

FACULTEIT DER RECHTSGELEERDHEID STUDENTENRAAD
UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM

OV FSR – Board, Monday 1st of June 2026 10:30-12:00 in REC A7.23

Attendees:

- Student Council (FSR): Livni Beck, Carla Gesell, Tom Scheer, Eleonora van Koppen, Johannes Hüttner, Fabian Que
- Faculty Board & Representatives: Nanda Oudejans, Mireille van Eechoud Pim Koenen, Marco Loos, Ingo Venzke

1. Opening meeting and announcements

The meeting was officially opened at 10:36.

2. Setting agenda

3. Faculty Strategic Plan: ambitions and priorities

The Board provided an update on the Faculty Strategic Plan memo. Internal Board discussions on how to elaborate on the presented ambitions are ongoing. These will be discussed in detail with department chairs and the Operations Council (OR). The Board presented the core educational ambitions for the Bachelor and Master programs to the student council, noting that the PPLE program is handled separately. The document will be shared with the FSR after updates from the department chairs.

Core ambitions for Bachelor + Master

- 1) Training legal scholars with a broad scientific view of societal challenges, capable of contributing to a just society and deep democratic order.
- 2) Strengthening the scientific side of programs in an interdisciplinary context and promoting student engagement.
- 3) Improving the curriculum by strengthening student autonomy, readjusting skills training, and ensuring sufficient academic staff for research.
- 4) Developing a powerful response to AI based on pedagogical insights to prepare students for the legal field. The focus will be on how generative AI affects and integrates into student learning, addressing specific impacts on law, society, and academic professionals.
- 5) Adjusting the thesis trajectory, including an ongoing evaluation of whether to retain a traditional thesis format.
- 6) Improving attention to teachers, increasing student involvement, and building resilience.
- 7) Improving physical attendance on campus, making it an integral part of teaching.
- 8) Providing a safe learning environment that explicitly allows students to

- constructively disagree on the definitions of justice and the rule of law.
- 9) Addressing the declining membership numbers across student associations.

Discussion:

- **Thesis Changes:** Carla questioned the status of retaining the thesis and how changes might affect students applying for master's programs outside the UvA. The Board clarified that a final project/work will always remain. The UvA is looking at international university trends and will not act in solitude. The Board will ensure legal practice career opportunities are unaffected, noting they are also looking at hbo end-project models for inspiration.
- **Thesis Scope:** Livni supported the forward-thinking approach, noting that current thesis testing methods are becoming irrelevant in the current climate. Noor asked if the final project would still focus on a specific topic. Nanda noted it is too early in the process to give a definitive answer, but teacher workload is a major factor in these considerations. Noor emphasized that while varied end-projects are a good idea, students should retain the ability to specialize in a specific area of law.
- **Study Associations:** Noor inquired about the plan to support associations, noting some feel favored over others. The Board responded that overarching ground rules will be established for all associations, followed by more specific, tailored approaches.
- **Student Autonomy & Electives:** Johannes asked if increased autonomy meant more electives. Nanda stated that the Board intends to expand options (such as studying abroad and minors) for the Bachelor's program, subject to financial constraints that prevent creating entirely new courses. E.g. the "Sterk op je werk" initiative will be incorporated as an experiment for honors students.

PPLA Ambitions:

- 1) Addressing the variation and balance among majors (Law, Economics, Psychology, Politics).
- 2) Making education more interdisciplinary and making the learning trajectory more explicit.
- 3) Reinforcing education with current faculty research and establishing direct connections with society.
- 4) Enhancing transdisciplinarity by creating opportunities to work with external partners.
- 5) Learning from and connecting with similar international programs.
- 6) Ensuring PPLA remains an inclusive community by improving diversity and inclusion among staff and students, specifically targeting socio-economic diversity.

PPLA Discussion:

- Johannes welcomed the focus on socio-economic inclusivity.

- Carla noted that a reason for the disbalance in majors can be that currently some of them do not provide enough qualifying EC for subsequent Master's programs. She also pointed out a structural flaw: PPLE students choose their majors in March, but the introductory Psychology course does not take place until April. Furthermore, she noted that this first-year course was poorly aligned with the rest of the major and served as a poor introduction. The Board acknowledged this as valuable feedback.

The FSR indicated that, in principle, it is positive about the Faculty's core educational ambitions as presented in the Strategic Plan, and looks forward to further elaboration together with the Board.

