

OV 13 January 2025

Time: 10:30 – 12:30

Location: A7.23

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On behalf of the FSR: Zofia Rytel (Chair), Len Holstein, Robin Blom, Hollando Bangun, Mitra Bamdad, Mirthe den Held (secretary).

On behalf of the Board: Mireille van Eechoud (Dean), Radboud Winkels, Nanda Oudejans, Myrthe van Amstel.

Agenda

1. Opening of the meeting

11:32

2. Announcements

a. New BA-director

Oudejans introduces herself as a professor of legal philosophy and the new director of the College of Law.

b. Online attendance letter

Van Eechoud states that she has received the FSR's letter regarding online attendance and emphasizes the importance of attending in person. She adds that meetings will be recorded for Brugman-Augustijn. Councilmember Rytel confirms that FSR members will also attend in person moving forward.

3. Midterm course evaluations

Councilmember Rytel asks to what extent the midterm course evaluations are being implemented. Councilmember Holstein adds that this is a project from last year's FSR, aimed at improving interaction between teachers and students and making small adaptations to a course within a block possible. Van Amstel reports that two bachelor courses have piloted midterm evaluations through a questionnaire. They found that a formal approach increases workload and therefore prefer an informal approach. Most courses in the bachelor program use the informal approach. Oudejans suggests using the term "check-in" to highlight its informal nature.

Holstein states that the Works Council mentioned it might be possible to implement Midterm Course Evaluations in UvA-Q. How is the rollout of the system going? Van Eechoud adds that the new UvA-Q system offers more possibilities than the old system. However, as it is new, there are minor issues, and staff still need to learn to navigate it. The Board will discuss incorporating the midterm course evaluation into UvA-Q with Donderds. Because teachers first need to familiarize themselves with the standard mandatory evaluations in UvA-Q, and as they prefer the informal approach, Van Eechoud suggests announcing the "check-in" moment during the prior week and reserving 10 minutes at the end of class for it. Midterm course evaluations can be a useful addition because teachers sometimes need to interpret written student feedback at the end of the course, whereas in-person feedback allows for clearer communication and facilitates constructive discussions with students. Oudejans suggests making it common practice for teachers and course coordinators to hold a 10-minute check-in during the 4th week of each course. Winkels notes that these evaluations have been done before in PPLE.

Councilmember Holstein agrees that the procedure for midterm course evaluations does not require formalization. However, he suggests formalizing the communication to teachers and course coordinators by including it in the course templates. He also notes that the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) has resources on panel discussions targeted at PC members, which could be valuable to include in the templates. Van Amstel responds that she will contact the TLC to incorporate this information into the onboarding process for course coordinators. Van Eechoud highlights the importance of ensuring that this information is communicated across multiple levels. She proposes discussing it with program directors and reaching out to Daan van Versendaal. The information can then be shared through course templates, staff onboarding materials, and program director meetings for the master's programs.

4. Budget Cuts

Van Eechoud explains that budget cuts are anticipated due to expected measures from the Ministry of Education and rising service costs. There is still uncertainty about the specific measures from the Ministry, particularly regarding research funding. The central administration of the UvA has also delayed communication on this matter. The details of programs like "Starters en Stimuleringsbeurzen" remain unclear, but as a Law Faculty, action cannot be postponed. By 2028, the Faculty aims to achieve a balanced financial situation, with the priority being to maintain the quality of education. A project group is monitoring progress through weekly meetings, the OR is involved in these discussions. Additionally, a "meedenkgroep" comprising members of support and academic staff is contributing ideas, to ensure that the workloads remain manageable. If research funding is reduced, the faculty anticipates an overcapacity of educational staff.

Holstein asks if the retraction of the "langstudeerboete" has an effect? Van Eechoud responds that this does not make a financial difference for the university. The measures on internationalization have the effect that the government needs to invest less in EU students. "Werkdruk en talentontwikkeling" is a small fund that is kept. Different Universities have different positions and demographics. It's not clear what the effect will be on this Faculty.

5. New guidelines for ethical collaborations with third parties

Van Eechoud states that the new guidelines are still being negotiated with the Central Student Council and Works Council. Once clarity is achieved, discussions will take place within the Law Faculty. Regarding education, the Faculty currently has no collaborations with Israeli universities. However, considerations have begun regarding potentially problematic existing or future collaborations. The law school frequently receives requests for exchanges, which are evaluated based on specific criteria. These include assessing whether the institution is in a sensitive region or country.

6. Educational year plans

College of Law

Councilmember Holstein notes that the program scored lower on structure and coherence compared to last year in the NSE survey. He asks for the Board's perspective. Oudejans states that the decrease

surprises her. The educational renewal was aimed at improving coherence, and she would like to understand why students are experiencing this decrease in coherence. Van Amstel adds that the NSE survey was conducted last March. It is not possible to filter out first-year students, so the data is mixed with responses from second-, third-, and even later-year students. A project is currently evaluating the educational renewal through biannual questionnaires and other evaluation methods.

