



## Minutes OV FSR and DB FGw 18<sup>th</sup> of June 2020

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|-----------|--|
| Present   | Fred Weerman, Marian Wilts, Carlos Reijnen, Rijk Van Beek, Ömür Kirli, Rozemarijn Vissers, Liesje Verhave, Luana Lenz, Gerard Nijsten, Devrim Aslan, Zazie van Dorp, Gabriel Perez, Roxane Erni, Thomas Vaessens |
| Absent    | Tjibbe Valkenburg, Freya Chiappino   |
| Guest     | Emma Kat (Technical Chair)   |
| Secretary | Nicolle Bötcher  |

### Agenda

- 1 1. Opening and confirming the agenda
- 2 2. Confirming draft minutes OV 200511 (Attachment)
- 3 3. Announcements
- 4 a. DB
- 5 b. FSR
- 6 4. Social Safety
- 7 5. Questions and closing

8 **1. Opening and confirming the agenda**

9 Kat opens the meeting at 15:01. The agenda is set prioritizing the topic of social safety with  
10 regards to the NRC article of the 12<sup>th</sup> of June.

11 **2. Confirmation draft minutes OV 200511**

12 **Minutes:** The draft minutes of 200511 are run per page, discussed and adopted.

13 **Action list:** The action list is discussed and states as follows:

14 191210-04 Weerman sent links concerning internationalization to the FSR.

15 200501-05 Striped.

16 200501-07 Striped.

17 200501-08 Nijsten talks to Maria Hagen about communication about the contemplation  
18 rooms.

19 200511-01 Concerning proctoring became a PRO MEMORI.

20 200511-04 Striped.

21 **3. Announcements**

22 **a. Daily Board of the Faculty**

23 Reijnen leaves the meeting at 14:15.

24 **b. FSR**

25 Freya Chiappino and Tjibbe Valkenburg are absent.

26 **4. Social Safety**

27 Weerman tells the FSR that open conversations with employees and students are happening  
28 at the moment concerning the case and stresses the importance of these meetings. He points out  
29 that he initiated Question Time yesterday (June 17<sup>th</sup>) where students could ask for information  
30 concerning the NRC article and social safety at the Faculty or share their thoughts. Similar talks  
31 are scheduled next week. Van Beek asks why students during Question Time couldn't make  
32 remarks or pose questions anonymously, and why they are advised to contact the Confidential  
33 Advisor or study advisor if this case shows that that route doesn't work). Weerman responds that  
34 for the safety during these sessions it is important for all participants to know who is present.  
35 The Confidential Advisors seem to function adequately at the moment, however it is correct that  
36 they cannot file a complaint on behalf of a student or staff member. Lenz says that the NRC article  
37 does not support this claim. Weerman explains that mainly the follow up of the complaint  
38 procedure is problematic at the Faculty.

39 Van Dorp says that in the NRC article, one of the students claimed to have been told by the  
40 Study Advisor to visit a psychiatrist because a change in the behavior of the teacher was not to  
41 be expected. Weerman expresses his displeasure with this statement and disapproves with the  
42 behavior of the Study Advisor. Furthermore, he says that in October the FSR can expect a rapport  
43 of the external committee with recommendations for improving the complaint procedure.  
44 Probably there will also be a separate rapport about including the use of anonymous information  
45 within this procedure. Also, the CvB will adopt a Code of conduct for the UvA; this is expected in  
46 a week or two.

47 Aro wants to know why the teacher has not been put on non-active. Weerman states  
48 decisions like these are depending on legal procedures and that the teacher is released from his  
49 teaching obligations at the moment. Practically, this means that the teacher is not around  
50 students any more. For clarification reasons Kirli asks if the teacher is now inactive and will not  
51 be teaching the coming year. Weerman confirms this statement.

