

Strategic Multi Annual Plan FSS 2020- 2025

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Versies

#	Datum	Auteur(s)	Aanpassingen
0		van Oudenhoven - vd Zee	eerste concept
1	5-10-20	van Oudenhoven - vd Zee, Peter Kerkhof, Jacquélien van Stekelenburg	Toevoegen secties onderwijs en onderzoek
2	7-10-20	Judith ten Brink	Toegevoegd sectie Human Resources onder het hoofdstuk management en Finance
3	12-11-20	FB-leden	Aanvullingen
4			
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1. Multiannual plan FSS

This multiannual plan describes how we have translated the VU strategy 2025 into our own strategy. How have we as faculty translated the VU strategy into our own strategies for the upcoming years. It was not difficult to translate the VU-spear heads and priorities into policies for our faculty, since our focus in research, education, valorization and organization in many respects perfectly aligns with the strategy of our university. Moreover, our vision emphasizes *taking a critical stance* and *crossing borders* of disciplines, methodological approaches, diverse inputs and perspectives, and the academic world to establish connections with societal stakeholders. This fits very well with strategic developments at the level of the VU.

It is important to state that much of what we do nowadays is affected by the corona crisis. This crisis places a burden on our teaching and research activities, leaving little room to develop and implement new lines of activities. Many of the strategic venues we will discuss have already been adopted enthusiastically by our scientific and supporting staff as well as our administrators. We are proud of the focus that we have and we aim at strengthening and innovate current lines of activities.

2. FSS and the VU strategy

FSS and VU Spear heads

The VU has three spear heads: *sustainability*, *diversity* and *enterprising*. With respect to the former we as a faculty aim to contribute to our best ability to climate goals. In 2020, a sustainability committee developed a FSS-sustainability policy to reduce carbon footprint based on bottom-up initiatives of departments. The sustainability committee will remain active to monitor progression towards our aims. Furthermore we want to strengthen sustainability as a research and valorization theme which is increasingly also affecting our educational programs. Active participation in ASI (Amsterdam Sustainability Institute) is one way of doing so.

Diversity is a theme at the core of our faculty. We believe that, in its broadest possible meaning, diversity in perspectives combined with an open mind is what science is about. Inclusion of people with diverse background is not only a matter of fairness, but also enriches our scientific insights; moreover mixed teams demonstrably perform better. The faculty houses world leading scholars in the field of diversity research, with for example an ERC and a VICI specifically on this topic. We aim to further enhance the national and international recognition of our scientific work and valorization activities in this area. Both in research and in teaching, we increasingly adopt the principles of the mixed classroom. To be successful in our diversity efforts, we strive to further enhance particularly the cultural diversity of our staff and to promote the inclusiveness of our environment for example by inclusive methods of selection and evaluation for promotion, as well as leadership training and mentoring of minority talent.

We are proud of the *entrepreneurial attitude* of our staff in teaching, research and increasingly also in valorization. Within the faculty, this was more evident than ever when we were confronted with the corona crisis. Outside our faculty, we actively connect to partners from

other disciplines and from practice to achieve multi- and transdisciplinarity. We applaud the VU to increasingly provide an environment that stimulates this enterprising attitude and experimenting by its staff. In our education, social enterprising is part of our community service learning activities that we will further expand, and it forms an important element in the revised bachelor in Sociology. Our organizational sciences collaborate with SBE both at the VU- and at the Aurora Alliance level to expand our research in this area, and we intend to establish a joint chair in Social Entrepreneurship.

Priorities

One of the priorities in the VU-strategy is *future proof education*. As society is continuously changing, continuous innovation in our teaching is essential to stay future proof. Continuous innovation, however, is an important challenge for FSS not because teachers lack motivation to innovate but because of the high work pressure our staff is faced with. The cornerstones of our innovation activities are: (1) active learning; (2) transdisciplinary teaching cocreated with external partners; (3) blended education: both online and on campus; (4) interdisciplinary connections with beta-/technical sciences, and (5) methodological innovation by combining Big and Small data.

Our education does not stop after obtaining a master diploma. We aim to provide *Life Long Learning*. It is our ambition that the School of Governance becomes an important player on the market of postinitial education. Moreover, we will contribute to the development of a strong identity/visibility as well as high quality facilities for life long learning at the VU-level.

