voice much more directly to see where we need to invest to help out most people. The idea of it is of course that our junior people that get these starter grants are serviced really well. We'll have a monitoring system around this, we'll have tools to get those voices in ERIM as well, but it is not going to be perfect in one go.

So, it's very important to monitor and to make sure that we improve it as we go along, but I think the most important thing, and that's why we had the meetings with the starter grant recipients, is that they also actively voice their opinions in their communities through ERIM. And when they're not serviced well and when they think there's a problem they should voice that as well so that we hear about it. That's why we've had those meetings.

And then finally there's the 40k which is really for them to spend on whatever they want as long as it's important for their research. So, if you're a recipient I think the benefit of this is workload will remain low for you, you have a say through ERIM where you need additional

investments in research infrastructure and of course you can utilize the research infrastructure that's there and then finally you have a 40k budget that you can really spend on your own research. I think especially that logic of collective investments is something that we need to keep explaining and I'm really strongly in favor of it.

There's multiple reasons for it: first of all because I think it benefits every single one of us much more if we do it that way, but there's another reason for it and that's that eventually the idea of the government is that every single professor, assistant, associate or full professor will get either a starter grant or an incentive grant every five or six years, or maybe seven or eight years. But every single person in our school will eventually get one every so often, so if we all get one every so often it really doesn't make a lot of sense to say: hey, you get one now, so you get to decide exactly what we do with our money and then next year it's Werner that gets one, now Werner gets to decide exactly. If we all got one anyway and we had the experience that these collective investments benefit everyone the most, we have to do this. At the same time, I think it's really important to make sure that the community really voices what we want. An additional benefit of this system as a whole is hopefully that we get people together much more in their communities across the boundaries of those departments so that there's more collaboration around research.

KR: So, I'm a PhD student and I want to stress that the infrastructure, while obviously assigned to juniors who get the starter grants, can also be accessed by the PhD students. And in the training process it's a well-meant infrastructure in which all of us can capitalize on some of those investments, so despite the PhD students not being the intended audience, I do want to point out that it's very real and I think it can leap over into the training process within the PhD programs.

DS: Yeah I think that's the real thing of it that I think if you give everyone a bunch of money and say just buy what you need for you then one is going to say: well I need this and this mechanic, I want to get this device for my research and I use it and that's it. And then another person is going to buy another device for her research and so on.

I think that's not how we've done this in our school so far. If we do something, we look at what do people use. When buying a machine, we might want to look for a slightly different machine that you could still use, but that seven other people might also use, such that if you don't use it it's not just in your office gathering dust. Our policy is meant that for instance PhD students are able to use all those that research infrastructure that we're building and I think that that's an important element of this.

KW: I think another important element is that we have now 23 recipients and then every year we are going to get 15 new and then every researcher has three to six years to spend a grant. So then there is going to be a community that's going to make things a little bit more democratic.

DS: So now it's 23 people, but after this year it will be 38 plus incentive grants. This year it's 15 as well so it's already 50 something. The next year we're going to have an additional 30 so it's 80 people, so very soon it will be the entire school.

WB: Yeah and I think the one thing that Daan mentioned is that basically, one of the ideas behind all of this was to some extent to create faculties with an infrastructure like RSM already had but that's quite unique I mean to all of you it may be you know relatively common that it's out there, but it's certainly not common for all faculties. So having that, fostering that and even strengthening that in the coming period I think will be to the benefit of all.

In some ways RSM is also lucky to be able to expand on something that they already had in this context. And I also have to say that it was really nice to see during the meeting that Daan was alluding to, to celebrate also that people actually see and understand this and support it. Also, the people receiving the starter grants were all very supportive about this line of reasoning and that for me also was really important to see. That there's a kind of collective feeling in that in that room was really nice to see.

LV: So we had some questions about this. I think it's very good to have this collective feeling, but we still want to highlight that there's also some people who are missing out on this opportunity because they don't get tenure and they don't get a positive midterm evaluation so they are not involved in let's say democratic process sometimes.

DS: That is not true, but good that you mention it.

So, because our feeling is that we are a research community as RSM all the researchers at RSM form together one research community and I think this splits apart into maybe six or seven research communities at the moment. And this is dynamic, so new research communities pop up every day, but every so often old ones die out: this is this is the system.

