

Creative Community Law@UM

Strategic Programme Faculty of Law 2018-2022

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1 Introduction

In 2017 the Faculty of Law celebrated its 35th anniversary. In the last three decades the Faculty grew from a small institution of unconventional jurists into an important player in the Dutch and international academic and legal landscape. The Faculty earned this place as a result of great enthusiasm and commitment of staff and students and strategic choices in teaching and research. In 2018 the Faculty is, as part of the UM, a fully bilingual law school with an international staff and student population and with a distinct national and international profile.

The role of law is changing, and so is the role of jurists and legal services. This calls for reflection upon the Faculty strategy. The appointment of a new Faculty Board (FB) in December 2017, the expiry of the previous strategic programme 2011-2016 and the publication of the new UM-programme *Community at the CORE 2017-2021* underscore the need to set new strategic aims for the Faculty in coming years. This is why, in the last quarter of 2017, the FB carried out an extensive consultation by visiting all departments, support groups and the student council. The result was laid down in an inventory discussed by the Faculty Council (FC) and Management Team (MT), followed by a discussion on priorities with all groups in town hall meetings. The present document is based on this broad debate.

This programme outlines the main priorities in future Faculty policy. For reasons of clarity, each chapter is organised according to the same format. Following a brief introduction of the context (1), we discuss the goals we aim for (2) and the proposed actions on the shorter and longer term (3). This action sometimes consists of making a more specific policy document – inherent to a strategic plan is that it is short –, sometimes of concrete action by the FB and sometimes of setting-up an implementation advice group. In all three cases action is taken in close cooperation with the entire Faculty community or responsible groups. Because strategy without effective execution is useless, the various actions will be regularly evaluated and adjusted if necessary.

2 Mission and core values

Mission

The Faculty of Law is a young and innovative Faculty in the heart of Europe, with an open, inclusive and diverse academic community striving for distinctive and high quality legal education in both Dutch and English and offering a stimulating study and work environment for talented students and staff. By educating and training undergraduates, graduates and professionals for national and international careers in law, and by doing both fundamental and practice-oriented research, we aim to add value to the society to which we belong.

With this mission in mind, the Faculty adheres to the four core values described below. They fit in with the UM philosophy of **CORE: Collaborative Open Research Education**.

- **Community** We are one academic community that attaches special value to cooperation between students and staff, between academic and support staff, between University and society and within teaching and research programmes. It follows from ‘Team Law’ that the Faculty must develop in a balanced way and that differentiation of tasks is possible for academic staff;
- **Innovation and profile** One of the main threats for the Faculty is that it becomes too much alike other law faculties. This is why the Faculty continuously profiles itself with distinctive teaching and research. This profile lies both in relating our programmes to societal trends (such as Europeanisation, globalisation and digitisation) and in developing innovative teaching. Initiative and experiment are seen as the breeding ground for constant innovation from the bottom-up and for connecting the law to other academic fields. The distinctive features of Law@UM are effectively communicated;
- **Inclusivity** The Faculty is a stimulating environment for students and staff endorsing our mission and core values. Mutual respect and transparency are leading. Although we foster a culture of high ambition and performance, aptitude without attitude is part of our DNA. Intensive contact between staff and students, diversity, small scale-teaching, the International classroom and an attractive building contribute not only to a welcoming atmosphere, but also to learning intercultural and

intercollegiate skills. Faculty decision-making is based on our common mission and takes place in a structured way;

- **Learning environment** Our students and staff aim for continuous professional and personal development. Students are trained to become curious and creative jurists with excellent job opportunities. They are enabled to develop academic and practical skills essential to a jurist operating in a rapidly changing, uncertain and complex world. Staff operates in an environment in which feedback is self-evident, best practices are shared and creativity is stimulated. The leadership culture one of trust and creating space for people to thrive.

These four core values are leading in further developing the creative academic community we want to be.

