

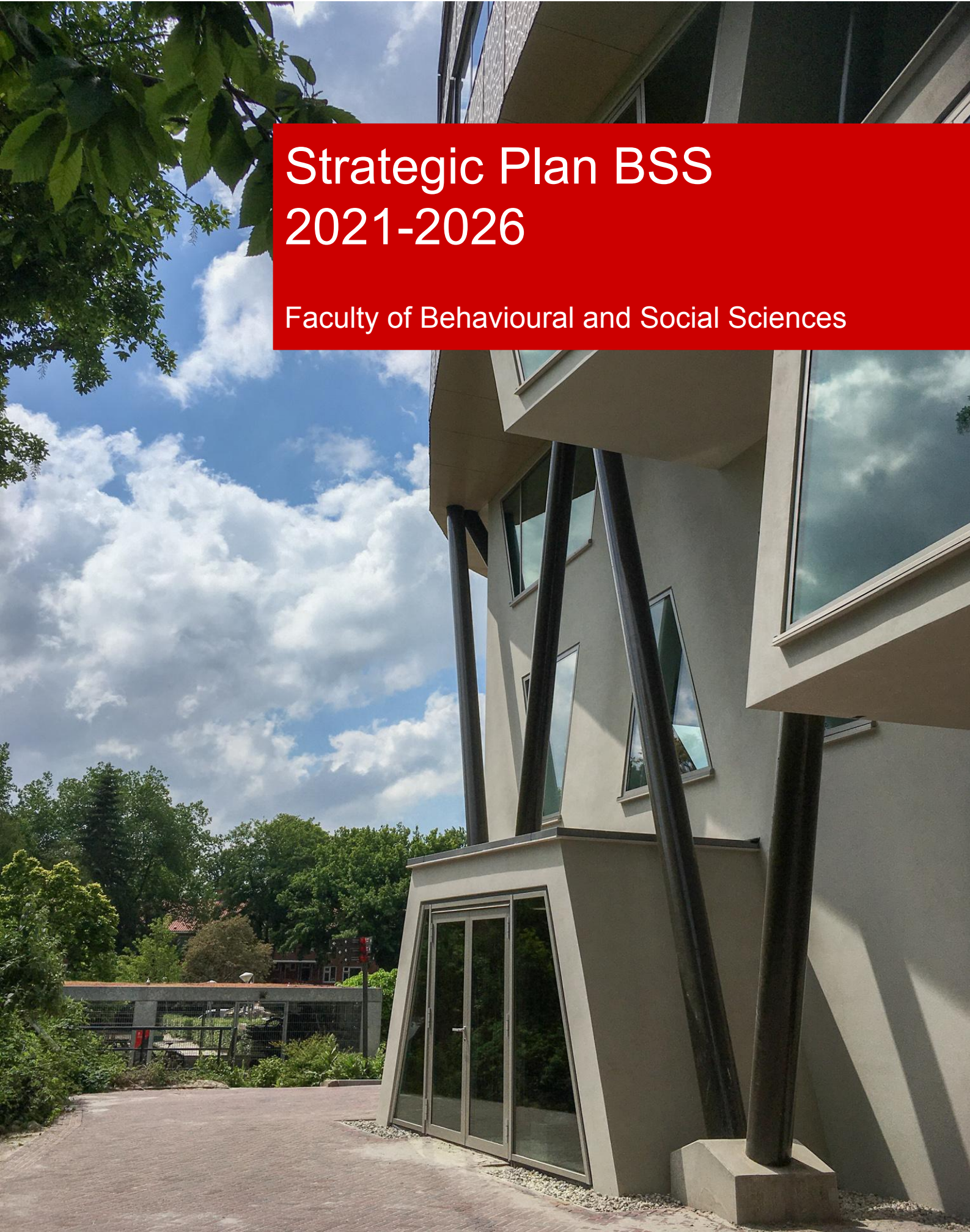


university of
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faculty of behavioural
 and social sciences

Strategic Plan BSS 2021-2026

Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences





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faculty board

BSS Strategic Plan 2021-2026

Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences

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Preface

This is our faculty's strategic plan for the period 2021-2026, describing the faculty frameworks and ambitions for the next five years. This version was created based on the green paper (of May 2020), after processing all of the reactions from various bodies within the faculty, from representatives of PhD students and student organisations, and from a survey conducted amongst all staff members (with 150 respondents). The original green paper was written with assistance from three writing groups—Education, Research and People & Resources—composed of faculty experts. Previous versions of this plan have been discussed in the faculty with the Boards, heads of departments and, once again, representatives of PhD students, and it received consent from the Faculty Council on 19 January 2021.