So, in making ERIM more democratic what we're not trying to do is limit this to recipients of starter and incentive grants. And the reason for it is because eventually all of our faculty will get either an incentive or starter grant, so at a certain point it doesn't make any sense anymore. If a small group would have it and then they suddenly decide what we all do that would not be okay. Besides, I mean the starter grant now is part of the money that we invest in here but it's a small part. We invest much more into it and I think all of the money that we invest in here for research infrastructure as a community we should decide how that happens and democratizing that is an important element. So, the people that do not get the starter grant still get a say in where that money is used. This is why it's important that people speak up and vote.

At the same time it's also clear that because of how these started grants are organized we explicitly also invite these starter grant recipients and incentive grant recipients to go and make their voices heard because they're eventually the individuals to which this money is flown into our school, so we want to hear from them as well we want to also make sure that they're serviced. But that doesn't mean that no one else has a say. Eventually we are a collective so everyone has a say about where something goes and everyone can also use it. The only real difference between getting a starter grant or not is the final 40k, so the workload reduction is spent for everyone, even the ones that do not get it.

LV: Another question was that I remember well that last time you said six went up for the midterm. Now I hear six again.

DS: No not the midterm this time. It might be six or seven for midterm and promotion.

LV: But in the finances we always speak about 15 so do we have enough info to get 15 per year?

DS: For this year we should and that's for several reasons. The money from the starting grant is meant for people that are two-legged faculty that get a permanent position as assistant. What we said so far: if you go up normally in a new tenure track at midterm you can get the tenure, if you're not in that system yet and you go for promotion, then we first promote you to tenured assistant and then to associate so that you can get the starter grant. That also holds for instance for the people that become an associate professor of education: they're also two-legged faculty that do research so they're legitimate recipients of the starting grant. They also need research infrastructure so they also need money to invest in this.

And I think we also have one or two candidates from last year that didn't have the starter grant yet because we could only get 23 and we had 24 eligible. I don't think that's going to happen very quickly for us for the starter grants again, but for the incentive grants clearly yes. So I think for this year we're still good, but there will be a moment where we no longer can spend all of them. For that time we're now talking to other schools and also on EUR central level to say: hey we know there are schools that can't hand out the incentive grants because they don't have enough people, but they have enough recipients for starter grants, so can we divide this to make sure that as a university we kind of get that money.

LV: Okay I just had some questions about some tables. Here I see something positive or maybe that's in line with what you are saying. It says something like we have 59 FTE on associate professors, we want to target incentive grants to associate professors and I read here already 60 incentive grants, so it more or less means that in the end we have an incentive grant for almost every associate professor.

DS: Exactly, the idea of it is that eventually everyone gets one and I think what also is happening is that it's not just associates that can get them, but full professors can get them as well, so we get more people. At the same time we also get everyone that got a starter grant that gets promoted to associate, soon is also eligible after that to get an incentive grant as well. So, there will be more recipients of incentive grants. What is really important there is to devise a way to make sure that you know to order the handing out of these grants.

WB: For the incentive grants nobody is really worried. It's the starter grants that at a certain stage at least on the Woudestein compass and it goes for almost all faculties, there will be more numbers of starter grants that you could actually distribute but you have too few people to actually be able to do so. So, you can't absorb the full money that was allocated to you and that's where the moment kicks in that we will try to reallocate also across the other faculties and Erasmus Medical Center now plays a crucial role in order to try to get some of their incentive grants and then they get some of our starter grants but that's an ongoing negotiation also at the level of university.

LV: I am trying to understand some of the differences in the tables.

WB: The difference in some of these tables is also that this is about this three-year period in which you spend the money, so it's not the full allocation of the 240k that goes to the university or to the faculty but it's actually only one-third to even one-sixth of it if people would spend it across six years. So, some of these figures are about spending in one year and others are about the total sum of the starter grants and that also makes a difference between the tables.

DS: Yeah, so it could be that ESE spends everything in the first two years or something while we spread it in six years so it looks like we get a lot less.

KW: And it is the challenge with these grants that the numbers keep changing. There is nothing ever final, so old tables can give the wrong idea.

WB: And the drop from last year to current is also very much that many of the different faculties had a backlog of people that were promoted in the last two years. You could all give them the starter grant still this year so that meant a lot of things going on this year and then the next year you get a bit into the normal situation.

