

# Minutes 251<sup>th</sup> FC meeting (ext)

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## Minutes

**LJ:**

Then, we had one thing on the minutes. The secretary tried a new method of minuting, but it was now very detailed and it contained a lot of unnecessary words. He will now summarize it a bit more to get out all the double stuff. We will send a new version.

Then the to-do list, which we moved back forward, because we normally never reach the end of the meetings. There are two things.

The first thing: a long time ago an issue that Mandeville was going to close earlier, and that that caused a lot of back and forth between the University Central and between employees and registering, and that it was said that you can register closely in advance, and then it wasn't. So maybe do you have any updates on that? Because it's still on there.

## To-do list

**WB:** I think that would typically be Myra, but she cannot hear us yet due to technical issues.

**LJ:** Yeah, there's also one thing on it I see that is something we discussed last year, and that I think hasn't come back anywhere, and that's the recording policy for functionally impaired students, and I was wondering if there has been any update from your side on it.

**LV:** Myra wants to answer it, but we still cannot hear her.

**LJ:** Maybe otherwise, while we fix the technical stuff, you can already start with the announcement, because I see there are quite a few.

**XWG:** We have quite some announcements from our side as well, maybe let's start with those?

## Canceled agenda meeting

**LV:** That's a good suggestion. There's still a lot to do from last meeting, which has not been discussed.

**LJ:** No, but I think most of this is from last year, right?

**LV:** For example, last meeting we had agreed that there will be sent an email about the budget to all, but there wasn't.

**LJ:** I think maybe we'd rather discuss it under the budget to keep it structured. But it is a good point that we also have some announcements and maybe it's a good start with that.

**XWG:** Alright, so first announcement from our side, and then after that maybe we can talk quickly about the workshops. So, we noticed that the agenda meeting this time was cancelled on very short notice, and I think this also contributes a little bit to now having an agenda which was not mutually discussed beforehand. Can we make sure for the future that we go back to having them?

**DS:** I think this was unfortunate circumstances, but usually they're planned in our agenda.

**XWG:** May I ask what the reason was? Because it was one and a half hours before the meeting was supposed to take place.

**DS:** I think it was two different reasons. I think one of the problems is, and this is I guess something that we have to work on, that we were there with two people. If one person says that he might not be able to make it and the other person said that he could make it, while actually last minute it turns out he cannot attend, we can both not attend and have a real problem. This was actually the case previous meeting and that's why we didn't report that earlier. So I think for now, we should be reporting much earlier when this is possible for us. At the same time, I think the honest answer is also that the current period for us is not the lightest period.

A lot of agenda changes happen also on short notice, because we get crisis meetings and other things that spontaneously pop up. And this is not nice, but this happens sometimes.

**XWG:** Of course, we notice that the agendas are tremendously full and that there's really a lot going on, but some of those issues are indeed burning issues for the entire school, right? And I think it would be then also good to be involved and updated on those issues.

**WB:** I fully agree. I think Daan is saying the same thing. Things like this every now and then do happen, but let's be clear, they should not happen.

So we'll do our best and if two of the people that would otherwise be here cannot make it, then we will try to find other people from the EB.

**LV:** May I add upon what you say? It's a very busy period indeed. That's what we also recognize and see. But will you take any actions or will something change that you get more time?

Are you looking for extra support or whatever?

**DS:** This is something that we are extensively discussing. We've already tried a couple of things, but not everything works. And it turns out every time we find a way to get a little bit less busy, then something else happens somewhere that makes all that more difficult.

So yeah, we're really trying to do that because I think it would be nice if we get a little bit less busy and have more time to reach out and talk to people.

## SURO-meetings

**U:**

Then I think the announcement on the SURO-sessions (=stand up reach out)?

**JL:**

So I gave kind of an update on what all of the findings entailed. But I have kind of a question, complaint, worry. Is the scheduling of the trainings cross into lecture time and can there

then be more training scheduled that make it easier for lecturers to be able to attend? Because right now there's a lot of times where they just aren't able to do it.

**LV:**

So for example, currently they take from 9.30 to 13.30. Just making it a little bit earlier, for example until 13:00 is more convenient since lectures start at 09:00, 11:00 and 13:00 as well. Or is it maybe possible to cut it into two, that you have a part one and a part two which you can do, since four hours is a lot. And I think it's a very important topic. We need the people to go there.

I also had a different question, but related, regarding the MindLab sessions.

I joined it, but I did not see many joining it. So I'm a bit worried that maybe the people who actually need that extra reflection won't join the workshop, or join this confronting theatre show, how to reach those? And if they are not willing to go to a theatre play of two hours, they are definitely not going to a four-hour-workshop.

**WB:**

So perhaps two things: First, we are going to have a kind of evaluative moment with the people running the Suro-workshops. And we will take this with us in order to make clear that the timing, let's say now, is sub-optimal and actually interferes with some people who would want to be there to actually come, which of course should not be the case.