1 Evaluation of the previous strategic plan

The previous strategic plan (2016-2020) was evaluated in early 2019. The evaluation addressed the completion of the actions, as formulated in the accompanying implementation plan. The situation was different, as additional strategic resources were available in order to ensure the largely successful achievement of goals in the areas of education, research and internationalization. In a few aspects, these goals were either not achieved or achieved only to a limited extent, and they have been included again as strategic objectives in this new plan: greater attention to employability and diversity, the introduction of a management information system, and the adjustment of the consultation structure within the faculty. The latter two aspects are included as a part of improved governance. Funding for the faculty is more limited, due to internal and external developments. This makes the challenge of transforming our strategy into action even greater.

2 Internal and external developments

The preparation of the strategic plan was guided in part by developments both within and outside our faculty. This is because we do not operate in isolation, but are increasingly oriented towards and dependent on society as a whole.

General

- › *Coronavirus*: The coronavirus pandemic has had far-reaching consequences for the design of teaching, research and working in the buildings. Although we have no clear overview of these consequences for the longer term, we would like to anticipate them at least to some extent.
- › *Workload*: Within the faculty, perceived workload is high, and this applies to both the academic staff and the support and administrative staff. In this strategic plan, work pressure has been explicitly addressed in the choices that are to be made in terms of teaching and research, as well as in the HR policy.
- › *Van Rijn Committee*: The budget that is available for the humanities and social sciences is facing pressure in response to the findings of the Van Rijn Committee. Focus, building a profile and clear choices are thus necessary in the areas of teaching and research.
- › *UG Institutional Plan 2021-2026*: In the preparation of our faculty plan, we have taken into account the most important aspects of the *UG Institutional Plan 2021-2026*, which was developed in parallel.
- › *Recognition and Rewards*: The manner in which scientists in the Netherlands are recognized and rewarded for their various tasks has rightly been adjusted, with greater attention to teaching, valorization and leadership.
- › *Open Science*: Open Science is becoming the standard. This has implications for the design of both teaching and research.
- › *Interdisciplinarity*: In light of its importance to society and the new UG strategy, additional attention should be directed towards interdisciplinarity in teaching and research. This is also the heart of the new sector plan, *Van Inzicht naar Impact. Sectorplan Maatschappij- en gedragswetenschappen 2020-2025* [From Insight to Impact: Sector Plan for the Social and Behavioural Sciences 2020-2025], which we endorse.

Specific to teaching

- › *Strategic Agenda*: The Strategic Agenda for Higher Education and Research calls for us to develop our own vision on what/who we would like to be, and to formulate ambitions relating to educational accessibility, flexible education and relevance to the job market.
- › *Quality agreements*: The agreed-upon implementation of the Quality Agreements, with prominent attention to Employability.

Specific to research

- › *Strategic Agenda*: The Strategic Agenda for Higher Education and Research calls for regional cooperation with universities of applied sciences and social partners, including within the context of the EU. The University of Groningen has already started working in this regard through the 'University of the North' initiative.
- › *Indirect government funding and contract research*: The research funding available through indirect government funding and contract research is under especially high pressure.

3 Ambitions

The faculty has the ambition to be one of the best faculties in the Netherlands and beyond within the field of Social and Behavioural Sciences, in terms of both teaching and research. Aside from the contributions brought by our staff members, the most important conditions for this ambition are as follows:

- › A decisive role for teaching
- › Thematic profile building
- › Greater attention to interaction with society, interdisciplinarity and internationalization
- › Excellent quality assurance and professional development
- › Proper use of people and resources, and well-developed governance.

The topics stated above are addressed sequentially in this strategic plan.

Our ambitions correspond to the objectives of the University of Groningen's *Institutional Plan 2021-2026*, which was developed in parallel, as well as with those of the new sector plan *Van Inzicht naar Impact. Sectorplan Maatschappij- en gedragswetenschappen 2020-2025* [From Insight to Impact: Sector Plan for the Social and Behavioural Sciences 2020-2025].

In addition, our ambitions are distributed across three core tasks: teaching, research and valorization (economic and social relevance to society), with the last of the three being derived from the first two. Valorization is intertwined with teaching and research, as it emerges largely from the societal contributions made by our staff members, students and graduates.

