

Minutes Meeting EdCom Thursday March 26th, 2020 (14:00-16:00)

Microsoft Teams

Present: Quentin Bourgeois, Ian Simpson, Mike Field, Marjet de Ruyter, Lizzie Hicks, Oda Nuij, Mariëlle Portier and Zoë van Litsenburg

Absent: -

Minutes by ON

1. Opening

QB welcomed everybody online.

2. Announcements

-

3. Minutes previous meeting

-

4. Covid-19 measures & updates

The first part of the discussion was dedicated to updating the EdCOM on what the Faculty already does. QB had a long conversation with Joanne Mol earlier.

Measures already implemented:

- Teaching: all teaching is (being) shifted to online remote teaching. There is support for and by teachers to help make this possible.
- Thesis: the thesis deadline is postponed for two weeks. All thesis supervisors have been asked to contact their students to come up with workable solutions to finish the thesis on time.

Problems identified by the board:

- Practical teaching: practicals, internships and fieldschools can't be taught remotely.
- Uncertainty: it is impossible to predict when the current situation will be over, so it is very hard to make plans.

Proposed solutions:

- BA1 fieldschool: will be postponed to September 2020. GIS and Bioarchaeology will consequently be moved to January 2021.
- Practical courses: some practical courses have been redesigned to be taught online. Others will be split into a theoretical part which will be taught online, and a practical part which will be taught later.

Still debated:

- BA3 to MA: the VNSU looks into this on the national level and will come up with a nation-wide solution, also for international students.
- Fieldschool 2: this will shift to August or to the BA3, depending on when the quarantine measures are lifted. It is not high on the priority list right now.

The second part of the discussion focussed on identifying gaps and blind spots that the board is not aware of.

Additional problems identified by the EdCom:

- ARCHON: they are working on offering online alternatives.
- Communication: staff don't know what information students get (and vice versa). QB: Joanne Mol provided a list of sent and planned emails to students, but clearly most of those still need to get sent.

- Teaching assistance: it should be possible to continue, because remote teaching requires a lot of help. Corijanne Slappendel is looking into how research master students can complete their TA requirements if they have not done so yet. For the salaried TA's it's all still very vague. More information will follow next week.

- (BA) graduation: BA students are worried about graduating on time, especially people who do not want to do an MA in Leiden. But because it's a pandemic, flexibility from other universities can be expected. Current problems for BA3 students (and mostly for the other years as well) are:

- Internships. Solution: substitute fieldwork with working on material from staff members' research projects.

- Finishing courses. Solution: a pass/fail system instead of the ten point grading system will reduce stress. The Exam Committee is working on this.

- (Financial) stress and anxiety. Solution: the University is aware of this. There is for instance the "Luisterlijn" for students if they need to talk to someone. Also Rory Granleese is working on this issue. All efforts of the Faculty are put into letting students graduate on time. This should limit the financial stress students are under.

Communication: the communication needs to be streamlined. Students have received very little information from the Faculty, which has increased stress and anxiety already popping up due to the social distancing measures. It must be stressed that students can still graduate on time. On the other hand, staff also want response from students to emails and other forms of communication.

- Access: students suddenly don't have access anymore to the special library collections (including the NINO). Also, students working on material can't get to that material anymore because they are not allowed to enter the Faculty building. However it is still possible to pick up requested library books from the locker in the Faculty building, so technically students are allowed to enter the building. Staff are allowed to pick up material from the building. In short, there is no clarity concerning entrance to the building. This will need to be addressed on the board level, and not through personal agreements between thesis supervisors and their students.

Conclusion: these are very weird and uncertain times. The Faculty and all staff members are working very hard to let teaching continue remotely (or for practical courses at a later date) and to let students graduate on time. Communication to students about implemented measures is very vague and incomplete, leading to a lot of stress and anxiety amongst students. Students need clarity and reassurance.