3 Faculty community and governance

1 Context

A stimulating study and work environment is becoming more and more important for attracting and keeping talented students and staff. The extent to which the Faculty forms one community – and is therefore an attractive academic home – is an important aspect of this. Our Faculty shows many features of such a close-knit academic community: cooperation across departments, collegiality, short lines of communication, a bottom-up approach, small-scale teaching and a high degree of institutional commitment and loyalty. Accommodation of staff also contributes to this community, as does one Faculty research programme. On some points the community must be strengthened. The Faculty is also in need of a common mission that is effectively communicated.

2 Goals

As part of the UM, the Faculty strives for an academic community that features openness, diversity, inclusivity, mutual trust, a feedback culture and close cooperation among disciplines and among all levels of the organisation. Initiative and innovation are stimulated and there is a close link between teaching and research. An islands culture and territoriality are avoided and the Faculty profiles itself as one in marketing and communication. Decision making at all levels of the Faculty takes place in close interaction with whom it concerns and in conformity with the Faculty mission and core values. In this respect, the Faculty Board leads by example.

The following specific goals are set to reinforce the Faculty community:

- a more balanced development of the Dutch and English taught programmes and a better sharing of best practices among teaching programmes;
- reinforce cooperation between academic and support staff and between the various support groups;
- reinforce internal communication;

- promote participation of staff and students in governing bodies and decision-making.

3 Actions

The following actions are taken:

- further develop the common study and work environment (more study places; common room/law lounge or common moments, for example by regularly organised drinks for staff and students);
- explore how the study associations can better contribute to the Faculty community and to preparing students for the labour market and how they can more collaborate;
- no separate housing of groups based on function;
- introduce an annual *Professors' parade* and reinvigorate the Faculty outing;
- introduce an annual Innovation Challenge;
- have the building and facilities better transpire the spirit of ambition and innovation;
- develop a more uniform recruitment policy and orientation programme for new staff.

4 Focus in teaching

1 Context

Compared to other law faculties in the Netherlands and abroad, Maastricht is a special place to study law. The International classroom, focus on small-scale teaching, staff-student contact and skills are widely praised. The Faculty is facing a number of important challenges in order to remain relevant:

- legal education is traditionally closely connected to professional practice. This practice is rapidly changing as a result of internationalisation, technology, and new forms of cooperation between jurists and other professionals. Jurists (including lawyers) are increasingly expected to act as creative solvers (and preventers) of complex interdisciplinary problems. Our teaching must reflect this, while at the same time guaranteeing *effectus civilis*;
- competition for the best law students is expected to increase in coming years, while our student intake will have to stay at least at the same level; an extra challenge here is the lower population growth in the region;
- the diversity of the student population must be guaranteed, with sufficient intake in both our Dutch and English-taught programmes and with students coming from the region, the Netherlands, Europe and around the world;
- although our bachelor completion rate is high, the Faculty has – compared to other faculties at UM – a relatively high drop-out rate in the first year.

The Faculty aims to address these challenges with a number of related actions. More focus in teaching is a top priority.

2 General

2.1 Goals

The Faculty of Law aims at educating excellent jurists who, thanks to the acquired academic and professional knowledge and skills, are well prepared to take up the various roles they will fulfil in their future professional career. This requires not only a thorough knowledge of one or more national jurisdictions, but also of the function of law in society and of other methods of regulation, conflict resolution and conflict avoidance than the law.

Our teaching system has the three following features:

- a clear three-track policy: the Faculty offers a Tax law bachelor, a bachelor in Dutch law and a bachelor European Law School;
- our bachelor and master programmes are challenging and, in so far as the professional requirements of the *effectus civilis* allow, as unique as possible. They are directed towards learning both academic and professional skills and offer an excellent preparation for the labour market;
- The programmes distinguish themselves not only by their contents, but also by their teaching system, of which PBL, small-scale teaching and ample attention for developing legal skills and personal competences are key elements.

