Outcome of consultation meeting FSP 7 sept 2026

Overall question:
How can the Faculty of Science develop into a more recognizable and connected faculty in which fundamental science, technology, education and social challenges reinforce each other over the next six years?

Round 1 – ca. 13.30–14.00
1. What distinguishes FNWI / what is the attractiveness as a faculty?
2. How can students recognize themselves in the FSP? How are societal needs reflected in the curriculum?
3. How to ensure DEI whilst pursuing cutting-edge/excellent science
4. Focus on technology profile: advantages and disadvantages
5. How can we shape the leadership of the future – strong & well fitted. What is needed? + talent?

Round 2 – ca. 14.00–14.30
6. How to increase societal impact, what is the role of research and education
7. Excellent research versus human aspect / social safety (trade-off)
8. How to include nature in technology?
9. Recognition & Reward non-research staff
10. Accessibility and attractiveness Amsterdam Science Park

Round 1

1. What distinguishes FNWI / what is the attractiveness as a faculty

This discussion took a broader view of what makes FNWI attractive and distinctive for students and staff.

- Well-established strength on **fundamental research.**
- The **atmosphere and interaction** between students and lecturers.
- **(Double) degree programmes** with **interesting curricula.**
- **Amsterdam** as a location and as part of the faculty's appeal; but **housing is also as a downside.**
- **Differences** between Bachelor's and Master's programmes, as well as between disciplines
- In some respects, the faculty feels **small-scale and "down to earth".**
- **Personal networks and reputation** play a role in choosing this faculty
- A high position in **international university rankings** contributes to attractiveness.
- **Alumni engagement** could be strengthened, both within FNWI and in education.
- For researchers, the **relatively quick route to tenure** was mentioned.
- There are also **permanent teaching positions**, although there is also a considerable amount of **temporary employment.**
- The strategic question is **how to retain these qualities in the future, including financially**.

2. How can students recognize themselves in the FSP? How are societal needs reflected in the curriculum?

- The ambitions of the FSP should be recognisable to students in their education.
- This is not only about content, but also about **visibility:** students should be able to see how their education aligns with the strategic ambitions.
- The curriculum should be able to adapt to changing student and societal needs, while recognising that major curriculum changes are difficult. Smaller adjustments, including changes to assessment, may offer ways to respond more quickly.
- Teachers and researchers also have a role in this: they should jointly consider how education develops and how societal needs are incorporated.
- An important question is what students need for their future role in society and the labour market: what knowledge and skills will they need?
- In addition to subject-specific knowledge, **human skills** are important.
- Fundamental knowledge should be taught **in context** enabling students to understand how it relates to broader societal questions**.**
- Education is also about learning to **work with others, being human, belonging and community, and developing one's own identity.**
- At the same time, there appears to be a tension between developing a more coherent faculty-wide approach and allowing programmes and teachers sufficient space to shape this in their own way.

Please see the attachment for further information.

3. How to ensure DEI whilst pursuing cutting-edge/excellent science

This group discussed the relationship between diversity, equity and inclusion and scientific excellence.

- Diversity was interpreted **broadly:** diversity in knowledge (methods; 'subjects'/people and dissemination), access and equity/recourses.
- **Equity and resources**: how are resources distributed, and how does FNWI compare with other environments in this respect?
- Inclusion requires **active action, awareness and outreach**; it is not only a matter of formal policy.
- In recruitment, attention should be paid to **vacancy texts and templates**, as well as to inclusive signals.
- At the same time, participants questioned whether such measures are primarily tools, and whether this means that **structural problems are not sufficiently addressed**: "slow down and fix things?"
- Contribution **MacGillavry Fellowship** to more female scientists in research and education.
- **DEI can be seen as a precondition for good science,** rather than as a competing objective.
- **Intersectionality** was explicitly mentioned.
- The question was also raised of **what actually makes a university "societal"** and how this can be **made visible**.
- As a lecturer or researcher, **show that you face challenges too** and that you can still be an excellent lecturer or researcher—for example, if you have a less visible disability or challenge.