KW: I also don't know how many starter grants you're actually going to reward, since the numbers for the future they are based on how many grants are available and we can't predict how many people are going to get a positive midterm, for example how many new professors we're going to get so that we can give them the grant, but it's not set in stone so you know thinking of 2027, we don't know how many grants we're going to get. Even thinking back at 2023 it changed since some people went for the midterm but didn't get it, so then they were out of the list

LV: Okay we have our next guest here so I want to thank Karolina for her visit and for presenting this, Daan also thanks.

WB: I just want to add: even though the figures are indeed changing and to some extent their predictions for the future, what we're trying to do as a university and as a faculty is of course to optimize in order to bring in all the money that we can and that's an ongoing answer that we will also monitor.

DS: I think the last thing is that the starter grant process is a really difficult and chaotic process from all levels, so from the governmental level it's completely unclear, from the level of the university it is completely unclear. So, how to deal with this is really not so easy and for us it's been a struggle, but Karolina really has really done an amazing job, not only in instructing in our own school but also in linking it with how other schools do this, so we are very tightly communicating with how ESE is doing this for instance. We have similar systems on how to use these things.

IBA Numerus Fixus

LV: Regarding numerus fixus, you've sent us some documents and if I can summarize it correctly, the question is to not change anything next year and whether we want to approve that. Of course we had some questions we have discussed this in the internal meeting.

MK: Yes, so basically I've read the document that you sent and it was stated that you are going to try to encourage Dutch students to join the program so that the numbers are more even and more equal in the balance and we are wondering if there are any specific types of encouragement you are planning to pursue or did you have something specific in mind when saying that you should focus on encouragement?

AJB: That is difficult at the moment because we're not allowed to actively recruit students, the only thing we're basically allowed to do is have our open days which mostly attract local students and maybe students from Belgium and Germany, and we have a social media presence which is allowed as well since it's sort of passive recruitment. But we are not allowed to go out there and talk to students who haven't first come to us. We cannot approach people like: hey you know come to RSM!

LV: Also not the Dutch students?

AJB: We could go to all the Dutch high schools but that's not a feasible thing to do. So, we have actually talked about this in a lot of international recruitment groups and we have talked about maybe we could sort of collectively target tto-schools, so the bilingual high schools, since they're the students who are more likely to be interested in English language programs, but it's not interesting for schools to have one university come, so it's kind of limited in what we can do in that sense.

What we have done this year is we've added a platform called GoIn, which enables students to interact with each other. So, once they've got an offer of admission they can sort make friends before they come.

We also have done some studies on where are our national students are coming from and we're a very regional university. The average Dutch student comes from only 54 kilometers from Rotterdam, so the pool that we're fishing in is pretty finite and so basically all the students who are interested in studying business administration in the provinces right around us are already coming to us. So there is not a lot we can do there.

The only thing we have thought about doing is that we could lower the GPA for Dutch students, so that you start getting points at a 6,5 already instead of a 7. This would give us more students.

Another thing we could consider is that, since the population of Dutch students is finite, raising the number of students that we wanted for IBA from 400 to 600 basically means diluting the population with international students. If you look at across the years how many Dutch students we've had in the program that's pretty stable, so basically we've diluted the population by increasing the number of students we want.

MK: I feel like some of those encouragement methods that you mentioned are both for international and Dutch students which is not truly the point but I understand. I don't know if the housing is now the right moment to mention, but basically we also talked about the thing that I saw in the document that the housing is one of the problems. Because the population of Dutch students coming here is finite, I was wondering maybe the question is

more on the other side, so what is being done about the housing problem right now and are the partnerships extended with housing agencies to offer any more slots for students.

WB: This goes beyond the limits of the faculty, it is more at the level of the university, so it has not been on the table of the deans and board meetings very recently, but my latest update is that they are actively talking to these other groups because the university can't do housing themselves. They need to go to these outside parties, but for housing in general in the Netherlands it is really tough. There's just too little space, too few opportunities. It is a tough market to function in and then we are also only being indirectly involved in these types of decisions.

I think in the short term we need to be realistic that the current situation is, my guess, not going to improve too much very soon and this is true for students coming in, this is true for refugees coming in, this is true for people on social waiting lists for, for renting rooms, this is just true across the board and, and we're also hit by it and only indirectly can influence it.

AJB: And one thing we are doing though is that my department is heavily engaged in communication, so the narrative that we throw out there, we tell our prospective students over and over and over again that there is a housing issue. We tell them that they will find housing if they start early, so we advise them not to wait till last minute.

