



university of
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faculty of economics
 and business



Strategic plan

2016 - 2020

Strategic Plan 2016-2020
Faculty of Economics and Business
University of Groningen

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Introduction

For the upcoming period (2016-2020) the Faculty of Economics and Business (FEB) has four aims:

- 1) To further develop, enhance and innovate our research-driven Degree programmes,
- 2) To strengthen the output of our disciplinary and multi-disciplinary research and increase external research funding,
- 3) To strengthen our research and Degree programmes through societal engagement and corporate relationships,
- 4) To develop into an international school in terms of international Degree programmes, research, student body, staff, partners and overall atmosphere.

To realise these aims we will intensify our efforts to attract, sustain and develop our staff, since the quality and well-being of our staff determine our success. The leading theme in our strategy is to enduringly enhance the *quality* of staff, teaching, research and societal value. FEB focuses on quality, rather than on quantity. This relates to students, Degree programmes, staff and publications: we aim for better students, better Degree programmes, better staff members and better publications. In the next sections we will set out which strategies and actions are being developed and implemented to realise these four aims.

These strategies and actions are in line with the Strategic Plan of the University of Groningen, which was launched in April 2016. FEB's Strategic Plan is also a direct response to the recommendations by EQUIS (2014) and AACSB (2011), both international reviews of Business Schools, as well as our national Research Review Economics and Business (2015) and also based on our own internal and external analyses. Drafts of the present plan are informed by discussions with key stakeholders, including the Faculty's Advisory Board, the Faculty Council, Department Chairs, Programme Directors, Research Directors and other representatives of academic and support staff.

This strategic plan is relatively short and focuses solely on strategies, actions and quality indicators in the areas of teaching, research, corporate connections & societal impact and internationalisation. Other documents specify our environmental analysis and SWOT analysis (AACSB –CIR report 2016, EQUIS report 2014 and various self assessments), goals achieved during the previous strategic planning period (AACSB – CIR report 2016), Financial Plan (2016 – 2020) and Project Plans for the International Classroom, Learning Communities, Language & Culture Policies (2016), Internationalisation Plan and various departmental staff plans. The proposed strategies and actions are directed to achieve our mission and are in line with our vision and values.

FEB's mission

- To prepare students for a leading position in national or international corporate, entrepreneurial or public sectors or a research career through top-rated research-driven programmes in the field of Economics and Business.
- To contribute to the advancement of knowledge in these fields by conducting outstanding research.
- To engage with local and global partners in the corporate world and society in order to contribute with our teaching and research to addressing societal issues and challenges.

FEB's vision and values

- We are an international university-embedded Faculty and foster quality in all areas of activity. We stimulate staff, students and alumni to aim high and strive for the best. FEB successfully competes in the global market for students, staff, and resources.
- The Faculty's teaching, research and management takes place in a setting of academic freedom, integrity, transparency and ethically responsible behaviour.

- FEB is an attractive employer for top talent and embraces the values of passion and performance in an inclusive and cooperative culture. FEB strives for staff diversity at all levels of the organisation.
- FEB is a renowned European research-oriented School for Business and Economics, and we are a strong partner for our corporate and public sector stakeholders, and the academic community.
- Our innovative and research-driven Degree programmes, ranging from BSc to PhD level, receive top ratings in national and international student surveys.
- Our disciplinary and multi-disciplinary research is world class according to research assessments and influential global rank lists.
- FEB has a positive impact on society through our highly employable graduates and by our accessible centres of expertise.
- FEB is firmly rooted in the North of the Netherlands, and engages with the needs and priorities of this region, for example by our contribution to the international economic competitiveness of this region.
- At the same time we define our purpose in terms of global needs and our contribution to societal and economic innovation, the development of global competences to enhance the employability of our students, and our contribution to global societal challenges such as social sustainability, public health, wealth disparities and energy transition.
- Our active student body, dedicated staff, and global partner network contribute to an outstanding learning experience and a thorough preparation for a successful career.

