As 2016 has drawn to a close, we look back upon an inspiring and exciting year. With heartfelt gratitude to all of you—our students, staff, alumni and societal partners—we proudly present our annual report, which features the highlights from 2016.

In a world in which business, society and environment are closely related and interact at an increasingly global scale, we continue to expand our scope. We are therefore delighted to announce that on 1 September 2017, the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration (abbreviated as FEWEB for Faculteit der Economische Wetenschappen en Bedrijfskunde) will change its name to the School of Business and Economics (SBE). Our new name reflects the broad scope of our activities, our ambitions in the area of internationalisation, and the quality of our teaching and research.

As we move forward in our transformation into a truly international School, we also look back on our activities and achievements in the preceding year. We hope you enjoy reading all about it!

On behalf of the Faculty Board,

Willem Verschoor, Dean
FACULTY BOARD

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:
Drs. Rob de Crom, Director of Education
Ms. Mira Maletic, Managing Director
Prof. dr. Willem Verschoor, Dean
Prof. dr. Andre Lucas, Vice Dean and Director of Research
Matthijs Eigenhuis, Student Assessor
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Willem Verschoor, Dean:

‘SCIENCE WITH PURPOSE’
The Faculty of Business and Economics (FEWEB) is one of the largest faculties of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. FEWEB accommodates approximately 4,000 undergraduate students, 1,450 postgraduate students and 460 employees. The academic staff consists of professors, lecturers, researchers and PhDs, who are connected to the various departments. The supporting staff is part of the Faculty Office. The Faculty Board leads the faculty.

‘Everyone at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration (FEWEB) is united in their commitment to excellence! We discover, preserve and propagate fundamental knowledge in business and economics that has a significant impact on the economic, social and ecological challenges facing our world today. Our motto is “Science with Purpose”.

At FEWEB, we foster an international learning and research community for ambitious people and organisations who are convinced that cooperation, open-mindedness and social responsibility are the way forward—for science, for business and for humanity.

Rooted in a tradition of independence and openness, we cultivate an inclusive environment where people learn, develop knowledge, reach their potential and achieve their goals. We are eager to encourage the personal growth of our students into people of character and conviction, people who make a difference in the world as academics, professionals and citizens.’
At FEWEB, we take pride in our highly productive researchers who in 2016 published a large number of journal articles, chapters, books and working papers. They presented their work at international conferences and received outstanding awards and grants, including prestigious grants from the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO): Veni (Maria Tims), Vidi (Martijn van Assem) and Vici (Bas van der Klaauw). We have highlighted a number of events and listed all PhD dissertations below.
HIGHLIGHTS

KIN RESEARCH BRINGS TOGETHER TOP ACADEMICS TO DISCUSS DIGITAL INNOVATION
Marleen Huysman and Hans Berends of KIN (Knowledge, Information and Innovation) Research recognised the need to craft an interdisciplinary research agenda for future research on digital innovation in communities and ecosystems; digital products, services and infrastructures; digital work practices and routines; and strategy and digitalisation. To speed up the academic learning cycle, they attracted many academics in their international network to Amsterdam for a two-day workshop on ‘Organising for digital innovation’. A select group of researchers—among whom were internationally renowned thought leaders such as Youngjin Yoo, Raghu Garud, Patrick Cohendet, Ola Henfridsson, Michael Barrett, Brian Pentland and Dick Boland—discussed the potential of the new field1. This event solidified KIN Research’s leading position in the field of digital innovation. In 2018, KIN Research will build upon its first success and organise a second workshop. In the meantime, the KIN Research group will not only continue its research on the use and development of digital innovations, but will also strive to create more impact for practitioners by developing a set of workshops and master classes.

INVESTMENTS IN COMPLIANCE RESEARCH PAY OFF
Over the past couple of years, the Department of Accounting has invested in research in the area of compliance and regulation enforcement. Two papers on this subject appeared in prestigious international journals. Mendoza Rodriguez et al. (2016)2 showed—based on the market of financial intermediation in the Netherlands—not only that the perceived fairness of regulations improves the compliance of firms, but also how this effect is established. The authors demonstrated that, when firms perceive the complexity of the regulation to be fair, they invest in getting to know the law, which enables them to comply. This indicates the importance of fairness perceptions for motivation toward voluntary

1 See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J2NQDl7G3Yo for a video in which scholars reflect on the opportunities and challenges that innovating with digital technologies brings to organisations.
compliance, as investing in knowledge is, after all, a voluntary action. Worku et al. (2016) studied the effect of corruption on tariff evasion in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), which is a subject ripe for further study, as tariffs constitute an important part of public revenue in developing countries. Although corruption in SSA countries is often blamed for high rates of evasion, Worku et al. (2016) showed that the corruption level in countries exporting to SSA is just as important: tariff evasion is reinforced by a combination of high levels of corruption in both importing and exporting countries. Fighting evasion by fighting corruption is thus a mutual responsibility.

**VENI GRANT FOR MARIA TIMS**

Maria Tims, associate professor in the Department of Management and Organisations Studies, received a prestigious Veni grant from NWO. The Veni grant will allow her to develop and conduct innovative studies based on her expertise in the field of proactive behaviour and job redesign. More specifically, she will focus on ‘job crafting’. Job crafting is the process by which employees proactively adjust various aspects of their work to better tailor their job to their individual wishes and needs. Maria Tims’ research is highly relevant for both professional practice and science. From a practical standpoint, around 2.7 million Dutch employees experience high job demands (Monitor Arbeid, 2013), resulting in burnout complaints, work stress and absenteeism. Organisational interventions aimed at reducing work stress are time-consuming and often ineffective, probably because it is difficult to take individual preferences and abilities into account when redesigning work top-down. Job crafting is a specific type of proactive behaviour to self-improve the person-job fit. In a scientific context, Maria Tims aims to expand on job crafting theory with a team perspective on individual job crafting behaviours, by bringing in team-level inputs and outcomes. Her research will elucidate individual (i.e., other-orientation, status) and team (i.e., supportive climate, reciprocity) influences on job crafting and individual (i.e., work enjoyment, work stress), team (i.e., efficiency, productivity, absenteeism) and organisational (i.e., effectiveness) outcomes.

