Minutes 255th FC meeting (ext)

Thursday March 21th 2024, 10:30 AM – 12:00 AM

FC members
Luuk Veelenturf (**LV**)
Hidde van Gelder (**HG**)
Taslim Alade (**TA**)
Xena Welch Guerra (**XWG**)
Maciej Kowalski (**MK**)
Luca de Jong (**LJ**)
Jessie Lee (**JL**)
Robbie Steegman (**RS**)

EB members
Myra van Esch (**ME**)

Style Definition: Heading 1

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Todo-list

Spring P&T

LJ: Now that there has been a P&T on the educational track, are there any updates on how that went?

ME: I am not sure whether the results of it were already shared with those involved in the P&T. Also, since I was not there, I do not feel I am in the position to share the results with you, so we can ask the Dean of Faculty next meeting.

Hospitality agreements

ME: Regarding the GVO's, or hospitality agreements, we can fix them for you, but we will need your private email addresses for that.

LJ: Then I will inform all student members to send our private email addresses to our Secretary such that he can forward them.

ME: The reason that it took us some time to agree upon creating GVO's, is that we are now using them in a way in which they were not intended to be used, because a GVO is really meant to communicate with people who don't work for us but are not related to our university. But we can fix it now.

Use of AI in thesis

LJ: Do you have an update about whether or not this topic was discussed during an academic directors meeting?

ME: No.

Recruitment of Dean

LJ: Since we feel that the process of recruiting the new Dean progresses too slowly, we intend to send a letter to the CvB asking for a timeline.

ME: What they are doing right now is creating a profile and a selective and advisory board. The plan right now is that they want the vacancy out early April. When he or she can start very much depends on who will apply, but the average timeline for this within RSM is about 14 months, so it could take a while.

Mandeville closing times

LJ: We discussed this topic a while ago, back then it was still a pilot. Right now, Mandeville is closing at 19:30 and it doesn't seem a pilot anymore. That is why we were wondering what the results were from the pilot and how this decision was made.

ME: It was completely CvB's decision. I was promised an evaluation of the early closing hours by Real Estate and Facilities (REF). I have been asking about this, but I am still waiting for it, since they are also busy with other projects. I think this was called a pilot but actually silently turned into a real change. What I can do is ask REF again, but now supported by the claim that the Faculty Council is also asking questions about this.

LV: That would be great since I see more and more colleagues struggling with the closing times. Sometimes they want to work during the weekend or must teach in the BV for example.

ME: I understand, but the defense from REF is that you can always sit somewhere else on campus, just not always in your own office. I will ask on your behalf.

Working hours preference in HR-system

LJ: Are there any updates on this?

LV: So, this topic is about a recent email that all teachers received regarding the scheduling of teaching hours. It said that we are only able to put forward the days that we are available, but not specifically on what times. I am wondering whether they could show a bit more flexibility in this.

XWG: Yes, for instance the slot 17:00- 19:00 would be impossible for a single parent since then daycare is closed.

ME: I understand it, but I think it's going to be difficult to consider everyone's preference. For example, everybody wants to teach on Tuesdays between 13:30 and 15:30. It is already a challenge to fit all different classes into timeslots and lecture rooms.

LV: I agree that teachers should also be more flexible than just on Tuesday afternoon. Would it be possible to at least inform the schedulers about time-specific preferences by for example communicating 40 hours during which you as a teacher are available? Some evenings I can be available, but others not, and some people are never available during the evening.

ME: I will ask them for a formal response to this. I have asked them about this already, but this informal way of communication is apparently not working, so I want to hear a more formal stance from them. If they formally state that it is impossible to take into account time-specific

preferences, then we can start the discussion about how we will deal with teachers who simply cannot teach during evening hours.

Announcements

Recruitment of DoEn

ME: I know about the recruitment of the DoEn that the second round has taken place and that we will have an end result soon.

XWG: I was in the advisory committee for this and to all members of this committee it was communicated who was picked yesterday. According to the procedure, the Dean should now present the candidate to the FC. Do we as FC have to give positive advice before the Dean calls the candidate, because that will happen tomorrow?

ME: The Dean is not here, so he cannot present the candidate right now. However, he will call all candidates tomorrow, so after tomorrow, the results can be shared in confidentiality with the entire FC. I would like to hear the response from the FC per email.

ME: Regarding the other announcements, all that I could say about it would be second-hand so it is better to leave that for the Dean of Faculty next time.

Finance

ME: For the long-term measures, we've created a plan of how we see the next steps and what questions we have for the CvB. That plan was shared with CPC (Certified Public Controlling) this week. They said that, as far as they're concerned, it could use more detail. Currently, we have only included ranges, but we don't know the exact amounts yet because we're still in discussion with all the different groups within the organization on where they see possibilities of saving money. In their request of more detail, CPC referred to one of the other faculties who delivered them a plan that is precise upon €5000.
Next Tuesday we're talking with the Vice-president of the CvB and the question is if she will accept that we want to act in an intelligent way and that we are in the very diligent process of talking to everyone, instead of simply giving them a certain percentage. If she doesn't, we have to go back to the drawing table.

