

Gezamenlijke overlegvergadering OR – FSR – Board Maandag 9 december 2024 11:00-12:30 uur in REC A7.23

Present on behalf of the FSR: Zofia Rytel (Chair), Robin Blom, Livni Beck, Mihnea Loi, Friso Tjittens, Johannes Hüttner, Len Holstein, Youssra Aarab and Mirthe den Held (secretary).

Present on behalf of the OR: Otto Tubergen, Hege Elisabeth Kjos, Désirée Blessing, Frank Tros, Nils Mevius, Pieter Lagerwaard, Marjolein de Broekert-de Greeve (secretary).

Present on behalf of the Board: Mireille van Eechoud (Dean), Radboud Winkels, Yvonne Donders, Arthur Salomons and Myrthe van Amstel.

1. Opening meeting and announcements

Councilmember Rytel opens the meeting at 11:06

Councilmember Beck notes that the Board stated at the start of the year that FSR members cannot attend meetings online. However, he observes someone online and questions the fairness. Van Eechoud explains that Winkels online presence is an exception due to his work on the reaccreditation.

Kjos notes that members of the Works Council are on strike and that the council, in solidarity, will not present agenda items on their behalf.

2. Check in Board members, FSR and OR

On behalf of the Board

Van Eechoud explains that the Board is working on the strike to prevent any disadvantage to students in the light of the upcoming exams. She adds that so far, the protests have been peaceful and notes that the Board is also addressing budget cuts.

On behalf of the FSR

Councilmember Hüttner reports that the FSR's organization and finance commission has finalized the accessibility file and the TER amendments. The FSR has also joined a team working on AI. For the mental health file, the FSR has reached out to university institutions to explore collaboration. The FSR plans to organize an event focused on CV building and applying for internships to support students in their career development. Additionally, the FSR aims to assist students facing study challenges and intends to review the GLASS system for course registrations, as it often fails to accommodate personal preferences.

Van Eechoud explains that the GLASS system is UvA-wide. Van Amstel suggests that the FSR can consult the CSR for further details. Kjos highlights a concern from the teaching staff regarding the uncertainty about how many students will attend retakes. Van Eechoud clarifies that students are automatically enrolled for all exams, and a logistical assessment is conducted to estimate attendance for retakes.

Councilmember Blom reports that the PR commission conducted a survey highlighting communication challenges with the university, mainly in the PPLE faculty. Councilmember Rytel would like to open a dialogue with Winkels.

The FSR has visited lectures, engages students via social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, and distributes a newsletter. Van Eechoud proposes discussing the Board's role in encouraging student participation during the next OV. Councilmember Beck reports that the O&O commission has been focused on TER

proposals, anonymous grading, AI regulations, lecture breaks, and lecture recordings. The FSR will continue to monitor the university's compliance with the TER guidelines.

3. Teaching renewal

Donders reports that the teaching renewal process is nearly complete. Improvements are needed in the thesis trajectory, and efforts are underway to share best practices and streamline related issues in collaboration with the examination Board. Salomons reports that the Board is currently working on the second year of the bachelor program. Tubergen asks whether the new bachelor director will contribute to the year plan? Van Eechoud clarifies that the successor will have the opportunity to provide input.

4. Budget cuts – working methods, multiannual planning

Van Eechoud announces that the long-term study penalty (“langstudeerboete”) will be abolished, but it is unclear where the government will make other cuts. A financial faculty plan for the upcoming years is expected by late February or early March. There is no UvA framework for the "starters and stimulerings" grant due to unclear conditions from the Ministry of OCW, making it difficult for central UvA to set boundaries for faculties. The current budget cannot cover all needs, and plans depend on final funding decisions. A small faculty group (“Meedenkgroep”) is brainstorming solutions for budget cuts, uncertainties remain about potential changes over the next six years. Kjos asks if the Works Council can join the meedenkgroep. Van Eechoud clarifies that the group is not a representative body and can organize its own work, it can generate ideas, articulates dilemmas, and has no decision-making power. Kjos and Tros emphasize the importance of including staff representatives earlier in decision-making. Van Eechoud will suggest involving the Works Council to the meedenkgroep in some way.