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RESEARCH
Education
Student Associations
Talented female scientists
### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES PER DEPARTMENT AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Permanent Staff</th>
<th>Externally Contracted &amp; Guest Staff</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information, Logistics &amp; Innovation</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management &amp; Organisation</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>Accounting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spatial Economics</td>
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<td>59</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Econometrics &amp; Operational Research</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Education/Zijlstra Centre</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### STAFFING IN FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE) VALUES, BROKEN DOWN BY ACADEMIC AND SUPPORT STAFF*

*excluding contracted and guest staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>FTE Support Staff</th>
<th>FTE Academic Staff</th>
<th>Ratio Support to Academic</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>End of year 2012</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>1:4.3</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of year 2013</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>1:4.7</td>
<td>429</td>
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<tr>
<td>End of year 2014</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>1:5.4</td>
<td>398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of year 2015</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>1:5.7</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of year 2016</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>1:5.1</td>
<td>377</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PUBLICATION IN TOP JOURNAL: AMERICAN ECONOMICS JOURNAL - APPLIED ECONOMICS

Nadine Ketel, Edwin Leuven, Hessel Oosterbeek and Bas van der Klaauw (Department of Economics) had their article ‘The returns to medical school in a regulated labor market: Evidence from admission lotteries’ published in American Economic Journal: Applied Economics⁴, a top journal with an article influence percentile score of 99. Medical school is the most prominent example of restricted access to education in the Netherlands. Three reasons often given for limiting the number of students in medical school are: 1) that small classes ensure the quality of the study programme; 2) that the high costs of medical school are a waste of public resources if students do not find employment as a doctor; and 3) that limiting the number of doctors avoids supplier-induced demand, such as doctors providing unnecessary medical services. For decades, centralised admission lotteries were used to determine access to medical school. The (conditional) random assignments in the lotteries are ideal for an empirical estimation of the returns to medical school. Merging individual data on admission lotteries with administrative data available at Statistics Netherlands allowed the authors to construct earning profiles up to 22 years after participation in the lottery. They found that in every single year after graduation, doctors earned at least 20 per cent more than people who were not selected in the lottery for a spot in medical school and ended up in their next-best occupation. The lifetime difference is even larger: 22 years after the lottery, the earnings difference is almost 50 per cent. Only a small fraction of this difference can be attributed to differences in working hours and human capital investments. The authors therefore interpret the return as a rent due to the restricted supply of doctors in the Netherlands.

Cambridge—all top researchers in behavioural finance. The call for papers generated approximately 200 submissions. After reviewing the submissions, a high-quality conference programme was compiled, featuring two full days of parallel sessions. Most participants were from academia, but representatives from the financial industry and supervisory institutions were also present. Participant feedback was consistently positive. The presenters were happy to see a conference focusing on behavioural finance, with high-quality speakers and discussions, and a friendly but professional atmosphere. The Research in Behavioural Finance Conference is currently the largest behavioural finance event worldwide.

THE GREEN PARADOX PROJECT
The Green Paradox project, for which Rick van der Ploeg and Cees Withagen of the Department of Spatial Economics received an Advanced Grant from the European Research Council in 2011, was brought to a successful conclusion in April 2016. Thanks to the indispensable participation of colleagues and the highly appreciated support of the Tinbergen Institute, this was celebrated with a conference in Amsterdam, which attracted leading national and international environmental economists. In short, the green paradox implies that subsidising renewable natural resources, such as solar and wind power, can drive oil resource and coal mine owners to accelerate the extraction of these fossil fuels, thereby aggravating the climate problem more than reducing it. The pricing of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases is a better method. The conference studied the green paradox from many different points of view, including that of its founder, Hans-Werner Sinn (Munich). Geoffrey Heal (Columbia University, New York) was also a keynote speaker. A number of contributions have been published in special issues of the European Economic Review and Environmental and Resource Economics. On the last day of the conference, Cees Withagen gave his farewell speech as professor at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

The green paradox implies that subsidising renewable natural resources can drive oil resource and coal mine owners to accelerate the extraction of these fossil fuels, thereby aggravating the climate problem more than reducing it.

For more information, see www.rbfc.eu.
Our researchers excel in key areas, and their research work is of the highest quality. In the ‘Research Review Economics & Business 2008–2014’ from QANU (Quality Assurance Netherlands Universities), we achieved the highest scores in the Netherlands. The chair of the international committee, professor Arie Kapteyn, noted that ‘productivity goals and strategy are well defined with strong incentives for top-quality publications and top grants in the tenure track’. The international stature of our research received a further boost in 2016, when we were awarded the Veni, Vidi and Vici grants.’

Willem Verschoor, Dean

JULIA MÜHLHAUS, SUCCESSFUL MASTER’S AND PHD STUDENT

Julia Mühlhaus, master’s graduate in Business Administration and current PhD student in the Department of Management & Organisation, published her master’s thesis research in the highly prestigious, peer-reviewed journal Human Relations. Her article is entitled ‘The paradoxical effect of self-categorization on work stress in a high-status occupation: Insights from management consulting’. Julia and her co-author, Onno Bouwmeester, conducted an interview study of management consultants to explore how self-categorisation in terms of occupational identity affects work stress in a high-status occupation. The authors found that not only low-status but also high-status groups benefit from self-categorisation when coping with stressful situations. They empirically demonstrated an ‘upward spiral’, illustrating how consultants’ social identity as high-performing professionals helped them to cope with stress, which in turn created a feeling of social inclusion. However, they also observed a ‘downward spiral’, where social identity provoked work stress among management consultants who could not meet high occupational standards. Consultants in this category coped less effectively and feared social exclusion from the group.