LV: So the CPC has sort of given a negative advice?

ME: They say that it's not completely there yet. We say that it's completely there, but that there are many things that still need to happen for it to reach a conclusion, and part of that is

the discussion with the CvB.
For instance, before moving some of the professional services to the centralized level we first need an answer from them. And there's also an issue on who carries the cost if we decide to rearrange something. There was a little asterisk that said that if we make any costs related to a restructuring of our part of the organization, EUR Central will take on this cost. However, recently this asterisk has disappeared, so we are curious who will take on these costs.

For these reasons, we cannot give any details, but once we have all that information, we can drill it down to: what does this mean for the organization? We think it will be the first of July as you've seen in the whole planning procedure.

Right now, as part of the process, we're having dialogues where we talk about research, education, engagement, and professional services. I sit together with each academic department, and there we discuss what kind of services they could do without and what services absolutely not. I also realize that we have a communications challenge where we need to show more what it is that we do.

One of the lessons that I have learned is that we should do this far more often, just sitting down with faculty and asking: do you like the services? What do you like about them? What do you dislike about them? This should be a yearly cycle as far as I'm concerned.
I think these are worthwhile discussions. But I've only had three of the seven, so there's more to come and they will happen early next week.

XWG: It's generally impressive to see that for many years we've had all these analyses of things and suggestions for improvement, but now there is actually something happening. And the differences in how we used to think about a required timeline for change and how we are thinking now about implementation speed, is quite striking.

ME: Yes, me too. And what I also find very striking is that I would expect faculty to say: "I'm very happy with this service and they should never go because they're vital for my work." But a lot of times faculty says: "I'm happy that these people are here, and they helped me a tremendous lot, but if they weren't here, I would do it myself. I'm happier when they're there, but it's not like I cannot do it myself." And I think that's also an interesting dialogue.
It's for instance about communication or about some of the more project management roles.

On the other hand, there are groups where they absolutely don't say these things. I haven't heard anybody saying: let me take on the legal advice. Sometimes it happens the other way around; for example when there are treasurers in these teams who say that BPC could do their

work as well. That means that we're asking someone who has a different role and other important things to spend time on, to do something somebody else could.

Once these discussions are all finished, which will be before the 1st of April, we have to bring together all the results from all the different discussions and then start ranking and putting the puzzle together.

Workload

XWG: You now say that faculty members could do work by themselves, but at what cost? In terms of workload for example?

ME: That's of course the question that I ask. But, the response that I get is that if the person that you asked to do something isn't 100% embedded in the system that you're working in, asking somebody else takes also additional effort because the work is still back to you.
The discussion is really about what is the added benefit of somebody else taking on some of the responsibility or some of the work.

XWG: Because what we've seen recently, was rather the opposite. There were processes where someone else would do them for me, like submitting grades. I would just send a simple Excel file somewhere and then the grades are submitted.
And now every time again, I need to go through the very long manual in order to figure out the difficult OSIRS system. That costs me huge amounts of time, three times a year, whereas if it just would be one person specialized on it, it would be far more efficient. And there are several other processes where it rather went that way.

ME: I would expect these kinds of things to be mentioned in those meetings. When I ask the question: are there things now that we don't provide that you would really like to have, I expect people will mention that it will be nice if they are not struggling with all the IT systems.

Distrust faculty vs professional services

LV: What I found a bit striking, but unfortunately I think it's reality, is that the document mentions that there is a distrust between faculty and professional services, and that we should restore that mutual trust. Will that only be done by these conversations, or is there another way? What are we doing there?

ME: Well, in terms of the relationship between, for instance, the EB and the Heads of Departments, we're really working on that. For example, we're having sessions with the facilitator to talk about what goes wrong in parts of the communication and what goes right. That's something we're working on parallel to this whole process.

I do have to say that I expected a lot more resistance or conservative behavior when starting discussions like this, because we are always talking about a reduction. However, all I find is willingness to think about it, willingness to think outside the box.

LV: That is within the department, but I also meant the distance between the faculty for the academic and professional services.

ME: I think for the professional services, there's a general feeling among faculty that if there need to be budget cuts, it should be more on the professional services side than on the faculty. And I think there is something to say for that. It would have consequences, but if you go to the core, over the last couple of years we created a service level that we thought was necessary to compete against others and to get the right people here. However, maybe that is not sustainable anymore.

School-wide measures vs departmental targets

LV: I have multiple remarks. So first, this list contains many school-wide measures. Whereas when I read the process, it comes across as the Dean deciding how much goes to which department. However, these departments cannot take school-level measures, so how does that relationship work?

ME: The amounts that the Dean will give to the departments will also include an instruction based on this whole process where the cuts need to be taken. So if, for instance, a conclusion is that some of the electives must be reduced, then the instruction will be for a very specific department to reach the target by reducing electives.

FTE vs Student EC as baseline

LV: Furthermore, I found it a bit striking that it said that these numbers are based on the current FTE and not on student numbers, because if you look at current FTE then departments who are already more efficient are punished. So, why not use other measures like student EC?