52 Perez asks if only the Dean was involved in handling the case through the years. Weerman  
53 explains the complaint procedure and says that the *capaciteitsgroepsvoorzitter* (or Chair of the  
54 department) played a big role in the procedure since he has contact with employees and conducts

55 *jaargesprekken* with teachers. This means that from 2014 till 2019 complaints were addressed  
56 internally at the level of the program. Aro asks when the Dean got informed about the issue.  
57 Weerman says that he received the letter of the students in 2019 that marked the starting point  
58 of a complaint. From then on, decisions were exclusively taken by the Dean, including the legal  
59 procedures within the Faculty. He advised the students to file a formal complaint with the  
60 independent complaints committee of the UvA. Perez asks if the board received notice before  
61 2019 concerning the case. Weerman says that the previous dean did not receive information  
62 concerning the accusation of sexual assault. Weerman says that complaints about didactic  
63 matters stayed at the level of the program. Nevertheless, when inappropriate behavior takes  
64 place, this information should be sent to the dean too. In this case, the first indications of indecent  
65 and wrong behavior in these terms – such as intimidation and the acts of sexual assault including  
66 inappropriate touching discussed in the NRC article – was known to the programme leadership  
67 on a ‘*via via*’ basis- in 2016. The Dean was never contacted about this in any way before 2019  
68 though.

69 Weerman wants to point out that the complaint letter of C&R-students to the programme  
70 leadership of 2014 (that was only sent to the dean in 2019) didn’t mention complaints with  
71 regards to the accusations of inappropriate behavior made in the NRC article. Verhave says that  
72 the previous dean seems to have known about the complaints and asks why there was no follow  
73 up on the earlier cases. Weerman says that he has no indication the previous dean was informed  
74 about earlier complaints and that he didn’t read this in the NRC article.

75 Lenz asks if Weerman believes he responded adequately when he received the letter of the  
76 students in 2019. Weerman says his acting was within his possibilities and in accordance with  
77 the law. In this respect he thinks he responded correctly. He does want to underline that the way  
78 the Faculty handles social safety needs improvement. Lenz believes that before the NRC  
79 published the article Weerman played down the accusations of the students. Weerman regrets  
80 the fact the NRC article does not properly take the perspective of the teacher into account and  
81 that the case is out in the open. He also acknowledges that article does clearly convey the reaction  
82 of the student and what this case has done to them; in that sense it is a good article. He does  
83 believe that the reaction of the UvA Saturday evening was inadequate. It drew the attention away  
84 from the issue of social safety, which is the important subject here and should be the priority.

85 Van Dorp summarizes that Weerman believes he is limited in his influence on the matter  
86 because there is no formal complaint. She underlines that the complaint procedure doesn’t  
87 protect students because they have to be in the same room with the accused person. Weerman  
88 says that this is the case in principle but that a different way for investigation is always open for  
89 discussion. He does agree that these procedures should be reviewed and that there should be  
90 more transparency about the complaint procedure (also online).

91 Van Dorp asks why the UvA spokesperson was involved in the teacher’s response to the NRC  
92 article. It seems to her as if the University took the side of the teacher in this regard. Weerman  
93 explains that all employees and students of the University of Amsterdam can ask for support in  
94 their communications with the press. Therefore, the teacher could ask them for help; the Faculty  
95 was not involved in his response in any way. The faculty has only been in contact with the teacher  
96 about the complaints and his behavior. Weerman understands that from the outside it seems as  
97 if the University is supporting the teacher, yet the way it went down is more nuanced.

98 Kirli says that the dean should function as a bridge: he should protect both students and the  
99 institution and that the unofficial complaint procedure is not working. He wants to know why the  
100 Dean is not resigning to make a statement about the failure of the system and the need for change.  
101 Weerman says that he supports the idea that the complaint procedure should be improved and  
102 that the case needs to be investigated thoroughly. Furthermore, he wants everyone from the  
103 University to talk about what can be improved, apart from the procedure, in order to prevent  
104 severe situations like these from happening again. He hopes by working together the status quo

105 can be chased in improving the environment for social safety. Kirli says that this sexual assault  
106 case happened before within in the Faculty of Law and that he is not blaming the Dean for it - but  
107 that he asks why the Dean doesn't want to take a political stance to resign. Weerman believes that  
108 he has better options to work on this problem when he stays active.