4. Focus on technology profile: advantages and disadvantages

- Advantages: a **technology profile** could contribute to a **clearer positioning of FNWI.**
- It could **make visible** how fundamental research relates to technological development.
- **Academic freedom** was explicitly mentioned as an important starting point.
- There are **synergie**s between technology, biology and the humanities; technology therefore need **not be seen as an isolated domain**.

- Technology can also be regarded as a means of, or solution to, broader scientific and societal challenges.
- Disadvantages/risks: biology and nature may receive less attention if technology becomes too dominant.
- A strong focus on technology may implicitly suggest a solution-driven approach.
- The Dutch–English tension was also mentioned, presumably in relation to positioning and terminology.

5. How can we shape the leadership of the future

- Make work more visible, particularly activities and contributions that currently go unnoticed.
- Improve onboarding by making the transfer of tasks and responsibilities clearer.
- Encourage a stronger integration of research and education.
- Define the values and behaviours expected of leaders.
- Ensure that leaders recognise, value and support people's contributions.
- Create clearer career pathways and development opportunities.
- Consider a practical leadership rotation system: prepare people for leadership roles, avoid keeping them in the same role for too long, and define the culture needed to support this.

Round 2

6. How to increase societal impact, what is the role of research and education

- Aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and societal challenges such as safety and resilience, climate, and biodiversity.
- Academic citizenship was mentioned as an important concept.
- Students should learn how to create impact, rather than only acquire knowledge.
- Critical thinking is essential in this regard.
- Students need to learn how to deal with uncertainty and how to situate themselves within a broader societal context.
- There should remain room to ask questions, rather than focusing solely on producing solutions.
- Staff should be supported in engaging more actively with society and building connections beyond the university.
- Students could be challenged more through education.
- Stakeholders and partnerships are needed to give meaningful shape to societal engagement.
- Internships and internship supervision were also mentioned, with particular attention to Master's students.

7. Excellent research versus human aspect / social safety (trade-off)

- Key statement: "There is no trade-off: best research with happy people."
- Excellent research and a positive working environment do not have to be in opposition.
- Participants called for faster action in response to issues of social safety. Broader support for people in difficult situations.
- Career policies should not automatically promote people away from students or junior faculty.
- Recruitment should take a broad view, rather than focusing solely on conventional criteria of excellence.

- Training senior staff was in the past.
- One challenge is that toxic professors may come across as very pleasant to their peers; problems are therefore not always visible through regular peer evaluation.
- Those who most need DEI or leadership training may be precisely the people who do not attend it.
- Bystander training was mentioned as a concrete intervention.

8. How to include nature in technology?

- Rather than choosing between nature and technology, the focus should be on synergy, connection and bidirectionality: nature and technology influence and strengthen one another.
- "Nature" should not be interpreted too narrowly as only greenery or nature conservation; it also includes, for example, agriculture, oceans and earth sciences.
- The previous strategic plan contained themes smart, green, health and pure.
- A key question was: how does FNWI distinguish itself from TU Delft and Eindhoven University of Technology? Clarify what "Technology" means for our faculty.
- One possible distinction is that FNWI is fundamentally science-driven rather than primarily engineering-oriented.
- Integration was mentioned as a core concept: the integration of different scientific disciplines and technology could be a distinguishing feature.
- There should be more incentives to collaborate across different disciplines; these are currently insufficient. More collaborations and opportunities to meet in person is important. Café too expensive for students.
- Faculty of Nature & Technology? "Great word lottery!", about the search for a single profiling label.

9. How can we improve recognition and reward for non-research staff?

- What does recognition really mean for teachers, education support and other non-research staff?
- Recognition should extend beyond research staff and include teachers, education support staff and other professional services staff.
- Participants felt that recognition is currently experienced mainly through feedback from students and immediate colleagues in similar roles.
- Much of the discussion focused on concerns about the current policy for teaching staff, particularly the D4 policy. Frequent changes in teaching positions can undermine the sense that teaching and educational quality are genuinely valued.
- The use of flexible staffing arrangements and frequently changing teaching teams raises questions about both efficiency and educational quality.
- In some cases, flexibility may be useful. However, it may not be beneficial in most cases, and the overall costs may outweigh the benefits.
- Teachers are sometimes viewed primarily as necessary because research staff cannot fulfil all teaching tasks. Instead, teachers should be recognized as complementary educational professionals.
- High-quality education and well-functioning degree programmes require a balanced mix of research professionals and education professionals.
- The contribution of researchers to education should also be recognized
- The divide between research and education can at times feel larger than necessary.
- Recognition also means feeling part of a wider community. Embedding teachers more firmly within research institutes could strengthen their sense of belonging and recognition.
- The perspectives of other support staff should be included as well: coordinators may feel that they have little voice in decision-making and are expected mainly to implement decisions made elsewhere. Recognition means being involved in decision-making processes, knowing that one's

