With a new Faculty Strategic Plan (FSP) and a Board that is back to full strength, the Faculty of Humanities is ready for the future. Not that our work will be taking a totally different approach, but the changing world certainly calls for different emphases. You can read all about our response to these new developments in this FGW.nu special.

The FSP is an instrument for formulating a clear vision of the future in a structured manner. The Faculty of Humanities has plenty of reasons to look forward to that future with confidence. The wealth of international academic knowledge about languages, cultures and societies of the entire world in the present and the past, makes our faculty unique. And now that the world is becoming increasingly complex through, for instance, globalisation, migration and cultural transformations, our work is even more valuable. With a wealth of different courses in our faculty that we cannot ignore. We must modernise and look further ahead. We have to ensure that we remain relevant for students and society, and continue to be one of the most important centres in the world for teaching and research in the area of the humanities. This does not mean, however, that we are changing everything. All in all, in recent years we have already taken many steps and the unique qualities of our faculty deserve to be retained. The new Faculty Strategic Plan outlines how we will handle these challenges: responding to new developments while still retaining our strong points.

The National Task Force for the Humanities (Regieorgaan Geesteswetenschappen) concludes that “the robustness of Leiden University’s Faculty of Humanities has substantially increased in recent years, and even to such an extent that it is also a success for the University as a whole.” Our financial position is also strong and our student numbers have increased over the last few years.

Building further
We therefore have a good starting position, but this does not mean that we can continue in exactly the same way. Students’ interests are changing, the student population is becoming more international and diverse, and international competition is increasing. We also see that our position within national and international research funding can no longer be taken for granted, because the usefulness and value of the humanities is sometimes underestimated as a result of the growing tendency to think in terms of profit and knowledge.

‘The FSP outlines how we will respond to new developments while still retaining our strong points’

What the Board has to say about the FSP

Wim van den Doel
Dean
“It is important to me that the Faculty of Humanities is an inspiring place for study and research. So I want to ensure that Leiden is the place that everyone with an interest in languages, culture and society worldwide, past and present, gravitates towards. I am committed to creating just such an environment. Excellent library facilities, the Lorentz centre, laboratories for experimental linguistics; these are just a handful of examples. I also feel it is essential that our students have the opportunity to study anywhere in the world and that Leiden can welcome students and academics from all over the globe. I would like to see Leiden become an international hub for Humanities!”

Mijnan de Baar
Vice Dean responsible for Masters and Research Masters
“In the coming years I want to put my efforts into improving the range of master’s courses we offer. More and more often we see bachelor students make a conscious choice in favour of a specific master’s programme at a university of their choice. This means it is essential to deliberately position our master’s programmes and to act on shifting interests among students. The breadth range of (often unique) research specialisations within our faculty opens up plenty of opportunities and possibilities. I also think it is vital to spend more time on community building and orientation towards the job market in our research-driven MA programmes. I would like to examine how to give them form and content, with the help of the department administration, the department teaching committee, alumni and the faculty careers advise. I also feel it is important for us to take responsibility for training academics who can get to work in secondary education with a teaching qualification. The introduction of broad labels for two-year educational masters in different groups of school subjects offers new opportunities in this area. In collaboration with ICLON, subject tutors for diverse groups of students can develop an academic training programme for teachers. This is a very exciting development.”

Egbert Fortuin
Vice Dean responsible for Bachelor programmes
“We have a wealth of different courses in our faculty that are taught with passion by our lecturers. My primary task is to keep it that way, and where possible, to strengthen this even further with help from students and lecturers. This could involve working on new programmes but also the use of ICT in education or further developing general academic skills. I also think it is important that our teaching is truly fed by our research. It is inspiring to be involved, for instance by contributing to the development of digital humanities within our faculty. Our courses should challenge students. We don’t want students falling between the cracks, which is why it is important that we do something about low success rates in the places where they occur. I have noticed that lecturers sometimes feel that bureaucracy in education has become far too important. As far as it is within my capabilities, I would like to take this into account. Lecturers need to feel they are in charge of their own course. A nice challenge for both students and lecturers is to keep promoting the important of humanities for our society.”
The FSP in 3 minutes