In terms of the number of workshops, we are still flexible in that sense. And we also want to see, which also relates to your point, how many people actually do express the interest of being there.

And the third point to perhaps make, and I know I announced two, so this is an additional point, is that we also discussed beforehand with the people running these workshops, especially about this. You will have a selection bias in people going to these types of workshops. And that may be a selection bias that may not always, let's say, be the selection that you would actually would want to see going to these types of workshops. And just to be clear, I was a dean at another faculty before I went here, we had the same discussions there as well.

Hanneke is always quite clear about it. What she says is, stand-up-and-reach-out-workshops are meant to create a movement. What you need is a critical mass large enough to be able to support each other in creating a change that we want to see within the school.

And, for instance, mandating would be one of the options, or almost forcing people to go. But, in her opinion, and I tend to agree, although I have the same feeling as you do in that sense, it may not be the solution for that problem. Because you then just have people who are sitting there waiting until it's done and then go again. I believe we have to create that movement with, let's say, a coalition of willing, and I'm hoping and expecting that that coalition of willing would actually be quite large also in this school.

A lot of young people who I think also would like to see changes in certain ways, really helps in that sense. So, given the discussion so far, also within the Suro-workshops, I'm quite positive about where that might be heading. But, again, there also should be an evaluating

moment at a certain stage where we just indicate for ourselves whether or not we have achieved the goals that we have with it.

And if we think that it's not enough, then there are all kinds of ways in which we could increase the pressure, for instance, by making this part of P&D-cycles, where people are asked whether or not they did something in the area of social safety.

### Opening hours Mandeville building

**LJ:**

Any further comments on this? Thanks for the elaboration. If it's correct, we should be able to hear Myra now. So, Myra there are some updates on the things we discussed with regards to the to-do list where you maybe could add some value.

So, first we have the opening hours of the Mandeville building.

**ME:**

Oh, yes. The opening hours are going to be evaluated by our RE&F department, the central RE&F department, to see whether this is something that we think is good or it hinders us somehow in the work that we want to do and that we need to do. And this is also something where, apart from all the feedback that people have been giving, also the numbers about how many people made use of it or registered will become available. And they said they would do it this fall. Well, fall is almost ending, so I'm anxiously waiting for their response.

The other point about this is that we've had some safety discussions, meetings, and a lot of people there, so you see sort of a shift in the attitude towards working late. There were a lot of people commenting there, saying that they not always feel safe when they are working late and they don't know who else is there or they're relatively alone in a hall or on a floor. So I think we should also look into that.

And it's one of the recommendations that came out of those meetings to see whether we need to not only register in terms of that people know that we're there, but also link with other people that are working late so that you at least know who else is on the floor or even in the building.

### Policy for functionally impaired students

**LJ:**

Okay. Thank you. Then we have the other point on the recording policy for functionally impaired students.

Do you have any updates on that?

**ME:**

I don't, but I do know that there will be sort of a scan of issues that impaired students have in coming to the entire campus again by Central. They've already done this for employees and I asked them why not do it for students as well and they thought it was a very good

idea. So, I'm hoping that if they do that, this will also come up and we can have more centralized guidelines on this.

**LJ:**

Okay. Thank you, thanks for the updates.

Then I suggest we move on to the announcements from the executive board.

## Announcements by EB

### Faculty model

**DS:**

So the first one is faculty model. think quite a big step there has been taken now.

The dean, together with the heads of the departments, has made a decision on the direction of the education profile and education track. It happened this week, so we don't have much information for you now in this meeting, but next meeting I think we can also give a lot more details about this and send you essentially the briefing that the dean has now sent to the steering committee. The briefing for that profile already puts in quite a bit of direction and detail on what we want from an associate professor of education, who would be able to become it, etc.

So, I can give a little bit of detail there in a bit, but I think next time we can send it to you beforehand and discuss it more elaborately. Moreover, we're trying on very short notice to also fill in the details as the steering committee. So my hope is that that means that we will have a fully worked out profile such that we can get the advice of the faculty council and really start making decisions.

**LV:**

But for me it looks like that our advice is not necessary anymore because you say it's already decided with the heads of the departments.

**DS:**

No, that is not the case. You've already given some advice before, right? And the idea is now that what we have is a decision by the dean and the heads of the departments only on the direction of this. The direction is about things like: what is this profile about? Is it about doing a lot of teaching or is it about education excellence and also having excellence around teaching? You can think of teaching educational innovation, educational leadership, executive education, those kind of things.

So, the direction the school wants to head in is to focus this profile also on that and not just having people teach a lot. That's one element.

Another element of the direction that's in there is that there'll be a part of the profile that's on research but that research can be any type of research. It doesn't have to be management research. The idea there is also that we don't have to release it as a school in terms of the ERM system that we have for the other profiles.

A third thing is that there's a direction that says we want not only other associate professors to be able to get into that role but also our assistant professors and our senior lecturers.

