



minutes

faculty of spatial sciences

faculty council

Meeting Faculty Council

Date and time

16 April 2026; 11.00 hrs

Reference

draft

Location

5416.0056 (**let op: zonder polycom**)

To

A.P.P. Remund, A. van den Assem, C. Mast, S. Enuma, C. O'Driscoll, S. Koster, S. Arnold

Others: Ibn Battuta, RECG, U-krant

Present:

FC: Conor O'Driscoll, Elliot Crozier, Sienna Fernandes-Hansen, Michel Beinecke, Nils Muller, Adrien Remund

FB: Sierdjan Koster, Karin Mast, Sanne Arnold, Arjan van den Assem

Others: RECG, Ibn Battuta

Absent: E. Turhan, A.C. Tiel Groenestege, Ryan Edelenbos

Agenda items

Actions

Number	Who?	What?	Dead-line?	See point
1.	Faculty council	Communicate sentiments about prevention coordinator candidate to Nienke	ASAP	
2.	Pro Geo	Proposal on more individual writing assignments + suitable courses.		
3.	Pro Geo	More concrete plan for course evaluations		
4.	Pro Geo	Survey on the social safety prepared to accumulate stories and present this to the FB.		
5.				

Decisions/Advice

Number	Subject	See point
1.		

1. Opening + setting agenda

2. Announcements and received documents

a. Update PCs:

- 1) Next block PC cycle has not yet started, no updates

b. Update Faculty Board

- 1) Open access strategy previously discussed is now published, will be used throughout faculty for open access publishing. In line with what BSS uses for publishing. A new version may be adopted by the University in the future.

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- 2) Convened with the University Board (Cvb) for informal talk, most discussion centered around budget. No big issues arising from the meeting. Keep a close eye on this idea of resilience, how this impacts the FSS. Broad definition of resilience, in the university and beyond. FC take into account what resilience means and looks like for FSS.
 - 3) Karin was in contact with Nienke about installing kitchen in previously mentioned room in Duisenburg
 - 4) How the hiring freeze impacts FSS staff?
 - a) Relating to 5 persons who have a contract ending regardless (prior to the freeze)
 - b) No immediate consequences
 - 5) More comments from FC on point 8
- c. Update extra Radenoverleg (09 April 2026)
- 1) Adrien attended on behalf of FC
 - 2) Representatives from all FCs and a representative from UC, relatively well attended.
 - 3) People were most interested in the interaction between Cvb and one to one meetings with FCs. Philosophy was disappointed as their safeguards were not mentioned. Seems that discussion of safeguards was being delegated to post merger decision. RCS felt similarly as Philosophy. Adrien gave feedback from FSS, similar conclusions about conditions/safeguards. Due to discussions about conditions being pushed to post merger, there seem to be no guarantees. There is little clarity still on how the process of this would take place. Arts seems to be working under the assumption that the merger will take place, open position for a new Dean is now available to other faculties that could be part of Arts. Proposed merger documents will be released April 30th, discussed in committees on May 10th, final vote on May 28th. Cvb is adamant for decision to no longer be pushed back. Ethemcan will send out documents to Cvb, along with the letter. Several faculties complained about incorrect numbers/data being provided by Cvb (especially regarding student intake numbers).
 - 4) Suggestion: to send our data about student intake numbers
 - a) Comment: best to do if the Cvb asks directly for that
 - 5) Cvb did ask for us to send sentiments (conditions etc)
 - 6) Concerns about if the vote does not go the way Cvb desires, they may still go to the larger court in Utrecht
 - 7) Vastly different numbers provided about financial gains from merger.
 - 8) FSE stated that irrespective of what happens with merger, they will refuse to change internal structures.
 - 9) Reaction from FB to information from Adrien:
 - a) It is risky to send safeguards/conditions because they can take over the discussion and take away from the merger being central to the discussion. Safeguards are a part of the decision, but should not become the core/basis of decision/vote. Conversation could also shift towards the process/planning and away from the merger decision.
 - b) Document received about input(other faculties?), implies that there are no guarantees. This stated

