

Annual Report 2015-2016

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 (hereafter: MT) on all issues pertaining to RSM's educational and research activities, as well as its role in society at large. On certain decisions by the Management Team the Council has to approve beforehand.

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 (this [page](#) shows an overview of the meetings of this year). At least twice a year, the Council meets with the Dean.

The Faculty Council (hereafter: FC) has selected a number of issues that are considered as deserving special attention. These issues in focus 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 current Secretary to the Faculty Council, Job Heidkamp LL.B. (fc@rsm.nl).

This annual report will serve as a brief overview of the year 2015/2016 and by use of hyperlinks as a portal to the minutes of last year.

Members 2015-2016

Representatives for academic faculty

- Dr Samer Abdelnour
- Dr Marja Flory (Chair)
- Dr Paolo Perego

Representative for administrative employees

- Gabi Helfert (September 2015- February 2016)
- Joey Johannsen (April 2016 forward)

Representative for PhD candidates

- David Unterdorfer, MSc

Representatives for students

- Marina Arnaudova (shared Vice Chair)
- Mike Jennekens
- Andrea Petrini (shared Vice Chair)
- Kevin Ren
- Dominik Scherrer

Official secretary to the Faculty Council

- Joy Kearney

Contact

- E-Mail: fc@rsm.nl

Activities by area

Education

Quality of the Academic Programmes

In [meeting 171](#) (30 September) the FC mentions asked if too many students were graduating with too high of a GPA, possibly due to a decreasing quality level of education. According to the MT there is no objective information on grade inflation; students have become more ambitious and the intake requirements are stringent. Within the Master Programmes there is also no proof for grade inflation and the differences between the Programmes are related to different selection requirements or the fact that some (niche) Programmes are attracting highly motivated student. The differences between BA and IBA are also because of selective intake. Curved grading would disadvantage students when comparing to other Dutch universities, according to the MT.

The FC also points out the discrepancy between what students want in terms of education (small-scale education) and how academic staff is incentivized to provide education (large lectures). With the so-called studievoorschotmiddelen this could be improved according to the MT. Also the MT promises to look into the possibilities of changing the system. During meeting 179 (2 June) the problem with the incentive system is stressed again.

Additional Selection Requirements IBA

With the new regulations of the Dutch government IBA cannot hold on to its current selection system and during [meeting 172](#) (5 November) it is stated that from the year 2017-2018 IBA will use the so-called additional requirements system, meaning that they legally cannot select on grades alone anymore, and this applies to Dutch and non-Dutch students alike. This could mean a major increase in Dutch applicants. The new admission process will increase the workload, as it asks students to prove their intrinsic motivation.

- With a letter dated November 25th 2015 the FC gives a positive advice on the proposed policy, while at the same requiring to take into account several points to strengthen its contents (motivation and clarity of purpose / procedures) and presentation format (proposal's structure, text editing).

Bachelor Curriculum Restructuring

The FC engages in extensive discussion on the restructuring the Bachelor Curriculum during [meeting 173](#) (3 December). Important parts are the Bachelor thesis and the improvement of flexibility. With regard to the thesis, the FC will send additional requirements.

Studievoorschotmiddelen

At [meeting 174](#) (14 January) the FC discusses and approves the proposal for the studievoorschotmiddelen (allocation of additional funds released by the Dutch government and allocated to RSM to improve the quality of education because of the abolishment of the basic study grant for individual students).

- On January 20th 2016 the FC gives approval to the proposed spending of the studievoorschotmiddelen by sending an official letter to the Programme Director of the Bachelor Programmes.

During [meeting 177](#) (7 April) the FC was updated with the fact that the spending of the studievoorschotmiddelen needs to involve the extra hiring of personnel, otherwise approval by the University Council could not be given. The FC points out that it should be extra teaching staff and not only support staff.

In [meeting 179](#) (2 June) it is made clear that specific departments are having a plan programmes can come up with a variety of ways of spending the funds. Also, it is clarified how the funds are directed between larger and smaller programmes. It's not about size necessarily but it depends on plan, student feedback and implementation.

Master Thesis Trajectory

The FC points out the problems with co-readership of the Master theses during [meeting 177](#) (7 April): too many students per supervisor, the supervisor sometimes being a PhD only graduated as a Master one year ago, co-readership from another department, differences between the departments with regard to size, and the deadlines.

Research

Integrity

In [meeting 176](#) (3 March) the FC points out several legal and technical issues of copyright and plagiarism with regard to study materials provided by teachers. Students, but also teachers need to be aware of possible issues and the MT promised to look into it.

HR and Finances

RSM Budget

In [meeting 170](#) (3 September) the FC gives positive advice on the RSM budget, after receiving responses to questions on the use of static or dynamic forecasts for employee numbers and the fees and expected numbers of candidates of the part-time PhD programme.

- On September 21st 2015 the FC provides a positive advice about the proposed budget by sending an official letter to the Dean.
- For future budgets the FC stresses the importance of more balance in terms of the level of detail given to all points and more use of sensitivity or scenario analyses.
- For future budgets the FC stresses the importance of a less static estimation of FTEs, in order to increase the usefulness of FTE budgets for planning purposes and to prevent underestimation of future salaries.