I think that's quite a significant directive that really sets the tone for this. So it's not a detailed discussion yet but it does show the direction that we want to go in and I think this is also the direction that we discussed before with you. But it does help us a lot actually in making decisions and filling in the details because these are the kinds of things that we were still discussing and about which different opinions existed.

Probably the different opinions still exist but now at least we have a product of saying hey, this is the direction we're moving into. So I hope that next time we can come up with both this but also a more detailed profile for you to discuss. I hope.

**LV:**

But I hope earlier. I think it's a big topic and I think it deserves more time for example in a smaller subcommittee where we can really take one hour on this I think it's better.

**DS:**

I think that would be perfectly fine. So if we say let's schedule a meeting in between to talk about this with part of the council I think that would be great. I can update you in much more detail then. That would be good.

**XWG:**

So of course everything that you shared here with us sounds good, but then we also noticed that progress has been very very slow and some issues are really very high pressure concerns for many people in the faculty and that particular concerns the temporary contracts for lecturers. This is quite a pressing question.

How soon will there be clarity for the contracts for people who are on those temporary contracts? And this is in particular linked to the question of whether it is possible to have tenured lecturers that are not immediately becoming senior lecturers, which we have asked earlier

**DS:**

I think the current policy is that this is not formally possible. The current practice is that this does happen sometimes at this point. So because everybody feels we're in kind of a transition phase we're looking at this more leniently I think.

And it's waiting for a policy around this.

**LV:**

But in this policy the intention will be that there is room for tenured lecturers? In your summary you didn't mention the lecturers.

**DS:** For me certainly, but this is outside of this profile. The profile that we're discussing here is the associate professor profile.

So the question that you're raising is on lecturers, which is not the same profile.

**LV:** But I think we mentioned in previous meetings that that is the most pressing one, since the lecturers have always one or two year contracts.

**DS:** I think both are pressing.

**XWG:** I think the most pressing is the organisation, that's probably more pressing than people not being promoted.

**DS:** Again, so I think at the moment the way we're treating that is we're not just firing people because of this. In the meantime, while we're waiting for this, we're still open to hiring to make sure that we don't penalise people for not having a policy yet.

**XWG:** So one thing is to not fire people, but of course there's also the other way that people just leave if they're in a permanent situation of uncertainty. It might have been a misunderstanding, but we were really under the assumption that by saying we are working, we are prioritising the educational track, we assumed that this would encompass the question of the lecturers.

**DS:** I think eventually it will. The brief here is really about the associate professor profile. But this is still on the table, so it's not this brief.

**LV:** But it needs to be discussed soon. Lecturers are in a very uncertain position.

**DS:** This is still very much a priority as well. I think that message is clear.

**XWG:** We have a large number of lecturers in various departments, many of them in temporary positions, and of course then for the heads of department it's also a question. Can they have a permanent contract? Or is that only possible if they are immediately promoted?

**WB:** Just to be clear, for me, in some ways, this is perhaps not a new topic, but not a topic with the pressure that you now give to it. So what I noticed for the other profile was that things were not progressing at a speed that you would be very proud of to tell at home. I think there we now make steps.

I think we very clearly heard your concerns being voiced as to what this also means for people who are in the track that eventually could lead up to also a position like this. I do agree to some extent it's a different type of topic, because basically, if by definition they would be on a temporary contract, they would never reach this end goal. They would be gone long before they could actually be an associate professor.

So I think the remark that you made is a clear one, and that means that we need to look at the policy that would at least signal if we already do it every now and then, but it's now against policy, whether or not we want to change the policy and have these people being allowed to or at least give the different departments the room to potentially give these people a permanent contract, which does have implications that we need to think about, but I think this then should be high also on our agenda.



And again, this is not about the route getting here, it's about the destination that we want people to see reach, but the route to get there could be different ones, and we need to define those in the coming period as well. I think we heard very clearly that there's one particular group that now is in a bit of a tight spot given the uncertainty.

**LJ:** Okay, and with regards to timeline, I think that then the subcommittee will meet with you in the meantime to discuss. Then in December we can get actual documents and actually talk about it as an agenda point also. But then what is the timeline for the decision being final, like there actually being policies? End of this year?

**DS:** I think we have got to have a timeline for it, but before end of the year would be correct for the final decision

**WB:** Yeah, that's my hope, because we owe it to the organization to give clarity about this.

### Budget measures

**LJ:** Thank you. Yeah, and then we of course had some more announcements from your side, so maybe start with the budget measures. I think that's one that's really important, and I think that's also where Myra comes in.

**ME:** There are two aspects about the budget. One is that the letter that you wrote where you basically didn't approve the budget yet. Since then, we've been in discussions with the CVB about the deficit that we are facing if everything goes according to plan for 2024.

And we've agreed a couple of things with them right now. They're being finalized, so there will be some more formal letter that we cannot share with you right now because it's being finalized. But the gist of it is that looking at the 5.1 million deficit that we are facing for next year, two and a half of that will be covered by Central. So they've agreed with us that this is something that they could help us with. This is not a loan. So they will, if it's necessary, cover that two and a half million.