The Faculty round shows that action is needed to reinforce these features. The Dutch and English taught bachelors must develop in a more balanced way, the bachelor *Rechtsgeleerdheid* must obtain a more unique profile and PBL can be used in a more varied and more effective way. An explicit aim is to attract more students to the bachelor *Rechtsgeleerdheid*. This leads to the following policy initiatives that all aim to contribute to a sharper focus in teaching: they reinforce the profile of the jurist ‘made in Maastricht.’

2.2 Actions

- **Modernisation of PBL**
The small scale and problem-centred character of our programmes must be reinforced and brought in line with the UM CORE philosophy. This means a more intensive use of digital tools, more personal guidance and support of students (e.g. by introducing a mentor system for all students, starting with the first year) and introduction of projects (next to, and partly instead of, regular courses). Transfer of knowledge can happen in larger groups (and assisted by digital means), while applying this knowledge (also across the borders of the legal discipline) can take place in a small-scale setting as well as in projects. Experiments will take place with other forms of activating teaching. Cooperation with alumni and other practitioners will be intensified.

- **Year 1 *Rechtsgeleerdheid*: stimulate students to be curious and critical**

The aim of the first year is to stimulate students to be curious and critical. This requires the redesign of parts of the curriculum. Acquiring knowledge of the positive law will more effectively go hand in hand with learning legal, as well as other, skills. This is not only achieved by introducing projects and building a stronger community of staff and students, but also by the creation of the right atmosphere by staff willing to look beyond the confines of their own course and to work in a bigger team in order to create a coherent curriculum. Students have to experience the curriculum as a coherent whole adhered to by all staff teaching in the first year.

- **Learning 21st century skills**

Jurists are increasingly expected to work in a multidisciplinary and complex environment in which not only legal expertise and skills are relevant. Today's jurists increasingly work as creative regulators and 'conflict managers.' They not only advise about legal aspects, but also about the question whether the law is the right instrument to use and which alternatives exist. This requires more attention for (e.g.) technology, digitisation, prevention of conflicts, management and innovation. PBL offers an excellent framework to educate this new type of lawyer. It will be investigated what is the best way to integrate these extra-legal skills in the curriculum.

- **From summative to formative assessment**

Our ambition is to aim for more diversity in assessment; where possible we move from summative to formative assessment. This requires the drafting of assessment plans at programme level, the creation of an assessment committee and including traineeships in the quality-control-cycle

The next action points will also contribute to a more distinct profile of our teaching programmes:

- create a limited number of new optional courses and specialised minors in so far as these deal with a unique theme and satisfy set requirements;
- simplify and unify cross-department teaching;
- create optional courses offering an introduction to foreign legal systems (for example on Italian and Polish law);
- develop double degree programmes that realistically contribute to increasing the employability of our graduates;
- participate in interfaculty initiatives and develop a strategy for international cooperation and intake of students beyond Europe;
- develop a marketing strategy aimed at increasing the number of students outside of the region for our Dutch-taught programmes;
- develop a strategy for the intake of *HBO*-students;
- better select and prepare Master students for PBL;
- reinforce the academic profile and distinctive character of the Master's programmes;
- create more synergy between the honours programmes.

3 Drop-out and completion rate

3.1 Goals

Our teaching programmes are open to students who share our philosophy and are willing to participate in our active learning experience. This creates not only a responsibility for the student, but also for the Faculty. Staff takes responsibility for helping students to realise their potential and to complete the curriculum within the set time. The international diversity of our student population – that we cherish – is an extra challenge: while some students are optimally prepared for the Maastricht teaching model, this is less the case for others. The first group is facilitated by a range of excellence programmes, while the second group is offered additional mentoring and support.

While it is recognised that the drop-out in the first year of law programmes is traditionally higher than in other programmes, efforts will be made to lower this rate. This will happen by providing better information to future students about what it means to study law, by adapting the SKC and by better monitoring and mentoring of first year students. The completion rate in the master's programmes will also have to increase. Next to the expected positive effect of introducing long term-projects next to the core courses, the following actions are taken:

3.2 Actions

The following actions are taken:

- more attention in student recruitment for what it means to study law in Maastricht, including the creation of a virtual law students recruitment day and other pre-academic experience-initiatives;
- adapt the SKC questionnaire to better fit the analytical skills jurists need to have and reformulate admission letters;
- better monitoring and guidance of students by introducing a mentor- and monitoring system;
- create better expectations management in courses 1.1, including an introductory meeting on 'How to survive the first year?';
- better investigate reasons for students' drop-out (e.g. through exit-interviews and surveys).