Julia is currently a PhD student in the Department of Management & Organisation. Her research interests are management consulting, coping, social identities and work stress.
### EMPLOYEE NUMBERS INCLUDING EXTERNALLY CONTRACTED AND GUEST PERSONNEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Academic</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Guests</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>275</td>
<td>859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of year 2013</td>
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<td>94</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of year 2014</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of year 2015</td>
<td>463</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of year 2016</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>707</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### AGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE FACULTY’S ACADEMIC STAFF AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>&lt;30</th>
<th>31-40</th>
<th>41-50</th>
<th>51-60</th>
<th>&gt;60</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate prof</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant prof</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>95</td>
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<tr>
<td>PhD researcher</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>82</td>
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<tr>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CONTACTS

RESEARCH OUTPUT 2016

TOTAL 789

*Working papers, conference presentations, editorial board membership, book editorships, reports.
by marketing scientists from all over Europe, confirming the department’s position as a young, dynamic group that is gaining international recognition. This reputation was further evidenced by a number of top publications in journals such as the Journal of Marketing Research⁶, the International Journal of Research in Marketing⁷, and the Journal of Interactive Marketing⁸.

OPERATIONS RESEARCH GROUP: TWO ‘BEST PAPER’ AWARDS
Ad Ridder and Zdravko Botev received the Best Theoretical Paper award for their paper ‘An M-estimator for rare-event probability estimation’, presented at the 2016 INFORMS Winter Simulation Conference, held in December in Arlington, Virginia, USA. This annual conference is considered to be the premier international forum for disseminating recent advances in the field of system simulation. In this paper, a maximum likelihood-type estimator with excellent performance was developed for Monte Carlo estimation of rare-event probabilities.

PhD student Joost Berkhout received the Best Student Paper award for his paper ‘Google’s PageRank algorithm for ranking nodes in general networks’, presented at the Workshop of Discrete Event Systems (WODES, May 30–June 1 2016, Xi’an, China). The paper provides an extension of Google’s acclaimed PageRank algorithm to not connected networks and avoids using any damping-factor-like mechanism.

In the autumn of 2016, the Marketing Department organised a conference on consumer behaviour, with speakers from the London Business School, New York University, INSEAD and University of California (Riverside). Femke van Horen from the Marketing Department delivered a speech about her research into consumer responses to copycat brands. The conference was visited

PHD DISSERTATIONS


11. Baroudi, S. [2016]. Shading a fresh light on proactivity research: Examining when and how proactive behaviors benefit individuals and their employing organizations. Amsterdam: ABRI


14. Huang, J. [2016]. Topics on social and economic networks. Amsterdam: Tinbergen Institute


22. Lysova, E. [2016]. What does your career mean to you? Understanding individual career and work behaviors through the prism of the meaning of career. Amsterdam: ABRI


25. Muller, P. [2016]. Labor market policies and job search. Amsterdam: Tinbergen Institute


27. Ryszka, K.A. [2016]. Resource extraction and the Green Paradox: Accounting for political economy issues and climate policies in a heterogeneous world. Amsterdam: Tinbergen Institute


31. Zeng, Y. [2016]. Topics in trans-boundary river sharing: Problems and economic theory. Amsterdam: Tinbergen Institute

32. Zhou, F. [2016]. Essays on mismeasurement and misallocation in transition economies. Amsterdam: Tinbergen Institute

In July 2016, the Amsterdam Centre for World Food Studies (ACWFS) was officially launched. ACWFS performs the activities of the former SOW-VU (Centre for World Food Studies). But it is more than that: ‘Our ambition is to become a Centre of Excellence when it comes to food and nutrition security issues, specifically in lower- and middle-income countries. To achieve this, we are bringing together the expert knowledge available within Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam: experts from FEWEB, the Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences, the Network Institute and the Centre for International Cooperation at VU International Office and, of course, the former SOW-VU with its almost 40 years of experience in food policy research for development’, says Remco Oostendorp, Director of ACWFS and Professor of International Economics.
'The Centre strongly endorses the view that food and nutrition security is part of a complex system of factors, including economic, agro-ecological, technological, health and cultural aspects. Therefore, we focus on an interdisciplinary system approach, involving experts from diverse faculties and research groups within Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. In addition, our research is demand driven, originating from real-world problems and in cooperation with local and global stakeholders and research partners.'

There is much to do. ‘We have planned many activities. For instance, we are developing a university minor in global food security, which will start in September 2017. We are also working to develop a summer school course on food security. And we have Student Thesis Fellowships to support students writing theses involving food security issues.’ The Centre is also one of the research organisations participating in the major NWO initiative ‘Tackling Global Challenges’. An internal introductory event was organised in the autumn of 2016. The official opening symposium will be held in the autumn of 2017. ‘Intentionally late’, says Remco Oostendorp. ‘We want to be able to show the outside world what we are doing and where we are going—not just plans, but actions that have been taken. In addition, we will use this time to extend the network, get our name on the map and get to know each other better.’

‘AGRICULTURE IS BACK ON THE AGENDA’

‘What I see as an obvious task for ACWFS is to give existing research a face. People outside Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam should know that Dutch knowledge of food and food security is right here in Amsterdam—not only in Wageningen. We have long-standing expertise on these topics, and we need to communicate this to the outside world.’