AGSL

Councilmember Bamdad asks for an explanation of the new CV selection procedure for the Master's programs. How does it improve diversity and inclusion? Van Eechoud explains that this procedure is used in a few selective Master's programs. Students with backgrounds rich in opportunities tend to perform better in traditional selection procedures. To reduce bias and mitigate the risk of generative AI, a standardized questionnaire replaces CVs. Bamdad asks if the FSR can see the standard form. Van Eechoud responds that she will ask Donders to explain the procedure in more detail at the next meeting.

Councilmember Blom inquires about the reflection on thesis trajectories, highlighting that the mandatory feedback meetings are not consistently implemented or conducted uniformly. How can this be improved? Van Eechoud explains that this can be addressed by the program directors and thesis coordinators. If there are repeated complaints about a specific supervisor, they will be brought to the attention of the department head. Blom states that academic integrity is important and asks how students can be better informed about writing proper references. Van Amstel explains that an online module provides a clear explanation.

PPLE

Councilmember Rytel refers to page 4 of the PPLE year plan and expresses that she would like more information on specific courses regarding course evaluations. Winkels responds that the Program Committee has all the information on course evaluations. Rytel suggests that the FSR would find it useful to include this information in the year plan.

Rytel notes that the year report states, “the option of midterm course evaluations was discussed.” She asks about the conclusion of this discussion. Winkels explains that the year plan pertains to the previous year. For this year, it will be communicated and implemented on a voluntary basis. In the long run, it might be applied to all courses. Rytel notes that the examination board's year report has not yet been delivered. She asks when it is expected and whether the FSR will also receive it. Winkels responds that the draft is ready, and he expects it to be delivered this week.

Rytel shares that the FSR has received negative feedback on the new teaching style introduced in the politics major. The lectures have been merged with tutorials, but students prefer the balance between separate lectures and tutorials. Winkels responds that it might be a bit early to make a judgment. He believes in the value of dynamic lectures. However, if all new lectures are consistently evaluated negatively, the Board will need to address the issue.

Rytel notes that the year plan mentions “continued efforts to improve accessibility for students.” Holstein adds that the program scored poorly on accessibility in the NSE survey, with a decline from last year. Both the PC and FSR proposed changes to the TER on accessibility. He asks what specific actions are being taken to improve accessibility? Winkels clarifies that two issues are intertwined: accessibility for students with disabilities, which is covered by UvA-wide policy, and PPLE's attendance policy, which requires students to be on campus. While individual exceptions are made, PPLE's policy will not be changed on a structural level. It is unclear from the NSE survey whether dissatisfaction stems from students with disabilities feeling disadvantaged or from PPLE's in-person attendance requirements.

Holstein states that he has compared the year plans of the College of Law and PPLE. While the former specifically investigates how students who receive support evaluate the program compared to other students, PPLE doesn't make such a distinction. Rytel states that PPLE should do more specific

research. Winkels responds that the number of students with special needs is small, and the study advisors know about the instances. PPLE does not differentiate in the NSE survey because the response rate from students receiving support is too low to draw meaningful conclusions. He believes that students in need get the support they require. Therefore, he feels that the negative response in the NSE is only about the attendance policy, but he will substantiate this with research.

Holstein adds that the program's communication can be improved, emphasizing the importance of students knowing what facilities are available. Rytel suggests posting this information specifically on the PPLE website, as the program is somewhat removed from the UvA. Oudejans adds that the Program Committee of the College of Law has written advice on improving communication about accessibility and mandatory attendance, which could be useful.

7. Closing

11:32

Who	What	When
Myrthe van Amstel	Will contact the TLC to include information on panel discussions in the onboarding of course coordinators.	In due time
Yvonne Donders	Will look into incorporating the Midterm course evaluations into the UvA-Q system.	In due time
Yvonne Donders	Will explain the standardized procedure for the selective Masters in more detail.	During the next meeting.
Nanda Oudejans	Will make it standard practice for teachers and course coordinators to have a 10-minute check-in during every 4 th week of a course in the bachelor.	In due time
The Board	Will communicate information about the Midterm Course Evaluations across multiple levels, including discussions with program directors, coordination with Daan Versendaal, inclusion in course templates, and integration into staff onboarding processes.	In due time
Winkels	Will communicate the midterm course evaluations and implement it on a voluntary basis within PPLE.	In due time
Winkels	Will research how students who receive support evaluate the program.	In due time
Winkels	Will explore adding information about accessibility to the PPLE website.	In due time