We also tend to be creative, so looking at the train lines that go into Rotterdam, look at cities like Dordrecht, Schiedam, since those places might be easier to find housing. We tell them to not go to the north because then you'll be hitting Delft where there's also students in the hay. So, we give these types of advice a lot. On social media we also give students information through all these little videos. We use all the channels open to us to explain situations and make sure students aren't waiting till the last minute, and to be honest we have had fewer sort of students, since we started really doing that, that were like: I don't have a room, and I'm living in the park.

JL: It was better last year than the year before, definitely, so I think the message is out there. Our answer to when they should look for housing is now. Even if students haven't applied yet, we tell them to start looking at what the opportunities are, where the platforms are, and have a plan in place before you even know that you're eligible or have an offer, and then once you do, you can jump into it right away.

ME: So, I think the most important thing is that for the university, for a student, this is a package deal, right? If you apply for a student university, you want something as close by as you can, but for the universities, these are two separate things, because we are not a provider for rooms for students, nor will we ever be, but we do acknowledge that the ones are linked. So I know that the university, for instance, is talking to the local governments to build more housing close to campus, and it says there are also talks about what kind of areas are already designated to put a building there where there will be future housing for students, and this is probably mostly geared towards international students for now, but since the whole atmosphere around internationals coming in is changing, that might change. But even though these talks are going on right now, it doesn't mean that within two to five years, there's a huge building where hundreds of students can enter, so it will actually take some time, it's on everybody's radar, but it's limited what we can do.

AJB: All we can do is tell the truth and be honest about it and give them as much information as they can have. The GoIn platform also helped in that. We noticed there were a lot of conversations about that, so students were giving each other tips on rooms and stuff.

LV: So I have maybe a question. I think you say the number of students with a Dutch high school diploma stays quite stable, but on the other hand, I see that the numbers in Tier 1, the total numbers are really declining. In the past, it was close to 400 students who were eligible Dutch students. It's now less than 250, so it seems that the interest of Dutch students in our program is declining.

AJB: I don't know about that, but I think one thing that we haven't looked into for a while is that it could also be that the VWO-grades have gone down, certainly post-COVID. So the Netherlands, as everyone who studied in a secondary school here can I think agree with, the Dutch have a really, I would say negative or very strict grading system. So the average grade, and again, this is sort of a gut feeling, but I have a feeling that the average grade point average is going down, which means that would actually justify lowering the GPA that we're asking from 7 to 6.5, and then you're still getting, if you compare to previous generations of IBA students, the same top 25%, but only if you add 6.5 and higher. Again, I don't have these numbers yet, but it's something we should probably look into again.

JL: And then you also look at the number of international applicants that we're getting versus the Dutch and the quality of those. It could be that the Dutch GPA is slightly, as a standard, going down, but we have more applicants, because the number has quadrupled in the last 14 years. If you have more applicants of higher quality every year coming in, but the standard Dutch is going down, then you're going to have more of those internationals going into Tier 1 than the Dutchies, because there's more of the internationals applying, and the standard GPA for the Dutch is then less.

AJB: We do readjust the GPA's and we've adjusted for certain diplomas every year, but I think we should look into the national grades again to see if we can get that data above water and see, okay, what's that percentage? Because when we originally started the Numerus Fixus, I made grading tables based on research done by the Nuffing, but that research, it's probably like 15 years old now, so. And COVID changed everything.

ME: And the number of students changes, right? The total number of students in the Netherlands is going down.

AJB: Yeah, so these are all factors that we, you know, we need to readjust from time to time, so.

LV: So what is actually the wish, since it says in the document that we want to increase that? What would our target be?

AJB: Initially, we wanted 40% Dutch students, and we're nowhere near close to that anymore.

LV: And the definition of Dutch students is students with a Dutch diploma?

AJB: Yes, but these numbers here, we've added the internationals with a Dutch nationality because otherwise the number would be even more dismal, but, ideally we want students from the Dutch education system.

And again, the Dutch universities are regional. This is not something we're probably going to change, so we may get a few more students from Groningen and Drenthe, but not a significant amount.

LV: And, okay, so 40%, that's definitely not where we are. Do we proactively contact eligible Dutch students who apply for BA to transfer to IBA?

AJB: We, well, you can't transfer, but we do target that group, yeah. And in the open day, we also promote IBA to that population. So that's what we're also trying to do.

I don't know how effective that is, really, but we try. So, that's something we can do.

