



Minutes of the Overleg Vergadering (3) of the FSR FMG '20- '21
Faculty Student Council of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural sciences

Date: 28th of January 2021

Location: Online via Zoom

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| Present executive board FMG: | Agneta Fischer, Sterre Minkes. |
| Present FSR FMG '20-'21: | Emilie van der Heijden, Pablo Mustienes, Robin Hellmich, Kaleem Ullah, Siddharth Jethwani, Pedro Gonzalez, Johanna Lehr, Viktoriia Akhankova, Alessandro Ractliffe, Ruben de Groot, Joshua Meijer |
| Absent FSR FMG '20-'21: | Joselyn Arevalo Moran, Kaleem Ullah |
| Guests | Ingmar Visser, Tommaso Catuzzato, Dede Kruisman, Mia Haug, Ties van Ierschot, Viraj Kote, Abbey Gilchrist. |
| Technical chair: | Alexandra Rosca |
| Minutes: | Lieve Bastiaan |

1. Opening and setting the agenda

Alexandra opens the meeting at 10:02. The agenda is altered, Numerus fixus psychology is discussed first. The agenda is set with a change.

2. Setting the draft minutes of the OV (2) on October 1st

The FSR FMG has accepted all of the dean's changes to the minutes of the second OV of '20 - '21.

3. Announcements

Dean

Ingmar Visser is joining to discuss the numerus fixus for psychology.

FSR

Joselyn and Kaleem have an exam and are unable to join. A couple of students wanted to join and observe the meeting.

4. Subject 1: Numerus Fixus Psychology

Dean

The main question being asked whether the student council supports the selection procedure and not with the numerus fixus itself. The Central Student Council has advisory rights.

The dean adds that the idea of having a selection procedure that is as close as possible to the normal programme has been scientifically found to be the best way to test this.

Ingmar Visser.

The procedure has not changed from last years. It is almost identical to last years apart from the date. They aim to have a good fit between students and the programme. The best way to do so has been shown to offer the students a small part of the programme with material similar to the programme. They then have to take a multiple-choice exam.

The chosen topics are the same as students get when they participate in the programme. There are little changes as it is a tried-and-true procedure. It was even used prior to the numerus fixus as a selection procedure (used for matching).

There are multiple ways in which students are supported during their selection procedure; they are thoroughly informed about the procedure, there is a website with tips and prospective students have the chance to ask current students questions.

To test whether the procedure still projects student success, during the first year they tested this and found that it does predict student success.

FSR

The FSR does not have any questions about the procedure, they would like to know why there are so little changes. The second question is if there are systems in place to ask students how they experience the selection procedure.

The council supports the numerus fixus procedure as is.

Ingmar Visser exits the meeting.

5. Subject 2: Blind grading

FSR

The FSR present their blind grading policy. The FSR FMG thinks quality of education can be improved with the use of blind grading. It will lead to more accountability ... in grading.

Currently, in many programs, teachers can read the names of the students on the exams. This could lead to a bias. To add there is the issue of progressive bias, students should be marked on the quality of their work and not the beliefs they hold. The council would prefer having the student number on the exam. This would still allow the student to be connected to their work, but it would be harder to identify them. The grading system send in the policy document would ensure that workload of teachers in not increased.

Initially, the policy was also directed towards tutorials, but the council agreed to limit it to big exams at the faculty.

The FSR is aware that students at the political science faculty students have asked for their exams to be regraded and received a different grade. The council will investigate if this also applies to other study programmes.

Blind grading should be seen as a preventative bias.

Dean

The dean informs the council that this is something that should be discussed with the OWI directors, this meeting is in March. In general, the teaching directors see the issue of needing to prevent implicit biases. Everyone is positive about applying it to large exams, with regard to first- and second-year bachelor exams. The main issue is if blind grading solves the bias. The question is whether blind grading is the ideal solution for that. Blind grading can easily be implemented for big exams, it is already used in some of the programmes. The question is whether it can be used in smaller groups and in one-to-one supervision, where the aim is to have intensive teaching. In those situations, it is not possible to use blind grading. In those

situations, the bias can be worse than in the larger groups. This can be avoided by having a second grader. This practice is in place in all programmes. The dean is wondering how the FSR sees this.

The dean wants to know if the FSR has any evidence that implicit bias is taking place. The dean wonders if this is just a political science issue or if its faculty wide.

The dean sees that there is bias but differences in grading can also be due to human error.

The dean believes it would be good for the FSR to be present at the OWI meeting.

Action points

210128-1: The FSR investigates if the implicit bias issue applies to study programmes outside of political science.

The student guests leave.

6. Subject 3: Proposed appointment for the College Director of Social Sciences

Dean

The council has received the CV and proposal, the council does not have right to advice but does have right to hear. After the director is appointed the FSR should invite the director to get to know the director.