Training (budget) employees

In [meeting 170](#) (3 September) the FC notices that there is a lack of clarity about this budget and the available courses. This was recognized by the Management Team (MT) and an email with information was already circulated among the chairs of the departments.

During [meeting 175](#) (4 February) the FC stresses that 0.5% of total academic salary to be spend by the department on training is not enough. Also, a lot of people don't know about it, so the funds will get lost in the general budget of the department.

Workload and sick-leave

In [meeting 170](#) (3 September) the FC stresses the need of procedures with regard to the workload of someone who has a burn-out to be carried by colleagues. The MT points out that solutions are found within the department and if not, a meeting with the Executive Board (EB) will be planned in that case.

During [meeting 176](#) (3 March) the FC points out that although the sick leave numbers of the RSM are relatively good, the true number of sick employees may actually be different as not all individuals report illness. This is impossible to measure, however.

At [meeting 178](#) (4 May) it is concluded that it is not always clear whether work pressure is adversely affecting employees and that workload is of concern in general.

Diversity (Task Force)

During [meeting 171](#) (30 September) the MT clarified that a diversity task force will make RSM more attractive for, among others, international employees and women. It was noted there are high mobility numbers of internationals and misrepresentation of those groups in senior academic and senior support functions. With regard to internationals, the climate at RSM seems negative, according to the FC.

In [meeting 172](#) (5 November) the problem of misrepresentation in senior positions is touched upon again. The task force advises on the two areas, the first being on the academic promotion process and the second on making (international) people feel more welcome and providing them with information on living in the Netherlands. After questions of the FC the MT promises to look into making the information better available. The importance of the use of English at the faculty is stressed.

Operations

Faculty Regulations

After earlier discussions the FC states during [meeting 171](#) (30 September) that it will give consent to the new Faculty Regulations on the condition that the EB consults the Academic Directors on a proper wording for their exact role.

- On November 9th gives consent to the new Faculty Regulations by sending an official letter to the Dean, thereafter the approval is [published](#).

Career Services

During [meeting 172](#) (5 November) the FC advises to involve programme management and the thesis coordinators in the development process of the internship registration system from the beginning. This way those parties can provide input to Career Services for the requirements of the system and can test the system upfront.

At [meeting 174](#) (14 January) the FC is assured that internationals will be employed to provide international experience to Career Services.

Tenure Track

During [meeting 173](#) (3 December) the MT announces that RSM will extend contracts to Tenure Track Assistant Professors that will come in after 1 January 2016 which are of different nature than before. The contracts will be for ten years with an evaluation after five years, plus any leave taken, plus for female candidates a period of maternity leave of eight months and the evaluation only after seven years. This is warmly welcomed by the FC.

During [meeting 176](#) (3 March) the MT promises to send a new letter on the changes in the Tenure Track system after the FC points out the lack clarity among Tenure Trackers.

Programme Committee

In [meeting 179](#) (2 June) a huge discussion takes place on the functioning of the Programme Committee. Its composition and (thus) size is of importance, just as the (intrinsic) motivation of the students in the Committee. The visibility and authority needs to be increased, a more proactive Committee is needed and it seems it's too big to be effective.

Reimbursement

During [meeting 176](#) (3 March) it is made clear that 10% of contractual working hours will be reimbursed to the department of the FC member in question. For diversity and ad hoc committees individual arrangements can be made, according to MT.

Internal and External Affairs

Student elections

Faculty Council has elections every year to recruit student members. After the candidacy period, five students were [elected](#) to be part of the Faculty Council 2015/2016: Maria Arnaudova, Mike Jennekens, Andrea Petrini, Kevin Ren, and Dominik Scherrer.

Committees

The Faculty Council 2015/2016 also [decided](#) to work in six committees, with the following members:

- General issues (RSM Internal organisation, RSM Strategy, Reorganisations: Andrea Petrini, Dominik Scherrer)
- Education (General/quality assurance, bachelor programmes, master programmes: Dr Samer Abdelnour, Marina Arnaudova, Dr Marja Flory, Mike Jennekens, Andrea Petrini, Kevin Ren, Dominik Scherrer)
- Research (General, PhD related issues, scientific integrity): Dr Samer Abdelnour, Dr Paolo Perego, David Unterdorfer
- HR issues (General, formation & career development, labour conditions, diversity): Dr Marja Flory, Dr Gabi Helfert (up to February 2016), Joey Johannsen -March 2016 forward), Kevin Ren
- Finance (Budget, other issues): Mike Jennekens, Dr Paolo Perego, David Unterdorfer

- FC organisation (Visibility/web page, external relations, back office): Marina Arnaudova, Dr Gabi Helfert (up to February 2016), Joey Johannsen - March 2016 forward),

Member training

Training was provided to FC members in September 2015 by a training consultant from TAQT, a company that specializes on training representative bodies in the Netherlands.

Employee elections

Prior administrative staff representative Gabi Helfert took over a new position as Policy Advisor in the Dean's Office and resigned from her role in the Faculty Council in February. After [elections](#) Joey Johannsen, Sustainability Coordinator at RSM, is the new administrative staff representative on the Council, from 9 March 2016.

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 2015 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.

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).

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.