Oostendorp sees excellent prospects for ACWFS. ‘Agriculture is back on the agenda. For years, this has not been the case. With local food crises in Africa and global challenges to feed an increasing global population with changing dietary habits and environmental limits, there is a growing awareness that there are problems with food security. Just read the papers. People outside of universities are discussing issues like the pros and cons of large-scale agricultural production, how to involve small-scale farmers in modern production methods, and how to feed growing cities sustainably. These are all really big questions on the agenda.’

Oostendorp worked on food and nutrition issues for years. He was an international consultant for the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the International Labour Organization, the UN Development Programme and the US Agency for International Development. He was a researcher at the former ESI-VU and an associate professor in the Department of Economics. His main interests are development and international economics, specifically the effects of globalisation, the integration of labour markets, business performance and agricultural intensification, as well as survey methodology in developing countries.
EDUCATION

New portfolio of master’s programmes

Following the successful renewal project involving bachelor’s and pre-master’s education, all regular master’s programmes underwent a follow-up review. Over the past year, FEWEB was assisted by a strategic innovation and marketing company in co-creating a new portfolio of master’s programmes. The aim of this project was to set shared principles and clarify the profile of each master’s programme in the faculty’s portfolio.
During the co-creation process, interviews provided insights into the wishes of employers, alumni, current students, teachers and management. In a series of workshops, common principles were established, for instance regarding the faculty’s learning goals, from which each master’s programme derived its own profile and curriculum.

The end result is a new, coherent master’s portfolio with a continuous link between education and research, and a closer eye on opportunities for graduates to join the labour market. We share some highlights of the renewal process below.

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

The master’s programme in Business Administration has gone through significant changes, in terms of both organisation and content. First, in terms of programme structure, three of the specialisations within the Business Administration programme—Digital Business Innovation, Financial Management, and Transport & Supply Chain Management—have started a process to become individual master’s programmes. Although these three programmes will formally still be part of Business Administration in 2017–2018, the aim is to have them accredited in one or two years’ time. The Human Resource Management, Management Consulting, and Strategy & Organisation specialisations will remain under the umbrella of Business Administration. In addition, two new programme specialisations have been added: International Management and Leadership & Change Management. The former programme specialisation focuses predominantly on preparing students for future global careers in multinational corporations. The latter is a new interdisciplinary programme that examines leadership of change processes from both a micro- and a macro-perspective.

The end result is a new, coherent master’s portfolio with a continuous link between education and research.
In terms of content, the master’s programme in Business Administration has adopted new faculty learning goals that focus on three domains: academic, professional and citizen. Focusing on these three domains, the Business Administration programme aims to produce graduates who are academically skilled and knowledgeable, prepared for their future professional careers and aware of their role in society. The programme has also moved towards creating a clearer distinction between the terms that make up the academic year, with the first semester focusing primarily on content courses and the second focusing more on the application of that knowledge, for example through an internship and master’s thesis. Finally, the integration of academic and practical elements has a more prominent place in the programme. This includes a stronger focus on solving complex practical problems using academic skills and knowledge, and greater cooperation with organisations (e.g., setting up courses for organisations, using some of their real-life cases for assignments).

The revamped master’s programme in Business Administration will

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**BACHELOR’S AND MASTER’S STUDENT NUMBERS 2016–2017**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>First-year students</th>
<th>Enrollments</th>
<th>Re-enrolments</th>
<th>International students</th>
<th>Honours programme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B Business Administration</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>796</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Econometrics &amp; Operations Research</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>B Economics &amp; Business Economics</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>371</td>
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<tr>
<td>B International Business Administration</td>
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<td>493</td>
<td>300</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Philosophy, Politics &amp; Economics</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Accounting &amp; Control full time</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>106</td>
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<tr>
<td>M Accounting &amp; Control part time</td>
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<tr>
<td>M Business in Society (joint degree)</td>
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<tr>
<td>M Econometrics &amp; Operations Research</td>
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<td>M Entrepreneurship (joint degree)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Spatial, Transport &amp; Environmental Economics</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Tinbergen Institute Master of Philosophy in Economics</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>3830</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*B=Bachelor of Science, M=Master of Science*
We are constantly fine tuning the quality of our teaching programmes and of our student support facilities. In 2016, our master’s programmes went through a scheduled evaluation and redesign process. This involved comprehensive feedback (including structural feedback) from stakeholder groups, such as students, programme directors, alumni and staff members.

Willem Verschoor, Dean

start in September 2017 with the ambition of becoming even better at preparing students for a successful career in business or management. To achieve this, the aim is to attract highly motivated and ambitious students who, together with the academic staff, can make the programme an even greater success. This will result in increased student satisfaction, a greater ability of graduates to find an appropriate job and a more active alumni network that will help to further support the Business Administration programme in the future.

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MARKETING

In the 2015–2016 academic year, the master’s programme in Marketing started out as an already redesigned programme. It had been developed with the view that academic professionals not only need to know the relevant models and theories to be able to identify a problem, but they also need comprehensive, real-life training in academic skills in order to explore complex cases from multiple perspectives.

Every course is kicked off with a briefing at a leading national or international organisation such as Heineken, Microsoft, SuitSupply, FrieslandCampina or TUI. These global brands present themselves and their current challenges—and ask the students to provide a solution. Students are confronted with challenges like: How can Microsoft Office 365 compete when almost everyone uses a free service such as Google Docs? Which sales and product strategies should FrieslandCampina adopt for its Chocomel brand in France, Germany and China—markets, where chocolate drinks are perceived very differently? Using Pitch2Peer, a peer review platform, students present their ideas, analyses and solutions in short videos to each other—and thus learn from one another. The best three teams present their solutions to the company at the end of the course.