ME: Well, that's a good question. I don't know, so I will ask.

Accounting for income streams

LV: I saw, maybe except from the teaching, that all measures were workload increasing measures. That looks worrisome to me.
And regarding the teaching, I think now we have said that fundamentally there's some issues with how we fund departments. Do I read it clearly that a department gets a target and we don't look at the income streams anymore? It looks like we go from profit-based to cost-based allocation, so the incomes are totally neglected?

ME: No, incomes will be included, but I want to get rid of the monopoly money that we include in the way it's arranged now. We have to talk about what is actually coming in based on student numbers and what's going out based on costs that you make, instead of creating a budget that is based on this virtual environment of money streams that are not really existent.

LV: Okay, so in the current system, having an elective brings in money for the department, which creates an incentive to get more electives.

ME: Yes, so you get a bigger piece of the pie, but it always means somebody else gets less of the pie, and the overall pie does not increase. And I think what we need to look at is how to divide the pie and how to increase the pie by creating other income streams or diversifying our income streams.

LV: But if you now cut down on electives, then you don't get enough in the pie, so you have to work more. How does that work?

ME: The whole idea of an incentive model where you have to earn your salary back, we need to let go of that. Also, because it creates a virtual money stream that's not actually there. We just need to say: we have students and they need to be taught, and there are subjects related to that, and that is something that we need to divide. There's already a distinction between different departments based on expertise. Then, within a department, you need to figure out who's going to teach what, and it needs to be relatively well-organized.
This would be a tremendous organizational change that will not be fixed before the first of next year.

Consequences for quality

LV: What I was reading through lines, is that not much is mentioned on reducing quality. Since, if you also want to reduce workload, then at a certain point, you will also lose some quality. For example, under education there is a minimum and maximum time allocation for each activity and teaching. If you say to teachers that they shouldn't spend more than a certain amount, this will influence teaching evaluations for them, and the tenure track recommendations. So how do we make sure that they are not punished?

XWG: To add to this: if you want to reduce the number of student assistants, which we are all very critical about, and limit the time to work on it, then we will always go for the simplest possible form of assessment. It is absolutely unworkable to get rid of student assistants.

ME: I completely agree, but we have to make sure that if we keep the quality of our teaching high, and we rely for it to happen on student assistants, and we cannot afford them, then we've created a model that is not sustainable. So, we need to have a discussion.

XWG: Grading is a huge proportion of our organizational workload, but it's something that you can do once or twice, and after that you really need some holiday. That's why this system that we currently have is so good, because students do that once or twice or maybe three times, which still feels all right, and then they rotate out. And they do that in a time period when it's very close to their own studies. So, it also makes sense from a content perspective.

ME: Yes, so if you look at reducing the student assistants, this may be an area where you don't do that.

XWG: But where would you do it then?

ME: Well, we have a lot of student assistants everywhere in the organization. Also on the professional services side, doing little tasks, assisting us, helping, just taking care of tasks when somebody's fallen ill or is overworked.

XWG: And you're suggesting to do those tasks rather with more expensive staff?

ME: No, I'm suggesting that we need to look at the efficiency of those tasks in relation to who is doing them. Maybe in some situations, it makes sense to create another type of solution than this.
And I welcome you to be critical because we don't want to end up with a high workload and we don't want to break up things that are already working efficiently.

We are creating a databased environment where we can see the effects on total cost savings if we pull certain levers. Right now, we still need more information from the CvB whether we still need to come up with 6 million or whether it is less because we have taken some measures as well. Furthermore, I want to see what the Erasmus perspective will be for 2025 first.

Consequences for publications

LV: My concern is also about people in the tenure track. If we ask them to spend their own time on finding more external funding, they will have less publications.

XWG: Which in the long run could have negative financial implications.

ME: Yes, but not everyone in every department brings in top-ranked publications, so the idea is that tasks will be divided in a way that everyone's skill set will be used efficiently.

XWG: I know that these publications do not bring in money directly, but they mean a lot for our reputation, rankings and student numbers. Many of my colleagues will leave RSM if we lower our standards of publications since it would have a negative impact on their personal brand.

ME: Yeah, so we want to keep those people and their time for publications and see if we can leverage the people who naturally do not produce this in other ways, for instance by collecting funding.

LJ: And with regards to reducing external hiring, doesn't that simply mean that the work has to be done internally, which wouldn't affect the costs in the end?

ME: We have a lot of special projects within the organization for which we hire external people and maybe we should just cut back on those projects and do them more one by one?

LJ: And one more question: if you decide to cut back on an elective, how exactly are you going to do that?

ME: I can imagine when you start with an elective, it has to gain some attention, so for the first couple of years we won't be evaluating the number of people. But at a certain point we could set a threshold that an elective needs to reach in terms of student numbers. What we really need to do is take the incentive away from people coming in to start an elective.

Next time I will have had my discussion with the Vice-president of the CvB so I can inform you on that.

Profile of external chair

ME: We looked at the profile and we also asked HR to look at it, but I haven't heard back from them. We thought it made sense, but I am still waiting for their response and then I will get back to you via email.