

Date: 4th of November 2024
Time: 10:30-12:00
Location: A7.23
Secretary: Mirthe den Held

REC A, Room A3.12
Nieuwe Achtergracht 166
Studentenraad.nl
E-mail: fsr-fdr@uva.nl

Present on behalf of the Faculty Board: Mireille van Eechoud (dean), Arthur Salomons, Myrthe van Amstel and Radboud Winkels

Present on behalf of the FSR: Zofia Rytel (chair), Len Holstein, Mihnea Loi, Johannes Hüttner, Livni Beck, Robin Blom and Friso Tjittens.

OV Meeting

1. Opening of the meeting

Councilmember Rytel opens the meeting at 10:35.

2. Announcements

Van Eechoud announces that the year plan of the faculty is in the drafting stage. It will be discussed during the next meeting.

3. Year plan of the FSR

Councilmember Rytel states that the FSR-FdR will present its annual plan, which is divided among the three individual committees. Salomons requests clarification on the timeline of the annual plan. Rytel explains that the FSR term runs from September 2024 to September 2025.

a. PR Committee

Councilmember Blom explains that the PR committee will focus on engaging students, by increasing the visibility and the transparency of the FSR. To this end, the FSR will involve first-year students by giving talks during lectures. The FSR will contribute to the newsletters and Instagram accounts of PPLE and Law. Additionally, it will organize social events, including its CoBo, a potential networking gala, and collaborations with other organizations, such as study associations. Winkels asks if the FSR has plans to increase turnout for the student elections. Van Eechoud adds that while the PPLE elections have a high turnout, low turnout in the law programs is not unique but rather a university-wide issue. Blom responds that the issue is on both the FSR and CSR agendas.

b. O&F (Organization and Finance) Committee

Councilmember Hüttner states that the O&F committee aims to enhance accessibility for PPLE students by proposing amendments to the TER. Youssra will be working on Artificial intelligence (AI) within the University. The goal is to integrate a student perspective into both the UvA AI task force and the joint UvA-VU task force. The FSR is actively involved in campus development, advocates for hybrid teaching, will work on improving the PPLE alumni network and will raise awareness regarding the university's mental health facilities. To engage students, the FSR is making an Instagram reel together with staff members. Additionally, the FSR will work on making period products available on campus.

i. Increase of institutional fees

Councilmember Loi states that the FSR has given advice on the UvA budget. Loi notes that the University plans to increase tuition fees for international students and asks how the faculty intends to continue attracting non-EU students? Van Eeoud clarifies that the increase in tuition fees is not directly linked to budget cuts. Students who do not qualify for the reduced fee will be required to pay the unsubsidized institutional fee, which has been insufficient to cover the costs of the bachelor's programs. Given the low percentage of international students in Dutch bachelor's programs, the University decided on a substantial increase rather than a gradual one. The recent increase is driven by rising costs, including inflation. The impact of this increase on international student enrolment remains unclear, though most international students are either financially well-off or supported by scholarships. Additionally, a decline in international student enrolment could also be attributed to the housing crisis or the current political climate in the Netherlands.

ii. Internal budget of the FSR

Loi states that there has been a meeting with Jaap Bakker about the internal budget of the FSR, the draft budget has been sent to José Brugman-Augustijn. Van Eeoud responds that the FSR budget was increased last year and has not been fully spent, making it difficult to justify another increase. Jose Brugman-Augustijn and Jaap Bakker will discuss this with the FSR.

iii. Hybrid teaching

Van Eeoud asks whether the FSR's proposal for hybrid teaching refers to an accessibility initiative or a university-wide plan. Rytel clarifies that the FSR aims to make hybrid teaching available in exceptional circumstances to improve accessibility. For example, a student in the hospital needs to be able to attend a lecture online. Van Eeoud responds that, for staff, hybrid teaching is often associated with the challenges of the COVID-19 era. Teachers found it difficult to simultaneously instruct in-person and online groups, and the UvA is a campus-based university. Rytel suggests renaming the initiative. Winkels adds that he agrees that online education should be available for students with special needs.

iv. Period Products

Van Eeoud states that facility services decides on topics that are organized centrally. The Law Faculty can't act upon this independently. Last year, 70,000 euro was spent on period products and dispensers have been installed. Van Amstel adds that there are suspenders in H0 and B0.

v. AI

Van Eeoud states that the faculty explored new methods for assessing students work while ensuring the quality of exams. The faculty is currently exploring AI integration in education. Salomons mentions that he is part of the AI working group. Van Eeoud suggests connecting the FSR to the working group. Van Amstel will ask them to reach out.