LV: But only at the open day, because otherwise, they are too late in the process?

AJB: Well, the fall open day is the only one for next year, but, a lot of students will look, you know, in their fifth year of high school, at least we hope they do. And so, the open day we're having in February, we're targeting students who will start IBA the year after. But BA can start, of course, in September already.

But the ones that are thinking ahead, we can target those in this coming open day as well. We mentioned it, but, I mean, we can't drag them into the other program.

But we do say: if you're are a Dutch student who wants to learn business in an international environment, then the IBA program is a good fit for you.

But you also have to make the grades. And the grades we're asking are very high for Dutch students. So, maybe our bar is a bit too high these days.

ME: But it's a trade-off, right? Because you want to have lots of students, but you want to have the right students.

So if you lower the bar and it means that you have, especially in the first year, a lot of students that are then not going to make it into the second year, you want to preferably know this as soon as possible. And you spend a lot of time and effort in terms of workload on a group of students that we're going to lose in the process anyway.

AJB: Yeah. For IBA, we don't know what would happen with the success rate if we change to students with six and a half, because we don't accept those students.

We do have the BA population. However, unfortunately, every grade of six and a half and higher is rounded off in the Dutch under final diploma. The grades that we have in OSIRIS: a seven is anything between a 6.5 and a 7.4. So we don't have that data.

ME: But we do know that in the BA, more students drop out than in the IBA.

AJB: There is a correlation with GPA. However, you cannot say it's between six and a half and a seven or somewhere else. So unfortunately, we do not know for sure.

ME: And we should also consider the psychological impact. Because what I remember from the COVID people that have graduated in that period, it was called like a COVID graduation. So having kids in that area, they still feel like they didn't really graduate and the world around them perceives them as this was handed to you. You don't want to have a generation of RSM students that were part of a trial where we lowered our standards. So you're not really up to par.

JL: So if we lower it, then it is also really looking at how has the standard across the Dutch lowered. Not just, oh, we'll lower it so we can get a higher number of students.

AJB: So if we find that the grades have indeed gone down for these students, but it's still the top 25%, then you could say, well adjusting the scores would be justified. So we'll have to look into that. But for now, this year, we haven't changed anything.

LV: There are still students in tier 1, which are Dutch, which are not selected. That's because of the ranking. So there are at least more eligible Dutch students, but due to the ranking, we cannot put them.

AJB: And we have adjusted the points that we give to Dutch students. For example, you will get the maximum points from a Dutch GPA much faster than you will for certain other diplomas. Because of this, we know that a Dutch student is not going to get a 10.

How we give the points is all us, we determine that. And initially, this was all based on the Nuffic data when there was data on the diploma. So, we looked at frequency tables, how often in a grading system is a certain grade given. And so then it was like, okay, you're in the top 10% in your grading system with this grade. But we realized over time that this data wasn't always accurate anymore.

So, we had to make adjustments. When we had way too many, for example, French students, we raised the bar a bit. Now, since VWO is one of the most rigorous high school diplomas there are, we can also say for the Dutch students: okay, you meet the minimum requirements. And then, because we want more national students, we will say: if you meet the minimum requirements, you get maximum points. That would basically put all of those eligible students in Tier 1 into the program.

LV: But I understand, of course, the discussion. But it's also like, what is the mission of a program? Is the mission of a program to serve the Dutch community?

If we want to have people with a Dutch diploma to grow up and study in an international environment, we also need international students. But if in the end, that is our mission, and there are no Dutch students in the program anymore, then I think we at least don't match with the mission. And then the mission could still be that we want to get talented international students into the Netherlands because we need them on the job market, but then we should at least be clear on the mission. What is the goal?

WB: Yeah and in terms of pure mission such a number is already strange, right? It just goes to show that this is also a bit of a moving target. I think in the recent year, there has also been a reorientation towards what that mission exactly should be.

And at least some people, and I don't even think necessarily there will be an overcrowd of those people, but at least in the outside world, there are people who say we may have gone

too far in not serving the Dutch population anymore. And I think it's at least good to be aware of it also, because it may be a risk if we don't at least understand how we could influence these numbers.

AJB: Exactly. And I think the numbers we have now are way too low. There are factors that we don't always have the influence on, but this percentage of Dutch students is far too low in this program.

