

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASoS) Research  
Institute  
Mid-Term Review, 2015

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## Faculty Board reply to main issues raised in the report

First of all we would like to thank the members of the mid-term committee for their thorough and comprehensive assessment of our research, their well-structured report and its clear advice. We appreciate the willingness of all members to put in the extensive amount of work needed to read our report and the selected results of our research carefully.

Our response starts with issues raised in the general section of the report. Subsequently we discuss the advice provided in relation to specific programmes and centres.

### *I. The FASoS Research Institute*

1. Without a clear Faculty mission-statement as to why new centres are necessary, the “corporate image” of the Faculty could be adversely affected.

FASoS will integrate such a mission-statement in the next Faculty Strategic Plan 2016-2020.

2. Need for a Faculty-wide “vision text” on nurturing and maintaining interdisciplinarity, both in content and in organization, stressing the importance of interdisciplinary research teams and of integrating the framing of issues and theory building.

A very good idea. Such “vision text” will be integrated in the next Faculty Strategic Plan as well.

3. While continuing to use the SEP system, FASoS could separately list peer-reviewed books, based on information given by the authors, thereby including books in the general output norm. The Faculty could include the list of peer-reviewed books as an annex to its next *Self-Evaluation Report* (in preparation for the 2017 External Review).

This point is well-taken. FASoS will follow up on it by providing the next re-accreditation committee with the SEP table and a separate list of peer-reviewed books.

4. Just as refereed journal articles are generally privileged over books, sole (or co-authored) books are generally privileged over edited books. This should not deter FASoS from highlighting edited books, especially those that emerge directly from the interdisciplinary research agendas of its Research Programmes

FASoS fully agrees with this assessment and will continue to highlight edited books. As a matter of fact, throughout the year we put copies of these books on display in a showcase for everyone to see. Moreover, the publication of new monographs and edited volumes from our staff is periodically communicated in our weekly newsletter (FASoS weekly) and on our website (<http://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/Faculties/FASoS/Theme/AboutTheFaculty/PublicationsFacultyStaff.htm>)

5. Nor should FASoS neglect the potential of publishing its Research Programmes’ work in special editions of journals, often as a prelude to publication in book form.

We agree with this observation and will stimulate our research programmes to pursue this option.

6. On a related note, the Committee advises the Faculty to be wary of efforts to evaluate the impact of refereed journal articles.

Our prime objective is to publish in high qualified journals or with highly respected publishers (in case of monographs and edited volumes). Yet this is not our only objective. We want our work to be read and cited. Moreover, we want to be visible to the outside world. To obtain reliable information on how well read and visible we actually are, both within the academic world and in society at large, we commissioned preliminary research performed by scientometrist dr. Ad Prins. His effort has led to useful insights and provided us with practical recommendations (e.g. publish in journals that are indexed by Google Scholar; list your work in METIS; keep an eye on your categorization in METIS). It is wise, in our view, to do this kind of impact research once in a while. The fear that we will assess colleagues on the basis of the impact of their output is unwarranted.

7. The Committee encourages the Faculty to think about ways in which valorisation may be fully acknowledged and rewarded.

Valorisation is one of our key tasks. Yet, valorisation may have quite different meanings, ranging from “selling knowledge” to “sharing insights” or “debating issues with a wider public.” FASoS will continue to stimulate the valorisation of research (in its various meanings) through the Research Stimulation and Valorisation Fund (RSF). FASoS also highlights valorisation activities in its weekly newsletter (FASoS weekly) and on its website (<http://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/FASoS/ResearchPortal.htm>).

8. Scholarly productivity and teaching excellence should trump fund-raising ability in the evaluation of Faculty members. A strategic approach—targeting realistic grant opportunities—is called for.

FASoS acknowledges that some researchers are better-equipped and more inclined than others to identify and pursue grant opportunities. Even more than we have been doing already, however, FASoS will stimulate its academic staff to pursue realistic grant objectives (based on advice from the funding advisor). In yearly appraisals of researchers we assess their activities in an integrated way. We prefer tailor-made assessments, meaning that we do not necessarily value particular research activities more than others in all situations or in all career phases.

