Position of the Board of the Faculty of Science and Engineering
Comments on the recommendations of research assessment report Computer Science (2009-2014)

1. *ALICE and the Computer Science section of JBI should collaborate more closely and gradually move towards a single unit of Computer Science at Groningen, in collaboration with the Computational Linguistics Group.*

Comment: The institutes ALICE and JBI-CS have accepted the recommendation of the committee to gradually move towards a single unit. Concrete steps have been taken in 2016 and 2017 to develop plans for a joint strategy and closer collaboration, which will result in a new institute in 2018. Special attention needs to be paid to the fact that JBI also has a Mathematics section. Additional investments from the Faculty and University will be done in order to build an institute of critical mass that is able to face the strong (inter)national competition. Moving towards a single unit of Computer Science at the university level, however, as the committee recommends, would obviously be a much more complex process which possibly conflicts with the interests of information-technology related groups in other faculties. Using the new *Center for Data Science and Systems Complexity* (DSSC) of the Faculty of Science and Engineering as the spearhead, first steps have been taken to initiate closer collaborations with other CS oriented groups at the university, such as the *Computational Linguistics* group (Faculty of Arts), the *Information Systems* group at the Faculty of Economics and Business, the *Law and ICT* group at the Faculty of Law, the *Groningen Bioinformatics Center* at the University Medical Center Groningen (UMCG), and the *Center for Social Complexity Studies* of the Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences.

2. *The capability of publishing papers in internationally leading journals is commended, but effective ways of improving the influence and impact of these papers should be sought.*

Comment: The committee made this recommendation in the context of citation measures. The Dutch universities participating in the research evaluation decided to base the citation analysis on Google Scholar (GS), being the database with the widest coverage of publications in CS journals and conferences. However, the committee specifically made a remark on citation impact, essentially referring to our Web of Science-based figures, which are on a different scale than GS. It is our strategy to continue focusing on publications in internationally renowned journals and top conferences. The latter are increasingly indexed, i.e., also in Web of Science.

3. *The collaboration with industry and the valorisation activities should be expanded.*

Comment: Room for expansion of collaboration with industry and valorisation activities can best be found by engaging in larger initiatives at the Faculty and University. Specifically, we would like to mention the following:

- The Center for Data Science and Systems Complexity (DSSC) establishes collaborations with industry from which the participating institutes (in particular, ALICE and JBI) may profit.
- DSSC participates in the recently established *Groningen Digital Business Center (GDBC)*, which is a collaboration between the Faculty of Science and Engineering (FSE) and the Faculty of Economics and Business (FEB).
- Establishing extraordinary and honorary professorships. Examples are an honorary professorship on Data Science Engineering at DSSC; honorary professorships through an exchange agreement with the Center for Mathematics and Computer Science (CWI), Amsterdam; and an extraordinary professorship, shared between FEB and FSE, to be established at the GDBC. Other honorary positions are under preparation, strengthening the national network of JBI and ALICE.
- Participation in an initiative of FSE with the Dutch government for establishing a national ICT Trainee programme.
- On the basis of acquired (EU) projects there have been established relations with several new industrial partners and the institutes will continue to foster such connections.
- As an example of valorisation output, several patents are filed. We will stimulate our researchers to consider patents if applicable.

- The new joint institute will continue its fruitful collaboration with the Groningen Engineering Center, opening up even more research connections to companies, particularly in the north of the Netherlands.

4. The cohort of PhD student intake needs to be enlarged, and attending national research schools should be encouraged.

Comment: Currently, the PhD student intake is unevenly distributed. Some research groups are already at the limit of their supervision capacity. In other groups there is certainly room for expansion. Overall, it should be possible to increase the PhD student intake. As an illustration of the efforts to increase the number of PhD students, it is worthwhile mentioning a large COFUND grant that was obtained from within the Data-Science and Systems Complexity Center (11 PhD positions).
The institutes will further stimulate membership of national research schools. In this context, we would like to remark that many PhD students from Groningen attend courses of the national research schools without formal membership, since by default these students are already enrolled in the local Graduate School *of* Science *and Engineering* (GSSE).

Finally, we would like to point out that in the tenure-track system of the University of Groningen that has been in place for many years all associate (adjunct) professors have the right to supervise and promote their own PhD students (*ius promovendi*). We mentioned this during the interview with the PRC but did not see it reflected in the remarks made by the committee on this topic (page 12, section 2.3, of the evaluation report).