We are, I think, all in agreement with that. But if we mess around with the requirements too much. We want the kind of the level of the student that we admit to be equal, relatively equal. Looking at BA, the differences are very large, because there's no selection. And that's why we have such a huge dropout rate in BA.

LV: So there are at least people in tier one who are eligible in the current things, but who are not in the program. And there are some possibilities there, I think.

AJB: Yeah, fiddling with the bar or the points that we give is something we can definitely consider.

LV: Thank you. And just for a reminder for us, so when do you need an approval letter?

AJB: As soon as you can get it. I mean, it's just a very, basically, it's not approval, it's like advice. Yeah, I think we should have numerus fixus. And do you have any tips on what we can change.

Profile external chair

LV: Okay, then we can go to the next agenda point, which was the profile for an external chair. So we have a wish to recruit an external chair. Claudia sent us the vacancy from the university council chair. So, I think that will be a good start point for us to draw the vacancy. I think we can almost copy paste it. Although I think we will say that we really want an employee there. They also say this role is open for students, but we really want to recruit an employee for continuation. We have as target as the FC to have this vacancy ready next week.

And then our question is, how will this vacancy be distributed? Or how do we find what will be the idea?

ME: Well, I guess if we want to hire someone external, external means external from here, right?

LV: External means someone else than the 10 of us here. It can still be RSM, it can be at EUR level.

ME: I think we would want to do all of that, right? And I think traditionally with many vacancies, the steps are the same. It's more that we first publish it internally.

And then you are wired and then if necessary, even go beyond that. So I think we can just use the regular process and say for a fixed period of time, it's usually about a month or a month and a half, we have it on and we advertise it as we do with all vacancies.

And you can share it on your LinkedIn pages and stuff like that to attract people to actually see it and respond to it. And then we move in different steps. And I think then we need to discuss, the process, which is all yours. So, you need to figure out who you want to have as sort of a committee. And what kind of restrictions you want to have in terms of things that are coming in. If it's a large number, you're going to have a pre-selection and then invite a few.

If it's only a small number, let's say it's one, do you at least want two? Things like that. But we can help advise you on that.

LV: Yeah, I think our idea is to do it a bit faster.

ME: It always depends on how many people respond, right? So if you put it out there and you have five people responding to it within the first week, we can close it now. But if you have nobody after a month, then the question becomes, do we close it? And we don't know what's going to happen. If there's a lot of people that are actually willing to come. I mean, you might have a better idea than we do. Yeah, you can have a deadline and change that deadline.

LV: Yes. so a short deadline and extend it. It's easier than a long deadline. Yeah, and we were thinking if next week the vacancy is ready, then we can put the deadline on the 16th of February, just before the holiday. . And then we will need some recruitment.

ME: I think that's a pretty good thing. My only advice would be if you have one candidate, is to aim for two. Because at least then you have a choice. Because otherwise you don't need to have to go through a process. And that's something that you can set before you start, right? And say, if we don't have two, we keep on actively asking people, stuff like that.

LV: Yeah, and the difficult part of this vacancy is that it is in principle most of the time either instead of someone else's current task or on top of his/her tasks, to extend the contract. So for outside recruitment, that's something different, but if it could be, we were thinking, if it could be on MyEUR or something, you sometimes see these vacancies there, then we reach directly the EUR community.

WB: It may also be good to stress what external means, because external really sounds like external to RSM. But I think what you mean is a non-elected. So we want a permanent non-elected chair of this. I think it's then also important, but that's something also for you to consider that in principle, that probably would also mean that it's more of a technical type of chair.

CR: May I ask you something? For which time you are looking for this external chair? Your own code of conduct is that each year you will choose a new chair. So if we look at your internal rules that would be applying that you only have one until September, because then you will have a new faculty council, or new members at least, at least student members. And that will mean you have to vote again about your chair.

LV: Yeah, so that is the annoying thing. It would have been better if we had had this process fast. But I think the vacancy should say something that from both sides, the ambition would

be there to have it long term, but officially, we need approval every September again to extend it.

CR: So we have to look at your code of conduct.

LV: We know that officially it's now first till 31st of August. Or we can change the code of conduct.

WB: I think that would make sense, right?

JL: And attracting people as well. If someone can see that they can stay longer, I think we could definitely attract more.

LV: Might make sense to maybe change the code of conduct to a two yearly thing. Because employees are also in there two years.

CR: I want to think with you about that. If you also want to have a staff member as a chair that you only will do that each in the two years and not every year. So you can think of that.