What lines are sketched in the Faculty Strategic Plan, what are the most important themes for our future and how will we implement them over the next few years? To learn about all the details, of course, you have to read the whole Plan. But as a convenient introduction, we present here an overview of the main aspects of the FSP:

1. An environment for excellent research

What do we want to achieve?
- International competition and renown for the quality of our research
- More freedom for the faculty to choose its research priorities
- Stronger links with society and other relevant actors

How will we achieve our goal?
- More autonomy for the academic departments
- More freedom for the faculty to choose its research priorities
- Stronger links with society and other relevant actors

2. Activating talent

What do we want to achieve?
- Our faculty remains an important source of innovation: we educate people who shape a part of the 21st century world
- More students from diverse backgrounds enter our programmes

How will we achieve our goal?
- More students from diverse backgrounds enter our programmes
- More students from diverse backgrounds enter our programmes

3. Innovation in teaching and learning

What do we want to achieve?
- To learn about all the details, of course, you have to read the whole Plan. But as a convenient introduction, we present here an overview of the main aspects of the FSP:

How will we achieve our goal?
- Further development of the course catalogue
- More opportunities to study abroad
- More international opportunities

4. Strengthening impact and innovation

What do we want to achieve?
- To learn about all the details, of course, you have to read the whole Plan. But as a convenient introduction, we present here an overview of the main aspects of the FSP:

How will we achieve our goal?
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- More opportunities to study abroad
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5. People, resources and organisation

What do we want to achieve?
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Challenges for the Faculty of Humanities

Our Faculty Strategic Plan (FSP) is naturally unthinkable from the academic climate. The translation of the ambitions from Freedom in Jutland into the situation at the Faculty of Humanities, offers opportunities and challenges that apply specifically for our faculty:

- The student population is becoming more diverse and international, the levels of interest in study programmes and faculties are changing rapidly.
- Competition internationalisation is increasing and we must continue to make efforts to remain an attractive study location for students and academics from all parts of the world.
- Support and funding are becoming more important as they more and more are required to meet the financial challenges of internationalisation.
- The importance of the humanities will be underestimated, potentially threatening our position in competitive environments.
- The core and the whole Plan

The FSP makes it very clear that the Faculty of Humanities intends to offer a varied range of programmes, which match the increasing diversity of our students. We wish to rapidly respond to the increasing number of students interested in an international faculty, and to offer our students a good learning policy and appropriate accommodation.

Studenteninstantie

Ontwikkeling van de baten

Number of study programmes

28 27 84

Leiden in figures

Our staff

Support staff

Academics:

$20,791$ 633

including 165

internal PhD/ MSc

contract/ PhD candidates

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This article can indicate the broad outlines of the FSP (there is no sufficient space to do justice to the immense number of details of the FSP Plan. For the complete FSP Plan with detailed explanations of all the key strategic themes, see our website available to read online. You can find this at the Humanities website, under the heading ‘On the Faculty’. The Future of our faculty.

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Menno Tuurenhout
Executive Dean

"Ik wil mij inzetten voor een evenwichtige begroting en realisatie daarvan. Niet alleen de gezonde reserveportefeuille behouden die de faculteit de laatste jaren heeft opgebouwd, maar ook het toekomstig geld nuttig besteden. In mijn beleving biedt het Facultair Strate’gieplan dat een goed kader voor speerpunten waarin we investeren zodat we bouwen aan een toekomstbestendige faculteit. Heel belangrijk vind ik de reducering van de wereldwijd. Een project dat ik vorig jaar heb opgepakt toen ik bij deze faculteit startte en dat mijn volle aandacht heeft. Het is een ingewikkeld vraagstuk geblokkeerd binnen deze mooie maar ook complexe faculteit. Een ander aspect dat mijn grootste aandacht heeft is de onderlinge verbinding en vertrouwen binnen de faculteit. In mijn beleving mogen deze meer versterkt worden, daar wil ik me graag voor inzetten. Tot slot probeer ik altijd de talentes en ambities van individueel collega’s te koppelen aan de behoeften van de organisatie: dat levert vaak prachtige resultaten op.”