4 Teaching, research and valorization

4.1 A decisive role for teaching

The University's highest priority is the education of students. Without students, there can be no University. At the same time, however, we also attach major importance to research, particularly with regard to research initiatives that can be transferred to teaching. For our new strategy, the choices that we make with regard to teaching will play a decisive role in determining how we will use our people and resources.

The teaching at our faculty is based on the following question: What should a social scientist graduating from the University of Groningen know, be able to do and see? This calls for a clear vision on teaching and clearly formulated learning outcomes within the degree programmes. This vision and these learning outcomes together determine our specific profile, in terms of both the implementation of the didactic concept and the range of degree programmes offered.

Vision on teaching

We aim to provide a thorough academic degree programme within an inspiring academic community that maintains active contact with society. Our teaching corresponds to current research and societal issues. With assistance from the professional field, lecturers translate theory and research into social practice. Research constitutes an important pillar in this regard, making it possible for students to learn to analyse reality in a systematic, traceable, justified, valid and ethical manner.

Didactic concept and learning outcomes

Within our faculty, academic professionals are trained in the social sciences (and in specific domains within the broader field). In addition to knowledge, skills and the proper attitude, the training of these professionals requires solid training in the research methods and techniques of both fundamental and practice-based social scientific research. Whenever possible, the design of our teaching centres on small scale and student participation. In this way, we provide students with a close-knit academic community, while striving to organize an active attitude towards studying on the part of our students, as manifested in thorough preparation and active participation in the teaching programme. In the coming period, additional attention should also be devoted to new insights into the provision of teaching (e.g. hybrid teaching forms involving digital options; innovations relating to assessment).

Learning outcomes and Programme curricula

This vision generates the profile of a graduate, as expressed in the learning outcomes of the degree programme. The curriculum is derived from these learning outcomes. Rather than being static, a programme's learning outcomes change in response to developments within society, as well as within the various disciplines.

4.2 Thematic profiling for teaching and research

The thematic profiling for our teaching and research is based on our common denominator: **Societal and individual resilience**. This heading includes teaching and research on changes in society and their effects on humans—on migration, the environment and climate, health, upbringing, education, the protection of vulnerable minorities and the implementation of effective and sustainable cooperation within and between groups. It also includes the domain of care for extremely vulnerable children and families, and—more generally—diagnostics (and psycho-diagnostics), *Healthy Ageing* and the treatment of people with physical disabilities or mental health problems.

Within the domain of teaching, the faculty identifies itself with four Bachelor's degree programmes (Academic Teacher Training for Primary Education; Sociology; Pedagogy and Educational Sciences; and Psychology) and six Master's degree programmes (Research Master's in the Behavioural and Social Sciences (BSS); Educational Sciences; Pedagogical Sciences; Psychology; Sociology and the Teacher Training programmes. Within the Master's

degree programmes, specialized tracks are offered. The faculty will evaluate the range of tracks offered on a regular basis, in view of thematic choices and the number of registered students. Each of the degree programmes and the three faculty research institutes provides a specific realization of this unique profile. The specialized tracks in the Research Master's programme in the Behavioural and Social Sciences provide a good example in this regard: Deficits, Distress and Disorders; Lifespan Development and Socialization; and Understanding Societal Change.

The new directions to be selected for our research in the coming five years will be determined in large part by the implementation of our teaching. This is because ensuring excellence in the design of the University of Groningen's degree programmes requires the right experts (see also the section on the strategic personnel policy), and these experts determine the unique character of our research profile. The discussion concerning the implementation of teaching with the specific range of programmes offered thus provides direction to the new research expertise that is needed, available and, possibly, desired. Furthermore, it would also help realize the research profile. In addition to the realization of the research profile, we define the areas of focus for the operation and facilitation of research in the coming five years. The most prominent role in this regard is played by external factors, including benefits to society (valorization) and the availability of external funding.

In the coming five years, we aim to achieve even more extensive profiling according to the aforementioned themes. The first way in which we will do this will be through our selection of three national themes from the Sector Plan¹, for both teaching and research:

- › Resilience in youth
- › Psychological problems
- › Societal transition and behaviour change

Other efforts will involve the formation of four schools within the University of Groningen, in which we aim to be well represented and actively involved:

- › Healthy Ageing for a Healthy Society
- › Digital Innovation and Technological Progress for a Knowledge Society
- › Energy Transition and Climate Adaptation and Agriculture for a Sustainable Planet
- › Governance and Politics for a Sustainable Society

In this regard, Sustainable Society calls for special attention. The topics exhibit considerable overlap with the existing teaching and research themes within our faculty. We also serve as the coordinator for this school within the University of Groningen.