1 Teaching

Our research-driven Degree programmes aim to enable students to be active and committed learners. Informed by the outcomes of various evaluations and assessments FEB will further improve its Degree programmes in the coming years, by further defining the programme profiles and the international and professional orientation as well as increasing our engagement with local and wider society. A comprehensive evaluation of all our Master's programmes (July 2015) has given specific direction to choices and improvement at programme level as well as at portfolio level.

Strategic goals of Teaching

- a Sustain and strengthen educational quality,
- b Offer a more distinct range of Degree programmes,
- c Develop a more international learning environment,
- d Develop a more innovative learning environment,
- e Strengthen the professional preparation and employability of our students,
- f Engage with society by offering executive programmes that reflect our expertise in disciplinary and multi-disciplinary research.

Actions

a Sustain and strengthen educational quality

FEB continues to monitor, sustain and develop our research-driven Degree programmes. Our established closed-loop quality system consisting of course unit evaluations, curriculum audits and discussions with year representatives, continues to be used and refined to enhance our quality culture directed to continuous improvement. FEB will intensify its efforts to reward good teaching by facilitating permanent education, through incentives for excellent lecturers and by differentiated career paths. We will continue to extend the UTQ ¹ qualification for all lecturers and implement STQ ² and a University of Groningen Academic Leadership Programme for those lecturers who seek to further develop their conceptual and leadership skills in the field of education. We will invest in an enhanced student-staff

¹ UTQ = Dutch University Teaching Qualification

² STQ = Senior (University) Teaching Qualification

ratio, that allows programmes to decrease the size of groups, and extend the number of contact hours or the time available to provide feedback.

b Offer a distinct range of Degree programmes

We will strengthen the distinctiveness and profiles of our programmes by reinventing, formulating and communicating their unique selling points. Our Master's programmes will be more closely related to our disciplinary and multi-disciplinary research strengths as well as to our expertise centres. We will invest in the introduction of new Master's course units and tracks (including health and energy) that also reflect our research strengths as well as the activities of our centres of expertise. We will also intensify our communication, matching and selection activities in our Bachelor's and Master's programmes to improve the student-study fit and the quality of our students. At the same time we will phase out programmes and course units which are less in line with our strengths and profile.

c Develop a more international and inclusive learning environment (see also section 4)

FEB aims to become a truly international Faculty. This relates to our student body, international staff, international partners, learning outcomes with an international focus and an inclusive and activating atmosphere. Two specific projects 'International Classroom' and 'Language and Culture Policies' are being implemented in 2016-2019 to achieve a higher level of internationalisation.

d Develop a more innovative learning environment

FEB will innovate its teaching in various ways. Firstly, by introducing multi-level learning communities. These communities consist of students with different levels of experience but a similar interest in a specific professional or disciplinary field, supervised by staff members and alumni. Secondly, by experimenting with e-learning initiatives, the further development of the extensive electronic learning environment and the introduction of innovative forms of formative and summative assessment. Thirdly, FEB will develop its expertise in Educational Innovation by appointing a full professor of educational innovation in Economics and Business. This professor will play an important role in examining and disseminating the use of innovative educational methods, including e-learning, learning communities and international class-room projects. He also leads a faculty-wide network of educational innovators.

e Strengthen the professional preparation and employability of our students (see also section 3)

FEB aims to educate a highly skilled workforce for local and international labour markets, in knowledge and competences that are relevant to the needs of society. Currently, all Degree programmes are involved in the project 'Embedding Employability' with the goal to evaluate how intra and extra-curricular employability activities can be optimised. We will also establish more external advisory boards for Degree programmes, consisting of alumni and representatives of corporate partners. We will also run pilots for corporate internships as an extra-curricular part of our Master's programmes.

f Engage with society by offering executive programmes that reflect our expertise

We will engage with the public and private sectors by developing and offering a number of executive programmes that reflect our expertise in disciplinary and multidisciplinary research, including energy transition management, food management and healthcare management. FEB is also developing state-of-the-art executive programmes connected to the research fields health economics, energy, food and leadership. These initiatives will be placed under the umbrella of the University of Groningen Business School. A director of the UGBS has been appointed and has started to develop and implement a business plan. The UGBS aims to transfer and exchange knowledge with its societal partners.