With respect to *focus and position in research* we aim to further develop the ISR into an institute that encompasses fundamental and applied research as well as valorization, with resilience as its major theme. In doing so we aim to further strengthen our excellence in social analytics as one of the cornerstones of our strength in research. Resilience is also the focus in our collaboration with the University of Twente (UT) in our joint program “Creating secure societies: resilience in practice”. At the VU level, together with colleagues from the law faculty and SBE, we work on the visibility and focus of VU-research in Governance for Society and on research funding in this area. For us, *scientific reputation* is not about rankings, but about continuous investment in the quality of our research and our researchers, for example by spending time and money in further increasing our acquisition- success for example in obtaining NWO- or ERC-grants. Moreover, we will continue investing in early career scientists to generate new research talent and remain attractive for talented “young” scientists. With respect to *societal impact*, we have been quite successful in developing a strong network of societal partners with whom we actively collaborate in research, teaching and valorization. Upcoming years, we aim to further develop our societal impact mission, vision and strategy.

Finally, we believe in open science, subscribe to the Dora-principles and believe in the *recognition and rewarding of staff* in a way that appreciates the variety of talents that is relevant to teaching, research, valorization and organization. We will keep on investing in HR-practices and policies that fit with these principles.

3. Teaching ambition

FSS education departs from the VU educational vision. We educate students to become responsible, critical and committed academics, in programs that focus on both scientific and societal value. In FSS education, we value the **personal** development of both students and teachers and we work in communities of learners in which individual talent can flourish. In our education, we promote being **open** to differences between disciplines, cultures, and religious or political beliefs, and we value bridging gaps between science and society. We expect students to act as **responsible** academic citizens, who take on active roles in becoming reflective, critical and committed academic professionals, and who strive not only to become personally successful, but also to contribute to solutions for today's societal problems.

Priorities in FSS education: future proof education

In recent years, great strides have been made in making FSS education future-proof. A number of programs have started international tracks, others are focusing on transdisciplinary education, and in the bachelor programs more emphasis is being placed on interdisciplinarity. As a result, student numbers are rising, especially in those programs where this was most needed. Also, urgent societal issues rather than strictly disciplinary topics are getting more attention in our programs, and the number of courses in which we collaborate with societal partners has increased. In the years to come, FSW will continue to develop the programs along these lines in order to ensure their viability after 2025.

Departing from the VU educational vision, in the coming years we work towards education that makes our students take on an **active** role in shaping their development, by thoughtfully **blending** on campus activities with online activities. By implementing **transdisciplinary** elements in FSS education, students will develop their academic skills while being challenged to apply them in a non-academic context. Crossing disciplinary borders, we aim to set up new **collaborations with the beta /technical sciences** in order to equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to work on societal problems that need both social scientific and technical knowledge. Lastly, social science data, both big and small, are increasingly extracted from and created in digital environments. FSS will **innovate its methodology curriculum** in order to train its students to work with digital data.

1. Active learning

FSS aims to have active learning as the single most defining characteristic of its programs: starting at day 1, and implemented throughout the curriculum. In the past years, we have seen attendance at hall lectures decline, especially in the bachelor programs, and there is abundant evidence to suggest that hall lectures should not serve as the default working format on which to build a course. Making use of funding available through the quality agreements, FSS will invest in furthering the use of active learning techniques throughout all FSS courses and curricula. Starting with programs that are currently undergoing major changes, and building on the experiences of corona education in other programs, in the coming years all programs will implement active learning as the cornerstone of their didactics.

2. Blended education

Online learning plays an indispensable role in curricula that focus on active learning. Once properly implemented in a course, online learning helps to channel the learning process of students without increasing the workload for teachers. In blended education, online and on campus education are combined, with knowledge transfer taking place online and student collaboration, information processing and application as main activities in face to face settings. The recent investments in online tools and the steep learning curve that teachers have gone through as a result of the partial corona lockdown have paved the way for a thorough rethinking of what can and should be done on campus, and what can or should be done in online environments. In line with our focus on activating education, FSS will invest in staff development to equip our teachers with the skills to use online learning tools effectively and to make face to face education a challenging, collaborative experience.

3. Transdisciplinary teaching

The FSS programs aim to deliver students who are well prepared for their roles in society. Collaborations with societal or business partners are essential in achieving this goal. In such collaborations, students work together on real world problems and are asked to come up with analyses and/or solutions that not only make sense in the academic world, but also to societal partners. The experience of working with a societal partner helps students to train a wide range of skills valued by future employers such as analytical skills, flexibility, assuming responsibility for an end result, and an open mind to other disciplines. All of this in a real life setting, with the complex real life problems that our societal partners encounter. Moreover, applying knowledge to challenging, real-life problems has proved to strengthen students' understanding of theory: they become better academics. The renewed FSS bachelor's program in Sociology will have transdisciplinary elements throughout the programs and in all of the semesters. During the coming years, each of the other FSS bachelor- and master programs will contain forms of transdisciplinary education such as community service learning (CSL), internships and/or courses that contribute to solving a problem brought in by a societal or business partner.