4.3 Interaction with society, interdisciplinarity and internationalization

In the operation of both teaching and research in the coming period, we would like to devote additional attention to interaction with society, employability, interdisciplinarity and internationalization. In addition, we are pleased to participate in the University of the North, for the development of common initiatives.

4.3.1 In teaching

Interaction with society: Valorization through graduates

The university is facing increasingly frequent and explicit demands to demonstrate its direct interest in and value to society (see also the strategic agenda for higher education). This means that we must demonstrate that our degree programmes are clearly beneficial with regard to helping solve the challenges that are facing society. We do this by expanding the employability of our graduates within the professional field. This can be achieved by directing greater attention in degree programmes to employability and interdisciplinary collaboration, as is being

¹ The Sector Plan *Van Inzicht naar Impact. Sectorplan Maatschappij- en gedragswetenschappen 2020-2025* [From Insight to Impact: Sector Plan for the Social and Behavioural Sciences 2020-2025] lists the following five themes: 1. Resilience in youth 2. Psychological problems 3. The human factor in new technologies 4. Societal transition and behaviour change and 5. Societal inequality and diversity. Each university selects three themes.

increasingly demanded by the professional field. Internationalization plays an explicit role in this regard.

The faculty is able to apply its expertise outside of the University of Groningen with both graduates and teaching staff, for the purposes of:

- › *Life-long learning* for professionals working within the faculty's domains.
- › Specific support of the region and the regional field of education.
- › Providing information to laypeople with regard to the outcomes of research as needed and desired.

Employability

In the recent past, visitation reports have noted that some of our degree programmes were excessively oriented towards research and provided insufficient preparation for the professional field outside the university. Increasing the employability is now a component of the Quality Agreements and, in 2018, a faculty commission issued recommendations for increasing relevance to the job market. Based on these recommendations, learning outcomes, curriculum and, if needed, the didactic concept can be examined and adjusted. One point for attention in this regard is that our graduates should also be able to apply new insights within the professional field and that this should not be a one-way street. The professional field also has no *status quo*. The degree programmes will be devoting attention to the following (and other) aspects of employability:

- › Elaborating the task of lecturers for the relationship between the programme and the professional field, and particularly in relation to the research-driven orientation of the programmes towards the professional field.
- › The progression from 'learning at the university' towards 'learning in practice' within the degree programmes.
- › Within courses: In which role and within which organization should typical knowledge, attitude and skills be applied?
- › Due to the ties to research: the relationship between Open Science and the job market.
- › Specific attention should be paid to foreign students in our teaching programmes. For example, we should examine whether the organization of group-based training could help to improve the process of finding internships.

Interdisciplinarity

Interdisciplinary collaboration (and the ability to engage in such activities) is regarded as an important factor in the ability to resolve the complex challenges facing contemporary society. Our students should also be confronted with this during the degree programme. To date, this has been done through the Minors and, for a select group, the Honours College. In light of our research profile, the Sector Plan and the new University of Groningen strategy, however, it would seem useful to take the opportunity to reinforce these efforts in a targeted manner in the coming five years. One problem in this regard is that, although interdisciplinarity is regarded as highly desirable, no proper definition or operationalization is available. Elsewhere, it has been demonstrated that a multidisciplinary approach can eventually lead to disciplinary and interdisciplinary innovation. In the coming period, therefore, the faculty will be encouraging initiatives involving cross-disciplinary collaboration that could lead to the development of common courses and teaching tracks.

Internationalization

The University of Groningen and our faculty regard the internationalization of the degree programme as an enrichment and as a desirable component of the curriculum. Many students will ultimately arrive in international or multicultural workplaces, and the diversity of cultures/backgrounds can lead to new perspectives and insights. At the same time, most major societal issues have an international dimension. For this reason, we will be devoting attention to the manner in which internationalization can make an even greater contribution to the quality of our teaching.

Within our faculty, internationalization has to do with the following:

- › Intake of foreign students/recruitment (number, specific countries, active recruitment) and intake of foreign staff members.

- › Range of courses taught in English (in the Bachelor's programme, in the Master's programme, in addition to/in replacement of courses taught in Dutch).
- › International classroom, double degrees, summer schools.
- › Inclusion of students and staff members/intercultural literacy.
- › Exchange of staff members and students (specific regions/countries/universities; strategic partners; on campus and online).

In light of the points presented above, we will be re-formulating our goals for internationalization in the coming period.