Quality Indicators Education

- *Quality:* Our degree programmes are highly valued by our students (> 75% A ratings on course units and lecturers), 80% of our alumni state that they advise other people to enrol at FEB.
- *Qualification of staff:* 85% of staff members completed UTQ and in 2020 10 staff members completed STQ trajectories.

- *Profiles:* In 2020 25% of our Master's degree programmes have reinvented and/or explicated their distinctive research-driven and professional profiles. New tracks in healthcare and energy have been introduced and new course units reflect our expertise in research and societal challenges. Five Master's programmes started to offer internships.
- *Innovation:* By 2020 the Professor of Educational Innovation in Economics and Business will have developed and maintained a network of innovative academic staff members. More than eight learning communities will have been established, e-learning modules and innovative assessment methods will have been implemented and evaluated, including electronic and formative assessment instruments.
- *Professional preparation:* Our degree programmes score above 3 on a scale of 1 to 5 for professional preparation by national student surveys (NSE). The Careers Company and the study associations offer a coherent range of learning experiences in close cooperation with the degree programmes, as a result of the 'embedding employability' project. Advisory boards cover the main activities of the Faculty.
- *Executive education:* In 2020 four new executive programmes will have been launched, offered and highly valued by its participants, after being developed and tested in 2016 and 2017. The University of Groningen Business School will be a brand for high quality academically grounded executive education.

2 Research

FEB aims to maintain and even further increase the reputation, societal impact, and international visibility of its research. FEB's research is concentrated in the coordinating Research Institute SOM, which consists of three interrelated units. The first unit comprises the six research programmes covering the academic fields of Economics and Business. The second unit is the Graduate School, including the Research Master degree programme and PhD programme. The third unit, SOM Applied Research, serves as a support office for the Centres of Expertise, which disseminate academic knowledge to stakeholders outside the academic community. FEB's research was evaluated very positively in the recently published national Research Review Economics & Business 2015. Specifically, FEB scored 2 ('very good') on quality, 1 ('excellent') on societal relevance, and 2 ('very good') on viability (using a 4-point scale). As a result, FEB takes a joint number 1 position in the Netherlands, together with the VU Amsterdam. According to the review committee, research conducted at FEB 'meets world-class standards'. At the same time, the committee identified several areas that require attention or need improvement. Based on the committee's feedback, we have formulated seven new strategic research goals.

Strategic goals of Research

- Further strengthen the top-level output of our research, leading to enhanced international visibility and recognition in the academic community
- Attract and retain high-quality staff
- Stimulate multi-disciplinary research initiatives
- Increase external funding of research projects
- Increase our international network
- Improve the placement of PhD students
- Improve the dissemination of research results

Actions

a Strengthen the top-level output of our research, leading to enhanced international visibility and recognition in the academic world

We aim to be an international top-10 research school in Economics and Business (as represented by our research programmes) in Europe. As the international status of the school and the individual scholars strongly depends on publications in high-quality journals, our focus will be even more on publishing in top outlets. To achieve this objective, we are currently considering adapting our incentive system for

rewarding research performance. More specifically, we are in the process of adapting the performance criteria by focusing only on individual researchers' five best publications over a period of five years, and using external and more objective indicators of journal quality. We plan to implement this change in the second half of 2016.

b Attract and retain high-quality staff

To improve the effectiveness of our recruitment efforts, FEB focuses more on employer branding. e.g. by the realisation of a specific informative faculty brochure for new (aspirant) staff and engaging a head-hunting agency. With respect to gender diversity and internationalisation, we aim to increase diversity through internal promotion and external hires. As the TT-system and the Rosalind Franklin Fellowship have proven to be successful, FEB will continue these policies. FEB is fine-tuning its talent-development-programme, including the Tenure Track and Rosalind Franklin Fellowship policy. To attract and retain high-quality staff FEB will improve the conditions of employment and will pay more attention to work-life balance, partner-support (dual careers) and its hiring activities on the international job markets.

