

Faculty plan for budget cuts and investments

Recently, the faculty board (FB) has written a new plan for *budget cuts and investments* for the humanities faculty for 2016-2018. According to the FB, the following causes are mainly responsible for the budget cuts of 8.1 million *before* 2018.

- The structural decrease of the influx of students into the bachelor programs of nearly all departments.
- The vulnerable position of a large group of small studies, mostly - but not exclusively - in the language domain.

This vulnerable position however, is the result of a Finance Model in which the executive board (CvB) focuses on output. The FB should strive to change this, instead of partly placing the blame for the budget cuts on the small Studies/Departments.

The large range of elective courses and programs, which is not only expensive, but also partially responsible for a heavy workload.

By saying this, the FB attempts to oppose students and teachers; if we ask for more courses, we impair the teachers. However, the problem is that there is no money being cleared to pay the teachers for the amount of hours that is needed, also due to an increasingly austere hournorm.

- The relatively high continuing drop-out in the bachelor program and the relatively slow study pace in the bachelor and the master program. *The latter should not have to be a problem anymore, seeing as the nominal +1 norm was removed from the Framework letter and the executive board has to pay the faculty for every single diploma (for which the government, “het Rijk”, also gives money to the executive board, but until now was disbursed between towards the faculties).*
- The comparatively low average scores in both the Nationale Studenten Enquête (National Student Survey) and the Nationale Onderwijsgids (National Education Guide) - results that are incidentally opposite of the rating on International rankings like THE and QS. *Even though it perhaps seems plausible that lower average scores on these rankings lead to a lower student influx, there is no evidence that proves a direct causality.*

The FB also indicates that budget cuts can make the faculty vulnerable, thus also investments have to be made. However, the executive board will only make money available when the FB presents a restructuring plan of which the executive board thinks it “strengthens” the faculty. *What “strengthens” then entails can only be measured purely quantitatively, since the CvB has no other criteria from which to test the plans of the faculty.* Since 2013, has the subsidies from government funding (via Rijksoverheid) decreased from 76.9 million to 67.1 million (that is a decrease of 13.9%). *In other words: a structural governmental cut on education. This affects the Humanities Faculty very hard, because the income of the FGW is voor almost $\frac{2}{3}$ dependent of education funds. This means that when **alterations** are made in the assignment of these funds, it would have a direct effect on what the faculty can offer. This effect is caused by not only a fluctuation based on governmental levels. but also with fluctuating student numbers, graduations and the amount of studypoint that are achieved.*

Last year, there was budget cut of 490.487 euros on the planning. For this, several measures have been taken of which the results are already visible according to the FB, but

there is no mention of how much money has been saved, but it will cause an expected decrease in cost of 3.7 million. The measures are:

- a hiring freeze on scientific and supporting staff (no new staff will be hired, unless it is necessary to supplement the minimum set of courses). *This has already been cut in 2015: 593.624 euros.*
- a downwards adjustment of the framework statement. *It is unknown what this means.*
- various proposals to save on other expenses. *It is unclear which expenses are meant exactly, but this is an estimate of what has probably been cut in 2015: 526.076 euros.*

In 2015-2019, budget cuts will be made on the following points:

- reduced education AANBOD in the bachelor and master program (2.687.372 euros in the bachelor program up until 2019; 2.453.688 euros in the master program up until 2018).
- lower supply of research (681.206 up until 2016)
- no PhD students of government funding ???? (1.839.999 euros cut back on PhD policy up until 2018, what happens after that is unknown)/
- reduction additional funding priorities (“zwaartepunten”) (1.180.000 up until 2018). *Priorities still exist on central level, and additionally they will receive extra funds. Of the many different priorities, only one is completely focused on the humanities department (FGw) (see the uva website for an overview). At faculty level, the priorities have always worked the same, even though they will continue to receive “special attention”, they will not receive extra funds anymore.*
- hiring freeze supporting staff (1.163.364 up until 2017)
- central services (736.806 up until 2016, after this, the costs will rise again and it will cost the faculty 200.000 euros in 2018). *Therefore, in the long term, this will be a budget cut of 436.806 euros.*
- other expenses (not specified) (526.076 already cut in 2015)

Additionally, the Faculty will also have to pay extra towards the increase in salary expenses because of the new CAO (1.958.456 euro) and a correction for overhead accounts (1.050.000 euro). *However, we do not know what this latter part means.*

The cuts in 2015 and 2016 are a result from measures already undertaken. The remainder of the cuts were presented by the FB as to be effectuated by:

- By decreasing the educational programs in the bachelors the FB says that “the substantial plans will be guiding for the decreasing demand for education” [*because less students, means less courses for students to follow and a decreased amount of an available range of courses*] *However, it remains to be seen in how far substantial plans can be guiding, considering that there are very strict financial frameworks being set out. Additionally, new forms of education will be introduced (English Bachelor's, Languages in Transition-plan, and research-intensified-education) which aim is to increase the influx of students. From which this causal expectation is based is completely unclear.*
- There is also no clear indication or specification as in how the decrease in the educational program of the Masters is going to be tackled. *This will be elaborated upon in the masterplan, however, this is not available yet.*
- The cuts on PhD policy will be achieved by abolishing every single PhD position that is being paid by the Faculty itself.

- The cuts on supporting staff will be achieved by cutting off 19.4 fte (full time equivalent, i.e. a full time job), *that is about 60 jobs.*
- The cuts on central services will be mainly achieved by:
 - Decreasing the amount of section libraries. *A larger part of the books will be stored in IWO.*
 - Decreasing the amount of lecture halls. *This entails mostly the selling of the Bungehuis, because the faculty can only rent out entire buildings and not parts*
 - The rejection of the Institution of Art History (Kunsthistorisch Instituut). *By doing so the faculty rents less room and hence the costs of the housing will go down*
 - “agreements in preparation by the combined faculties and services” *This is probably about the construction of the inner city campus: all faculties pay for the construction of the new campuses (Science Park, Roeterseiland and the Binnenstadcampus), this is, however, not certain.*
- In 2017 and 2018 it is expected that the faculty will lose more on central level, because the m2 keeps rising
- Because of the increase in salary by the new CAO the faculty will not receive extra money from the CvB. *Which will cost the faculty a lot of money*
- The correction rule for the overhead allocation has been boosted because at several previously mentioned posts the integral cost have been integrated (for CoH, GSH and AIHR), whilst the prospect cuts only cover the direct costs (salaries). *We think that this means that they calculated with higher expected costs (namely the costs for all forms of education and research), whilst the cuts only affect the salary costs.*

Investment plan

However, the faculty also asks for an investment so that the faculty will not collapse entirely. The substantive plans focus on “profile the faculty more distinctly, strengthen it and in the long term, increase the revenue”. *This means: streamlining programs in such a way that there will be less space for electives - thus a smaller drop-out risk. For this, the FB uses terms such as “studiability, distinguish and streamline”.*

5 plans have been drafted:

1. Languages in transition (for this, the faculty asks 1.1 million euros up until 2018). This plan is actually completely fixed: as of september 2016, four courses will start and as of 2017 all language studies will have to do the same. The FB wants to give “the language studies a new profile with which studies can distinguish themselves from comparable studies elsewhere in the country and simultaneously become more attractive for students with a different VWO-profile than Culture & Society, whose share has decreased significantly”. *The measures that are being taken for this come from a certain perspective. Namely, that there should be a change in the studies, while the problem is that humanities is lowly valued in society. Last year, it turned out to be effective that Bureau Communicatie (Bureau Communication) specifically advertised for language studies. It is the wrong way around to first adjust the program and then advertise, instead of first trying to find out whether better advertisement helps to increase the popularity of the current programs.*
2. They try to do this by creating “clearer graduate profiles” for the programs, with a “clear, studyable set-up according to the major/minor structure”. *In reality, this means*

that there will not be any space for electives in the bachelor program, because everything will be fixed from the start. The FB writes that the propedeuse will be structured in such a way that “in the course of the first year, students will be able to make a reasoned choice concerning their major and making a switch between related courses during or after the propedeuse will be relatively simple”. In the new plan for the languages, however, there is only one possible major, students will not be able to make a choice, because there is nothing to choose from. Additionally, the possibility to switch between different programs is realised by creating as much shared courses between disciplines as possible (however, this will happen in clusters, e.g. cluster languages from a certain region, so not ALL languages together). These shared courses will not only exist between comparable language studies, but also between language studies and European studies. In reality, this is a movement towards the proposed shared propedeuse from Profiel 2016.

