

Dear members of the board,

As requested by the board, the diversity committee looked into the new version (draft of June 2021) of the Faculty Reglement ('Rules & Regulations'). We looked at it in general terms, not at the individual rules, and we therefore provide some general comments and recommendations.

1. Given the fact that the faculty community (staff and students) is already quite diverse, a first (obvious) recommendation is to translate it as soon as possible, in order to also offer it in English. Ideally it would be discussed with the various committees/groups in English.
2. It would be an important signal if the Rules & Regulations would include a general section on 'ethics and behavior', explaining what is expected of the community members in terms of behavior towards each other. It could refer to the ethics for fieldwork, but this section should not exclusively relate to people on fieldwork.
3. It was noticed that an effort was made to make the language diverse (at least gender neutral). To further encourage inclusiveness, the language used in the Rules & Regulations could be adapted at some additional points, as by default it uses the male style figure (student, portefeuillehouder, directeur, hem, etc.). It does not mean that the use of language would ideally be adapted for each task or role, or that it needs to say he/she (hij/zij) all the time. The latter is not very inclusive either for people who do not feel represented by a binary gender division. Sometimes the writing style can be more inclusive by making it less explicit (e.g. 'the board member responsible for') and by using for instance the plural (they, students, people responsible for ..., etc.). Another example of a non-inclusive writing style is the use of 'vlootshouw'. It has for some a colonial connotation and it is first of all associated with (white) men. An alternative could for instance be 'staff scan'.
4. The Rules & Regulations refer a couple of times to 'representativeness', in particular when it talks about the composition of committees. This usually refers to the representation of the various organizational bodies (like departments, students, staff members, etc.). However, it does not include references to a wish or intention to have a diverse composition of such committees in terms of junior/senior positions, age categories, gender groups, social or religious backgrounds, etc. By making the wish to be diverse and inclusive explicit, it raises awareness that it needs attention and will not happen automatically. One could make a statement that preferably the board or a committee should preferably have a diverse composition.
5. In general the Rules & Regulations seem rather 'closed' and do not encourage inclusiveness (in terms of making people feel they are involved). To give an example, the document says that the board appoints members of committees, but it does not specify how these participants are being recruited. It does not explain how procedures are and how people, who want to, can get engaged. Should people wait till someone thinks about them? As a consequence, it looks like a black box for those who are not included. This raises the question how the Faculty will be safeguarding that the recruitment is inclusive? Are there procedures in place to prevent that the ones who are 'in the picture' will be selected most? Maybe this could be specified.