4. Interdisciplinary connections with beta-/technical sciences

During recent years FSS has worked on bridging the different social science disciplines, and we will continue to work on this in the coming years. A next step would be to bridge the gap between the social sciences and the beta-/technical sciences. At FSS, we believe this is an important part of preparing students for dealing with today's wicked problems. These problems more often than not require an understanding of both human behavior and issues which are typically in the domain of the beta- and technical sciences (e.g., new technologies, algorithms, viruses, CO2 emissions).

FSS wants to develop connections with the beta- and technical sciences and to work towards interdisciplinary programs that train students in both the social sciences and (one of the) beta-/technical sciences domains. The VU-UT initiative offers opportunities to do so, and will be used to explore possibilities for both small scale collaborations (e.g., sharing courses, developing new shared courses) and larger scale collaborations such as setting up a bachelor program focusing on society and technology and possibly collaborating in a master in Technical Anthropology.

5. Methodological innovation: big data and small data

Social science research and analysis methods are currently undergoing a rapid transition. The nature of data is changing, with data becoming available as a by-product of digitalization rather than being created on purpose for research ends. Open data and transparent analytical procedures are rapidly becoming the norm in many social science disciplines. And due to corona limitations, many disciplines are finding new ways to conduct qualitative research in digital rather than physical environments.

In several FSS programs, most notably the recently established research master Societal resilience, we are now training students to master the skills needed to do digital social analytics. The aim is to further incorporate the training of computational skills in the FSS education portfolio by offering a minor in computational social science, starting in 2022.

In the coming years FSS-education in research and statistics will focus on learning how to work with big and small data that are extracted from or created in digital environments. Such data require both computational, quantitative and qualitative skills to be understood. The basic skills can be taught collectively across different programs, soon after students should practice and further develop these skills in the context of their disciplinary substantive courses. Students will be taught how to analyze data in a way that is transparent and reproducible, and to use the tools that enable them to do so.

The VU spearheads in FSS education

FSS has a diverse student population. Due to the international intake in the bachelor's programs, this **diversity** has increased considerably during recent years. Through the mixed classroom FSS can make use of this diversity to let students learn from the different backgrounds of their fellow students and from differences in their religious or political beliefs. In the coming years, all employees involved in FSS education will be trained in employing mixed classroom techniques. In 2025, the mixed classroom will be an integral and clearly visible part of all FSS programs.

The main way in which FSS programs aim to foster an **entrepreneurial** attitude among students is through active learning, in which agency is moved from the teacher to the learner. In line with the VU vision on education, in all of our programs students and teachers will share the responsibility for student learning. Moreover, in the revised transdisciplinary bachelor program in Sociology, one of the goals is to prepare students not only for traditional roles, such as advisors or policy officers, but also for a role as social entrepreneur.

Establishing a sustainable way of living has become the single largest challenge for humanity. Currently, all FSS programs provide students with knowledge that is relevant for **sustainability**, yet this knowledge is typically part of larger courses and is not always made explicit. In the coming years, as part of the Social Science for Society courses, all FSS bachelor programs will give students the opportunity to follow an interdisciplinary course on how the social sciences can contribute to establishing a sustainable world.

Key results 2025	Actions and milestones 2025
1. Active learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gradually implementing active learning techniques throughout all FSS courses and curricula • Starting with programs undergoing major changes (e.g., bachelor program Sociology) • Rethink the role of students, from passive consumers of education to participants who are also responsible for the learning process
2. Blended education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rethink the role of on campus and online education in FSS education • Make face to face education a challenging, collaborative experience. • Employ online learning where this most effective and/or efficient in steering student learning • Create support structure in order to facilitate the implementation of blended education, making use of VU facilities
3. Transdisciplinary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting collaborations with societal or business partners in FSS education • Each of the FSS bachelor- and master programs will contain forms of transdisciplinary education • Transdisciplinary education will be a cornerstone of the renewed bachelor program Sociology
4. Interdisciplinary connections with beta- /technical sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish collaboration with beta/technical sciences • Both within VU and in VU-UTWente collaborations • Both small scale (e.g., shared courses) and large scale (e.g., new bachelor or master program combining technical and social sciences)
5. Methodological innovation: big data and small data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train a generation of social scientists that are trained to work with data, both big and small, created in or extracted from digital environments • Train students to analyze digital data using a mix of qualitative, computational and traditional quantitative skills • Offering a minor in computational social science, starting in 2022 • Make methods training more effective by integrating methodology in substantive courses
6. Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train FSS teachers to actively make use of diversity in the classroom • Make the mixed classroom an integral and clearly visible part of all FSS programs
7. Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce an interdisciplinary course on social science and sustainability as part of the bachelor SS4S courses

8. Entrepreneurship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gradually implementing active learning techniques throughout all FSS courses and curricula • Train students in the bachelor program Sociology in a role as social entrepreneur
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4. Research Ambition