c Stimulate multi-disciplinary research initiatives

Many of the major challenges faced by society require research-based insights from multiple disciplines. Research conducted at FEB has the potential to contribute significantly to this need for insights. To stimulate multi-disciplinary research focused on addressing complex challenges, FEB has decided to fund a number of Signature Areas³. These Signature Areas are small 'research communities' where several of FEB's top researchers with proven track records and often different backgrounds, work on joint research projects.

In contrast to existing research programmes and departments, these communities have emerged from shared research interests, can be temporary, do not have a formal governance structure (with boards or directors) and are very flexible. By financially supporting these initiatives, FEB hopes to stimulate innovative, multi-disciplinary research projects, and to further improve the quality and visibility of FEB's research.

d Increase external funding of research projects

We accept the challenge to focus even more on fundraising and become less dependent on direct funding by the government. We aim to further strengthen the collaboration between corporate partners and FEB's Centres of Expertise by facilitating and stimulating academic staff to participate in activities of the centres, and regularly reviewing the centres' portfolios. Moreover, we aim to further increase funding for large-scale projects in collaboration with international research consortia. Building on the proven success of our current policies, we aim to attract substantial funds from Horizon2020, the European Research Council (ERC) and related programmes. Initiatives have been taken to support potential applicants, by providing specialised expertise, financial means and compensation of time investment. FEB will experiment with the possibility of outsourcing some of its support activities regarding external funding.

e Increase international network

As suggested by the research review committee, we are currently working on an ambitious visiting professorship programme. A budget will be made available to not only invite excellent scholars from abroad to spend a longer period in Groningen, but also to support our own staff to spend time at reputed universities abroad to work on joint research projects. Also, a programme to encourage PhD students in spending some time at reputable business schools abroad will be established, including funds and administrative support. We will also take stock of existing international research contacts and explore how we can further structure and benefit from these contacts with strong international partners (e.g., by staff exchange programmes and exchanges of PhD students).

³ These Signature Areas are 1) The Dynamics of Global Development and Inequality, 2) Connecting Innovation and Creativity, 3) Digital Business Models, 4) Individual Health & The Economic Environment, 5) Board Effectiveness, 6) Collective Resilience, 7) Markets and Sustainability.

f Improve the placement of PhD students

The Research Review committee has strongly recommended providing more career guidance to PhD students. This year the Graduate School will start a programme offering activities like career events, placement services (including appointing two placement officers), internships in cooperation with the Centres of Expertise and the Careers Company, and also funds for PhD students to visit job markets in their final year.

g Improve the dissemination of research results

We hired two in-house journalists to strengthen interaction with the general public, and further improve the dissemination of research findings, as suggested by the review committee.

Quality indicators Research

- *The number of top publications*⁴: We aim for an increase from 37 in 2015 to 43 in 2020.
- *Increase of external funding*: We want to achieve an increase of 15% in external funding in 2020 (comparison year: 2015).
- *The number of external visitors*: We facilitate at least 12 visiting scholarships per year.
- *The percentage of PhD students who study abroad*: 33% of the PhD students goes abroad for at least 3 months during their project in 2020.
- *Placement*: We will actively track the careers of our PhD students, and count the number of PhD students who find jobs in academic positions at FT Top-100 Universities or other highly reputed institutions (e.g., DNB, ECB, CBS, etc.).
- *Visibility and recognition*: We will actively track the recognition for research conducted at FEB (prizes, mentions in the media, distribution of h-index scores in WOS and Google scholar, etc.).