4.3.2 In research

Interaction with society: Valorization and impact through research

Our research topics, including fundamental topics, are increasingly being determined by the needs and preferences of the broader society. This also requires us to provide substantive justification for the expenditure of research funding. Demonstrating the benefits of our research to society is thus also an area for attention within the strategy. Even within this societal frame of reference, however, fundamental and innovative research will continue to be of major importance to our faculty.

Open Science comprises two specific characteristics:

- 1 Demonstrating additional value and interacting with society, including interdisciplinary work aimed at resolving major societal issues.
- 2 In addition, Open Science provides the public with insight into the 'why', the 'how' and the outcomes of research, with all steps in the research process being presented in a transparent manner.

In the previous planning period, the faculty has taken important steps towards the realization and assurance of such efforts through the professionalization of ethical assessment, awareness-raising concerning the careful treatment of data and the promotion of Open Science. Within the University of Groningen, we have come to be regarded as a faculty in which considerable knowledge is available in these areas. In the coming years, we will continue to develop Open Science, with particular attention to specific components. This is because Open Science is a broad category, with implications for a variety of aspects, including the treatment of research data (open data, FAIR data), research output (open access), research design (pre-registration) and the manner in which others are involved (citizen science and outreach).

We cannot and, fortunately, are not expected to resolve all of these issues on our own. For the coming five years, we will be working on the following aspects:

- › Clearer guidelines and contacts for researchers, with regard to the friction between the GDPR, ethical-assessment frameworks, openness and conducting research.
- › FAIR data (also in accordance with the University of Groningen strategy).
- › Training and awareness-raising amongst researchers concerning all aspects of Open Science and what can and cannot be done in this regard.
- › One way to translate research to the broader society is through the establishment of a Public Academy (e.g. in collaboration with regional media). In the near future, we will be exploring further possibilities in this regard.

In addition, we encourage researchers in terms of research design and the involvement of others. We follow the national guidelines for research output.

Interdisciplinarity

Like the university, the faculty acknowledges the desirability of interdisciplinary work on societal questions. At the same time, however, we have observed that such collaboration is still limited within our faculty. It can and should be reinforced through discussion concerning the realization of the research profile and its correspondence to the Sector Plan. This will take priority in the coming years.

In the realization of the profiling themes, researchers have the opportunity to engage in interdisciplinary collaboration outside the faculty (e.g. through the University of Groningen Schools and the University of the North, or within the framework of the Social and Behavioural Sciences Sector Plan, the NRA or the EU). This is intended in part as a response to the requests of funding sources. In the coming planning period, therefore, we will be working to eliminate obstacles to interdisciplinary research. This will also include ensuring that researchers opting for an interdisciplinary approach will be recognized for this in the assessment process. The basic principle will nevertheless remain that interdisciplinary research relies upon a strong disciplinary foundation and that interdisciplinary research thus exists alongside disciplinary research.

5 Excellent quality assurance and professional development

Quality assurance

Quality assurance within the faculty is in good order with regard to teaching and research, as evidenced by positive results from the visitations, amongst other indicators. In order to maintain this level, it will be important not to relax the attention paid to quality assurance. This applies to both the institutional and the national level. With regard to course evaluations, we largely draw upon the existing evaluation systems within the University of Groningen. In order to include the internal and individual visions of good teaching more as a basic principle in teaching evaluations, however, the faculty has taken the initiative to experiment with new forms of evaluation. Examples include establishing a well-documented system of sample evaluations based on interviews, with a specially developed questionnaire to be administered by students. Our approach to quality assurance is obviously in accordance with external actors and criteria, as established by the NSE and the NVAO.

Professional development

In addition to experience, one of the most effective ways of continuing to develop professionally in the area of teaching involves engaging in conversation with each other about our own teaching. To this end, the faculty has organized the Professional Learning Communities. Within the faculty, there is a need for a more organized form of professional development—one that addresses dilemmas that lecturers encounter in their own teaching, and one that demands relatively little time. One possibility in this regard is ‘peer review’, as a follow-up to the UTQ or STQ: lecturers observing each other in class and then discussing their observations with each other. There is apparently also a need for support in the form of sources, materials, recommendations, experiences, tips and ideas. This could take the form of a digital portal that is actively maintained and that is accompanied by coaching.