That leaves 2.6 million that we need to cover ourselves and we've been discussing with the heads of department and the heads of the professional service departments for the short term where we can save money. So the plan now, and this hasn't been communicated yet, but I want to share it with you up front, is that we are going to ask every department within our school to save 6% for next year and we give suggestions based on the broader group that we had the discussion with where this could be. So this could entail for example: not replacing a person if somebody leaves, less hiring of externals like consultants if it is not absolutely necessary, but also looking at maybe finding ways for individuals to donate their additional leave hours that they've been saving up for a long time because we have to make a reservation for that on the budget.

And then all these measures together per department should lead up to a short term reduction of the deficit for next year together with the two and a half million from central to zero which will then enable Werner to pass the baton on to the next dean without any additional deficit. So this is the short term. Any questions so far?

**LV:** Yes, so I have multiple questions on this. The first one is that the numbers are lower. Now I hear 5 million but before we had higher numbers, which is always good to hear of course.

**ME:** The reason that it's 5 million and not 7 million is because there's still the plan from the CVB to take the grants that we have and to pull them towards 2024.

**LV:** Okay, and in earlier stories you were always very confident that they would cover the loss but now it seems like they cover only half. So what's changed?

**ME:** Yeah, so what they're saying is part of the deficit is a structural problem on the RSM side and not created by central basically. So they say we want to help you but you should also take measures yourself. So that's why we have the shorter measures that we are planning now and of course we also need to make a longer term plan.

We've already discussed this also with you for 2025 and beyond, but we have a little bit more time for that. So that plan, that's actually also the reason that I'm not physically in Rotterdam because I'm working on that plan today. And it will take many days before it's finished.

But we have to deliver that plan at the end of the first quarter of 2024 to the CVB with your approval.

**LJ:** And when can we be involved?

**ME:** As soon as I have a timeline and a step-by-step process, I mean the kickoff is today. So as soon as I have that I will share it with you. I would suggest that every time we meet and even if you want to set up a subcommittee we can meet more often, I can update you and take you along in the process.

**LJ:** I suggest it would be wise to use the budget, the finance subcommittee for that.

**LV:** And then we can also be involved.

**ME:** You are already, but we haven't started yet.

**LV:** No, but I mean you have already agreed upon the short-term measures with the heads of department without us being involved. I thought that at the beginning also on one of the to-do lists I thought we had agreed last time we are going to be involved in the short-term ones as well.

**ME:** There is a plan and we are finalizing that and then we can share it with you and you can comment on it before it is finalized and shared with everyone else. So we are not deviating from the process.

**XWG:** I would like to comment on that because there was certainly some surprise about the whole topic of communication and we of course understand that there is a lot of time pressure around those issues and there is new information coming in at unexpected moments and of unexpected nature as well. In the last meetings it was really that we were

holding back the publication of the minutes so that you can purposefully steal the way the issue is communicated to the organization, right?

And when we sent you an email about when to publish the minutes, we didn't hear back from you. But since then, information was spread through different means. I think foremost the Erasmus Magazine article and then some of us had a department meeting on Tuesday.

During that department meeting, the screen went black and it was communicated as some dark announcements that the situation financially looks bad and that we need to take harsh measures. It was mentioned that we probably won't be traveling anymore. Many, many, many other things were announced with a very dark tone.

**JL:** And our meeting was the opposite of that, where it was kind of like: we don't know what's going on, we can't give you final information, we want you not to worry', but it definitely wasn't like: 'yeah, hold the presses.' So it seems like there's a very different way of communication in all of the different departments regarding what is going on.

**XWG:** Obviously we are very surprised. We were holding back the minutes to give you time and then suddenly, apparently everyone is informed about what will happen, but then there are different versions out there.

And there's clearly a large concern, in particular since we recently realized that for assistant professors it is encouraged to have certain roles in the academic communities, which requires travel. And even the normal travel budget is not enough to cover the costs in order to have one of those roles, but if now it is being announced that we cannot travel for a year, of course that causes panic.

And that's only one of the things. This information is also having an implication for our hiring decisions already. I'm just very surprised because it doesn't align with what we have been discussing in previous meetings here.

**ME:** So I'm very happy that you're very aware of what the communication does, even if it comes from this area. I'm grateful that you kept the minutes from spreading, because we don't want to add to any of the confusion. What we've done so far is we haven't put out any information further than the heads of departments.

But we also said to them: since you are going to make decisions for the short term, just for 2024, relatively soon, maybe it's a good idea to start updating the leadership that you have within the department so that they are prepared. And what we are going to do is provide a set of possible measures that could be taken, and it's up to the different departments or professional services departments, how these measures will actually be implemented. And one of the things that we also communicated is that it's worthwhile to look at the different groups within the department that are going to be affected, because maybe for some groups in the department, for instance, allowing them to travel less has a higher consequence than for other departments.

