

Leeuwarden, Fryslân
03 August 2020

Dear colleagues, students and friends of our community,

I am very glad to see that despite the challenges we have faced in the last months, we can gather today, in this building and also online, to celebrate the start of another academic year at Campus Fryslân. Thank you to everyone that made this possible!

This event is about highlighting our work and research, talking about future plans and welcoming new staff and students to our community. We have already heard from our dean and student assessor about the developments in our faculty and the ambitions that we have for the coming years.

As chair of the Faculty Council, representing a diverse team of staff and students, I would like to share with you how we ensure that the faculty plans are in line with the needs and vision of the staff and student communities, as well as working towards participatory, inclusive and representative decision-making at all levels. We are a vibrant, innovative, multi-cultural, curious, ambitious and open community. Together we are building a faculty that invites people to feel

welcome, able to be themselves and contribute from their own unique perspective. These characteristics should also be reflected in the decision-making and governance processes of our faculty and university, as the Faculty Council we are working towards that.

The Faculty Council has only existed for one year, starting activities last September with three staff representatives and three student representatives. We have been working since then on a bottom-up approach to collect the voices of all students and staff members. To do so, we created the so-called forums, one dedicated to the staff and one dedicated to students. The forums are organised throughout the year, and in these, we discuss in an open and safe environment issues important to the community and get the feedback that allows us to serve as representatives, advisors, and liaisons during the Faculty Council meetings.

Together with the Faculty Board, we are working towards transparency and accountability by making all Faculty Council agenda items and meetings public and encouraging the community to actively listen to the discussion and monitor our performance.

These actions have empowered us and position our role within the faculty. I am proud to say that we have built a

constructive and respectful relationship with the Faculty Board that enables us to communicate constructive but much-needed feedback to the Faculty Board and the University Board on issues related to mental and physical well-being, human resources policies, staff satisfaction, budget, Campus Fryslân's growth and expectations and vegan catering services amongst others. Of course, more needs to be done and there is always room for improvement. We look forward to your input!

The Faculty Council is not the only body that helps shape the faculty. To the new staff and students, I invite you to use this month to get to know our faculty, get settled and after that find ways of getting involved either via the student association, green office, programme committees, board of examiners, you are all welcome to actively engaging with us via the staff and student forums, or connecting with any of us through one-on-one conversations. It is important to represent all the voices that make Campus Fryslân so unique and continuing building a diverse and inclusive faculty community.

Personally, I decided to participate in the faculty council because I realised at that time I did not feel represented in any of the boards and there was a need for a more active input from my side. We hope you will feel represented by the Faculty Council, or, at least feel connected with one of

us so we can guarantee that your identity is heard and represented at Campus Fryslân. That's our main goal.

Finally, I would like to thank Frida, Hendrik and Paul, for their valuable contribution during their term as the first-ever student section of the Faculty Council. Thank you so much for your work! Berfu, Engeliën and I are looking forward to continuing the work of the Faculty Council with the newly appointed student section. Lina, Lise, Max and Sinead, welcome to the team.

To all of you, welcome to Campus Fryslân!

Thank you.