3 Corporate Connections and Societal Impact

We aim to increase the visibility of our position in and impact on society through employable graduates and through disciplinary, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research that contributes to the economic and business environment as well as to society as a whole. Therefore FEB seeks to interact with local and global partners in society and the corporate world in order to connect research and teaching, staff and students with societal issues and challenges. During recent years FEB has set up a support organisation for societal and corporate connections. This organization develops and maintains a regional, national and internationally diversified network of reputable partners in the public and private sectors. During the coming years we will strengthen and develop our societal position by strengthening our network and sustaining an organisation that supports our teaching and research.

Strategic goals of Corporate Connections and Societal Impact

- a Strengthen intra and extra-curricular attention for the corporate world in FEB's Degree programmes
- b Strengthen the research cooperation between corporate partners and FEB's Centres of Expertise
- c Further develop a regional, national and internationally diversified, societally engaged and high-quality network of reputable partners in the corporate world
- d Further develop FEB's support organisation for corporate connections and partnerships

Actions

a Strengthen intra and extra-curricular attention for the corporate world in FEB's Degree programmes

All Degree programmes are currently participating in the project 'embedding employability'. The goal of this project is to analyse how employability is embedded in the programmes and to determine how intra and extra-curricular employability activities can be further optimised. The outcomes will be

⁴ In the most recent research review, publications in journals with an Article Influence percentile score > 80 were counted as 'top'.

implemented in the coming years. A project to establish student consultancy for small and medium-sized enterprises in the region will be extended. FEB is also implementing Faculty supervised internships as an optional addition to the Master's programmes. An increasing number of degree programmes consult alumni and other representatives of the corporate world on a regular basis, e.g. through advisory boards during their efforts to strengthen and innovate education.

b. Strengthen the research cooperation between corporate partners and FEB's Centres of Expertise

To optimise the cooperation of corporate partners with FEB researchers, FEB offers a range of services through SOM Applied Research and its Centres of Expertise. The Career Services and Corporate Relations office supports SOM Applied Research and the Centres in establishing contacts and facilitating regular information exchange with, as well as monitoring and archiving contacts with the corporate world (e.g., via the implementation of a customer relationship-management system/CRM).

c Further develop a regional, national and international diversified network of partners in the public and private sector

FEB will continue to intensify its connections with regional companies, inter alia through its account management for regional SME's and its membership of regional networks. Support and academic staff will continue to participate in regional networks and participate in regional, national and international bodies. We will add international partners to internship formats and we will actively use FEB alumni to increase our links with the national and international corporate world. We will develop a limited number of strategic institutional partnerships that include cooperation with regard to knowledge development, executive education and graduate recruitment.

d. Further develop a support organisation for corporate connections and partnerships

The Career Services and Corporate Relations department functions as a contact desk at FEB level for organisations interested in cooperation in research and or education related projects. A Faculty-wide strategy group for societal impact and corporate connections helps to foster and link existing activities and to create a platform at FEB level to discuss new projects and initiatives. This group has developed a long term vision, with several actions in the following areas: internal and external engagement, improved organisation, effective communication, funding and quality control. To capture the main corporate connections, FEB has also defined its customer relationship management (CRM) processes and will implement a CRM system. We will intensify and diversify our alumni activities through our FEB alumni network, which is closely connected to the Faculty.

Quality indicators Corporate Connections and Societal Impact

- *Professional orientation/career services:* In 2020 degree students will rate professional orientation/career services above 3 on a 1-5 scale in the NSE (National Student Questionnaire).
- *Internships:* In 2020 70% of the degree students will be satisfied with the possibilities for internships within or outside their Degree programmes.
- *Corporate Partnership Model:* In 2020 FEB will have developed and implemented a strategic model for corporate partnerships, resulting in long-term agreements for cooperation with a limited number of key partners.
- *Corporate Partners Interface:* In 2020 FEB will have its interface for corporate partners in place, through accessible web portals for career services, Centres of Expertise and executive education.
- *Customer Relations Management:* In 2020, FEB will have its customer relations management processes in place and have fully implemented a CRM system to attract and sustain the main corporate connections.