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- essentially that all safeguards are left to the process after, which again does not give any guarantees.
- c) What remains difficult is that the argument changes depending on who is talking. What is needed for the university to survive and what will help the university succeed. Hopefully the University council will be strict on keeping focus in line.
 - d) Are certain faculties sustainable? Again looking at inflow and outflow numbers, which do not seem to be consistent. It is important to not only focus only on bachelor intake, master and Phd intake must be taken into account for faculty sustainability. FSS is predicted to have relatively stable numbers over the next 5 years, slightly less bachelor and master but likely more Phd.
 - e) Moving to budget discussion: where the numbers are coming from? 10 million seem to be budget in the budget cut document, which gives a list of things that we can economize on and possible amount saved. All things on this list cannot be cut. 10 million is reserved for economizing on process for harmonization and centralization. For this amount to be saved we need fewer faculties, is the argument put forth. 10 million is by far over estimating possible amount saved, likely closer to 6 - 7million. Most of the budget stress is coming from larger faculties, their deficits will impact the university much more than ours.
 - f) Back to the resilience or adaptivity point: may be improved with less faculties, but hard to predict or substantiate this argument.
 - g) Comment from Adrien: UCG seems to be eager to merge, but this seems to be mostly from the Dean and possibly from all staff/ FC

3. Concept minutes of 5 March 2026 (annex – for approval)

- Correcting point about diversity committee

Approved with minor corrections

4. Governance

- a. Quite a bit of discussion about this already took place in announcements
- b. Deadlines for decision and voting clear
- c. Clear advantage of merger is still vastly unclear and necessity for it still being questioned.
- d. Safeguards have been promised by Cvb and council to be taken into account. In the end if these things are integrated only in the process phase, it is not really a safeguard anymore.

5. Input from Pro Geo

- a. Main point about elections
 - i. List submitted from Pro Geo with 8 candidates. Competing party DVS also submitted a list, very last minute so we did not submit a support list. There is a chance that all seats will not go to Pro Geo.
 - ii. Using Faculty resources for promotion during elections? Might not be possible because of bias?
 - iii. If there is a seat for DVS there are concerns for how PCs will be selected and managed?

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6. Input from staff

- a. Point raised by Connor on behalf of staff: confusion about announcements for open positions. Will these announcements always be published and requirements made clear? The degree of openness of the positions has been differing between courses/positions.
 - i. Response FB: started as an experiment somewhat, last year started the open announcement procedure. Wish to continue this process as it brought more opportunity. Some unclarities around what the department chair can do and what requirements are for positions. Planning to continue the open announcement for positions.
 - ii. Always somewhat tricky to determine criteria for positions.
 - iii. Some confusion that people were unaware that some positions were open (for example SSP).
 - iv. Suggestion from Adrien: to always publish open positions in the same way so that there is clarity for what positions are open and when.

7. New Prevention' coordinator

- a. FC received email with information for new prevention coordinator candidate.
 - i. Consensus from FC was that there seemed to be a low level of experience and not fit for the position to be prevention coordinator for the entire campus. Concerns around whether this candidate experience match specifically seeming unfit to deal with occupational health, campus safety, etc.
 - ii. FC consent necessary for appointing new position?
 - iii. Concerns over lowered FTEs for the same amount of work.
 1. Likely already approved, so not pertinent to argument against the position/candidate
 - iv. FC will send input to Nienke who can make sure it is forwarded to right person

8. Budget cuts 2026

- a. Touched a bit on this point earlier in announcements
- b. Question from Adrien: is the hiring freeze only taking place this year or for the foreseeable future?
 - i. FB response: for now the hiring freeze is in place only for this year (2026)
- c. From Adrien: concerns about the fact that some parts of the faculty will be hit harder by the freeze than others (for example cultural geography)
 - i. Response from FB: this does not seem to be a problem for now, of course if this is prolonged into 2027 then there may be issues with too much outflow. This is not possible to predict, besides retirement, but more random outflow (finding new positions etc) may be affecting some departments more than others. If a certain area is losing too many FTEs to a point of affecting the education, exemptions can be made (and this has already been done).
 - ii. It is important to get an overview of the most important topics and areas over the next few years and try to strategically deal with possible outflow from those areas/departments etc.
 - iii. This will all be exacerbated by possible student number decrease, which will result in lowered FTEs and cutdowns.
 - iv. Steps are being taken to protect education quality in the face of this freeze and to safeguard certain areas in the face of uncertainty.
 - v. Long term and short term plans in the making

9. Any other subject

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 - a. Nienke is looking at an opportunity to close the Duisenberg building at the end of summer. Then people who need to work during that time may be allowed to work in Mercator.
 - b. Question from Connor: where will they go?
 - i. Comment from Connor: there is an ongoing process to optimize office use in Economic geography
 - c. Announcement from FB:
 - i. Benelux conference was a great success
 - ii. Next installment of this conference will be hosted by us! (2028)
 - iii. 2027 is a lustrum year for FSS!

10. Closure and date next meeting (28 May 2026)

Closure: 12:29