The Alzheimer Lab, a fundraising initiative for the prominent Alzheimer research group at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, also deserves a special mention. As part of the Lab activities, large companies such as KPMG, Shell, Philips and McKinsey provide high-potential managers to develop fundraising campaigns. Students work with these non-marketing managers to improve the campaigns. They learn not only how marketing can contribute to societal issues, but also what they themselves can contribute to society as role models in providing community services.
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ECONOMICS, PUBLIC POLICY TRACK

In 2016, FEWEB designed and developed the one-year master’s track in Public Policy. Public Policy, a specialisation within the Economics programme, is targeted at talented students from different academic backgrounds who want to pursue a career as a policy advisor or analyst. Graduates might work for a governmental organisation, or as a policy economist for an inter-governmental organisation such as the World Bank or IMF, or as a high-end consultant providing economic policy advice. The master’s track addresses the main societal challenges facing the world today, which often have a strong economic dimension, for example, global warming, poverty, globalisation, inequality, urbanisation, ageing of society and international migration. Local, national and global policy makers all struggle with these issues. Effective public policies are urgently needed, but are not available straight off the shelf.

The master’s track in Public Policy provides students with a solid foundation in public economics and empirical research methods. Students learn about the economic tools needed to identify the challenges of policy makers around the world, and how to design and evaluate policy interventions. They are then challenged to put these tools into practice during four field courses focusing on either climate change, constructing the welfare state, globalisation or urbanisation. In addition, students participate in a policy seminars series, in which they meet and interact with policymakers and learn to write a theoretically grounded policy brief supported by convincing empirical evidence. The master’s track, which starts in the 2017–2018 academic year, will be educating the leading economic policy advisors of the coming decades.
The year 2016 marked the first full year of operation for Executive Education. The increased focus on cooperation and coordination of resources and activities proved to be beneficial. There were a number of promising new initiatives in the Accounting, Finance and Management domain; the master’s programme in IT Audit, Compliance and Advisory received NVAO accreditation; and several newer initiatives gained momentum.

The most prominent beneficiary has been the postgraduate programme in Business Analytics and Data Science (BA/DB). The programme started in 2014 and in 2016 demand exceeded capacity, which forced the team to look for bigger accommodation in 2017. Head of the programme and recently appointed professor, Frans Feldberg, elaborates on the value of big data for organisations (see page 32).

**STUDENT NUMBERS IN EXECUTIVE EDUCATION 2016–2017**

- **IT Audit, Compliance & Advisory**
  - Total: 47
- **Business Analytics & Data Science**
  - Total: 830
- **International Executive Master in Auditing**
  - Total: 505
- **Executive Master in Finance & Control**
  - Total: 37
- **Executive Coaching & Team Coaching**
  - Total: 105
- **Management Consulting**
  - Total: 42
- **Change Management**
  - Total: 46
- **Compliance & Integrity Management**
  - Total: 95
- **Digital Auditing**
  - Total: 60
- **Certified Public Controlling**
  - Total: 31
- **Professional Programmes**
  - Total: 10931
- **Accountancy/ Register Accountant**
  - Total: 1115
- **Total**: 2117
We aspire to the Triple Crown accreditation (AACSB, EQUIS and AMBA). In 2016, we made good progress in the AACSB accreditation process, resulting in the approval of our application for eligibility in Business and Accounting. During her two-day visit to our faculty, our mentor, professor Julia Clarke, reported that she was “extremely impressed by the quality of the institution and its commitment to the AACSB accreditation”.

Willem Verschoor, Dean
In February 2016, Frans Feldberg was appointed Professor of Data-Driven Business Innovation. How can organisations achieve value from big data and analytics? This, in short, is the main theme of his research. Systems, methods, processes and technologies that have traditionally been used to transform data into insights and results are no longer adequate to process and analyse the ever-growing amounts and types of data generated today. Such developments require new ways of thinking. Organisations are faced with the challenge of developing and implementing new data-driven business models.

Frans Feldberg on Big Data:

‘IT IS ALL ABOUT CREATING A BALANCED VALUE EXCHANGE’
Feldberg: ‘The role of data in strategy-making has changed. The upsurge in digitisation, and the associated data deluge, has prompted organisations to re-examine their business models. Traditionally, data were only used to improve existing business by being transformed into actionable insights. Nowadays, more and more organisations are discovering that data can also be used for major innovations and to enter new business domains. The creation of new data-driven products and services is an interesting and booming area. Consider, for example, a manufacturer of skiing equipment that offers skiers a smartphone app to enhance their skiing experience. Based on the data collected, this manufacturer can advise users of the app on which slopes to take, where to find the best restaurants, where to meet like-minded skiers and even which ski insurance to buy. These services allow the manufacturer to enter new business domains.’

Big data and data science are hot topics. ‘There is a shortage of knowledge and skills in these domains. Employers and employees are becoming more aware of a growing demand for knowledge in this field. Data science courses are very popular, at the undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate levels. Even students from different faculties apply to our courses. We have also set up a postgraduate programme, Business Analytics & Data Science, for which there is a huge waiting list.’

What are Frans Feldberg’s plans for the years to come? ‘My key mission is to connect academia and society, especially when it comes to issues involving big data and innovation. Therefore, the focus will be on strengthening the ecosystem already established around our research—that is, collaborating even more with those in our environment. We work together with a variety of organisations, companies, local governments, health institutions, etc. Through our scientific research, we add value to these organisations. And, vice versa, education and research also benefit from active collaboration with those in our environment. In this way, we create ‘win-win’ situations that are beneficial for everyone involved, and we want to do this to an even greater extent in the future. It is all about creating a balanced value exchange.’