Research in Social sciences – More relevant than ever

With our research, we aim to contribute to understand and tame complex societal problems in society. Due to globalization, individualization and the rapid development of communication and information technologies, present day society faces many *wicked* problems: problems that are multi-layered, hard to define and as such challenge the capacity to generate viable and resilient solutions. To define and tame a wicked problem, actors involved – often with divergent interests – have to agree on the definition of the problem, and its goals and actions for taming them. Not all actors actually want a solution, or what is a solution for one side is exactly the problem for the other side (like stricter border controls to stop undocumented migration). This diversity of interests makes wicked problems not only complex but also political. The assumption that there is potentially common ground for a solution to wicked problems is already political and favours the most powerful actors.

Our research focuses on **societal resilience**. It helps us to understand and contribute to complex societal challenges to facilitate social thinking, to improve the lives of others, better preparing us for critical global issues, and helping to inform major decisions that affect us all.

In our approach to wicked problems and resilience we take a **critical stance**. We continue to ask critical questions and look for new angles that put the problem or its solution in a different light. We consider curiosity and critical analysis as the hallmark of a scientific way of working. In case of potential sensitive situations, in particular but not exclusively, we correspondingly focus on the researchers' craft of questioning the own decisions in the research process and evaluating the information processed.

We regard our faculty as a laboratory space where the world of science meets the world of practice, and faculty with students to engage in the empirical cycle. In analogy to Mixed Classroom, we refer to it as the **Mixed Research room**. By crossing disciplinary and methodological borders our approach builds upon differences to enrich and feed our research in all stages of the empirical cycle. Capitalizing on differences does not mean compromising between different perspectives or merging them into one uniform perspective. Instead, we use the differences and possible tension between perspectives to stimulate critical thinking, strengthen analytical skills, and generate creative solutions.

Doing research in times of the COVID-19 pandemic knows its own challenges and opportunities and shows a renewed urgency of social sciences. By FSS we have seized the momentum, and joined this all-hands-on-deck enterprise to connect forces across boundaries to understand and address COVID-19 consequences and share our expertise. Decisions and discussion on this

matter – and the way these are taken and communicated by professionals and administrators – require strong, research-based social-scientific knowledge. Recent developments have been put in the forefront by the impact of the epidemic. They show that globalization, mixed methods, big data, far-reaching virtualization, a growing diversity of cooperation partners in (international) networks, open science and team science continue to offer new opportunities and challenges for our research. In the foreseeable future, we aim to consolidate and strengthen this **hybrid approach to social sciences**.

We argue that contributing to society with scientific knowledge rests on both fundamental and applied research. As showcased by fundamental disciplinary studies on loneliness and Alice the robot, or, yet another example, how fundamental disciplinary approaches to cooperation and conflict inform the study of overcoming detrimental effects of compartmentalization in healthcare. We would like our research Institute for Societal Resilience (ISR) to provide an apt home for both. In order to create a flourishing research environment in which the two research approaches naturally speak to each other and synergistically inform our research. We are not there yet. In the current situation, fundamental and applied research, although both valid, customarily act as two independent research activities. To make ISR a home for both types of research indeed, rearranging the management and organizational structure of our FSS research is our first priority.

The VU spearheads in FSS research

With respect to *sustainability* we aim to strengthen sustainability as a research theme. We aim to add behavioural and societal aspects to research in sustainability and add social sustainability to the research agendas. In doing so, we aim to show what social sciences can add to debates and understanding on economic crises, natural resource extraction and environmental threats. The ISR expertise lab ‘Infrastructures, Sustainability and Commons Lab’ functions as a **sustainability hub** in- and outside the faculty and we actively participate in and contribute to ASI (de Theije, Pattberg).

Diversity as a societal phenomenon is an important research topic in many, if not the majority, of our research in all its aspects, from filter bubbles to educational (in)equality and from polarization to minorities. Diversity is one of our four ISR themes and ISR operates the following diversity expertise labs: Refugee Academy, Health care, Polarization lab and Resilient Identities). Additionally, we staged and run the program *Meer kleur aan de top* (MKAT). Diversity figures not only in *what* we study, but also in *how* we approach our study objects. FSS holds the unique combination of expertise to sharpen our focus on the inclusivity of our research throughout the research lifecycle in line with the *VU Diversity Policy Toolkit*, and we envision developing and working according to the principles of mixed research room.

For FSS entrepreneurship is an attitude, we refer to it as an *entrepreneurial attitude*, an open, inquisitive creative attitude with a keen eye for opportunities. Our researchers are motivated and facilitated to act and think as a social entrepreneur to achieve societal impact. They actively approach societal stakeholders and initiate joint research activities that combine academic rigor with applicability of new knowledge in society. Organization Sciences collaborates with SBE both at the VU- and Aurora Alliance level to build a **research program on social entrepreneurship**, and we envision a joint chair with SBE in social entrepreneurship.

