



Minutes of the Overleg Vergadering (4) of the FSR FMG '20- '21
Faculty Student Council of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural sciences

Date: 18th of March 2021

Location: Online via Zoom

Present executive board FMG:	Agneta Fischer, Sterre Minkes.
Present FSR FMG '20-'21:	Emilie van der Heijden, Pablo Mustienes, Robin Hellmich, Kaleem Ullah, Pedro Gonzalez, Johanna Lehr, Alessandro Ractliffe, Ruben de Groot, Joshua Meijer, Joselyn Arevalo Moran, Kaleem Ullah
Absent FSR FMG '20-'21:	Siddharth Jethwani, Viktoriia Akhankova, Emilie van der Heijden.
Guests	Ece Utku, Seung Ju, Fatma Escalante, Lucas Lawrence, Molly Munyard, Mark O Neil, Shen Wei, Willow Chen, Mimi Kaagman.
Technical chair:	Alexandra Rosca
Minutes:	Lieve Bastiaan

1. Opening and setting the agenda

Alexandra opens the meeting at 13:02. The agenda is set without changes.

2. Setting the draft minutes of the OV (3) on January 27th

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

3. Announcements

Dean

The dean has an announcement regarding corona. It is unsure if the lockdown will continue and how long. The faculty is aware that the government might open up higher education, they want to create more spaces for students to study on campus. Most schedules have been set, and classes with larger groups will be harder to organize physically right now. The UvA/faculty wants to make it possible for students to meet each other and possibly even their teachers.

FSR

A couple of students wanted to join and will observe the meeting. Three council members, Siddharth Jethwani, Viktoriia Akhankova, and Emilie van der Heijden, will be absent.

4. Subject 1: Student information and wellbeing

FSR

The FSR is aiming to make all information relevant to student wellbeing readily available and by having it published on Canvas, they would like input from the dean. The inspiration is the VU (Vrije Universiteit) wellbeing website. There is information regarding physical health, mental health, academic success, and student safety. There is information regarding physical health, mental health, academic success, and student safety on the A-Z page of the UvA website, the council feels it is cluttered. There is no uniformity between faculties. The council wants all information in one place that is easily accessible for students and a website that contains all relevant contact information. The categories they propose are social safety, studying and community, mental health, physical health.

The council thinks it would be beneficial to work together. The central student council is also involved, the FSR FMG is taking the lead.

It would be beneficial to start this initiative at the faculty of social and behavioural sciences, when its efficacy is proven the initiative can possibly take off from the CSR.

It remains the council's responsibility to get in touch with the UvA communications department regarding the creation of the Canvas page.

Dean

The dean agrees on the general goal of making this information more accessible. The dean advises the council to go to the UvA central communications department, as it is best to organize this at the central level. The webpage that is currently addressing wellbeing, is focussed on corona. The dean thinks it is best to consult professionals about communication on these issues. She agrees that information should be more coherent across the faculties.

5. Subject 2: Discussion on student wellbeing and safety

FSR

The FSR is concerned due to the recent events regarding a student who committed suicide. Members of the council wish to pose questions and engage in a dialogue regarding the situation and ask how the faculty plans to address this. It is important to note that students are angry and worried. The council is not trying to blame anyone, but they do believe that the university does have a duty of care.

The council as a representative body feels responsible for the students. They are aiming to work together with the faculty to find a solution. The council does not feel that the anger online comes from blame but from frustration with the lack of resources. It takes months for students to be able to access resources.

The council would like to see more psychologists and more information on how to access professionals outside of the university. Especially since international students often lack this information. It is highlighted by the council that the focus should not only be on the increase of services but also on the cause of current issues.

The council does not feel that there are too many deadlines but there are circumstances that make it harder to turn things in on time, they would like to see more flexibility. Teachers have gotten extend time for grading assignments; students should also be granted leniency.

The council does want obtained degrees to have the same worth as before corona. But it should be remembered that these are not normal times and that this is not just the flu.

The programme committee of Sociology supports the council but thinks there should be more aid.

The council would like to feel more supported by the dean in their efforts. The council would like to present a united front with the dean in asking for more mental health support for students.

Dean

The dean states that the university cannot be blamed for a suicide. There were no signs that the university was an important factor. The dean agrees that every suicide is one too many.

After it happened a meeting was organized where students, teachers, and study advisors could commemorate the student and share their grief. The dean finds the question if the UvA should do more a difficult question as the university is not a caregiving institute. This does not mean that the concerns and mental health problems are not taken seriously. The study psychologists are there for study-related problems not for anxiety or depression that are not related to the study.

She highlights that blaming teachers and study advisors gives an implicit message that they did something wrong.

The dean has been pleading for more psychologists since she started her position. She also thinks that the student physicians centre should include psychologists.

The dean would like to make a distinction between the Covid programme and the general programme. In COVID times everything is different. She thinks that most programmes are already working on decreasing assignments. The reason there are so many assignments is that students found it stressful that there was just one large exam at the end of the course. If there really are too many assignments, then this issue could be addressed by talking to the PC (programme committee) students.

If there is flexibility in deadlines there no longer is a deadline. There can be good reasons to extend a deadline for specific students, but this should be solved at the level of the study programme.

It is not an official policy that teachers have more time to grade examinations. It is difficult to discuss the details as they are not available. The BSA has been lowered with 6 ECs. The dean agrees that there are measures that can aid students. Teachers have been reminded to mind students mental and physical well-being.

The council should talk to programme directors and students in programme committees regarding leniency. The first step would be to get in touch with the students in programme committees to investigate if there are problematic things taking place.

When talking about supporting students, the dean agrees that it should not be solved at the programme level. The dean will back the council up when it comes to student's mental health and their discussion with programme directors. Students are talking to the central board of the university regarding these issues as well.

Commitments:

- *The dean will talk to the education directors about teacher's leniency in Covid times.*

Action points:

210318-1: The FSR gets in touch with the students in programme committees and programme directors regarding teaching leniency during corona times and can discuss this with the education directors during the OWI meeting.

6. Any other business

FSR

The council is concerned that some of the documents they are sent are not translated into English. The OERs being in English are not only useful for the council but for international students that are interested in the programme. The council brings up the first OV of 19/20 where the dean committed to providing all documents the council needs to advice on and all communication in English.

Dean

The translation budget cannot be provided again next year. It does not cost that much time to get the translation yourself, for example via DeepL Translator. Last year there was an agreement with the council that the TER's for Dutch programmes would not be translated. This agreement and other agreements regarding the language policy were evaluated with the FSR at the end of last academic year and found to be satisfactory. During the OERen process last year, the FSR also indicated to be satisfied with the agreements. The standing agreements are listed in the document '202014 Language policy participation FMG'. This document was received by the FSR last August.

7. Questions and closing

No questions are asked.

Alexandra closes the meeting at 14:12.