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Bijlage(n)	0		
Betreft	**Unsolicited Advice Greenpaper OCs**		

Dear Dean, dear Fred,

By means of this unsolicited advice the FSR wants to address the fDB's proposal for clustering the *Opleidingscommissies*, established by the Green Paper *Opleidingscommissies*.

Unsolicited advice Green Paper *Opleidingscommissies*

Before getting to our suggestions and critique about the clustering itself, we want to point out that, in general, the FSR does not agree with clustering as an appropriate solution for the problems some OCs are facing. It is possible that specific visions, for individual programs, will get lost by clustering. As members of the *medezeggenschap*, we believe this would fundamentally undermine decentralization. If clustering were to happen, it shouldn't be under the influence of the fDB. Therefore, the FSR shares the OR's thoughts described in the following points:

- **Clustering of OCs only takes place with the consent of the OCs that are involved in this process and in the form these OCs currently have.**
- **Information and advice requests concerning educational programs and policy-making, within the educational schools for the OCs, must be handled by the board of the CoH and GSH. Here the program's own OPD may provide an explanation for the envisaged program-specific consequences of the intended decisions within the schools.**

First, the OR emphasizes that *"Het initiatief van de te vormen clusters moet daarom bij de OC's liggen, of tenminste moeten zij daarvoor goed gemotiveerd zijn. Hun instemming met de clustering is daarom volgens de OR een eerste vereiste."* (OR, 20-47). At the FSR level, we also want to point out that the OCs' autonomy is at stake when the decision for clustering comes from the outside, especially when certain OCs are functioning properly (as is the the case for History and Philosophy). Any possibility of clustering must happen within the framework of self-determination. In this sense, each individual OC will apply the change in accordance with their own will and needs.

Second, the FSR FGw shares that for issues regarding communication and training, the solution should involve more initiative from the fDB to make sure that - each year - OCs are properly prepared and aware of their tasks. We will impart more of our observations below, when answering the questions brought forward in the Green Paper.

Reaction FSR FGw to the Green Paper *Opleidingscommissies.*

We will react to the Green Paper by answering the questions posed by the fDB.

1) **Do you agree with the problem analysis? Is anything missing?**

For this question we will go over each point of the problem analysis stated in the Greenpaper. Snippets from the analysis have been added to provide context.

1. *Greenpaper: With respect to the dialogue between the Program Director and the Program Committees, you find that, in many cases, such a dialogue does not occur or that it occurs insufficiently. Often, the Program Directors are too far removed from the (multiple) Program Committees they deal with.*

   FSR FGw: Some OCs and their OPD don't seem to share a close relationship, as is illustrated by the unsolicited advice from the BA and MA History OCs. Though, this does not seem to occur in every OC. A good relationship with the OPD could be beneficial to OCs. Yet, OCs should not be forced to cluster to increase contact with their OPD. Creating good contact between the OPD and the OCs is also possible without having to resort to clustering.

2. *Greenpaper: You observed two things with regard to the composition of the Program Committees. First, you find that, in several cases, Program Committee members don't have a proper understanding of the curriculum itself or (to an even greater extent) of the role it plays within the Faculty. Secondly, some programs at the Faculty of Humanities have so little*

lecturers that all, or nearly all, of the core lecturers are part of the Program Committee. This means that it is impossible for the Program Committee to position itself vis-à-vis with the program director and the programs team of lecturers.

FSR FGw: Regarding the first problem, this derives from the understanding the fDB has of OCs and which differs from the understanding OCs have of themselves. Therefore, these ideas and expectations have to be communicated more clearly to the OCs by the fDB. The second problem solely rests on the size of the programs. Therefore, in a problem analysis concerning OCs, a distinction has to be made between large programs with plenty lecturers (e.g Media Studies, European Studies, Philosophy and History) and smaller programs with fewer lecturers (e.g. modern languages and certain art programs like *Cultuurwetenschappen*).