FSS itself is also becoming increasingly entrepreneurial in the way we promote our research and relate with societal partners. Besides the role that the Institute for Societal Resilience plays in framing and promoting our research, the VU School of Governance (which FSS leads in collaboration with SBE and RCH) is a major instrument to share our expertise with societal partners. While the VU School of Governance operates primarily through post- academic education for professionals, we expect increasingly that many of its (in-company) offerings will take the form of combined teaching-research trajectories (or 'atelier') in which professionals and researchers operate side by side.

Key objectives

The faculty's core objectives include maintaining internationally high impact of disciplinary and multidisciplinary science with and for society. With curiosity, critical thinking and an entrepreneurial attitude, we aim to address blind spots while building a body of knowledge (and data) where future generations of scientists and societal partners can build upon. FSS will provide optimal conditions for fundamental and applied research with and for society by:

1. Strong focus and position in research

- ISR encompasses fundamental and applied research as well as valorization, with resilience as its major theme;
- FSS is leading on the resilience theme in collaboration with the University of Twente; Creating secure societies: resilience in practice;
- FSS is leading Governance for Society as VU profiling theme; strengthening focus and visibility of the profile themes via online platform and events and collective acquisition efforts;
- Strengthening our vision and academic skills on connecting big data to small data, combining our qualitative and quantitative (/mixed methods) expertise in our ambition to become the center of excellence in social analytics;
- Sharpen our focus on the inclusivity of our research throughout the research lifecycle in line with the VU Diversity Policy Toolkit and further our vision and strategy on Mixed Research Room;
- Consolidate and strengthen our hybrid approach to social sciences: benefit from virtual and in vivo social arenas to examine complex social processes.

2. Maintain and improve scientific reputation & impact

- Continuous investment in the quality of our research and researchers:
 - o Enhance the national and international recognition of the top quality of our research;
 - o Invest in early career scientists to generate new research talent and remain attractive for talented 'young' scientists;
 - o Share best practices, organizing peer support and creating synergy to ensure high success rates in 2G and 3G;

- Promote and improve research quality through principles of DORA, Open Science and Team Science.
- Continuous investment in a supportive and facilitating ecosystem for research funding & improve supporting research funding applications:
- Continuous alignment with centralized support services and focus on reducing work load and procedures for effective and efficient grant writing;
- Research support for data management, ethics and privacy will be offered to improve research integrity workflows.
- Further expand our network, internal & external, building new consortia to enhance our multidisciplinary research:
 - Further mapping of interdepartmental synergies for funding applications;
 - Increase synergy with interdisciplinary research initiatives (NI, GfS, VUUT, Talma, ASI).

3. Thriving Graduate School of Social Sciences (GS)

- Train a new generation of social scientists, researchers and PhD candidates who are able to develop theory, apply the theory in empirical research and contribute to the application of scientific knowledge in practice:
 - Develop different profiles in training and research that lead to a PhD to cater for large diversity of PhD candidates, in their background and their future careers in a wide variety of settings. Building on the Bridging Program for international candidates, and training in academic and transferable skills outside the specific project and disciplinary niche of their PhD research.
- Conducting PhD research within FSS is attractive. Candidates work on a defined research within an already developed project or develop their own research in collaboration with FSS researchers. In line with faculty spearheads, FSS also offers paid, faculty-based PhD positions for which candidates are recruited in competition.
- Candidates do their doctoral research under good conditions:
 - Adequate supervision in all aspects of the research, paying attention to the person and his or her circumstances, by two or three supervisors. Supervisors are trained and supervised in their job.
 - All candidates have (almost) four years for research and training.
 - All candidates, also bursals and externals, enjoy the same facilities as employees, such as access to research support and HRM facilities.
 - Psychological help is available, because a candidate's well-being is important;
 - If a problem (threatens) to arise, it is raised in good time and in good consultation.
- Supervisors focus on quality in connection with efficiency (in case of a fulltime trajectory, the thesis is ready to be defended within four year).

- Candidates are selected for their suitability, both before the start of the project and in the go / no go assessment.
- The substantive planning and planning of work of the project is adjusted if necessary (at an early stage) to achieve this result.
- Ownership of a PhD trajectory is shared. In terms of content, the responsibility lies with candidate and supervisors, in line with the department's research program. In cooperation with the candidate, supervisors and department head, the GS organizes training for the candidate and a solid process and administrative support of the PhD trajectory to achieve sufficient quality of the final results within the possibilities and agreements.

