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To: University Executive Board

Date
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Our reference
 JWMF/ih/24/00127

Subject
 Position of Faculty of Science and Engineering Board to the Kapteyn PRC Assessment report

Dear members of the University Executive Board,

The Faculty Board would like to thank the members of the peer review committee for their thorough assessment and helpful recommendations for Kapteyn Institute. One of the strengths of Kapteyn Institute is its collaborative nature, within FSE and nationally in NOVA. The FB fully supports the involvement of Kapteyn Institute in NOVA and supports the institute's ambition to become the leading partner in NOVA in data science and instrumentation development. The FB encourages that Kapteyn Institute continues to link with Bernoulli Institute and ENTEG when opportunities arise. With the implementation of the new sector plans and hopefully the successful awarding of the SUMMIT proposal, these activities will be secured for the coming years at the Institute.

A response has been prepared by the Director of Kapteyn Institute (see appendix) and below you will find the additional reactions from the Faculty Board.

1. *Continue to evaluate the student/staff ratio in view of both the quality of the PhD program and the high workload of the staff.*

High workload of staff is an important attention point for the Faculty Board. We have been working on several Faculty initiatives to reduce workload. An important example of how FSE seeks to alleviate administrative burdens is by how we have organized our education support: FSE has an extensive education organization consisting of support staff members that take care of most of the logistics associated with education. Another example is the FSE Research Strategy and Partnerships team who support staff in, amongst which, funding acquisition (together with the funding officers within the Institutes.) Kapteyn Institute engages with these support systems, and we encourage members of the institute to continue to do so. We do consider it an important signal that staff members still report high administrative pressure and are willing to discuss this in more detail.

With regards to the quality of the PhD program, we applaud Kapteyn Institute for the guidance and monitoring systems in place at the institute for their PhD students, leading to one of the shortest PhD completion times within FSE. These are an example of best practice within our Faculty.

2. Continue to work towards a more stable funding situation for its research support staff

The Faculty Board agrees with the institute's reaction. The funding from the sector plans has allowed the institute to hire several important research support positions, including the two data-science support positions and the permanent funding of the NOVA sub-mm lab positions. The faculty is prepared to work with the Institute in finding suitable approaches for financing research support staff, for example exploring links with other departments such as the CIT.

3. Improve the current management structure to accommodate the growing size of the Institute. Provide a program of coaching and learning to Institute leadership.

The Faculty Board supports the Institute in looking at restructuring the management system in the institute and is willing to provide support where needed. The Faculty Board is also prepared to discuss arrangements for the Institute's management team (scientific coordinator, business developer, funding officer) to ensure successful continuation of support in the coming years.

4. Position itself strategically within NOVA, integrating the possibility to host the Opt/IR group currently at Dwingeloo and the plans for developing a Dutch Astronomical Data Center.

The Faculty Board is prepared to discuss these points and is looking forward to receiving further information from NOVA and Kapteyn Institute. This is also a topic we would like to discuss further in a meeting with the University Executive Board.

5. Accelerate the impact on society through a more structured program with clear objectives and professional support, where relevant supported by NOVA and 6. Proceed with the hire of an outreach officer.

The Faculty Board supports the initiatives of Kapteyn Institute and linking activities to cross-institute themes and initiatives (for instance Data Science and Systems Complexity, and activities at Science Linx). A practical solution is to have someone dedicated to outreach, making use of the knowledge within Science Linx and within NOVA to maximize outreach impact. The faculty board looks forward to hearing more about the outreach plan.

6. Develop a more aggressive culture of entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship is an important aspect where many opportunities are available within Kapteyn Institute to support start-ups in data science/AI and instrumentation. We support the initiatives suggested by Kapteyn Institute.

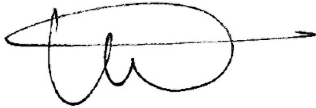
7. Organize regular surveys to assess the well-being of the community and confidence in the system in an anonymous way.

As a result of the Employee survey at FSE, Kapteyn institute has prepared a plan for further supporting its personnel based on the outcomes of the survey. The installation of a well-being committee is an excellent initiative and a best practice for others.

8. Maintain its excellent gender balance and broad cultural basis.

The gender and cultural balance at Kapteyn Institute is strong and well above average for our Faculty. We commend the institute for its commitment to gender balance, diversity, and inclusivity.

Kind regards, on behalf of the Faculty Board,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Frenken', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Prof. Joost Frenken, Dean FSE

Approved by the College van Bestuur, 22 March 2024