6 Proper use of people and resources, and good governance

The realization of teaching and research requires capable people and suitable resources. With regard to people, in addition to academic staff and support and administrative staff, this includes an involved student community that contributes to the realization of the faculty's ambitions. This involves the creation of an inclusive community, a proper structure of consultation and governance, and the right infrastructure for teaching and research, with future-oriented staff planning and sufficient faculty-wide support in order to achieve the objectives.

6.1 Together: An inclusive community

The faculty's basic principle in the implementation of its vision on teaching and research is that we do this together. Each of the three parties—academic staff, support/administrative staff and students—has its own responsibilities and roles.

The inclusive community cannot work unless:

- › Everyone actively participates in and is a part of the faculty community, regardless of nationality, gender, cultural/religious background or position.
- › All three parties are adequately represented in the governance structure.
- › Everyone's contributions are respected and given serious consideration in the decision-making process.
- › The tasks and/or responsibilities of each individual are clearly delineated.

The goal is for the HR policy to correspond to these basic principles, as evidenced by indicators including a policy that encourages the appointment of women professors. This will also require the clarification of the faculty's governance structure and the tasks and responsibilities of the academic staff and the support/administrative staff in the implementation of teaching and research (see below).

6.2 Governance: Improved tasks and responsibilities

The Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences is a large organization of professionals that can flourish only if the responsibilities, tasks and competences, as well as the associated resources, are allocated in a balanced manner within a clear governance structure. We acknowledge that this structure involving the allocation of responsibilities and tasks across the Faculty Board, the directors and the departments is in need of improvement. To this end, improved governance is a clear priority within this strategic plan. The descriptions of responsibilities and processes are currently insufficient, and this must change. It is important to document and update the positions and roles of all actors, with due consideration of University of Groningen policies, the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW) and the objectives of our own faculty.

This does not mean that no progress was made in the previous period with regard to improving the consultative structures within the faculty. Such efforts have generated the following image of how the faculty is organized:

- › The Faculty Board serves as the hinge between the faculty and the outside world. The Faculty Board is responsible for the faculty as a whole, and its powers are in accordance with this responsibility. The Faculty Board, which includes portfolio holders for teaching, research and resources, exercises these powers through collegial governance.
- › In consultations with the departments, the Faculty Board works with the directors to determine the teaching policy, research policy and budget allocations. These frameworks allow the directors sufficient leeway for making their own choices. They are nevertheless bound to close consultation with their departments (through regular consultation with professors or department chairs) concerning the implementation of these choices.
- › In addition, the Faculty Board engages in regular bilateral consultation with departmental managers. The matters discussed during these consultations primarily concern the relevant

department. The managers are in close consultation with the relevant portfolio holders in the Faculty Board.

- › The actual implementation of teaching and research takes place within the faculty's four departments. Each department has a director for education and a director for research. Their duties are established in the Faculty Regulations, and they cover the realization of good educational programmes and stimulating research policies suited to the institute, within the agreed-upon financial frameworks.
- › In order to design and realize teaching and research, as well as the associated policy, the Faculty Board and the departments are assisted by support services. These support services fall partly within and partly outside the faculty. The support services within the faculty are not department-specific, and they fall entirely under the responsibility of the Faculty Board.
- › The heads of the service units also engage in regular consultation with their portfolio holder within the Faculty Board, and they are periodically present at Board meetings. In this manner, they are kept well-informed of the need for support for teaching and research, such that they are able to act in accordance with the wishes of the Faculty Board, discuss what is (and is not) possible and work with the Faculty Board to establish the necessary frameworks.

In addition to the relationship between the departments and the Faculty Board, the independent roles of the Boards of Examiners, the Programme Committees, the Ethics Committee and the privacy coordinator are important to the achievement of our goals.

Participation and faculty input

In the faculty, participation is embodied by the Faculty Council. The Faculty Council and the Faculty Board have a long tradition of consultation according to a '*Harmoniemodel*', which will be continued. The Faculty Council also has a right to prior consultation and a right to consent on a number of topics, and it is equipped for the proper exercise of these rights. In addition, we attach importance to input from the faculty community of staff members and students in the formation and implementation of policy. To this end, the faculty has a number of permanent committees and working groups (e.g. the Occupational Health, Safety and Security working group) and several other more or less formalized consultative bodies, with which the Faculty Board has periodic contact. These consultative bodies include the following (amongst others): YESS-BSS, the PhD Council, Behave and the annual panel discussions with lecturers and students concerning teaching.

6.3 Strategic personnel policy: Recognition and Rewards

Our strategic personnel policy is aimed at optimizing the realization of our vision on teaching and research, while deploying our staff members in a manner that does maximum justice to their expertise and talents. In the coming period, the Faculty Board will gradually transform the existing tenure-track system into a broader strategic personnel policy (SPP).

