



Faculty
Student Council

ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

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Dear Prof. Dr. P. J. van Baalen,

The purpose of this letter is to give FSR FEB advise on the Weekly education cycle (WEC) in new bachelors.

Before going into detail on the WEC, the FSR would like to express their concern with making rash decisions that affect the educational structure of the programmes at our faculty. Therefore we suggest that the faculty should not decide on implementing the mandatory WEC in the 2nd&3rd year of the new bachelors without having carefully and seriously evaluated this system in the first year. We look forward to the sounding board meetings this week and eagerly await the evaluation of the faculty that the Dean confirmed at the previous informal meeting on the 31st of October. However, we believe that in order to be successful and representative, evaluation must include not only response from the education service centre but also from course coordinators, lecturers, students and confidentiality has to be guaranteed for everyone. Many questions regarding the WEC remain unanswered: How were response lectures used? Did they add significant value to the structure? Again, the Student Council is excited receive answers to these questions.

For now, we believe that making one WEC standard mandatory for each course is not beneficial. The current standard structure of lecture, seminar, response lecture (L, S, RL) is not suitable for all courses, especially quantitative ones, in which weekly material cannot be covered and fully explained in one 2-hour lecture. Therefore, in these courses cutting on lectures weakens their quality and students are prevented from obtaining all required information from the lecturers. This results in an increase self-education, which, of course, contradicts with the objectives of an educational institution.





RLs pose numerous problems that were pointed out by the FSR in the academic year of 2016/2017. First of all, it is unclear how much value RLs add to the students' education: In the old bachelor programmes we observed that one of the main problems with RLs were that they were almost always poorly attended. This occurred when RLs were not used effectively and students decided that studying on their own would be more beneficial than attending a RL.

Some lecturers use the RL to discuss old exam questions. If these questions and their answers are not available online (not only Blackboard), then such RLs might be useful. However, sometimes it happens that lecturers discuss exams that have already been reviewed by students. Thus, there is no need for students to attend those RL, as answers were already found.

An advantage of RLs is more interaction between lecturers and students in the form of Q&As. Such realization within RLs is supported by the FSR as it gives students a possibility to get answers to their questions that cannot be obtained via other means. In addition, this gives lecturers a great opportunity to see what topics/questions students see as the most complicated, hence, more time can be allocated to these or additional materials could be provided. Nonetheless, this will only happen if the idea and structure behind L, S, RL is extensively communicated to students and teachers: How will these RLs look like? Where can questions by students be posted? Will additional content be covered in this lecture?

If a RL is simply treated as a general lecture, due to structural issues in quantitative subjects for example, even more problems can arise:

1. Material is presented to students too late (after the seminar takes place) and, sequentially, cannot be explained to a proper extent.
2. If the problem mentioned in point 1 above occurs, both lecturer and students, face difficulty in seminars, where they have to discuss questions on the grounds of the material that has not been discussed yet. As a result, lecturers will have to spend more





time on explaining those questions in seminars, which makes seminars less effective and might limit discussing all planned questions due to time constraints. At the same time students will not be able to prepare for seminars successfully and will not be able to fully understand the material that will be discussed in the S. This directly leads to confusion and weakens the organization of the course as well as the education itself.

3. When RL will be used as L under a name of RL. Some students might not attend RLs because they do not have any additional questions to the content. But if these are actually normal content lectures, students will unknowingly not attend another lecture. As a consequence many students will skip response lectures without knowing that important material will also be explained there.
4. Problem in 3 will only become larger if RLs were not used effectively in previous courses. The experience of the FSR greatly confirms the ineffectiveness of response lectures; hence, problem in 3 will occur even more frequently as some students already decided not to attend these lectures due to poor past performance.

In conclusion, the Faculty Student Council strongly opposes the implementation of a mandatory WEC structure in the second and third year. Only after having found solutions to the aforementioned negative consequences of the WEC and after careful and exact evaluation of the WEC by **all** parties involved, this could become an option for the FSR. We stress the importance of the consultancy of course coordinators, lecturers and students during this process.

On The Behalf of FSR FEB 17-18,

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