4 Post-graduate teaching

4.1 Goals

Lifelong learning is an integral part of our teaching philosophy. This not only shows in the focus on skills in our regular programmes, but also in the Faculty's commitment to post-graduate teaching. The market for post-graduate teaching changed rapidly in recent years: competition became fiercer and the needs of professionals for intensive and interactive courses has grown. The Faculty wishes to respond to this development by expanding its courses for alumni and other professionals. This is also needed to bring the decreasing number of participants

to a halt. The number of participants will be enlarged by expanding our English-taught courses (next to the post-graduate master IPKM and training in the area of privacy and data protection) and by smartly adjusting our courses taught in Dutch. The link with alumni will be strengthened. The starting point remains that post-graduate teaching must yield profit for the Faculty.

4.2 Actions

The following actions are taken:

- increase the number of participants by broadening and digitisation of courses;
- more intensive use of the campus Brussels;
- strengthen the link with alumni policy.

5 Quality in research

1 Context

The Faculty has a distinct and widely praised research profile that can briefly be described as studying the role of law in a Europeanising and globalising society. This profile is implemented in one Faculty research programme and begets a domain-specific application within the departments and related research institutes, as well as within interfaculty institutes. New research themes within the confines of the programme are proposed from the bottom-up. It fits the nature of the legal discipline that there is both space for (mono- and interdisciplinary) fundamental research and for work aiming to influence judges, legislators and policy makers. PhD-training takes place both within the Maastricht Graduate School of Law and in the context of the interfaculty Ius Commune Research School. This research organisation is not a goal in itself, but an instrument to create a vibrant research culture, to facilitate staff in doing high quality research, to profile this research externally and to have it evaluated.

The main challenges in the coming period are how to secure sufficient time for curiosity-driven research, how to relate the Faculty research agenda with themes from external agendas (such as those of NWO and the EU) and how to better connect the internal research organisation to the aims it seeks to achieve.

2 Goals

The Faculty research strategy for the period 2015-2021 was adopted in 2015. This policy is closely linked to policies in the fields of education and staff development. Main points of the policy are a focus on quality of research, reinforcing the connection between teaching and research, increasing our share in external funding and permanent attention for integrity of researchers. In addition, the following goals are pursued:

- create an environment conducive to attracting and keeping talent;
- offer an attractive career perspective to talented post-docs;

- stimulate staff to develop their own research agenda and to foster original and creative research;
- foster cooperation between researchers and groups;
- maintain the current number of high quality PhD-defences;
- increase the societal impact, accessibility and visibility of (inter)faculty research;

3 Actions

The following actions are taken:

- develop a staff policy aimed at creating more space for talented researchers;
- develop a policy to increase our success in obtaining external funding; the current incentives will be evaluated and revised;
- organise Faculty-wide research activities (including a Faculty research day or meetings on common themes);
- implement the Faculty research programme, including appointment of coordinators within the pillars;
- further develop the Graduate School, including better monitoring of progress of PhD-projects and drafting of guidelines for PhD-supervision;
- explore possibilities to reduce the number of institutes in order to avoid fragmentation and create more critical mass within each institute;
- create a Faculty book series;
- develop a series of events geared towards both academia and the general public to profile the research we do;
- develop and carry out an effective communications strategy.

6 Staff development

1 Context

The creative community the Faculty wishes to be is highly dependent on our potential to attract and keep talent: people are our competitive advantage. The Faculty must therefore be an attractive employer able to compete with other academic institutions in the Netherlands and abroad. This requires a stimulating and collegial work environment, good facilities, possibilities for professional and personal development and a clear policy in recruitment, training, facilitation and promotion. In order to achieve these goals, staff development will be prioritised in coming years.