Before Frans Feldberg entered academia, he was an entrepreneur and business consultant for national and international companies, specialising in business analytics and business model innovation. ‘I consider myself to be an entrepreneurial scientist’, he says. ‘I see many opportunities—especially when it comes to the way in which we, the academic community, can use and exploit the results of our research. An entrepreneurial approach can be very fruitful in this process.’
AUREUS
Aureus is the faculty association for all students in Economics and Business Economics, Business Administration, International Business Administration and associated master’s specialisations at the VU. Founded in 1948, it now has more than 4,000 members and is one of the largest and most active organisations of its kind in the Netherlands. Aureus’ mission is to provide FEWEB students with extra benefits in the form of a range of services and activities. Acting as an intermediary between students, the faculty and the business world, one of the main goals of Aureus is to connect students with the professional community.

In September 2016, Aureus hosted its first ever FEWEB Master’s Day. This kick-off to the start of the academic year was attended by more than 800 new master’s students. During the event, students received information about their master’s specialisation and companies gave presentations, linking study to practice through business cases. Between securing the participation of companies, coordinating with VU Amsterdam-related parties such as Sodexo, and communicating with master’s coordinators, the organisation of this new event was very challenging but rewarding.

Moreover, in November 2016, the Speaker Series welcomed Klaas Knot (DNB), who presented a report on the growth potential of the Dutch economy. Around 70 enthusiastic students, and even a few VU Amsterdam employees, attended the session. Among the topics of interest were the influence of the American elections on the economy and the Amsterdam housing market.

Following the trend towards digitalisation, Aureus chose to re-evaluate its brand image. The most visible change that took place in 2016 was the launch of a new logo, accompanied by the development of a new website.

Board of Aureus 2016-2017
From left to right: Eva van Schijndel, Jorim Buisman, Noa Wesselink, Jill Baltus, Reinout Niekraje, Welmoed Rentes (Chair), Tim van Kleef, Puck Terpstra

One of the highlights of 2016 was a study trip to Portugal. A group of students travelled to Lisbon and Porto, taking a look behind the scenes of Transavia at Schiphol Airport, Ernst & Young in Lisbon, the University of Porto, the Dutch embassy in Lisbon and more.

In addition to a number of social and sporting events, in 2016 Kraket organised Forum. During this one-day event, first-year students were introduced to alumni working in various functions. Senior students were invited to attend presentations by companies like ABN-Amro and ORTEC. In addition, all students were invited to attend three different workshops and presentations by academic speakers from the NS (Dutch Railways) and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.
Women are under-represented at higher levels of the career ladder. This is certainly true for higher education and research in the Netherlands. Therefore, Aspasia ensures that more female assistant professors progress to the level of associate or full professor. Aspasia was set up by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU) and NWO. The grant is intended to encourage the promotion of female Vidi grant candidates to an associate professorship and female Vici grant candidates to a full professorship.

*Source: http://www.nwo.nl/en/research-and-results/programmes/aspasia*
Zuzana Sasovova (1976) is an associate professor affiliated with the Amsterdam Business Research Institute (ABRI). She obtained her master’s degree in Business Administration from Comenius University in Bratislava (Slovakia) and her PhD in information systems and organisational behaviour from Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Her research interests cover dynamics of social networks, cognitions, social processes of innovation and network perspectives on corporate governance.

Sasovova on what led up to the grant: ‘My proposal, entitled “Unifying diversity: Network dynamics in multidisciplinary collaboration” received a “very good” score in the final interview round of Vidi in 2013. Because I fulfilled FEWEB’s criteria for associate professorship at that time, the Faculty Board (and eventually the Executive Board of our university) agreed to promote me to associate professor within a year, satisfying the NWO conditions for the Aspasia grant of 200,000 euros that was awarded in 2015.’

The grant consists of two components: an institutional part and a personal part. ‘The institutional part of this grant (50,000 euros) was pooled together with Eveline’s grant last autumn to create a faculty diversity fund with the goal of promoting diversity at FEWEB. This fund can be used for supporting colleagues in writing grant proposals, finding a mentor, following a career-related course or funding a student assistant. For instance, a colleague from the Department of Marketing (Femke van Horen) has used the fund to hire a talented female research assistant—a potential PhD student. The personal part of the grant (150,000 euros) is meant to support my research activities over the next few years. In the original Vidi proposal, I planned to finance a post-doc and two PhD students. So far, I have used the largest part of the personal grant to hire (female) post-doc candidate Evgenia Dolgova. Thanks to the Aspasia grant, we can focus on investigating network dynamics in teams together. We are currently finalising revisions for a journal article that will hopefully be resubmitted soon to the Organization Science journal. This would not have been possible without the Aspasia grant.’

‘Combining work and family life has been a real challenge.’
But that is not all. 'Since the autumn of 2016, I have been co-supervising an external PhD candidate. Another PhD candidate is applying for a CSC (China Scholarship Council) scholarship to fund her position in the Netherlands. If everything goes well, the two PhD candidates (coincidentally both female) will not require much additional funding. The remainder of the personal grant will probably cover additional research time for me and travel expenses for attending workshops and conferences, mostly for the PhD students and the post-doc. We aim to acquire additional resources to organise an international workshop in a few years. In this way, we want to stay in touch with the research community.'

Sasovova has one daughter. 'Emma was born around the time the Aspasia grant was awarded. Combining work and family life has been a real challenge, especially because my physical recovery has taken longer than expected. But it is also a truly enriching experience. I think that what helped me most was advanced planning and developing routines to get things done, finding support—sometimes from unexpected sources—and, most of all, embracing change.'