3. *Greenpaper: Concerning the Program Committees' alignment with the overarching faculty policies and strategy, you found that Program Committees tend to be insufficiently aware of the decision-making process and the frameworks established by the faculty (i.e. the Faculty Board, CoH and GSH). Which means they lack context when they are called upon to consult on or consent to an issue. You're of the opinion that it is too strenuous and time-consuming for Program Directors, who are in talks with multiple Program Committees, to provide all committees with adequate background information. Some Program Coordinators will act as liaisons between the Program Director and the Program Committee; however, they do not have first-hand knowledge of the managerial ins and outs the consent and advice requests are subjected to.*

FSR FGw: This problem is not inherent to OCs. There is plenty of miscommunication between the different levels of the Faculty and its *medezeggenschap*. Communication by the fDB, concerning their policy plans, towards lower levels of *medezeggenschap* is insufficient, especially towards OCs. Therefore, we believe this problem could be fixed by more frequent and more intensive communication between the fDB and the OCs. This could happen in the form of an OC representative meeting with the fDB on regular basis, or someone from the fDB fulfilling a role as contact person to the OCs. Evidently, this person must be compensated for the number of hours invested into this task. Solutions like these will divest OPDs from having all the responsibility of passing on all the background information regarding the faculty's framework, etc. The responsibility would be shared and the task divided.

4. ***Green paper:*** *With respect to the amount of time available for OC activities, it has become clear that the number of hours (25) the OC members (lecturers) are given to perform their duties do not correspond realistically with number of hours required to perform such task in an adequate manner.*

   FSR FGw: We share the conclusion that the number of hours given to OC members and the actual hours spent on activities are unrealistic. We have been informed by OCs that teachers decide not to join OCs, because, in reality, they spend more hours on their duties than what they have been accredited. Moreover, it is likely that clustering will lead to more working hours as the workload from different OCs would be concentrated in only one clustered OC. In any case, a more accurate hour count should be made to reflect the actual number of hours required to adequately perform the assigned duties. Furthermore, a new division of hours should be decided upon by OC members themselves, considering they have the most realistic understanding of their working hours. Transparency regarding the working schedule is vital to ensure more and better participation.

5. ***Green paper:*** *Regarding the independence of the Program Committee, you have found that some OCs interpret this independence to mean that the program director cannot attend the meetings. This way Program Committees make their decisions solely based upon their internal discussions.*

   FSR FGw: Every individual OC should make their own decision concerning the presence of OPDs at their meeting. The absence of OPDs could be necessary in situations where a conflict of interest might arise (e.g. the writing of an unsolicited advice). Updates regarding these meetings or planning an additional meeting, other than the one unattended by the OPD, could suffice to solve this issue. In this way, when a possible conflict of interest arises, the OPD isn't deprived of contact with the OC(s) for that particular month. If the fDB wants OPDs to be present at every OC meeting, they need to have a justification for this. As a sidenote: the absence of OPDs is not only caused by OCs, some OPDs might choose to not attend OC meetings of their own volition. The problem is, therefore, also (at least) partially self -imposed by the OPDs.

2) Do you agree that clustering Program Committees could be a way to resolve the issues mentioned in this Greenpaper?

The problems, as raised in the Greenpaper, seem to only be limited to OCs of smaller programs. Therefore, clustering seems to be unsuitable to larger programs' OCs. The situation at smaller programs should not affect the status quo for the OC's of larger programs.

In order to respect the autonomy of each OC, the initiative to improve the current situation should - only - come from the OCs themselves. Thus, the fDB should not intervene in the situation or interfere with the OCs' decision-making. Rather, the fDB should fully devote their resources to aiding OCs in managing their situation when OCs request it. If a program wishes to cluster, this should only occur with consent from the OC itself. In this process the autonomy of OCs has to be safeguarded, therefore it is of the utmost importance that the fDB relays to the OCs that clustering is just <u>one</u> way of solving the issue – not the only way.

3) Can you think of any other measures or improvements that might result in a better positioning of our Program Committees?