The composition of the staff (academic and support/management) should be such that we are able to realize our goals for teaching and research. The focus in this regard is on goals and consequences for the medium and long term. It will involve the introduction of the staffing principle. First, however, we will examine the outcomes of the discussion on the strategy for teaching and research, along with the desired staff and personnel structure emerging from these outcomes, which will fit within the financial frameworks of the faculty, but which will allow leeway for individual talent. For the academic staff, this implies that the current design of the tenure-track system will be adjusted and that the ratio of permanent to temporary staff members will be examined. The existing agreements concerning tenure will be upheld in this process, and nothing will be changed in existing contracts.

Academic staff: Career paths

At all universities in the Netherlands, it has come to be understood that, for too long, the assessment of academic staff members has placed excessive focus on research performance. In order to change this, the VSNU (Association of Universities in the Netherlands) compiled the memorandum entitled *Erkennen and Waarderen* [Recognition and Rewards]. In this memorandum, universities make a commitment to develop new manners of recognizing and rewarding the efforts of researchers. These efforts include work in the areas of teaching, societal

impact and academic leadership, as well as team contributions and open science. In addition to changing the assessment of academic staff members, it will affect their career opportunities within the university. We support this development and, in the coming period, we will establish and implement the most suitable paths and criteria in this regard, within the frameworks that are to be elaborated both nationally and within the University of Groningen. In parallel to this process, we will consider the valuation (or re-valuation) of the societal impact of academic staff members who have no research duties.

Support and administrative staff: Career paths

Our goals in the area of recognition, rewards and offering developmental opportunities apply to members of the support and administrative staff as well. The exact form that this is to take will be elaborated further during this planning period. The desire nevertheless exists to think less in terms of departmental boundaries and more in terms of the actual competences of staff members, in order to enhance their mobility and career opportunities, whether within or outside the faculty. In addition, and in light of the effort to improve governance, we will be examining the current system of support, which could offer some opportunities and possibilities.

6.4 Support services and infrastructure

The necessary support services and infrastructure are in part closely associated with the choices made with regard to teaching and research. Based on these choices, it will be necessary to analyse what will be required in terms of expertise on the part of the support and administrative staff, as well as in terms of essential infrastructure. At the same time, the allocation of tasks should be clear, as should the priorities and what is and is not possible within the limited available resources.

Support services

For the faculty to function properly, it is essential for the tasks, expertise and expected effort of staff members to be sufficiently clear. The primary implication for this strategic plan concerns the clarification of the efforts and expertise of support services. In this regard, we will proceed from the principle that the academic staff and the support/administrative staff have shared responsibility in the realization of the core tasks of our organization, based on their own professional perspective and competences, together ensuring proper operations. The academic staff and the support/administrative staff have a relationship of equality in this endeavour.

The support staff currently comprises seven service units:

- 1 Communication, Marketing and Information
- 2 Support Services Department (DFO; *Dienst Facilitaire Ondersteuning*)
- 3 Finance and Project Control
- 4 Human Resources
- 5 Institute of Education
- 6 Research Support (*Onderzoeksondersteuning*)
- 7 Secretarial and Administrative Services (SAS; *Secretariele Administratieve Dienstverlening*)

The utility and necessity of these service units are indisputable. The tasks that they should and can fulfil and the scope that is best suited to these tasks do constitute a point for discussion, based on the principle of ‘*The right task for the right person*’. There are two components in this regard: what has to be done and who is best suited to do it (this could thus be either support/administrative staff or academic staff). The following steps will be taken to this end:

- > An evaluation and overview of the services offered and the tasks performed by the support services at this time.
- > An overview of the support tasks that are desired for the implementation of our strategy.
- > A comparison of the two overviews in order to detect any mismatches between what is desired and what is possible.

The comparison can be used to fuel a discussion concerning prioritization, the allocation of tasks and the consequences of the choices that are made. This discussion will be conducted by the Faculty Board with the departments and service units. The comparison and the priorities emerging from it will be updated regularly, based on new developments.

Infrastructure

Various requests exist in relation to infrastructure for the coming planning period. It is important to note, however that, in accordance with the University of Groningen standards, our faculty has sufficient space, and our resources are not infinite. As is the case for the support services, this means that considerations must be made:

What do we want/need to have available in-house, given our teaching and research profile and our ambitions, and what could we divest, possibly in combination with external rental?