109 Aro asks if the Dean should apologize for the initial reaction of the UvA to the NRC article,  
110 that gave the impression that the UvA only cares about protecting the teacher. Weerman says  
111 that he made an announcement yesterday about it. He stated that if the idea arises that the Dean  
112 did not handle adequately he regrets this sincerely. This is also included in a statement that will  
113 be send soon to all the employees and students. Aro asks if this statement will also be made  
114 publicly. Weerman says that this is not the case but that he expects the information to be public  
115 after the students and the teachers receive it.

116 Lenz believes that Weerman is not taking responsibility for what happened and that the  
117 students on the Faculty do not feel safe anymore. Weerman regrets that this is the case and  
118 underlines that he wants to work towards improving both the culture around social safety as he  
119 wants to change the complaint procedure. Verhave says that the idea that there has to be a  
120 cultural change at the Faculty is snowed under by the system. She believes that they cannot  
121 prevent these things from happening because the structure protects perpetrators and blames  
122 victims. She illustrates this idea with the fact that the Faculty Board was informed very late about  
123 these complaints by the program. Weerman explains that a cultural change could prevent cases  
124 like this from happening within the Faculty in the future because students and teachers then  
125 know how to interact properly when they see the signs of inappropriate behavior: this means  
126 that students will feel safer. He repeats that both lines are necessary: changing the culture within  
127 the Faculty and changing the complaint procedure. Verhave says that the first priority should be  
128 protecting the students and that if the teacher has touched the student (as he admitted in the NRC  
129 article) and the university cannot fire this person, the student will never feel safe even though  
130 the culture changed. Weerman believes that with a cultural change colleagues will also feel  
131 empowered to respond correctly to inappropriate behavior of a teacher. Verhave feels that the  
132 system does not allow structural change: without unaccountability there is no allowance for  
133 students to speak out when they are harassed because they know that their complaints will not  
134 be taken seriously. Weerman does not believe that everything within the procedures is broken  
135 but admits that there are problems with the filing of complaints. To illustrate his point he states  
136 that having *jaargesprekken* and monitoring teachers is in principle a good system and that those  
137 measures are also part of the same complaints structure. Weerman says that there should be an  
138 attitude that good procedures within the system should be adhered to.

139 Kirli says that the FredVlog and the Dean's interview before the Corona crisis announced  
140 that the NRC article was in the pipeline. He asks where the plans are on a central level for change,  
141 what the professionals concerning social safety are doing, why the Dean did not work together  
142 with the Faculty Student Council on this topic or proposed a Social Safety Plan. It seems to Kirli  
143 that the Dean was struggling with this issue and that he did not ask anyone for help. Weerman  
144 says that between the Vlog and this moment the Faculty tried to do a lot for social safety, f.e.: they  
145 scheduled a program for all supervisors/managers within the faculty to discuss all sorts of  
146 aspects of social safety. There also were several meetings with the CvB and the Faculty hired an  
147 organized play to talk about empowerment although this later was canceled due to Corona. The  
148 play is now scheduled for October. Furthermore, a Code of conduct will be casted soon and  
149 together with the deans of the other faculties and the CvB they are trying to make this issue as  
150 explicit as possible. Weerman underlines that social safety is very high on the agenda. Kirli says  
151 that these changes are again on a cultural level and that the system should protect victims. It  
152 seems to him that when the system protects victims, the culture will also change. Weerman says  
153 that new sustainable systems should be taken into account and that both sides are necessary.

154 Van Dorp says that on the UvA side a *verbetertraject* is already being set in motion and she  
155 wants to know what this traject entails, who is in charge and how the project is monitored.  
156 Weerman says that a *verbetertraject* was already in place. The leadership of Conservation and  
157 Restauration was closely monitoring the teaching, the teacher followed workshops and has been  
158 observed in class. The findings were discussed with the Chair of the program. Every few months  
159 the dean met with the teacher to talk about the issue in the dean's office. The situation has  
160 changed following the publication; at this moment the teacher is no longer active within the  
161 programme.