2 Goals

The goal of our staff policy is to foster a culture of high ambition and performance, to stimulate staff to work on what they are best at, and to attract and keep people that fit the profile of the Faculty. A number of sub-goals follow from this:

- transparency in staff policy: there is a need for clear criteria for tenure and promotion and a culture in which feedback is self-evident;
- stimulate a balanced and diverse composition of both academic and support staff. A healthy academic community is diverse in functions, nationality, age, cultural background, professional experience and views, not as a goal in itself but because it will contribute to the innovative and open community we wish to be. It is essential that also non-tenured staff feel valued and are supported in designing their future career;
- aim for an acceptable workload.

3 Actions

- **Revise criteria for tenure and promotion of academic staff**
Following the advice of the Working group on criteria for tenure and promotion, the current criteria will be revised. The purpose of the revision is to create clear criteria to be applied in a relatively uniform way. These criteria in the areas of teaching, research and leadership will match those used both nationally and internationally. The criteria are not meant as check-lists but are part of a broader frame of assessment in which they are looked at in conjunction with each other.
- **Clarify mutual expectations**
The mutual expectations of staff and Faculty concerning achievements, career development and facilitation must be clear. Following UM-policy, the Faculty will introduce performance agreements for academic staff. These agreements will be made in close cooperation between staff member and direct supervisor. These agreements will fit in with the criteria for tenure and promotion for academic staff. Part of the agreements will be how the Faculty can support in realising the set goals. Promotion cannot only be based on the career principle as this would lead to an unbalanced composition of staff that is no longer in line with desired diversity and could also lead to financial instability. Also for support staff, the mutual expectations will be clarified where necessary.
- **Create differentiated career paths and teaching careers**
Based on the idea that teaching, research and management is teamwork, and all staff work towards a common goal, differentiation of tasks (for example in teaching and research appointments) will be better facilitated. The policy remains that all tenured academic staff is involved in teaching, research and management, but it will be possible to have more variation in these tasks. This will also lead to a policy on teaching careers. A new Faculty Chair Plan will be made.
- **Implement tenure track for university lecturers**
The Faculty is in the process of implementing the new UM tenure track policy for university lecturers (UD's). University lecturers performing well will in principle be offered a tenured position as UD after five years. Part of this policy is to assign a mentor (other than the direct supervisor) to

university lecturers in a tenure track. It will be seen whether also staff in other positions will be assigned a mentor.

- **More attention for training and personal development**
The Faculty regards the professional and personal development of its staff a top priority. This means that more attention will be paid to training and development of staff. The University is working towards the implementation of a Training programme in management (BKL). The purpose is to train and coach supervisors in order to allow them to make their staff flourish even better and adjust where necessary. In addition, plans are made for a system of permanent education in the area of teaching. The format of the yearly interviews with staff will be modified to better fit the aim of these interviews: describe and evaluate the mutual expectations and facilitate future development.
- **Increase career development and mobility of support staff**
At this moment, the possibilities for career development of support staff within the Faculty are limited. Action will be taken at two different levels. First, it will be seen how to enhance possibilities for development at the University level. Second, the Faculty will map wishes of the current support staff and see which possibilities exist to realise these.
- **Sustainable employability of academic and support staff**
Specific attention is needed for staff to retire within five years. General University facilities for this group were abolished in 2017. The Faculty will work towards providing better information and will investigate how to facilitate the sustainable employability of older employees.
- **Reduce workload and fragmentation of tasks**
The report of the Working group on Administrative tasks will be implemented. In so far as funding allows, new staff will be hired in accordance with the choices made in the new strategic plan. It will be investigated how to avoid fragmentation of time.
- **Teaching free periods and sabbatical policy**
One method to reduce the workload, and to guarantee sufficient research time, is to plan teaching-free periods. This possibility will be explored. In addition, a Faculty policy on sabbatical leave will be developed.