9. The call for rising productivity in fund-raising accentuates the growing pressure on “free” research time. Some initiatives can be taken to ameliorate this, such as an additional investment in sabbatical leaves and in the provision of research assistants. Moreover, there needs to be a continuous reflection about the relationship between quantity and quality of research (output). The Faculty should make clear that it takes this challenge seriously.

Certainly, FASoS is very serious about the challenge regarding growing pressure on “free” research time. As a result of a UM survey regarding work experience, FASoS has taken up a number of actions already:

- Central FASoS budget for sabbaticals has been increased with 1000 hours.
- Current Lecturers 3: all have or will get 70/30 contracts instead of 80/20 ones.
- *No teaching duties for at least one 8-week course period.*
- The number of non-academic tasks of academic staff will be reduced.

10. the Mid-Term Review Committee notes that the length of time that junior faculty members spend at FASoS before being eligible for a tenure-track position, and, if they hold such a position, before coming up for tenure, may be excessive. This is likely to accentuate the anxiety of junior faculty members and ultimately cause some of them to leave.

11. The Committee urges FASoS to take additional steps to retain valued junior faculty members and encourages Programme Directors to press the Dean on that point.

The issues addressed by 10. and 11. are related. We would like to stress that at FASoS the time for tenure-track eligibility is 2 years. Once staff members are on a tenure-track, they can go up for tenure within a period of 2 to 3 years. A total period of 5 years before reaching tenure can hardly be seen as excessive in the (inter)national context. And with new Dutch labour laws in place this period will even be shorter in the near future.

Moreover we would kindly remind the committee and our colleagues that FASoS created almost 30 tenure-track positions in the last six years. Of colleagues offered a tenured-track position only very few left FASoS. The exception here is the comparatively small GTD programme, which in recent years saw two colleagues decide to continue their career elsewhere.

12. The committee positively evaluated the proactive stance taken by FASoS to fill the expected vacancy due to the departure of a highly-productive professor before it could cause a drop in production. However, the Committee wondered why this successful approach was not taken in two other cases (AMC and CGD).

It is important indeed to strengthen all research programmes and research centres as much as possible. However, the FASoS Board is not in favour of a one-size-fits-all policy. We also provided specific support to AMC and CGD, if in ways different from the support given to the MUSTS programme. In financial terms all programmes received an equal share.

## *II. The AMC programme*

AMC will take the remark on the disproportionate number of professional (in particular newspaper) publications to heart. However, a substantial number of these publications are written by prof. dr. I. Cornips, who considers this to be a very valuable way of keeping in touch with the region central to her research (the province of Limburg); moreover, she is a very prolific writer of peer-reviewed articles. We agree on the issue of the great value of Dutch monographs; although they figure prominently among our publication highlights, we will emphasize them even more in the future.

We share the Committee's concern about the risk of pursuing coherence at the expense of individual research. In line with the Committee's positive valuation of edited books as products of a programme's research agenda, we are presently working on an AMC volume articulating a "Maastricht" approach to humanities, including valorisation, comprising both collective and individual contributions. Through MACCH, AMC will link up with such NWO programmatic themes as e-humanities and Creative Industry.

## *III. The PCE programme*

No comments

## *IV. The MUSTS programme*

We appreciate the notes of the committee on interdisciplinarity. As it is one of the defining characteristics of the research programme (and of the faculty's research institute), we will continue our efforts and make these explicit in the next self-evaluation report

Moreover, we will reconsider the MUSTS lines of research that together address a core interest in "cultures of innovation". As a result of the hiring of two new professors in the programme (Van Lente and Mody), the topic of emerging technologies has been gaining more attention in our research. During the next annual research day (Summer Harvest), our lines of research will be discussed with all researchers of the programme. In our view this discussion is connected to the ambition to remain visible in core STS journals, whereby it is a question how our contributions should achieve that goal.

In response to the much appreciated recommendation to make our outreach activities more explicit, we will articulate how outreach activities, in their turn, feed our research with ideas and questions.