**EVELINE VAN LEEUWEN** (1978) is an associate professor in the Department of Spatial Economics. She graduated in Land Use Planning (MSc) at Wageningen University in 2002 and obtained a PhD in Spatial Economics at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam with her dissertation entitled 'Towns today: Contemporary functions of small and medium-sized towns in the rural economy' in 2008.

Eveline's research is focussed on the integration of micro- and macro-approaches in the field of regional science. Currently, Van Leeuwen and her team are working on a qualitative assessment of participation choices in the Netherlands. Facilitated by her NWO Aspasia grant, she is focusing on which personal, community and social network characteristics influence the choice to participate in one's local environment.

'Like Zuzana, I received the Aspasia for my "very good" Vidi proposal that I submitted in the 2014 round. The proposal dealt with "Happy Communities" and how social networks, public facilities and migration impact individual- and community-level satisfaction. Although the original proposal was designed for a team of three persons for a five-year period, it consisted of several sub-projects. With my

**GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF THE FACULTY’S ACADEMIC STAFF AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>88.2</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD researcher</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>46.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant professor</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate professor</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>88.6</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>74.0%</strong></td>
<td><strong>26.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

■ MALE ■ FEMALE
Aspasia grant, I could start working on one of them. I decided to rationalise the work, financing two post-docs (and myself) to join forces for a period of one-and-a-half years. Together with Rixt Bijker and Paul Koster, I have been working on an innovative choice experiment on people’s decisions to become active in their local environment and the role their social network plays. The great thing about the Aspasia grant is that it allows us to be flexible and creative because we can set our own goals and deadlines.’

Is Aspasia really stimulating? ‘The Aspasia definitely improved my academic track record. It allowed me to reduce my travelling for a while and spend more time with my twins. In 2013, I became the proud mother of two lively daughters. It added a great dimension to my life and gave me new ways of looking at the world. It made me redefine my priorities, not only in my work-life balance, but also in my research. Now I am much more interested in what is really relevant for society.’

Van Leeuwen has found her own way to combine work and children. ‘I really appreciate the flexibility of academic life. I work full-time, but I usually start late and work additional hours during my commute (one hour each way) and in the evenings. One of the reasons this works is because my husband is also quite flexible and we really share our family responsibilities. Because we do not go on holiday very often, I extended my parental leave to give myself a fixed day off every week. This way, the girls and I get to spend every Monday together until they start primary school this September.’

WHO CAN APPLY FOR AN ASPASIA GRANT?
Aspasia is linked to the Vidi and Vici competitions of the NWO Talent Scheme. Eligible candidates are:
• female applicants who have received a Vidi or Vici grant
• female applicants who were not granted a Vidi or Vici, but were assessed as ‘very good’ or ‘excellent’ after the interview procedure

University executive boards that promote these candidates to an associate or full professorship within a year of the Vidi or Vici being granted will be eligible for a grant under certain conditions.


‘The great thing about the Aspasia grant is that it allows us to be flexible and creative because we can set our own goals and deadlines.’
An interview with Karin Wiegman-Eilander, Ina Putter and Hadewijch van Delft

PROMOTING TALENTED FEMALE SCIENTISTS: POLICY, DEVELOPMENTS, INITIATIVES
Women are breaking through the glass ceiling at the Dutch government. According to the figures, 31 per cent of top officials in the government are women. The target of 30 per cent, as stipulated in the Government Agreement, has been achieved. By department, women’s career opportunities differ somewhat. Women are well-represented in the Ministries of Social Affairs and Employment (44 per cent) and Education, Culture and Science (40 per cent), but less so in the Ministries of Defence (9 per cent) and Economic Affairs (17 per cent)

When it comes to women in top roles in business, the state of affairs is worse. The number of female directors of the 85 companies in the Netherlands that are listed on the stock exchange has fallen to 6.2 per cent. Two years ago, it was 7.8 per cent. However, the number of female supervisory board members has risen, from 23.1 per cent in 2016 to 24.6 per cent.

Universities in the Netherlands are doing a little better, with 16 per cent of their top scientific positions held by women. In Europe as a whole, however, universities are ranked last, according to NWO data from 2012. From the figures above, you might expect that our faculty has a double handicap: the domain of economics scores low and universities score low.

10 Source: https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2016/05/19/rijksoverheid-haalt-doel-voor-aantal-vrouwen-in-1622695-a1208863
11 Source: https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2017/09/01/driekwart-commissariaten-gaat-naar-mannen-12781488-a1571943
12 Source: https://www.nwo.nl/onderzoek-en-resultaten/programmas/aspasia/achtergrond
What is the situation at FEWEB? Karin Wiegman-Eilander, Human Resources Coordinator, explains, ‘In total, 26 per cent of our academic staff are female. However, if we look at the different job profiles we see that the proportion of women decreases as the job category becomes more senior. Amongst PhD students, the balance is almost equal: 54 per cent male vs. 46 per cent female. As we encourage our PhD students who have finished their dissertation to pursue their next academic career-step beyond our faculty, practically all of our new assistant professors are recruited from outside FEWEB, beginning their careers in FEWEB’s Tenure Track system. Of all new tenure track academics who started in the last five years, 44 per cent are female. Therefore, at 34 per cent, the current proportion of assistant professors who are female is expected to increase in a short period of time.’

In more senior academic ranks, the differences are significantly greater. Wiegman: ‘Of our associate professors, the proportion who are female is 20 per cent. Of full professors, only 11.5 per cent are female. Although this is still a very low percentage, it remains the highest amongst all the economics faculties in the Netherlands. Moreover, compared with the situation at FEWEB five years ago, it is quite an improvement. Then, just five per cent of full professors were female.’