162 - Reijnen leaves the meeting at 14:15 messaging the participants that he would like to  
163 work closely together with the FSR on this issue. -

164 Concerning the conversation between the Dean and the teacher Verhave wants to know why  
165 this talk would be seen a viable and constructive procedure. Weerman says that the teacher got  
166 an *officiële waarschuwing* with a letter of what behavior was expected from the teacher, which is  
167 a strong measure. Earlier the teacher had a history of responding immediately and adequately on  
168 direct feedback, and changed his behavior accordingly. Weerman says that the teacher probably  
169 conducted behavior that he thought was normal and legitimate taking his generational culture  
170 into account. Verhave says this looks like victim-blaming. Weerman states that this is not the case  
171 and that the board did now pull the teacher out of the program based on his behavior. Van Dorp  
172 says that the NRC article stated that one of the teachers of the program made a noticeable  
173 distinction between 'generation boomer' and 'generation snowflake'. She wants to know if there  
174 will be held talks with the teacher who stated this since this statement is about a bad working  
175 culture. Weerman underlines that this teacher was very insensitive which does not mean that  
176 students are overly sensitive. All the students and all the teachers have different norms and  
177 values and as a teacher you should be able to navigate between and be sensitive to those. Van  
178 Dorp says that talking about sexual explicitities and touching students is not about being sensitive  
179 but it is just plain wrong. Weerman underlines that he does not claim that teachers can say those  
180 things to students and that he is very disapproving of behavior like this. What he tried to point  
181 out was that in the past (in the seventies) the relation between teachers and students used to be  
182 different.

183 Aro wants to know on what points Weerman disagrees with the NRC article. Weerman says  
184 it doesn't give a nuanced idea of the time line, that things were said to the teacher and did have  
185 effect on his behavior were not - or partly included - and that there was a lot of new information  
186 in the article he had never encountered. Also, the sorts of perspectives that were given seem to  
187 be very one sided. Weerman says he does understand that the atmosphere and the feelings of the  
188 students were sketched in the article, but at the same time he believes that this might not be  
189 precise enough with regard to what happened when and who did what. Aro asks if Weerman can  
190 point out something more concrete he disagreed with. Weerman says that some of the complaints  
191 cannot be placed in the timeline. On the letter of 2014 - that was only referring to didactics of the  
192 teacher - the program director directly responded and appointed a new teacher. Aro says that  
193 the teacher later was placed back into the program again. Weerman says that in the letter the  
194 focus was not even on the accused teacher. The letter contained more broad claims about the  
195 didactics within the program and another teacher that was taken out. Weerman says that from  
196 2014 on they changed the program and appointed a new teacher to the program. That change  
197 was still visible between 2014 and 2019.

198 Kirli asks if Weerman as a person, not as a dean, thinks the teacher should be fired. Weerman  
199 states that he cannot make that distinction. He would have preferred that at the level of the  
200 complaint committee there was independent research on the matter, taking in to account both  
201 parties involved. That should be done carefully, without such an investigation no person should

202 be condemned in advance. If the conclusion is that the students are right and that the evidence is  
203 completed he does believe that somebody who conducts this kind of behavior cannot work as a  
204 teacher. Verhave wants to know how 'touching' a student can't be enough to hold someone  
205 accountable. Weerman says that he regrets what he is going to say - but that if the exact nature of  
206 the touching is unknown or unproven it cannot be officially condemned in advance. He makes an  
207 analogy between touching someone appropriately and inappropriately. Weerman directly states  
208 that he condemns touching students in general unless it is for practical reasons (f.e. during a  
209 practicum with consent of the student). He thinks it is very important that there is an independent  
210 investigation where both parties are heard to know the nature of the touching. That being said;  
211 it is not right for a teacher to touch students: this has been made clear to the teacher in 2016 and  
212 after that the touching has stopped. This case affects us all, that is why an independent  
213 investigation is needed.