4. Restructuring of bachelor / ALF

A request was made by the FSR to share documents in English and clarify translation policies. The Board noted there is no official policy but promised improvements.

Nanda explained that the restructuring is driven by budget cuts and the need to evaluate the final year of the new curriculum implementation. The current ALF format presents weaknesses, notably a high workload for teachers and a heavy study load for students, alongside a lack of alignment between core courses and skills training. Additionally, students currently receive no credits for the program.

Proposed Solutions:

- Scale down ALF contact hours from 4 to 2 hours per week.
- Improve alignment between courses and the skills program.
- Remove programmatic assessment (*programmatisch toetsen*), ending the requirement to hand in papers every week.
- Allocate credit points to ALF by redistributing points from elsewhere in the program. The Board firmly desires to allocate points to digitalization (*digitalisering*) and sustainability (*duurzaamheid*), which will free up the semester. A positive consequence of this would be that it creates space for teaching staff to focus on bachelor thesis and the possibility of ALF staff to also be involved in thesis support.

Discussion:

- Livni asked if an "ALF Plus" option would exist. Nanda replied that there is currently no plan for this. The focus is on the general redesign of the honors program, which will be prioritized next year.
- Fabian asked if freeing Block 6 would increase the workload in other blocks. The Board clarified that it would not, as credits are being awarded for workload already being performed by students. It effectively cuts education hours and work hours.
- Fabian raised a final question regarding why the 30EC in the third year does not align with the *Onderwijsvisie* (Educational Vision).

The FSR stated that, in principle, it is positive about the intention to allocate credits to the ALF programme, as this better reflects the workload students are already undertaking.

5. Restructuring thesis trajectories

The rise of AI has accelerated the need to restructure thesis trajectories. The Board has divided the strategy into long-term visions and short-term implementation for the upcoming academic year. Immediate changes are limited by Teaching and Examination Regulations (TER) constraints but focus on protecting against AI abuse and redistributing student/staff workload so that all academic work is finalized by the end of June.

Discussion:

- Carla praised the short-term adjustments as a fair middle ground given the current time constraints.
- Fabian expressed concern about shifting the heaviest workload to April and May, particularly regarding how exam weeks will be managed for staff and students. The Board estimated the difference would be minimal, describing it as a necessary redistribution of workload for the upcoming year.
- Fabian asked how and when incoming students (starting September 2026) would be informed. The Board stated changes will be updated in the study guide and master's website as soon as possible, before the program starts. The topic will also be discussed with department chairs.
- Livni questioned the policy of limiting students to a maximum grade of 6.0 if they fail their initial thesis defense, asking how the faculty accommodates students with severe presentation anxiety. The Board clarified the distinction between Bachelor and Master expectations, stating the defense is primarily a safety test to verify the student conducted the research independently and understands it, making failures unlikely.
- Livni asked whether fraud/plagiarism investigations would be handled by supervisors or the Examination Board. The Board confirmed that existing protocols remain: staff members who suspect fraud will not investigate it themselves but will forward the suspicion to the Examination Board for formal review.

6. Implementation of standardized grading rubrics

Livni proposed the implementation of standardized grading rubrics to reduce the volume of reassessment requests. The proposal was discussed with a testing expert. The expert noted that while transparency in rubrics is already recommended, it is only genuinely effective for testing lower-level skills. There is a risk that highly transparent rubrics allow students to answer strictly in unmotivated bullet points to game the system. The Board noted that the previously implemented oral reassessments have been more effective at reducing overall staff workload. Tom noted a concern where a student was threatened that submitting a reassessment request would automatically result in a lower grade, the Board noted that this should not be said by staff.

7. Addition information safety & resilience

The FSR followed up on question regarding how the current geopolitical situation affects the faculty's research agenda and national discussions surrounding defense funding. The Board clarified that increased national defense budgets have not changed the law faculty's agenda. There is no pressure or active policy to pursue "defense money." It was noted that the Asser Institute is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, not the Ministry of Defence. There are currently no defense-related research projects within the faculty. Regarding the faculty's role in government legal services, the Board clarified that the faculty does not act as a counseling body, though individual legal scholars may occasionally join external committees. Collaborations are strictly vetted against the faculty's norms and values. Any proposed collaboration with defense entities is automatically flagged and thoroughly reviewed by the Ethics Committee to ensure transparency.