4. **Maintain and improve societal impact & social entrepreneurship**

- Shift from ad hoc to proactive course in societal impact and social entrepreneurship. Develop a mission, vision and strategy for societal impact and entrepreneurship;
- Provide insight into our societal impact and relevance achieved and shed light on success factors and points where improvements can be made;
- Consolidate and enlarge strategic societal partnerships in thematic (ISR)labs where academics, professionals, and policy co-create with a special focus on the Sustainability lab Infrastructures, Sustainability and Commons;
- Encouraging cooperation within and across domains through a strong transdisciplinary basis.
- Further development of the School of Governance:
 - Position VU School of Governance as go-to provider in the Netherlands for on key challenges for professionals in the public sector
 - Use multidisciplinary teaching programmes in VU School of Governance as a hubs for the initiation of joint research projects with partners inside and outside the VU
 - Post-academic education in the VU School of Governance is organised around key societal challenges on which the VU holds (transdisciplinary) expertise;

5. **Societal impact Ambition**

The faculty's core values include maintaining an internationally high level and impact of disciplinary and multidisciplinary science **with and for society**. In realizing this ambition we will focus on the following aims:

From ad hoc to proactive

FSS stands for high-quality academic research that contributes to understanding social issues and finding and evaluating potential solutions. Achieving **societal impact** (also in an economic sense) is emphatically what we at the Faculty of Social Sciences strive for and focus our activities on. In doing so, we assume that we can optimize our impact on society if we assume

cooperation and co-creation with external social partners throughout the research cycle and do not lose sight of the relationship with education (with special attention for Life Long Learning). Jointly distilling scientific questions from socially pressing issues is often the 'beginning', with the ideal resultant scientific results that we can translate into concrete policy recommendations, advice (whether or not to implement changes in policies, work processes and/or organisations), products and/or services, of which postgraduate education can be an example. Incidentally, broader knowledge dissemination and the involvement of students and maintaining contacts with social partners during and after the completion of the research also structurally form part of the process to optimise the impact. In this way, a flywheel can be created for new partnerships future research and educational innovation within one's own ranks.

This way of working requires an **entrepreneurial attitude** from our researchers. Because the contacts and skills for this are unevenly distributed among researchers, this strategy requires the search for mutual cooperation within research groups, departments and across departmental boundaries, while benefiting from each other's strengths. ISR and, among others, the Network and TALMA Institute facilitate this and act as a vehicle for initiating and developing collaborations with external parties. To optimize impact of these collaborations we focus on tailor-made solutions, as every context and timing ask for different solutions. This requires a close assessment of the request at hand and the corresponding steps to take. Close cooperation between the ISR, IXA, School of Governance, C&M and other VU services is crucial in this respect and will be continued.

The Institute for Societal Resilience clearly shows that there are a lot of opportunities to create societal impact from social scientific research. Gradually **knowledge labs** emerge on different focus areas of ISR (e.g. the Refugee Academy, Young Informal Caregivers, Community Urban Education). We believe in the power of knowledge labs as a means to co- create with external parties in all the phases of the empirical cycle. We focus on understanding and explaining complex social issues and designing and evaluating possible solutions through both fundamental and related applied research.

For FSS societal impact also means sharing and enriching our knowledge with practice by means of post-graduate education. In the upcoming years, we want to develop the VU School of Governance, in close collaboration with the Law Faculty and the School of Business and Economics, as a top-three supplier in The Netherlands for post-academic education for professionals in the public sector. The VU School of Governance will profile itself on the basis of its multidisciplinary expertise on key societal challenges of our times: digitalization, new inequalities, internationalization, inclusion and sustainability. Starting with individual modules, we aim to have an executive MPP (Master of Public Policy) running by 2024. However, more than just a training center, we want the VU School of Governance to become a community and a hub where public professionals meet with researchers, find new ideas and inspiration and join in research. While the programmes will be offered in Dutch until 2024, we also aspire to cater for international clients once the School is well-established in the Dutch market. The VU **School of Governance** aims to closely collaborate with and share resources with the School of Management at VU-SBE.

Due to the society's questions and insecurities on the effect of the pandemic, interesting opportunities rose to step up the band wagon of new analogue and digital initiatives where we can enlarge the impact of our academic work and find new or improved ways to enlarge public engagement with the social sciences. For example, in cooperation with Pakhuis de Zwijger the School of Governance and ISR organised livecasts.