4 Internationalisation

At FEB, we regard internationalisation as a strategic response to the challenges of the globalising environment. We define our role in the world in terms of the impact of our teaching and research with

regard to the major societal challenges of today and tomorrow. Many of these challenges result from issues that are global rather than local, and can therefore not be addressed at regional or national levels only. This requires an international and comparative perspective throughout our core activities teaching, research and engagement. Therefore, for the coming years we will further develop our current internationalisation efforts, but will also enhance both the scope and the depth of internationalisation at our Faculty. We will broaden our international perspective with regard to research and corporate relations by various actions in these fields (see sections 2 and 3). At the same time we will deepen internationalisation by making our academic community more diverse and inclusive.

Strategic goals of Internationalisation

- a Increase the diversity of FEB's student population
- b Increase the diversity of FEB's staff
- c Further internationalise the FEB learning experience
- d Develop the inclusiveness of FEB's academic community

Actions

a Increase the diversity of FEB's student population

We aim to raise the number of international students in degree programmes to 25 %, while maintaining a healthy mix of nationalities. We aim to raise the (annual) number of incoming international exchange students to 450. In order to achieve this, we will further operationalise the overall FEB positioning and distinctive characteristics of the FEB degree programmes in our marketing, improve and expand our recruitment through external agents and representatives and our follow up on leads and applications, and develop our online presence and social media strategy. We will increasingly develop the FEB double degree activities, extend our network of academic exchange partners, and will try to make the FEB offer even more attractive for incoming exchange students.

b Increase the diversity of FEB's staff

FEB will increase the number of international core faculty and international support staff by using the services of professional international recruiting agencies, improving our information for prospective new staff. FEB will also further develop the introduction and general support structure for new international staff, as well as the partner support options. In addition, FEB will actively target international academic staff for managerial positions, giving them clear incentives for taking up managerial tasks, and making the organisational environment sufficiently accessible to take up such tasks. FEB will actively target international staff and students for participation in Faculty governing and advisory bodies, promoting the importance of the representative bodies to international staff and students, while being clear about the amount of time and effort it will require from them, and about any remuneration available. At the same time, we will work on making the organisational environment sufficiently accessible to allow for their full participation.

c Further internationalise the FEB learning experience (see also section 1)

FEB will work on the enhancement of the FEB international classroom by actively participating in the University of Groningen International Classroom project. In this project, FEB will further implement the concept of international classroom in its Bachelor's degree programme International Business and Master's degree programme Business Administration.

d Develop inclusiveness of FEB's academic community

Related to the University's Language & Culture policy and Learning Communities project, FEB will set up a range of projects aiming to improve the English language proficiency and intercultural competences of staff and students; the welcome, introduction and continuing support of new international staff; the preparation and introduction of international degree and exchange students, with a specific focus on new international students entering a FEB Master's Degree programme and the integration of students with different cultural backgrounds. Together with international students and staff, we will take stock of

concrete issues they encounter with regard to inclusiveness and integration, and develop ways to deal with these issues.

Quality indicators of Internationalisation

- *International Degree Students:* In the coming years, the percentage of international students in FEB degree programmes, including Double Degree programmes, open to international students will gradually increase from 20% in 2016 to 25% in 2020.
- *International Exchange Students:* The number of incoming international exchange students, attracted by FEB's international course unit offer, will gradually increase from 350 in 2016 to 450 in 2020.
- *International Staff:* In 2020 35% of our staff will have a non-Dutch nationality and/or background. An increasing percentage of international academics will fulfil higher positions (associate and full professorships, and managerial positions).
- *Learning Experience:* In 2020, the international classroom concept will have been implemented in the BSc International Business and MSc International Economics and Business. First evaluations will indicate that participation in the international classroom will result in a more inclusive and more international learning experience.
- *Inclusiveness:* In 2020, the results of the NSE ⁵, ISB ⁶ and NAE ⁷ surveys will show that FEB international students highly value their studies at FEB and are satisfied with the FEB experience.

⁵ NSE = National Student Questionnaire

⁶ ISB = International Student Barometer

⁷ NAE = National Alumni Questionnaire