5. Academic integrity

Van Eechoud reports on faculty-wide academic integrity meetings and an investigation in the tax law department regarding media claims about external sponsorship and commercial influence on research. A committee of three external tax professors reviewed the case under Dutch integrity law, concluding there was no breach. The independent CWI's findings were published on the UvA website, and the UvA Board endorsed the committee's position. Van Eechoud disagrees with a recent Follow the Money publication on the matter.

Lagerwaard asks whether external sponsorship could help to address budget cuts, given the approval of this research. Van Eechoud explains that securing external funding aligns with university-wide policy, but proper safeguards are crucial. Contracts must uphold the code of academic integrity. The CWI has previously emphasized caution in highlighting investor benefits to avoid any appearance of undue influence. While joint interests can be articulated, maintaining a balance is essential.

Kjos asks whether ancillary activities are relevant. Van Eechoud states that ultimately it is the responsibility of managers to monitor this. This is also part of the recruitment process and annual consultations. However, it is not university policy to monitor employees in a systemic way. Councilmember Aarab asks what steps are taken when ancillary activities are in conflict. Van Eechoud responds that this would be addressed in a conversation involving the supervisor, the HR department, and the dean.

6. Annual plans CoL, AGSL and PPLE

Concept year plan FDR

Blessing remarks that support staff is rarely mentioned explicitly in the annual plan of the Faculty, which is not in line with the ‘Erkennen en Waarderen’ policy. Van Eechoud explains that staff has not been divided into two categories in the annual plan. Blessing points out that academic staff has been mentioned explicitly. Van Eechoud responds that Erkennen en Waarderen was initially designed for academic careers but the Faculty decided to expand this to include all staff.

Tubergen inquires about post-academic education, mentioning an evaluation planned for next year, and asks if the Works Council could receive a business plan. Van Eechoud acknowledges that post-academic education is a potential area for budget cuts and adds that she and Winkels are open to discussing the matter.

Tros notes that supervisors are encouraged to improve PhD supervision and asks for examples of participants in these courses. Van Eechoud replies that two or three cohorts have participated so far and mentions her biannual meetings with department chairs. Further, it is mandatory for supervisors to follow this course. Tros also inquires about the 40% research time target for academic staff. Van Eechoud explains that while 2025 will have a normal budget allocation. However, the target of 40% likely cannot be maintained for everyone in the future.

Councilmember Loi raises concerns about an inconsistency between points 7 and 8 regarding the societal relevance of research. Point 7 promotes greater collaboration with NGOs, while point 8 downplays the issue, stating there is only a perceived imbalance rather than an actual one. Van Eechoud states that the inconsistency stems from visitation panel. She will Johan Sluiter to explore potential concerns about funding transparency.

Graduate school of law

Kjos asks about the university's role in standardizing application forms to make Master's applications more inclusive. Donders explains that the Diversity Committee uses tailored questions instead of standard CVs, noting that AI's role in selection must also be considered. Van Eechoud clarifies that while extensive CVs can improve admission chances, students with shorter CVs may also perform well. Kjos then inquires about the Faculty's performance compared to other programs. Donders states that she will follow up on this matter.

Kjos also raises concerns about preventing AI-related fraud in courses. Donders states that fully take-home exams are not viable, while in-class exams are more secure, and assignments should be limited. There is a policy guideline from the Faculty at the assessment, course, and program level. Additionally, questions can be modified to minimize the risk of AI usage. Beck asks how AI use is identified, and Donders explains that there is no reliable tracking system, but language style changes can offer clues. Further, teachers can compare AI responses to their questions. Cases are referred to the examinations board, with some students admitting to AI use.

7. Questions and closing

12:30

8. Action list

Who	What	When
Van Eechoud	Will consult the meedenkgroep about their views on involving the Works Council.	In due time
Van Eechoud	Will explore expanding Erkennen en Waarderen to encompass all staff, including support staff.	In due time
Van Eechoud	Will consult Göran Sluiter to determine whether there are concerns about funding transparency.	In due time
The Works Council & The Board (Winkels)	Will discuss post-academic education.	In due time
Donders	will provide information on how the faculty's graduate school selection process compares to other programs.	In due time
The FSR and Winkels	Will have a meeting on communication between students and the faculty	In due time
The FSR and the Board	Will talk about activating students to engage in participatory organs.	During the next OV