7 Alumni

1 Context

The Faculty has more than 9000 alumni; they are our ambassadors and the backbone of our national and international network of professionals. The importance of the Faculty mission also shows here: those who feel part of our community are more likely to feel a lifelong connection to Maastricht and the University. In line with UM strategy, alumni policy is aimed at involving alumni in

various ways to the University and to further strengthen our ties with them. To this end, alumni meetings take place in Maastricht and in cities where alumni circles are active. Alumni are also regularly informed about Faculty developments through the alumni newsletter. Future policy aims to continue and expand these activities.

2 Goals

The goal of the Faculty's alumni policy is to strengthen the connection with our alumni and to mutually profit from this. The following activities already take place:

- annual meetings of the Dutch and international alumni council;
- annual or bi-annual alumni meetings;
- at least two UM Star Lectures on law at the University anniversary;
- distribution of the electronic newsletter *Maastricht Law Messages*.

In the future alumni will be more involved in teaching (e.g. through guest lectures), post-graduate education and advising students on career and life planning (e.g. through job markets and traineeships).

3 Actions

The following actions are taken:

- develop and improve our alumni database and use this database to obtain more information about employment of our alumni;
- better involve alumni in both regular and post-graduate teaching;
- better use alumni as ambassadors of our programmes, also in student recruitment;
- investigate how alumni can be stimulated to provide financial support for specific Faculty initiatives.

8 Operations and communication

1 Context

Operations are designed to serve our primary processes of education and research. This means that administrative processes must take place with sufficient input and guidance by staff and students. Operations are guided by the principles of transparency, accessibility and sustainability. In addition, the Faculty building and IT-infrastructure must meet the needs of students and staff. All this requires a constantly learning environment in which support staff is optimally enabled to fulfil its tasks.

An effective communications and marketing policy is essential to achieve almost all the goals set out in the previous chapters. This policy must not only guarantee appealing internal communication, but also ensure that teaching programmes and Faculty activities are conveyed to (future) students, alumni, external colleagues and society at large.

2 Goals

Our operational processes aim for optimal support of teaching and research. The more concrete goals are as diverse as our Faculty activities. Some sub-goals are the following:

- guarantee sufficient input and guidance in the administrative processes and give back the results of their input to internal stakeholders;
- accommodation and facilities doing justice to our ambition of being an attractive academic community and employer;
- further professionalization of the ICT-infrastructure;
- contribute to implementing the UM Sustainability Vision 2030.

Our communications policy has the following goals:

- student recruitment that conveys what makes the Faculty special and unique (small-scale teaching, informal atmosphere, creative community and a strong international profile) and aimed at motivated and talented students;
- branding to the outside world as a Dutch and European top Faculty with a vibrant community that is strong in teaching, research and creation of societal value; strong presence on social media;
- open and direct internal communication, including communication between governing bodies and staff and between academic and support staff; an accessible and clearly designed intranet on which information can be easily found.

3 Actions

The following actions are taken in order to achieve the above goals even better:

- ensure a constant feedback loop between academic and support staff;
- description of workflows and tasks and roles of staff in so far as it is unclear who does what and how;
- structural extension of teaching and office space at a location doing justice to our ambitions (such as Kapoenstraat 2); infrequently used offices become available for those who are (almost) fulltime at the office;
- work towards a building that transpires our ambitions, including representative spaces for postgraduate teaching and reduction of noise in rooms at the front side of the building;
- investigate how administrative tasks of academic staff can be diminished;
- investigate the introduction of a fair and reliable alternative for Solver;
- protect teaching schedulers;
- investigate how the Faculty can further contribute to sustainability.

The following actions are taken in the field of recruitment, marketing and communications:

- making choices in student recruitment and implementation of the Report Recruitment *Rechtsgeleerdheid* of 2017;
- develop a strategy on external research communication and use of social media;
- develop a policy on internal communication (including the Faculty Journal);
- develop smart ways to keep individual Profile pages updated.

Colophon

Text: ...

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