#### V. The GTD programme

We welcome the committee's suggestions for addressing staff-retention issues. While acknowledging that quite different concerns may influence the decision of prospective staff to commit themselves to a position at Maastricht University, the GTD, together with the GDS teaching programme and the Dean of the Faculty, has launched a search for an assistant/associate professorship with a "fast-track" to a tenured position, to attract and try to retain a strong candidate. At the time of this writing, this recruitment procedure was not yet completed.

We agree on the issue of the limited value of the SCIAMPI methodology for the GTD, being a newly established group made up of early-career researchers in particular. There were few publications to take into consideration for this methodology, and the benchmarks used were too high for us to be able to draw lessons from the exercise. That said, we will continue to focus our efforts on publishing in high impact-factor journals, while maintaining a balance with professional publications and valorisation activities. This strategy has served us well thus far.

The GTD has a large network of international collaborators on research projects. To increase its network among institutions focusing on Development Studies, it has recently joined the European Association of Development Institutes (EADI), as suggested by the committee. We are currently following up on the recommendation to strengthen our cross-border partnerships through our partnerships with institutions in Belgium and Germany in the context of MACIMIDE and the ITN-TRANSMIC programmes.

#### VI. The Centre for Gender and Diversity

We are happy with the high appreciation of the CGD's efforts and acknowledge the viability and urgency of the recommendation of the committee to enhance the visibility of gender perspectives in FASoS research. We will devote a portion of our upcoming research colloquia to develop such a strategy.

#### VII. The SHCL

As indicated by professor Knotter, he will retire as of January 1, 2019. The appointment of his (prospective) successor, both as director of the SHCL and as professor in FASoS, will ideally overlap

with his own for one to two years. The close bonds with FASoS continue to be highly important and the SHCL's supervisory board (CvT) recommended to integrate the SHCL research even more into FASoS. Similarly, the teaching tasks of the SHCL may be expanded, in particular when the plans for a bachelor in Global and Regional Studies will materialise. The faculty's new strategic plan, which will be developed as of September 2015, provides a good opportunity to further frame this integration in more detail. In a memo professor Knotter will develop some preliminary notes on this subject.

#### VIII. The FASoS Graduate School

As was stated in the report: "*The Self-Evaluation does not include an overview of completed PhD theses (so it is not possible to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of PhD training).*" An overview of completed PhD theses has been attached to this response.

Furthermore, the report suggested "*to evaluate the career trajectory of PhD graduates, not only immediately after they leave the Faculty but also after a period of five years.*" We have now planned to carry out such a survey and have already discussed the questions that could be included in a survey of this kind. At the same time we would like to point to the fact that our Graduate School's "Linked-in group" also allows us to track the career trajectories of "our" PhDs. Moreover, for June 2015 we organised a Conference aimed at bringing our current PhDs into contact with alumni of the FASoS Graduate School.

## Annex : List of PhD defences 2011-2013

### 2011

Nora Engel

Supervisor: prof.dr.ir. W.E. Bijker

Co-supervisors: Prof.dr. H. van Lente, dr. R. Zeiss

Title: "Tuberculosis in India; a case of innovation and control"

Successfully defended on 20 April 2011.

Julia Quartz

Supervisor: prof.dr.ir. W.E. Bijker

Co-supervisor: dr. A. Hommels

Title: "Constructing Agrarian Alternatives; how a creative dissent project engages with the vulnerable livelihood of marginal farmers in South India"

Successfully defended on 21 April 2011.

Patrick Bijsmans

Supervisors: prof.dr. T. Blom, prof.dr. A.J.J. Nijhuis, UvA

Title: "Debating Europe: Reflections on EU Affairs in the Public Sphere"

Successfully defended on 1 June 2011.

Hylke Dijkstra

Supervisors: prof.dr. T. Blom; prof.dr. S. Vanhoonacker

Title: 'The role of the council secretariat and the European Commission in EU Foreign Policy'

Successfully defended on 15 June 2011.

Henk van Elmpt

Supervisor: Prof. dr. T. Blom

Title: "Een besef van eigen kracht, Limburgse Provinciale politiek in de periode 1962-2007"

Successfully defended on 29 June 2011.