You could also think about allowing the upcoming academics to travel more than the already established academics, but this is up to the department. So, we are still working on communication to everyone, but this is tricky. And this is the first time I'm hearing back, so

that's very helpful. I'm hearing back that there are things communicated within departments and what is communicated and what the effect is.

**XWG:** Everything that you say sounds, of course, very sensible, but I'm also sensing that there is some pushing responsibility back and forth between different layers in the organization. You're saying that the departments can decide what is right for them, but then in the department, it sounds more like: 'we have to do what the school tells us to do. And let's see what happens. Let's see what they will tell us next.'

So, there's a lot of uncertainty.

**ME:** There is, because we're still discussing the finalized plan. So, once we've updated everyone, you've had a chance to look at it, we've incorporated your feedback and we've agreed upon this with the CVB, we can finalize the agreement. That's when we can make more clear what the end result needs to be. But either way, it has to add up to a savings of 2.66 million, at least for next year.

**XWG:** I think also part of the worry is that we also heard from Jessie that in her meeting, the answer to basically most questions was: 'we don't really know what is going to happen'. I definitely agree with you that it's very important to have good communication and that you don't say the wrong things in your communication. But no communication is also communication.

And these things always like sort of leak out, at least what I'm hearing from here is that there's already like a lot of rumor right now. This causes a lot of people being frightened of certain measures being taken, despite the fact that certain things haven't been decided.

And in this specific case, I could also imagine that the lack of communication from the executive board then means that people are having more uncertainty, more stress and more anxiety than would have been the case, even if the message wasn't perfect. I think it would be good if at least something was communicated.

One person just approaches it very differently than the other person, but there is no centralized message. And I think that such a centralized message would help.

**LV:** It is so important that everyone who is on a temporary contract right now will soon have far more information about how things will look like.

**XWG:** Yeah, and we as RSM did not communicate anything yet, but rumours have start to spread since Ellen gave the interview at the Erasmus Magazine at 23rd of October.

And that's already three or four weeks ago.

**ME:** Yeah, so I completely agree. And thank you for bringing this to my attention, we are progressing.

I'll take this up and put extra stress on the central communication from our side towards all the employees. In terms of the individual measures per department, that will take a little bit

longer to agree upon, because we're asking the departments to take measures and calculate for their part of the savings what they are going to do.

So, we can assist, but I also expect them to in some way communicate that to their department. And unfortunately, it will mean that there are going to be differences between departments on how they are going to reach these savings.

**WB:** So first of all, on the communication part, I think the point is really clear.

Myra already said something, and I think we need to pick up on that before too long, even if we can't already prelude on the final measures. I think it's just important to start communicating if this is the type of unrest that we're hearing about.

One second is we started out with a more centralized list to start the discussion also with the heads of departments. In there, for instance, the idea was: why don't we travel 30% less than we did before. You know, it's about 2.1 million at the level of the school that we travel for. So, reducing that a bit would probably work in good directions, not only financial, but even perhaps in other terms as well. One of the things that we got back, because I'm very sensitive for the topic of differences between departments, is that there are already differences between departments.

In some departments, people can only travel once a year, but if we would reduce that with 30%, either they couldn't travel anymore or 30% of people couldn't travel anymore. In other departments, there is now already more room to travel. Therefore, doing things centralized may seem like it's a more egalitarian thing to do, but at the same time, given that these departments have different starting points, could actually have a detrimental effect as well. And by allowing these departments to have a bit more leeway in coming up with a 5% reduction, I think and I hope that we can diminish not only the uncertainty at the level of the different departments, but also diminish to the largest extent the detrimental effects of having to cut back on costs. I think it makes most sense to look at your own department and then make the choices that work for that particular department, as long as everybody contributes to it adding up to the numbers that we need to have.

**XWG:** That makes sense. So what I'm also a bit surprised about in those discussions is, if I know the numbers correctly, then we have roughly 350 faculty members and roughly 350 people in the professional services, right? So that makes it a bit skewed when we always talk only about the departments.

**WB:** This holds for departments and professional services, so everyone gets the 5% reduction.

**LV:** You said 5%, I thought it was 6%.

**WB:** We started out the conversation with 6%, because we thought that that added up to that, but the latest figures show that with 5%, we already are in the safe margin.

**XWG:** Okay, but just in terms of size, right? Then wouldn't it already bring a lot of clarity if for those 50%, for the professional services, for a huge chunk of the organization, if at least there would be more clarity soon about where exactly those cost savings could come from?

**ME:** Yeah, you're absolutely right, but we're very early on in the process in the sense that we still need to agree on this package with you and with the CVB. So, we're not there yet to finalize the proposals for the different departments. But we will in a very short time frame.

**WB:** So the 5% of course depends on the 2.5 million. And with regard to the 2.5 million it was not like the people from the other building were running towards us in order to offer it. Therefore, we need to finalize this in a sensible way in order to safeguard that we have a manageable amount that we need to save. 5% will still hurt, right? So no mistake, both in terms of the unrest that it will give people and also if we need to cut down in certain types of expenses, that will hurt.