FSR

The FSR is generally very positive about the candidate, the qualification is impressive, and the council is especially happy that the candidate is familiar with the UvA. Especially as the director will be starting her function from home.

The FSR will invite the new director to a PV meeting.

The student guests join again.

7. Any other business

Dean

The dean thinks there are a lot of initiatives within the faculty to improve student welfare, she wants to thank the council and other student representatives and students for their efforts. The faculty is busy working with the psychology department to create a service for students. If the study room works, it can be extended to the UvA as a whole. Agneta would like to be updated about the progress.

The dean sees the frustration and the stress the system has been implemented as there is no other way to do these big exams. The dean would suggest that representatives of the FSR talk with the teaching directors whose programmes make use of proctoring programmes.

Regarding the system it has been extremely unfortunate that first something went wrong with the UvA server and then with the Proctorio server. Improvements have been made but the dean cannot guarantee no new issue will arise. The teaching directors do not see alternatives to using Proctorio. If all questions become essay question that would put a lot of extra workload on the staff. Despite the use of proctoring students are still committing fraud. The dean is willing to discuss these concerns with the teaching directors, but they may have good arguments that alternatives are not good enough. The dean agrees that comparing old exams and this year's exam is a good way to evaluate Proctorio.

The dean agrees that the scheduling of exams after the programme malfunctions should be done with the student's interest in mind.

The dean agrees that students should be informed after their video footages is destroyed. Regarding privacy the dean is least impressed, we share data all the time.

If the programme will continue being used better protocols should be in place to aid students. The OWI directors will be asked how they feel about this issue.

What the dean is missing is the effectiveness of the buddy systems, are all students reached and are they all in a group? Additionally, the dean would like to see an evaluation of the experience of buddies and students who participated in the system. Some students might not want a buddy for good reasons and some for bad reasons. The dean would like to discuss a short survey to send to students. The teaching directors are responsible, so they need to be asked first.

The dean notes that the topics at any other business are discussed longer than the agenda items. The FSR should have discussed the topics about proctoring and buddy system at the owi meeting with the teaching directors (after all, that is what the 10 minutes on the owi meeting agenda are for) and should have put these items on the agenda of de OV meeting and prepared meeting documents.

FSR

Pedro had a meeting with the other student council chairs yesterday, there will be a meeting next week about installing study spaces. It is still being discussed if the current study space will be extended or if the faculties will all get their own study spaces.

The FSR would like to discuss proctoring, a topic that has been discussed for a long time. The council would like to discuss some concerns they have as the system has been implemented at the faculty across three exam periods. A council member shares her experience with proctored exams. Firstly, taking proctored exams adds a lot of additional stress. Secondly, the exams feel very invasive. Thirdly, if the programme misfunctions it is hard for the students to receive support, one exam was even cancelled due to the programme not working.

The first issue the council has with the programme is that the system has crashed on two different days. One of two things occurred after exams, either the exams were cancelled after exam were taken or students were unable to even start their exams. There is no contingency plan in place for when the system malfunctions. It often takes too long before students are informed what happens to their examinations. This causes a lot of mental stress among students and a lot of insecurity about the continuation of their studies. The programme failing is something the council foresaw. It is on the agenda of the FSR to have a separate meeting with the teaching directors. However, the council believes that having the dean on their side is useful.

The FSR is very concerned with the mental health of students, especially due to the state of the world. Anxiety about exams get build up a lot due to the programmes. When the system fails exams need to be rescheduled, which entails that students have an exam on top of their other course work. Continuing to use the software makes these times even more stressful for students.

Where there is a will there is a way and it has been shown that proctoring does not avoid proctoring. There are many alternatives to the use of proctoring, many programmes are using alternatives, even at programmes with large groups of students. If the programme is non effective, then there is no need to add this pressure to students. Looking at last years exams and this year's exams there was no big difference in the grades and the amount of people who passed the course.

The FSR does not want to add workload to the teachers but it is unfair that the students are carrying the burden of the situation.

Secondly, the council believes that privacy is an issue for students. Students have not been informed that their recordings have been safely destroyed. In Germany, the government has not allowed proctoring due to privacy reasons.

Thirdly, several students have reached out regarding technical difficulties. In many student accommodations internet connection is not ideal. The students were thrown out of their exam and were told to take the retake.

The FSR would like to schedule a meeting with the OWI directors and the dean to further discuss this issue.

The buddy system is an issue that was brought forward by the FV-FMG. In their discussion they aim to streamline the buddy system. The incentives for buddies are different across the study programmes, this affects the input of the buddies. In cases where buddies get money or ECTS are more productive. The council is still discussing if the system should be mandatory or not. When presenting the mentors with an incentive it is easier to ask things of them and have a more organized system which would provide students with a better experience.

Everyone agrees that the mentor programme should be investigated and revised if necessary.

8. Questions and closing

No questions are asked.

Alexandra closes the meeting at 11:47.