-> QB and MdR will schedule a meeting with Marten Jess Pot to talk about all things that need to be communicated to students: thesis deadline, access to library and NINO books, access to the building and material in the building, internships, graduation.

-> MdR will contact Corijanne Slappendel to ask her to email the students as soon as ARCHON knows more, and to keep in touch with them about ARCHON and TA.

5. Support for fieldwork (update)

QB earlier wrote a memo to the board stressing the problems concerning fieldwork in the Faculty. Resulting from that memo, Joanne Mol, Richard Jansen and someone else had a meeting with the board to talk about implementing the issues mentioned in the memo. At this point it is unclear what came out of that meeting and it is not on the priority list due to the corona-virus outbreak. A positive note is that the immediate problems surrounding the BA1 fieldschool are slightly less urgent because the fieldschool is postponed.

8. Course coordination

QB earlier wrote a memo concerning issues with course coordination mentioned by IS in the previous meeting. The memo represents the points raised earlier.

-> QB will send the memo to the board.

7. RMA visitation

Jan Dekker (Faculty counsel), LH and ON conducted a survey amongst the RMA students to write the student chapter of the visitation report. The answers to the survey highlighted some problems in the RMA that the EdCom was not aware of earlier. The most pressing problems are:

- Thesis supervision: many respondents said they do not receive enough supervision and monitoring, which leads to a delay in finishing their thesis and graduating. Research master students want a thesis seminar just like the MA/MSc.
 - Flexibility: all students that went on an exchange mentioned that this delayed their studies.
- Other problems that were identified but only very shortly mentioned during the meeting:
- Community: about half of the RMA students does not feel part of any community within the Faculty.
 - Facilities: the digital facilities, both hardware and software, do not suffice, especially not for students specialising in Digital Archaeology.

Conclusion: the EdCom can and wants to make the board aware of these issues.

-> LH and ON will condense the identified problems into short and concrete points and send this to QB.

-> QB will draft a memo to the board based on the points identified by LH and ON.

6. Studying with a disability

LH, together with the other student members, organised a meeting and an online survey for students with a disability, to identify the problems they encounter and the needs they have. This input is needed because from next year onwards a new form about learning disabilities will be implemented.

There were four main problems mentioned:

- Scheduling: clustering of deadlines leads to peaks in stress, which is difficult to cope with. Also last-minute changes to schedules are a problem.
 - Staff training: students feel staff members are sympathetic towards students with a disability, but they often don't understand the problems these students have and therefore don't know how to help them. A staff training in how to handle learning disabilities was scheduled but the current status is unknown.
 - Communication: in general, communication is vague and late. Disabled students need a clear study guide and schedule. The first contact needs to come from staff to make students feel (more) comfortable approaching staff if they encounter issues.
 - Support: extra time and/or a separate exam room for exams is often not something students need. However, that is at the moment the only support they can get. Students don't know what other support the Faculty (or University) offers and where they can find information on support.
- It has been concluded that staff need to be (better) aware of disabilities students have and how they can make their education more accessible for students with disabilities. Students need and want support from staff members.

Conclusion: students with learning disabilities experience various problems in the way education is currently organised. The identified problems and suggested solutions should be used for future staff training and the design of the new form.

-> QB will draft a memo with concrete points of action from the document LZ wrote earlier. He will ask Joanne Mol and/or the board to come up with a plan to implement the suggestions.

9. Student affairs, and 10. Any other business

- MP: the current BA2 students will mostly be on exchange in the first semester of the BA3. This needs to be taken into account when rescheduling delayed BA2 classes due to covid-19.

- ZvL: the student members received an email from a BA student about the lack of leadership skills learned during the education program. QB: the EdCom can only look at this by checking if it is included in the end qualifications of the BA. -> *ZvL will forward the email to the EdCom address.*

- IS: did the staff hear something about BA mentoring? Answer: nobody did. -> *IS will ask Joanne Mol about this.*