expertise and contributions are taken seriously, rather than merely executing predetermined decisions. Professional services staff and teachers possess **substantial expertise regarding day-to-day operations,** but this expertise is **not always sufficiently recognized or used.**

10. Accessibility and attractiveness Amsterdam Science Park

- A shuttle bus from the university, potentially specifically for UvA staff and students.
- Better alignment of travel reimbursements with the cost of public transport.
- A clear point of contact between FNWI/Science Park and GVB.
- Accessibility has direct implications for:
    - interfaculty meetings;
    - supervision and meetings with Master's students;
    - researchers, including PhD candidates and postdoctoral researchers.
- Improvements to catering and pricing.
- More facilities and shops to make Science Park a more attractive "sticky campus": a place where people want to stay longer and meet one another.

Attachment: Additional information related to 2nd topic

2. How do students recognize the FSP in the curriculum?

The discussion focused on translating strategy into education and the student experience.

- The FSP should become visible in students' actual educational experience, not remain a strategic document alongside the curriculum.
- This means embedding the FSP's ambitions throughout the curriculum, including courses, assessment, research projects, internships, student support and campus experience. Implementation in education should primarily happen at programme and teaching-team level, rather than through isolated course changes.
- A second core point was that future-oriented education is not only about adding new content such as GenAI or technology. It is also about asking: What is the distinctive value of university education, and who do we want students to become? That includes critical thinking, writing, perspective-taking, applying knowledge in context, socialisation and developing a sense of academic and civic identity.
- Which insights or questions do we want to keep?
    - How can students recognise the ambitions of the FSP throughout their programme?
    - What should every FNWI student develop, regardless of discipline, to be prepared for the future?
    - How do we balance rapidly changing skills such as GenAI with more enduring human capabilities such as critical thinking, judgement, writing and taking different perspectives?
    - How do we enable staff and teaching teams to keep up with change without constantly feeling behind?
    - How do we strengthen socialisation and belonging (and not only for students, but also through the way staff work and collaborate across groups)?
- One especially important question underneath all of this is: Why should students still come to university our faculty, and what educational experience can we offer that they cannot get elsewhere?
- What ideas or possibilities emerged?
  A few concrete possibilities emerged:
    - Translate the FSP into programme-level learning ambitions rather than leaving implementation to individual courses.
    - Map where those ambitions already appear in the curriculum and where gaps exist.
    - Use assessment as a lever for change: not every course needs new content; sometimes changing assessment or the context in which students apply knowledge may be more powerful.
    - Pay more attention to authentic and contextualised learning, including research projects, internships and societal applications.
    - Define a small set of future-facing capabilities that all FNWI students should develop across the curriculum.
    - Strengthen the campus as a place for socialisation, identity development and interaction, rather than viewing education only as transmission of disciplinary content.
    - Support staff through collective programme-level decision-making, shared guidance and professional development, rather than expecting every lecturer to individually interpret every new development.
- Is there anything here that deserves a follow-up?
  Develop a programme-level translation of the FSP: what should students experience and develop, where does that already happen in the curriculum, and what needs to change?

A second follow-up could be to explore whether FNWI needs a shared educational framework or set of design principles for themes such as GenAI, critical thinking, academic identity, socialisation and learning in context.

Summary

Our main point was that students should be able to recognise the FSP in their actual educational experience. A key question was: why should students still come to university, and specifically to our faculty, and what can we offer that they cannot get elsewhere? This is not only about content and new skills like GenAI, but also about socialisation and identity. To make that real, the FSP needs to be translated into programme-level choices, with teaching teams supported to implement them.