But at the same time 5% is also relatively manageable. And it buys us time to look at the longer term and at the end of the day I think that will be the most important one that we will need to look at jointly, because that means also something as to where you want this school to move towards and make decisions that are in that sense congruent with where you want to go. But as long as we don't have this go ahead also with Central, even on the shorter term, either we allow a deficit of 2.5 million to then still exist at the end of 2024, which would mean that we would have a negative reserve, which I at least would not wish upon the person that is sitting here, or we need to go up to 10% and that would hurt much more, which I think if at all possible we really should try to avoid.

And as soon as we have that finalized, then the 5% is fixed, and then the plans which are now already in the making, also for the different departments, can be handed in and then I mean all departments, so both academic and professional services. I think and I hope that we then have a reasonable plan that will hurt a bit, but not too much, and gives us time to really make sensible decisions about the longer term. I fully understand from you that even though there's no perfect moment in time, the current unclarity is more detrimental than providing clarity that may not give all the answers.

**LV:** So I understand that you say that there are already differences in departments. But I think it's also one of the issues we face during meetings here about fairness. You now give an example about travel, but we also have discussed about teaching load, etc.

I think it's at least part of a larger problem which you also still need to address. I think it might be good to centralize more certain policies, such that there's less freedom in the departments on this which lead to a lot of inequalities and discussions.

**WB:** I would completely agree. The problem is that for this financial issue, if you do it only for that, there are going to be targeted differences between these departments.

**LV:** I hope at least that we will try to get and remove this.

**JL:** I don't want to open a whole other can of worms, but I do have the important question that we've talked about a lot, and that is, we have now cost-cutting measures, how is it going to impact work pressure?

Because usually cost-cutting measures leads to doing more with less. So, I don't know if it's possible, but do you have a short answer as to how does this affect work pressure, and will this worsen the situation, and what are the safeguards to protect that?

**ME:** We're very aware that this is normally the case, and we want to prevent this, and especially in the longer term, so the plans that we start implementing in April, we also want to do less. So, in figuring out what is the core of what we absolutely need to do, we are going to have less budget, but also do less, and still do very well in what we decide that we still need to do. So that's the whole tricky part of the long-term plan, that we need to make sure that if we structurally are going to create reductions, then it shouldn't lead to adding work pressure.

So, we are very aware, and we're working on it.

**WB:** I do think we can also reduce on some of the activities, and there has been an activity analysis actually way before I was here at RSM, and I think there are reasonable pointers in that analysis that just were not followed up on, and I think you could, without loss of quality, for instance in education, could make a number of reductions where you would actually alleviate work pressure quite a bit.

**XWG:** But we have been trying to push for those topics for quite some years now. Both with regard to the thesis trajectory as well as the elective portfolio, and now it's announced to us that we have to cut short on our travels, which is painful. Whereas other things like thesis trajectory or elective portfolio, that's something that one should have done earlier, and I would really put as much time pressure on those topics as possible.

**ME:** But those are two different things. So, one is the short-term that's just for 2024. And that's what we need to do in the short run to keep us from accumulating a deficit that we will have to work years to alleviate.

And then there's a long-term plan, and that's where the activity analysis and all the stuff about which we already said that it is important, but with which we didn't do anything, are coming into play. And that plan will be delivered at the end of March, and we will start implementing that right away, which we want to have in place at the end of 2024. So those two things will happen in parallel.

But given the short time frame, we haven't been able to finalize that plan. So, we take until the end of the first quarter for that.

**JL:** And then, yeah, maybe my question regarding work pressure also was mostly related to the short-term because I think indeed for the long-term, it's all going to be incorporated. But in the short-term, especially when you ask the departments to cut back on costs with 5%, then is there any idea of what that will do to work pressure for specifically short-term plans?

**ME:** Well, some of the measures will have less impact on work pressure than others. So, the balance of the different possible solutions in terms of asking people to give up their leave days that they've accumulated over the years or traveling less, not traveling at all, but

traveling less, will have a different impact than when you don't replace somebody that's leaving.

**LV:** For me, you're mentioning this now the second time. So, the last year's work pressure was very high, and what you are saying would sound like: thank you very much that you've worked more than you could and that you couldn't take your leave days, so please now give me your leave days for free.

**XWG:** This really sounds like a punch.

**ME:** Well, the thing is, all decisions that you make are relative. So, we are going to continuously ask people to take their leave days. I think that it's very important to do so.

You get those every year, and you're supposed to take them all because that's good, and you can alleviate some of the pressures that you experience in your workplace. However, in terms of taking drastic measures to prevent a loss, it's an either-or kind of situation, and it's up to the individual to say: I've accumulated 100 extra leave hours over the last couple of years, I did take my leave days this year and I'm planning to take my leave days next year, but those 100 hours, I will not be able to take anymore, or I'm not planning to take anymore, and maybe this is a better measure than not replacing a vacancy.