vi. General remark/Alumni relations

Winkels states that the FSR is welcome to contact staff, such as study advisors. However, questions on policy decisions are reserved for these meetings. He appreciates the FSR's involvement with alumni and he is happy to discuss this with the FSR, though the primary responsibility lies with the board. Hüttner explains that the FSR has previously worked on this topic and wishes to review the file again. Winkels agrees that alumni relations serve multiple purposes, including their relevance to current students.

c. O&O (Education and Research) Committee

Councilmember Que states that the amendments on the OER and Anonymous grading will be important topics, the latter aims to remove unconscious bias in assessments. The O&O committee will also address the AI file and the FSR will focus on standardizing the laptop policy in tutorials. The UvA switched to a new platform for examination, the FSR will monitor its implementation. Another issue is that comments on course evaluations are not published on the website, this is important for transparency. Additionally, the FSR noticed that there are many OER infringements or possible infringements within courses.

i. OER infringements within courses

Que notes that it's not the FSR's role to check course compliance with the OER and asks what processes prevent OER infringements? For instance, the verbintenenrecht lecturer mentioned being unaware of recent OER changes. Councilmember Holstein inquires if coordinators are kept informed about OER updates? Van Amstel responds that the faculty distributes key updates when a new OER is issued and provides a Canvas template reflecting changes. Van Eechoud emphasizes that responsibility mainly lies with course coordinators. Winkels adds that within PPLE, the education desk double-checks course manuals. Van Amstel mentions that program directors also review course manuals, and there is a formal complaint procedure or the option to contact program directors directly in such cases.

ii. Examination platform ANS

Councilmember Beck mentions that he found the course evaluation within the examination platform lengthy and asked about its effect on response rates. Van Amstel explains that the platform is in a pilot phase, there were some technical issues, the board can provide an update during the next meeting. Van Eechoud adds that program committees are also involved. The new system is flexible, allowing course-specific adjustments to evaluations, which requires balancing between detailed feedback with student completion rates. Teachers prefer this platform over the previous one for grading, despite occasional issues like exams closing unexpectedly, which can be fixed in settings. Beck notes that there is a warning pop-up indicating the exam would close soon.

iii. General remarks

Winkels notes that there are a lot of proposals concerning PPLE. Rytel proposes to have a PPLE-specific meeting. Van Amstel adds that it might be helpful to organize another meeting specifically for the normal law courses. Since, it will be a lot of work to go through all of them.

4. Budget Cuts

Van Eechoud states that the faculty budget for 2025 won't be influenced as much by the budget cuts. Part of the research funding stops and there are cuts in the central services. Budget cuts are essential, if the university wouldn't do anything, there will be a negative balance of 7 million euro. Loi asks for explanation on the Vini-program. Van Eechoud responds that the program existed before the budget cuts to save money. The average amount of credits that students receive translates into income for the university, this is one of the reasons why the university wants to stimulate students.

5. Toets anderstalige opleidingen

Van Eechoud mentions that the new government has introduced an examination of foreign-language programs (toets anderstalige opleidingen), creating uncertainty within PPLE. The exact details of this test are still unknown. Winkels expresses confidence that the PPLE program has sufficient grounds to continue teaching in English and notes that the policy will not impact current students. Loi asks what would happen if English instruction could not continue. Winkels responds that potential justifications include proximity to international borders (which doesn't apply to PPLE), labor market demand for English skills (relevant for PPLE), and the program's unique, inherently international nature. He adds that he is confident in these justifications.

6. WVTTK

Councilmember Beck states that he attended a course from the confidential advisor, in which he learned that one in ten women experience rape during their studies. In the psychology program, there's a course on "grensoverschrijdend gedrag" (transgressive behavior). He asks what the law faculty does to prevent this? Van Amstel states that in ALF, the faculty provides information about confidential advisors. She would like to see a mandatory course on social safety. Winkels adds that in PPLE, a mandatory course on social safety is being discussed. Salomons states that there is an e-learning module on social safety.

7. Closing of the meeting

Winkels compliments the FSR on the year plan.

11:50

Action-list

Who?	What?	When?
The board	Will present the final faculty budget	During the next meeting
Myrthe van Amstel	Will ask the working group on AI to reach out to the FSR	In due time
Myrthe van Amstel	Will give an update on how the new ANS platform affects student response rates for course evaluations.	During the next OV
Radboud Winkels and the FSR	Will plan a meeting to discuss PPLE-specific proposals.	In due time
Myrthe van Amstel and the FSR	Will plan a meeting to discuss the law-specific OER proposals	In due time