2. English bachelor programs (for this, the faculty asks 840.000 euros up until 2018). The FB wants to offer more English bachelor programs, in order to meet the internationalisation of the staff and because a lot of literature is already being read in English. *For this, two possibilities are proposed: the choice between these two possibilities depends on the student numbers and unknown subject-specific considerations (there is an article about this in the WHW that must be followed, but this remains vague).*

- a. language change of the program. European studies already has an English track and as of 2016, Literature Studies and Media and Information will transfer completely to English. *This is not a bad thing per se, but the conditions would have to be good in order not to cause loss of quality. It is important that teachers and students are given the opportunity to get their English up to the required level. Additionally, there would have to be a satisfactory transitional arrangement for current bachelor students.*
- b. the provision of an English track next to the Dutch program. *The problem here is that as soon as this track exists, it will anglicize the Dutch remainder of the program: general courses will still be offered together, but now they would necessarily have to be in English.*

3. Research Intensive education (The faculty asks for this up and till 2019 3.672.333 euro). To facilitate for a more structured program, better orientation on the labor market, and more ways of learning in the field of academic thinking and writing skills and “international competitions”, they will work on a so called “research intensive education”. They suspect that this will help to achieve the core performance indicators (KPI'S: Target numbers that the FB needs to present to the CvB, but that do not have financial consequences if they are not met, however executive heads may roll) (which are dropout under 15%, bachelor profitability of 75% and a master profitability of 85%). To achieve this they use means like “already implemented study-success-enhancing measures” (BSA, matching, the limitation that you can only get a maximum of 180 ECT's per year, the equalisation of the mark system, 8-8-4 which is why you can only follow 2 courses per block and that the chance of dropping out statistically might be lower). They will also try to “via the qualitative-substantial line “ increase the “study ability of the programs”. *How they are planning to do this has, however, yet to be implemented in this plan, but the preconditions of this plan are crucial. It is possible that this focus will lead solely to more courses that are focused on academic skills and thus that there will be less attention towards substantial content courses. This would disadvantage specialization. Intensifying*

Research Education is also the basis for the claim on pre investment; it is unclear if the requested amount is already implemented in the amount mentioned above.

4. Reforms in the master program (for this the faculty asks 696.800 euros up until 2017). The reforms in the master program are primarily aimed at making the program less expensive (“an arrangement that is sustainable from a financial point of view”). With this, there will be worked with a “new profile for the master programs, in which a combination of a research-intensive approach with academic training, and the connection which are central to social issues”. Additionally, work will be done for a stronger coherence in the master program with a clear line of study because of the strengthening of cohort formation and improvement of study success, the intensification of tutoring, integration of transferrable skills in the courses and because of an adjustment of the offered courses on the end terms. *This actually means that there will be more unity in the master program at the expense of one’s own room for electives. Additionally, there is the problem that it is once again unclear what a research-intensive approach entails. It would be undesirable in a one-year master program not to offer the subject-related courses in order to give more courses focused on academic skills. Because of this, subject-related knowledge will be lost.*

The FB proposes to use a master-mentor organisation model for small and specialistic programs. This means that students will be educated by means of shared courses and individual education. *With this, several EC will be filled in by ‘old-fashioned’ joined work-groups, and part of it will be modified for the specific interests of the student. This way, the student can join a teacher who specialises in a certain direction (and potentially contribute to a research, or conduct his own research under supervision). An alternative for the mentor-master is the continuing of the tutorials, where it is not so much about research as about gaining theoretical knowledge. Again, it is true here that these forms of education are only able to function when the condition which are being set truly provide space for these specifications. The conditions are yet unknown (now: 10 hours per student, up to max 5).*

To achieve all of this, the FB created a review procedure for 2015-2016, with which the program directors, on basis of qualitative and quantitative analysis, will evaluate the existing education program. A panel consisting of external members then will judge the programs and give advice concerning the necessary adjustments. From this advice, a facultair plan will be drafted, which will be presented in March to the FB and the participation (de medezeggenschap).

5. Reinforcing of the Structure of PhD research (The faculty ask for this up and till 2019 1.066.667 euro). The faculty will stop with financing PhD positions that are fully being paid by government subsidies (first way of funding), this means that there will only be PhD positions available for people who were given grants (second way of funding) or get money through companies for their research (third way of funding). *This is an immediate attack on the independence of research, and will ensure that less research will be carried out towards subjects that are not as relevant for current society than others, but are not therefore not any less scientifically relevant.* The policy of the FB is therefore build up to attract more PhD candidates from the second or third way of funding by for example offering fellowships, finishing grants, and free waivers. *Since 2012 there has been a grant-team that assists and supports researchers in their search for funds. This policy will be expanded upon. This will apparently also help (Faculty Strategic Plan).* Additionally, they will work on creating

a closer academic community where PhD students with not fully-financed promotion places are also a full member of the academic community. *It is not clear how the faculty will accomplish this culture shift, nor is it clear how they want to attract more PhD students from external funding (tweede en derde geldstroom).*



Humanities Rally