**LV:** Yeah, but it feels a bit like unpaid overwork then. Maybe to respond to your first part, very good that I had this week a first year PHD- meeting assessment where the first question they ask is: did you take your leave days?

So, I think it's a good measure that they also really start forcing people, checking, do you take leave days, and especially, I can understand that for PHD's, that's sometimes a challenge. So I was positively surprised by that.

**WB:** There are also environments, like for a certain period of the other faculty I worked with, where there was just the idea that you didn't have to register, because many people find registering, including me, I have to admit, a bit of annoying. If you didn't register, at the end of the day, the balance would be zero, but that also would alleviate you from having to always fill out those forms. There are also other faculties where the norm is that you can take 80 hours, so two additional weeks across from year to year, but not more than that.

I fully agree that it shouldn't feel like or actually be that you're working overtime and then as a gratitude we take away the days from you that you couldn't enjoy before. But I think it could be good getting into a mode where it's more normal for people to actually use the days that they have and at the end of the day if there are days left, within reasonable time spans you can actually use them, but otherwise they will be gone.

I don't think in a more general sense that is a bad thing for an organization to have. I think it also gives the right signals. I do see that the change from where you are now to that change is something that can also feel in the way that you describe it and that's of course not the feeling that you want to alleviate, but just to be clear, it's really large numbers because for every hour that people keep, the financial department needs to make a reservation because it has a monetary value and that really adds up to a really large chunk of money.



**LV:** I know indeed some companies go bankrupt by the leave days. One more thing which is interesting is that you can get very difficult discussions, again at the topic of traveling, where the university also took a lot of sustainability measures which are sometimes more expensive. So, now you get a clash in this. For example, when they say: take a direct flight, you have to take a direct flight, up until the moment the other option is 1.5 times as cheap or something like that. So even if a direct flight is more expensive, you have to take the direct flight because it's more sustainable. You have to take the train even if it's more expensive, etc.

So, taking traveling measures, we will get more discussions about this. On the one hand one should spend less on traveling, but on the other hand you should spend more on traveling because you should pick the sustainable option. I think it will lead to more traction in the discussion about sustainability.

**WB:** That's, I think, also an issue.

## Dean of engagement

**LJ:** Okay, thank you for all the updates. I think concretely going forward, we have to schedule a meeting with the Budget Committee or the Finance Committee from our side and we will also, I think, see this once again in the next meeting. Then for now I suggest we move on to the full agenda topics and see then afterwards if we have time for the other announcements.

Because we have the Recruitment Deans and the Master Thesis topic and I think it's important to have them discussed while the others are more updates. So first on the Dean of Engagement topic, one note we had on that was that the Dean of Engagement profile contained some of the same things that we have pointed out in the Dean of Research profile that we thought would be wise to change. And therefore, we also would like to say please check the Dean of Research letter and apply those same things to the Dean of Engagement. We saw in the Dean of Research profile that it was actually changed.

**DS:** I think we probably used the original format of the Dean of Engagement profile for the Dean of Research profile. I think that's also because when we started writing the Dean of Engagement profile we didn't have your feedback yet. But that's a good point, so we have to go back to that one and change the same. And I think further with regards to content I would like to leave the floor to anyone who has any comments on that.

**LV:** For the Dean of Research as well as for this one, I'm wondering how people can do this in 0.8 FTE and then still do things like teaching a bachelor course or master course. I think it can be such a bottleneck on someone's career or other things you want to do. Doing this role means dropping other things or working for 60 or 80 hours per week. Then I understand that we cannot find people for this position. And I am not saying that, if this role is really this big, then we should say we only give 0.4 so that it looks like you can fit it in the position. But I could imagine that it is a challenge to find people for these roles since they have to more or less pause their career.

I think you've changed in the Dean of Research that there is a sabbatical afterwards possible. But are there ways to make this role also feasible for someone? Or is this only feasible for people who want to work 60 hours per week?

**LJ:** Yeah because we also noticed it like for example with the faculty model discussion you are just extremely busy. You have like a really full agenda. So I think it's also it is a really important topic.

**XWG:** When we were trying to schedule a meeting to already discuss the developments of the faculty model, we got offered two short time slots on a Tuesday each which is the day where so much is happening, so I assume you have an incredibly tight agenda.

But you are of course now also a bottleneck to the entire organization, right? And so that is a question. We have seen that in the past and we had people leaving the role because it was too much.

So, it is a huge concern and we don't want to be slowed down as an organization because individual people's schedules then have a bottleneck or have unrealistic expectations.

**DS:** I think this is a discussion that we have quite a bit as well within the EB and we've noticed this as well. So, I think there's a couple of things we try to alleviate this. One of the things that we're trying is to create a bit more support, which alleviates our jobs a little bit.