A number of measures and so-called gender-neutral regulations has been implemented in order to make sure that women have an equal chance to build an academic career. Wiegman mentions a number of these: ‘Our Tenure Track System allows women an additional year for maternity leave during their Tenure Track period. In addition, a 0.8 full-time-equivalent (FTE) appointment—instead of the usual 1.0 FTE appointment—is possible. Furthermore, FEWEB has been actively involved in the university’s Mentoring Scheme to support female talent. Female academics have also been involved in selection committees for professors. Last year, with the aim of attracting and promoting female academic talent, we developed the prestigious Hermine Weijland Fellowship, which will be implemented in 2017. In addition, the Talent Scan—an HRM tool used to monitor performance and potential in groups of personnel—was introduced in 2016. One of the aims of this tool is to scan and monitor female talent. Finally, at this moment, FEWEB is preparing for its participation in the Westerdijk Talent Scheme programme, which will be introduced in 2017 by NWO. Its aim is to increase the number of female professors and therefore contribute to a greater diversity at the top of Dutch academia. The programme offers universities the possibility to apply for grants if they appoint female researchers as professors.’

‘We will continuously monitor and investigate how to improve measures and results on this topic’, says Wiegman. At the same time, she warns of overkill. ‘The increased attention given to the topic of gender
diversity in universities—and also at the national level—is great. However, we should beware of exaggerating or treating this topic as our one and only focal point. We don’t need to “help” female talents to make it to the top. They are very much capable of doing that themselves. We just have to make sure that there are no unfair barriers.’

Clearly, FEWEB has made progress over the past five years, having more than doubled the number of female full professors. ’This is primarily due to a number of measures that have been taken, such as the Fenna Diemer-Lindeboom Chair that was established by Vrije Universiteit’, says Research Policy Officer Ina Putter.

’The Fenna Diemer-Lindeboom Chair is intended to accelerate the career development of female academics—to promote them from associate professors to full professors. The first requirement is, of course, that the candidate is “professorable”. In order to become a full professor, one needs to meet a number of requirements, measured in terms of publications, grants acquired, PhD students supervised, and experience in bachelor’s, master’s and postgraduate education. It might be that a female academic does not meet all the requirements necessary for the position of full professor yet, but she is expected to meet them soon—within a time period of five years at the latest. If she meets the requirements within this time period or sooner, the temporary appointment will be converted to a permanent one. I should add that quality, rather than gender, is paramount. We always want the best.’

In addition to the Fenna Diemer-Lindeboom Chair, and in the same vein, another new measure is well underway. Putter: ’As Karin Wiegman has already mentioned, in 2017 FEWEB will establish the Hermine Weijland Fellowship with the aim of attracting and promoting female academic talent. The establishment of this prestigious fellowship seeks to encourage promising female academics to join our faculty and improve the gender balance at senior levels. Hermine Weijland (1932–2001) studied at FEWEB in the 1960s. Later on, she became a researcher and was one of the first women to obtain her PhD at FEWEB. She went on to build a successful career as an academic. Hermine’s life and outlook can serve as inspiration for female academics today.’

What are Putter’s expectations? ’I hope that this fellowship will make a difference and that the number of female assistant and associate professors becoming full professors will rise. I do not think that a 25 per cent share of female professors is realistic at FEWEB, because of the fact that the domains of economics and universities score very low on females in top academic roles. However, we hope to achieve a 15 per cent share of female full professors by 2020. In my opinion, awareness of policies focused on gender balance is already helping.’

In addition to the above measures, a Diversity Fund has been set up. Hadewijch van Delft, project manager: ’In 2015 and 2016, two female researchers13 received an NWO Aspasia grant linked to the NWO Innovational Research Incentives Scheme [Vernieuwingsimpuls, Vidi and Vici]. Part of this grant (50,000 euros) is targeted at funding diversity policy

13 See for an interview with these two Aspasia grantees page 38
measures to increase the upward movement of female staff in the researcher’s institution. FEWEB has decided to use this earmarked portion of the grant to set up a Diversity Fund to finance different activities within the faculty, such as:

- temporarily releasing female academics from other duties to enable them to prepare ERC, Vidi or Vici applications
- coaching or training courses
- employing talented female student assistants in order to introduce them to the academic working environment
- offering temporary employment to recently graduated female students, facilitating access to a PhD trajectory (matching by department).

opportunities for women to conduct research.' Van Delft considers the low proportion of women in higher academic positions to be the result of a very complex set of factors. ‘I blame it on a combination of cultural and biological factors around caregiving and family responsibilities, national policy on parental leave, psychological differences [such as women typically being more modest] and so on.’ Van Delft thinks there are a number of things that may be helpful in expanding the proportion of women in higher academic positions: ‘I think it is good to raise awareness of these career barriers for women among managers, so that they can take them into account when supervising and coaching their female staff, conducting annual reviews and discussing career plans. Talented women may need a different approach from that for talented men, like more personal feedback on their achievements, and they may need different support in terms of incentives and motivating actions. The opportunities offered by the Diversity Fund may contribute to raising this awareness among supervising staff and create an even more supportive working environment for women.’

Do women make use of the Diversity Fund?
Van Delft: ‘Since the first call for submissions, applications have been submitted for all of the activities, except the coaching and courses. One student assistant and two recently graduated students have already been temporarily hired, while one assistant professor and one associate professor were temporarily released from other duties in order to prepare an ERC Starting Grant and/or Vidi application.’ She adds, ‘Once a year, a call for applications is announced to department heads, who can then nominate candidates. We decide on the basis of submissions whether funding the proposal would serve the original aim of the grant, namely expanding academic career possibilities and opportunities for women to conduct research.’