A lot of measures can be taken to improve the positioning of OCs. Starting with (but not limited to): making more resources available to inexperienced OC members, improving communication, ensuring a clear understanding of the tasks and rights beholden by OC members. This could, for instance, entail sharing documents or organizing training sessions to help clarify the OC members' task description. Another idea is to set a clear goal for OCs to meet at least once a month, to create a routine, make sure they stay in contact and remain focused.

Moreover, for OC members to have a better overview of faculty policy and developments, instating an OC representative as a member of the fDB could be deemed necessary. This particular representative can improve communication between the board and OCs as well as ameliorate the OCs' understanding of their tasks and commitments.

Furthermore, visibility of OCs among students and staff must be increased. Possible measures for this could be: arranging events, bringing attention to the OCs during introduction days for first-year students. Thus, bringing the OCs center stage within student bodies to ensure representation and participation by attracting candidates for OC membership.

4) **Given the maximum number of hours that can be assigned to lecturer members of Program Committees, what would be a proper allocation key for allocating hours to the Program Committee members?**

1. **The current allocation model, in which all members and chairpersons are allocated the same number of hours, with chairpersons receiving twice the number of hours allocated to members, irrespective of the number of CROHO-listed degree programs represented by the committee?**

2. **An allocation model in which members of Program Committees that represent multiple CROHO-listed degree programs are assigned more hours than members of Program Committees that represent one single-degree program? If so, what should the allocation key look like?**

3. **Should the ratio between the hours allocated to members and chairpersons be revised (i.e. with chairpersons no longer being allocated twice the number of hours)?**

The fDB states it is willing to invest in having more hours available to clustered OCs. The FSR FGw wants the possibility of more hours available to <u>all</u> OCs, not only clustered ones. As this would favor clustering and cloud fair decision-making.

If an OC decides to cluster itself with other OCs the current situation (a) concerning a division of hours and tasks would not suffice in a clustered OC; this problem is inherent to clustering.

Proposal b, reflects that clustered OC members would require more hours as work pressure will increase, this includes chairs (having to cover more subjects in meeting) and general members from single-degree programs. Granting <u>relatively</u> more hours to members of clustered OCs should be a requirement if an OC decides to cluster[1].

Regarding proposal c, we would support an allocation key where chairs receive up to 30% more hours compared to general members, rather than the current situation where they receive double the hours. Though, we believe OCs, themselves, have the best ideas on how to fill in and apply these hours.

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[1] *All OCs must be granted more hours. Nevertheless, we understand that due to a possible higher workload of clustered OCs they should be entitled to relatively more hours than a non-clustered OC.*

5) **With regard to clustered Program Committees wherein not all programs are represented: how could the role of the contact person be aptly structured?**

To the FSR FGw, the position of an unpaid contact person is inconceivable. Contact persons would have to fulfill tasks very similar to those of a general OC member, without receiving any hours or compensation for this. Therefore, the utmost effort should be made to fill the seats of unrepresented programs by letting go of the current maximum of 10 OC members.

Should clustering occur, every program has to be represented In the OC by one teacher and one student. This means that, also in the case of OC clustering, we want the DB to let go of the *randvoorwaarden* in order to forego the limit of a maximum of 10 members for an OC. This would, in turn, cut out the need for unpaid contact persons.

If a contact person is deemed necessary, the contact person will be compensated in some form by the fDB. Contact persons should be actively involved within the student bodies and/or staff community. This could be established by communicating well with the OC, receiving course evaluations, and engaging this person with students, lecturers and the *medezeggenschap*.

Conclusion

As we have addressed in our answers to the fDB's questions, we think clustering is undesirable. The FSR FGw believes that there are alternative solutions yet to be explored consistent with the needs of each Program Committee. It is good that the fDB's suggestion of clustering has sparked a discussion and need for revision. However, any change has to respect the autonomy and the ideas of all OCs, including smaller ones.

Yours sincerely,
On behalf of the FSR FGw,

Zazie van Dorp
Chair FSR FGw