I think another thing we try to do is to take us out of this bottleneck. What we've noticed in the organization as a whole and the way we've been organised is that Deans need to be involved in decisions at any point in time in all the process. We're trying to take that away as well. People can go on and do things without us continuously being involved.

They don't have to talk to us all the time in order to move on. So I think that's also something that we're slowly but surely implementing. And that takes time but that is really important I think.

**WB:** I'm a relative outsider so I think this is an interesting and rather complex type of organization, where decision making processes are typically difficult to get to a final completion. Clarity as to who gets to say what, when, about which topics.

Therefore, I think we really need to progress in these types of areas. And that also means, and I know that that is never an easy thing, but it also means that we need to set priorities, both as EB but also as individual EB members. And with priorities I mean: which topics are we addressing, and to some extent even: with whom are we talking.

And I'm not saying this because we now just happen to be in this room. But I mean you have a crucial role in the decision making processes, so in terms of priority setting, even though it means that other people may have to wait sometimes a bit longer or that certain processes or projects we cannot do any longer, you should be high on that agenda. Sometimes it's the awkward truth that that will mean that certain other things will just have to wait. But that's also the only thing by which we can keep it a bit manageable for ourselves. Because I think some weeks it takes indeed 60 to 80 hours, certainly not every week. But, I mean these are demanding positions. So what you need from people in these positions is first of all a

commitment to at least put in the 0.8 FTE. But secondly also an organization that supports them as good as possible in order to make the best use of the time that they're there.

And I think at this moment the organization is not there yet. And that will require attention. Because otherwise it doesn't matter who you put in the position, you'll never get it done.

**LV:** But I also think as a result you get the same type of people in these positions. The ones who are people who want to commit themselves to this 60 hours, are often people with similar attitudes. And I think it's good for diversity that you also have people with different attitudes on this.

**WB:** 100% agree. The only question for me is how to get from where we are now to that position.

That may mean that for instance for some of those new roles at the outset of things you make very clear agreements about this. If these agreements are not being met by the organization, then the burden is on the organization and not on the individuals to try and solve it.

And you're absolutely right that if we don't make that type of commitment certain people very likely will never apply for those types of roles. And that's what we don't want to see.

**LV:** So the annoying thing is that it's most likely more costly if you want more support for that. I think it's similar also with department heads which are quite demanding roles that are only asking more skills all the time. I am almost thinking: should we not go have a two-body department head.

**WB:** No, I agree. Whether or not it's exactly more expensive I'm not completely sure. I think now we very often also organize other things to basically compensate for the fact that the core was not organized very well.

So I think by reorganizing things we at the end of the day may even actually become more efficient.

## Master thesis

**LJ:** Internally we already discussed that we will probably Michel for this, but maybe you will be able to do something with it.

We have one specific concern, and that is for the master thesis evaluation. For the performance evaluation of the coaches, only one of the questions in the evaluation is used for HR purposes.

And that is something that was worrying to us, as that was the question that we felt reflected the performance of a thesis coach the worst. It was the question about: would you recommend this thesis coach to another person? Like basically as if it's an Amazon product or something. So, that is a concern that we wanted to share.

**WB:** And this is being used in what context exactly, this question? In the context of P&D cycles?

**XWG:** Michel now came to us as a department to say that we should have a conversation with those coaches. Because the evaluations are not really good. We have a fully-fledged data. And the fully-fledged data looks quite different than if you only look at one section.

**LJ:** That was basically the main concern. We already thought it might be nice to already give you a heads up for the next meeting.

**XWG:** I have one final question. We skipped the starter grant. Is the money coming still? Or what's going on with the starter grant?

**WB:** No, I think the money is still underway.

**LV:** Some people are already waiting since April.

**WB:** I will pick that up with Percy.

**LJ:** Then I do have one final point. I'll keep it really short. But what I've now experienced in the master and I don't know if the other students have experienced the same.

But with us there's a lot of unclarity for the exams for the coming block. In the fact that for last block our exams were moved one and a half week later. And for this block it wasn't really a problem because we didn't have any holidays or something.

But next block, at the end of the current block, we have exams and then Christmas. And what we had at least in the finance and investments program was that now in timetable, the exam was moved two days later while some students had already booked flights and stuff like that. So, I mostly just to make you aware of that fact. And maybe if you could look after that.

**LV:** It happens in multiple programs, also in our program. There the option was given either change to paper or change the date. Now then we said we change to paper. If you change the date, even after the last one, you will get this.

**LJ:** Yeah, because we now have some students in the group chat who told that, yeah, I've already booked a flight. Especially international students booked a flight home for Christmas. And now the exams moved two days later.

**WB:** My guess is, I mean, that's not to diminish the problem, but just to indicate that also not everything is within the powers of Michel.

**LV:** No, this is indeed exam organisation.

**WB:** But, we need to be aware of it and we need to pick it up.

**LJ:** Yeah, I just wanted to make you aware of it because I hear like a lot of stress around me. Thank you very much. Also for extending.