Key results 2025	Actions and milestones 2025
1. Strong focus and position in research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISR encompasses fundamental and applied research as well as valorization, with resilience as its major theme; • FSS is leading on the resilience theme in collaboration with the University of Twente; Creating secure societies: resilience in practice • FSS is leading Governance for Society as profiling theme VU; strengthening focus and visibility of the profile themes via online platform and activities combined with collective acquisition efforts; • Strengthening our vision and academic skills on connecting big data to small data, combining our qualitative and quantitative (<i>mixed methods</i>) expertise in our ambition to become <i>the</i> center of excellence in social analytics; • Sharpen our focus on the inclusivity of our research throughout the research lifecycle in line with the <i>VU Diversity Policy Toolkit</i> and further our vision and strategy on Mixed Research Room; • Consolidate and strengthen our hybrid approach to social sciences: Benefit from virtual and in vivo social arenas to examine complex social processes.
2. Strong scientific reputation & impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous investment in the quality of our research and researchers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enhance the (inter)national recognition of the top quality of our research; ○ Invest in early career scientists to generate new research talent and remain attractive for talented 'young' scientists; ○ Share best practices, organizing peer support and creating synergy to ensure high success rates in funding; ○ Promote and improve research quality through principles of DORA, Open Science and Team Science. • Continuous investment in a supportive and facilitating ecosystem for research funding & improve supporting research funding applications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continuous alignment with centralized support services and focus on reducing work load and procedures for effective and efficient grant writing; ○ Research support for data management, ethics and privacy will be offered to improve research integrity workflows; • Further expand our network, internal & external, building new consortia to enhance our multidisciplinary research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Further mapping of interdepartmental synergies for funding

	<p>applications;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase synergy with interdisciplinary research initiatives (Network Institute, GfS, VU-UT, Talma, ASI)
3. Thriving Graduate School of Social Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Train a future proof generation of social scientists ● Conducting PhD research within FSS is attractive ● Candidates do their doctoral research under good conditions ● Candidates are selected for their suitability ● Ownership of a PhD trajectory is shared
4. Strong societal impact & social entrepreneurship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shift from ad hoc to proactive course in societal impact and social entrepreneurship. Develop a mission, vision and strategy for societal impact and entrepreneurship; ● Provide insight into our societal impact and relevance achieved and shed light on success factors and points where improvements can be made; ● Consolidate and enlarge strategic societal partnerships in thematic (ISR)labs where academics, professionals, and policy co-create with a special focus on the Sustainability lab Infrastructures, Sustainability and Commons; ● Encouraging cooperation within and across domains through a strong transdisciplinary basis; ● Further development of the School of Governance.

6. Organization

The management of the faculty is not a goal in itself but rather a tool to facilitate the primary process: research, education and impact thereof. To realize our ambition we need to be able to attract a diverse staff who can work in a safe and inclusive environment and with agile management to support them.

Work pressure

Work pressure is still one of the main issues when it comes to challenges our departments have to deal with. Work pressure is enhanced by corona. We try to use the 'kwaliteitsgelden' to innovate our teaching in a way that enhances quality but reduces staff work load, for example by introducing blended learning. The extra means that we have available imply that departments are financially compensated for efforts needed for such innovations. We will continue with our efforts to use, among other things, our Teaching Load Model to distribute tasks in a transparent and fair manner. Moreover, we want to further develop our program for talented junior teachers. We continuously take measures to ensure the right balance between invested teaching hours and the compensation that programs receive, for example via our new allocation model, but also by fitting the amount of courses/subprograms to what is justified by student numbers. In some programs we plan investments in promoting study returns. In 2021 we also aim to reconsider the amount of hours spent in administrative roles by critically examining our managerial structure as well as meeting cycles. Finally, we will continue to apply measures to support individuals in dealing with overburden and to invest in our tenure track system that

provides new staff with a career perspective and extra research time in the first two years of their appointment.

Diversity and inclusion

We believe that diversity amongst our staff and students enables us to produce better knowledge and to educate professionals who are better equipped for their future roles in society. This asks over and above all else for an inclusive work environment. Particularly the cultural diversity of our staff runs behind our ambitions. The period 2020 - 2025 will be the period for serious investments in an all-inclusive personnel policy. This implies:

- Faculty-wide implementation of the methodology of inclusive job analysis. This method focuses on competencies that are concurrently underrepresented in a department or competencies that become more important in the near future. Steps:
- Translating the future strategy into required competencies, particularly those that are underdeveloped;
- Defining the added value of diversity for the department and translating that in specific job requirements (e.g. for teaching diverse groups of students or performing research in multicultural environments);
- Structure the selection process (from job description to recruitment process to ads to selection interviews) accordingly.
- Ensuring that our selection committees but also committees that take decisions on for example prizes or grants are sufficiently diverse.
- Inclusivity as a point of departure in the new assessment policy that focuses more strongly on the personalized goals of staff members in education, research, valorization and organization, allowing them to align those goals with their own unique emphases and talents.
- Enhancing the diversity in our promotion policies.
- Implement and facilitate working according to the principles of the mixed classroom.
- Develop and organize Leadership training focused on inclusion. Conducting a mentoring system for minority staff.