The current wishes/needs are as follows:

- 1 *Teaching:* Sufficient and suitable teaching areas are needed that correspond to current and future teaching methods and the didactic concept, with regard to both small (< 30 students) and large lecture halls (> 250 students).
- 2 *Research:* The physical state of the laboratories and the amount of space available call for investments in modernization and the provision of sufficient space to all research projects.
- 3 *General:* Various medium-term issues exist surrounding accommodations, which include those of the Heymans building and the Institute of Education. Staff members are attached to being in the physical proximity of their departments and service units, as well as to having their own offices. At present, this is not always possible.

6.5 Finance and management

Given the faculty's financial situation, the realization of our ambitions will require a better grip on funding. A number of steps will be taken to this end in the coming period:

- › Improved information facilities with regard to the faculty and departmental budgets, as well as their preparation, from a long-term perspective.
- › A uniform, transparent manner of working with the allocated budget, including the standardization of teaching hours, which could also improve workload.

Based on this management information, regular consultation takes place between the Faculty Board and the departments with regard to the deployment of resources.

Education funding

The funding of the faculty is dependent on the starting value and parameter component (based on performance). In the coming period, specific attention should be paid to the internal re-allocation of resources for teaching, in relation to the thematic choices in the study programme and the associated intake of students. Additional stability in education funding is needed. In the coming period, the faculty will attempt to develop this within the management information system.

Research funding

Without success in the acquisition of indirect government funding and contract funding, the departments within the faculty will not be able to maintain their current scope. Based on current expectations, the acquisition of external research funding—particularly from European funding sources—will become even more important in the coming years. It is therefore essential to arrange this process as efficiently and successfully as possible. To this end, we operate according to a number of shared basic principles:

- › The acquisition of external funding serves a collective interest, and it is thus also a collective responsibility.
- › Funding strategies are being developed for the various types of expertise within the faculty, in line with the research profiles of the unit, institute and faculty, as well as with the core values.

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- › The faculty's step-by-step plan for grant proposals is followed consistently and adjusted as needed, such that the management information needed for the funding strategy will be available in the short term.

In the preparation of the funding strategy, explicit attention will be paid to long term and group interests. The successful efforts that have been made in previous years to acquire personal grants alone will not suffice in the coming five years. For this reason, stronger efforts will be directed towards consortium proposals at the national and EU levels. To date, we have not been very active in this territory. Performing the lobbying work that is needed in this regard will require teamwork and a shared vision within and between institutes regarding internal and external collaboration. Individual proposals will nevertheless remain an important element of research funding.

At the same time, however, the current plan includes the optimization and improvement of the support and organizational structure for the realization of proposals. The limited support that can and/or should be provided by the support/administrative staff and the academic staff must be deployed as effectively as possible. The likelihood of success (quality aspect) and the ratio of effort to returns (quantitative aspect) are thus two points that will be consistently included in decisions concerning whether to proceed with a proposal process.

7 Afterword

This plan is a statement of our ambitions. It is nevertheless important to note that the state of the faculty is good. This is something that we have achieved together, both staff and students. At the same time, however, the intentions presented in this strategic plan will be necessary in order to respond to the internal and external developments that we are or will be facing.

An implementation plan must be written for this strategic plan. Responsibility for this task will rest primarily with the Faculty Board, the directors and the heads of the service units. In the implementation plan, our plans will be further elaborated to include concrete intentions and actions. The entire faculty community will be involved in the further implementation process.

To measure the progress of the plans, we can use the indicators for monitoring, as briefly stated in the appendix: Indicators for monitoring the progress of the Strategic Plan. These indicators will be clearly positioned and elaborated within the implementation plan.

Appendix: Indicators for monitoring the progress of the Strategic Plan

Teaching

- › Intake of Bachelor's and Master's students
- › Success rates
- › Appreciation for degree programmes in the Higher Education Guide (*Keuzegids HO*) and visitation commissions
- › Satisfaction of students and the professional field with relevance to the job market
- › Satisfaction of lecturers
- › Faculty-specific quality criteria
- › Interdisciplinary partnerships (at the level of courses and tracks)

Research

- › Target for each department (% FAIR data stored), visitation committee's appreciation of research
- › Appreciation of research through Research Analytics (SciVal and Altmetrics), SEP indicators
- › Submitted and successful proposals
- › Interdisciplinary collaborations (through article count or contracts)

Valorization

- › Number of life-long learning activities
- › Number of projects for the region/society
- › Performances for a broad audience