Elissaveta Radulova

Supervisor: Prof. dr. T. Blom

Title: "Europeanization through Framing? An inquiry into the influence of the Open Method of Coordination on childcare policy In the Netherlands"

Successfully defended on 7 November 2011.

Josje Weusten

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. M.J.H. Meijer

Title: "De idylle voorbij. Verbeelding van moederschap in Nederlandse literatuur, 1980 tot 2010"

Successfully defended on 25 November 2011.

Serge Langeweg

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. A. Knotter

Title: "De arbeidsmarkt voor mijnwerkers in Nederlands-Limburg, 1900-1965"

Successfully defended on 15 December 2011

### 2012

Gerharda J.C. aan de Stegge

Supervisor: Prof. A.L. Labrie  
Co-supervisors: Prof. M.F. Gijswijt-Hofstra, Dr H. Oosterhuis  
Title: "Gekkenwerk. De ontwikkeling van het beroep 'psychiatrisch verpleegkundige' in Nederland 1830-1980"  
Successfully defended on 16 March 2012.

Alexandra Supper (cum laude)  
Supervisor: Prof. K.T. Bijsterveld  
Co-supervisor: Dr J.C.M. Wachelder  
Title: "Lobbying for the Ear. The Public Fascination with and Academic Legitimacy of the Sonification of Scientific Data"  
Successfully defended on 6 June 2012.

Roel V.J. van den Oever (cum laude)  
Supervisor: Prof. M.J.H. Meijer  
Co-Supervisor: Dr R.C. Hoogland, Wayne State University, USA  
Title: "Dominant Mothers, Queer Sons. (Un)doing Momism in Postwar American Culture"  
Successfully defended on 15 June 2012.

Geertruida C. Heems and Dr Baukje L.M. Kothuis (joint defence)  
Supervisors: Prof. W.E. Bijker; Prof. M.A. Hajer, UvA; Prof. M.J.F. Stive, TUD  
Title: "Waterveiligheid: Managen van kwetsbaarheid voorbij de mythe van droge voeten; De Nederlandse omgang met overstromingsdreiging in sociaal-cultureel perspectief"  
Successfully defended on 19 September 2012.

Hans H. Bosman  
Supervisor: Prof. E. Homburg  
Title: "The History of the Nederlandsche Cocaine Fabriek and its Successors as Manufacturers of Narcotic Drugs, analysed from an International Perspective"  
Successfully defended on 8 November 2012.

Johanna I. Höffken  
Supervisor: Prof. W.E. Bijker  
Co-supervisor: Dr T. Conzelmann  
Title: "Power to the people? Civic engagement with small-scale hydroelectric plants in India"  
Successfully defended on 12 December 2012.

Jenny B. Boulboulé  
Supervisor: Prof. R. Zwijnenberg, UL  
Title: "In touch with life; investigating epistemic practices in the life sciences from a hand-on perspective"  
Successfully defended on 20 December 2012.

Matthijs V. Kouw  
Supervisors: Prof. S. Wyatt; Prof. W. Bijker  
Title: "Pragmatic constructions; simulation and the vulnerability of technological cultures"  
Successfully defended on 20 December 2012.

## 2013

Joeri Bruyninckx (cum laude)  
Supervisor: Prof. dr. K.T.H. Bijsterveld



Co-supervisor: Dr. J.C.M. Wachelder

Title: "Sound Science: Recording and Listening in the Biology of Bird Song, 1880 – 1980"

Successfully defended on 19 April 2013.

Natasja Reslow

Supervisors: Prof.dr. S. Vanhoonacker; Prof.dr. M. Vink

Title: "Partnering for mobility? Three-level games in EU external migration policy"

Successfully defended on 5 September 2013.

Mathias Dobbels

Supervisors: Prof.dr. T. Christiansen; Prof.dr. C. Neuhold

Title: The European Parliament – A giant with feet of clay?

Successfully defended on 4 December 2013.

Jasper Aalbers

Supervisor: Prof. dr. K.T.H. Bijsterveld

Co-supervisors: Dr. A. Fickers; Prof.dr. P. Pisters (UVA)

Title: "Echoes of the city: Staging the Urban Soundscape in Fiction Film"

Successfully defended on 13 December 2013.