Social Safety

Promoting an inclusive and safe work environment, by investments in the visibility of confidential advisors and by leadership development. Investigate where insecurity is experienced and improve the conditions. Activities should focus on Training Senior Management and team leaders. Organizing events for employees to encourage awareness of a safe work environment and facilitating training for all employees. Adjusting systems and obstacles that cause insecurity by embracing recognizing and valuing.

Recognizing and valuing

Finalizing and implementing the new TT-system, with assessment criteria for the different job levels. All junior staff starting in a position that entails both teaching and research starts in a

tenure track to a tenured position at the level of assistant professor-1 (UD1) or associate professor-2 (UHD2). As a way to allow differentiation, from the UD1 level onwards, we distinguish between profiles that emphasize teaching, research, valorization or management.

In the new assessment framework we want to partly connect assessment to individual career strategies and specific roles staff members have been asked to fulfill, to allow room for individual differences in targeted accomplishments. This allows for differentiation *within* the categories teaching, research, valorization and organization. Some researchers will focus on monodisciplinary knowledge production and second moneystream acquisition, others more on transdisciplinary output, with an emphasis on third moneystream funding.

The assessment framework itself will also be adjusted, with open science, team science and integrity as explicit categories of evaluation. The new framework will only include criteria that are 'DORA-proof'. We will implement the new policy as of 2021. A manual is being developed for both assessors and individuals to be assessed. Around these manuals FSS will organize workshops and discussion sessions between leaders, potential assessors and employees on the faculty level. At the same time, in order to align individual strategies with the aims of the department and to help individuals in defining their personal strategies, it is important to promote discussions about individual talent within departments as well as discussions about the potential contribution of individuals to the teams they are part of. We maintain our policies in line with the VU vision Recognizing and valuing. In 2024/25 the new recruited Tenue Trackers will finalize their tracks. In 2025 we will evaluate the system and adjust where needed. Staff members should realize that with a modified assessment framework other people might be promoted than with the previous assessment framework, but that budgetary constraints will prohibit the promotion of more people. Right now a system is developed that focuses on the scientific staff, but it is important in a next step also to develop policies for the supporting staff.

Leadership

Leadership becomes much more challenging and complex in the crossing border community and in a team science oriented environment. At every level we expect leadership from our permanent staff. FSS wants to further embed art of engagement as the foundation of our leadership the coming years. In addition to scientific leadership there are team leader roles related to the management of organizational units. In FSS we want to improve the development of both types of leadership. We think our leaders should be coached and trained properly throughout their whole career and we support them actively to take part in training and coaching programs to develop their leadership skills. In 2019-2020 we started a leadership series and we intend to continue this series in the coming years.

Possibilities for training

One of the priorities in the VU-strategy is future proof education. Future proof education covers among others blended education, active learning and transdisciplinary teaching. This means that we have to provide our scientific staff with skills to enable a permanent innovative environment. This ambition requires training programs focused on the development of these skills. The same holds for valorization skills.

FSS believes in the concept of Life Long Learning. Via the School of Governance we will

contribute to the development of high quality facilities for lifelong learning at the VU-level. We will also apply these facilities and learnings on faculty level in order to develop our scientific and support staff to make them mobile and widely deployable. Carriers are not limited to the VU only. As a result of our vision crossing borders and multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary activities, our staff will develop highly and widely appreciated skills and knowledge. Which will make our staff desirable for other employers and encourages employability.

Financial Governance

The choice how to allocate funds in the faculty has of course a significant impact and the organization and choice the departments make. To address the work pressure related to the teaching we designed a new allocation model which was implemented in 2020. Both teaching tasks and the financial compensation are allocated transparently through this model. We plan to evaluate this model in 2021 and will monitor its successful implementation.

The university has changed the way overhead costs (and the fund to cover those costs) are attributed to the faculties. The goal is to directly attribute the costs to the faculty on basis of the actual usage of the different facilities of the university. Hereby the VU aims to allow the faculties to steer more actively on their overhead costs. This development is accompanied by the implementation of a new ERP system which will allow us to attribute budgets and costs to research and education respectively. The insight into the direct and indirect costs attributed to the various educational programs in our faculty will allow us to evaluate the rendement of an educational program. The combination of those insights and our teaching load model will equip us to steer on the financial stability of our educational programs.

Decisive and flexible

As faculty, we applaud the ambition of the VU to become more decisive and flexible, because this forms an important condition for realizing our ambitions. In our attempts to reduce work load we already describe some activities that should help becoming more decisive. For the rest we gladly contribute to the VU-broad efforts in this regard.

7. Implementation Strategic Multi Annual Plan

See section 1 through 7.