214 Lenz asks if the solution of doing an external investigation about the functioning of the Dean  
215 is sufficient. Weerman says that working on the procedure and the system is important and the  
216 system should be carried more effectively where it does seem to work. He regrets that there was  
217 no official complaint filed by the students. Weerman thinks it should be possible to have more  
218 options for anonymous complaints in the first stage of the procedure. However, he doesn't aspire  
219 that teachers could be fired only on the account of an anonymous complaint because teachers  
220 should be able to receive a precise defense against the exact accusations. Van Dorp says that there  
221 are ways for teachers to defend themselves against anonymous complaints and that the Dean  
222 should look into it.

223 Van Dorp stresses that the victims should be compensated for the behavior of the teacher.  
224 She says the article talks about students quitting the program prematurely because they had  
225 mental problems because of this case. Weerman says that he wants to get in contact with all those  
226 students. The letter of the two students was supported with five alumni and Weerman says he  
227 never saw them and wants to meet them to see how they can reconcile. Zazie says that Weerman  
228 and the committee should think about compensation *now*, and that reconciliation should not rely  
229 on what these students have to say.

230 Aro asks to appoint an external office in which students are able to give their complaints  
231 anonymously with confidential advisors that work for this external office independently from  
232 the UvA. Weerman says that the system of confidential advisors is revised now and that Aro's  
233 suggestion is good to take into account.

234 Aro says that it is problematic to speculate about the generational gap because it seems that  
235 the Dean is not on the side of the student. Weerman understands and confirms this is not his main  
236 point: the protection of students comes first.

237 Verhave wants to know what the other board members have to say about this topic. Zwiép  
238 states that she is in a listening phase and is trying to grasp what everyone deems important in  
239 this case. She would like to talk to the students that went to the NRC. Zwiép furthermore will be  
240 in contact with the OR on the matter and yesterday she chaired a meeting with employees -  
241 among them study advisors and colleagues of the program. There were many suggestions for  
242 improving social safety. Zwiép is also going to meet the PhD Council who was confronted with  
243 similar problems. She believes that this problem can only be dealt with properly by having an  
244 ongoing conversation within the Faculty on social safety, this needs time. Procedures need to be  
245 improved concerning the student advisors. Nevertheless, Zwiép says that she does not want to  
246 condemn people on the basis of an anonymous letter. Vaessens agrees with Zwiép. Van Beek asks  
247 Vissers about her student opinion. She also wants to stimulate ongoing conversations within the  
248 Faculty.

## 249 **11. Questions and closing**

250 The board and the FSR thank each other. Kat closes the meeting at 15:10.

251 **Decisions**

252 200618-01 -

253 **Pro Memori**

254 200511-01 Weerman makes a short summary of the important points on Corona so that the FSR can advise on this.

255  
256 200618-01 The DB informs the FSR about Proctoring and the use of it.

257 **Actionlist**

258 ~~191210-04 The DB sends the FSR all important (and available) documents regarding internationalization.~~

259  
260 200501-04 Nijsten visits the contemplation room in PCH to see where there is place for improvement.

261  
262 ~~200501-05 Nijsten talks to the Diversity Officer to gather advice on making the rooms more inclusive.~~

263  
264 ~~200501-07 Nijsten will initiate a meeting with Kirli and Lenz.~~

265 200501-08 Nijsten talks to Maria Hagen about communication about the contemplation rooms.

266  
267 ~~200511-01 The DB informs the FSR about Proctoring and the use of it.~~

268 200511-02 Vaessens will add the promotion of Humanities with Dutch high school students (other than the ones who have a N&T profile).

269  
270 200511-02 Nijsten discuss' the topic of vegetarian options, cleaning and milk with Cirfood and Facility Services.

271  
272 200511-03 Nijsten looks for a promotion plan for sustainability and waste.

273 ~~200511-04 Nijsten will reach out for an appointment with Verhave and Van Beek about sustainability.~~

274