Aurélie van ‘t Slot
Assessor

"There are a few themes that are close to my heart as student member of the Faculty Board. One of them is creating an inclusive and diverse learning environment in which every student feels at home, regardless of gender, sexuality, age, ethnicity or disability. For example, I organise focus groups in which various aspects of diversity are discussed. An inclusive student community is also important for the growing number of international students. As I am studying on an international master’s programme myself I know all about the problems that international student faces, such as accommodation, finding work and social integration, to name but a few. Although these students are often very happy with their course, I believe that student support services could be extended further. Finally, I am looking forward to seeing how the implementation of the 21st century skills will unfold. I am convinced that our students will have a stronger position in the (international) job market with these skills and qualities. I hope the input of our students will contribute to the success of the Faculty Strategic Plan.“

FSP: work in progress

The Faculty Strategic Plan is ready, the Executive Board has given it its seal of approval. We can now start making the plan a reality. Of course we cannot realise all 93 (!) action points defined by the FSP at once. Below is a selection of the action points that will be tackled first, organised into the themes from the FSP.

An environment for excellent research

- Founding a hub for digital humanities

Status: in progress

What does it entail: The Faculty is giving an impetus to education and research in the field of digital humanities. More and more research within the Faculty of Humanities is performed using ICT, such as text and image analysis, the building of databases and visualisation with GIS software. In the new hub, digital humanities research and education in the faculty will be coordinated and developed further. Through close collaboration with the UBLA Centre for Digital Scholarship and the Leiden Centre of Data Science (LCDS) support and expertise in digital humanities will be collated, joint research proposals for funding will be prepared and high quality infrastructure will be built. Engaging teaching programmes on digital humanities will also be developed for interested students.

Point of contact: Hilde De Weerd, Advisory Board Digital Humanities

Activating talent

- Setting up new 2-year MA programmes

Status: pilot with a 2-year MA programme in Geography will start in September 2016, additional plans will be worked out in 2016.

What does it entail: The faculty is working on adapting particular MA programmes in the light of the coming broad BA programmes. For instance, an experimental 2-year educational MA programme in German will start in September 2016 for motivated students with a different background from the BA Germanic and Culture. And if the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science grants its permission, work will begin on language-focused 2-year MA programmes in Arabic and Russian. The aim is to give students with a broad BA the opportunity to become specialists in a particular language and cultural area.

Point of contact: Mirjam de Baar, Vice-Dean and portfolio holder education MA.

Innovation in teaching & learning

- Further development of ICT&O applications

Status: in progress

What does it entail: We are working to increase the knowledge and application of ICT in education. Several projects are running within the faculty to make it possible for lecturers to experiment with digital study materials in their courses. Initiatives have been established to allow lecturers to share their experiences, so increasing the knowledge of new ICT in education across the entire faculty. ICT applications which have proven their worth so far are knowledge clips, online peer review and voting online during lectures.

Point of contact: Anna Benjamins, ExpertiseCentrum Online Leren, eco@hum.leidenuniv.nl

Strengthening impact and innovation

- Development of the Nederlands Instituut Marokko (NIMAR: Netherlands Institute Morocco) Status in progress. The NIMAR has been part of the Faculty of Humanities since the beginning of this year.

What does it entail: The NIMAR is the national expertise centre for Morocco Studies. It provides education to students, PhD candidates and professionals from the Netherlands, facilitates research and actively contributes to the knowledge of languages, culture and society in Morocco, the Arabian world and West Africa, in the Netherlands.

Point of contact: Livis Buskens, Director of NIMAR, nimar@hum.leidenuniv.nl

Research and education in an international environment

- Development of an English track within the BA in Philosophy

Status: in progress

What does it entail: The study of philosophy in the Netherlands (including in Leiden) has focused on the Western Tradition. In the 21st century philosophy defined itself largely in terms of a Euro-American tribal warfare between continental and analytical philosophy. In the 21st century, this approach is becoming increasingly untenable – especially at the Faculty of Humanities in Leiden, where our focus encompasses the entire world. The new English spoken track Global and Comparative Perspectives in the BA Philosophy will study Western and non-Western philosophy (for example Chinese, Japanese, Indian and Arabic) and the hermeneutics and other questions that a comparison between these traditions will pose.

Point of contact: Léon Buskens, Vice-Dean and portfolio holder education MA.