

# Development Dialogue Site visit PPE – 23 March 2022

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## Participants VU

- Prof. dr. Susan Legêne (Dean FGW, chair)
- Prof. dr. Lieven Decock (Dean of the College/Programme Director/Head of Study Philosophy)
- Prof. dr. René v/d Brink (Head of Study Economics)
- Prof. dr. Bastiaan van Apeldoorn (Head of Study Politics)

## Panel

- Prof. dr. Joshua Preiss, Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Program in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics at Minnesota State University, Mankato (chair)
- Prof. dr. Dirk De Bièvre, Professor in International Politics at Universiteit Antwerpen
- Prof. dr. Madeleine Hosli, Professor of International Relations at Universiteit Leiden
- Prof. dr. Roberto Veneziani, Professor in Economics at Queen Mary University of London
- Natalia Jagolski, bachelorstudent Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Universiteit Utrecht (student member)
- Dr. Fiona Schouten, Academion (secretary)

## Agenda

- Which opportunities to further develop the programme does the panel see? Is there clear untapped potential?
- The John Stuart Mill college is considering to add additional programmes, specifically master's programmes in PPE. What is the panel's vision on these plans?
- How can the PPE-programme best approach the issues and discussions around diversity in the programme?

## Discussion notes

The questions about untapped potential and adding additional programmes were discussed together. In this regard the panel offered a number of considerations:

- Our BA programme is currently very strong. If we do want to consider branching out, we have to consider if this would not entail further stretching resources that are already scarce. Solidifying the current programme's excellence would also be a worthwhile goal.
- Regarding untapped potential the panel sees options to increase our 'brand awareness', so we can draw from a larger pool of students. For this we could draw more attention to our specific strength: the way the three disciplines are all carrying the programme, and the comprehensive way these are integrated. For this we could look at what the other PPE programmes in Groningen and Utrecht are doing, and from this highlight our own profile.
- The inherent interdisciplinarity of the programme could also feed into a specific research profile in PPE for the staff. Especially if we want to start a master's programme, we should build the VU's research profile in the field of PPE, perhaps in the form of a research institute

in this field. The JuDo's who teach in the programme and work on a PhD could be instrumental in building this profile.

- The programme could also increase its profile by becoming more involved in the growing international PPE community. The annual PPE Society conference in New Orleans was mentioned, as well as initiatives to build a European PPE community that we could join.
- The panel furthermore encouraged the programme to make more use of our alumni. They encouraged the initiatives that are underway to reboot the professional advisory board to include more students.

The second part of the session was devoted to the discussion on how the programme can best approach the issues and discussions around diversity. In this regard the panel offered the following advice:

- The concerns that were highlighted in the student chapter of the self-evaluation report about the curriculum being too heavily focused on the work of white and western males are being adequately addressed by the programme in the panel's eyes. The international composition of the programme's body of staff is an asset in this regard. This could be strengthened even further by inviting teaching fellows into the programme, or to work with research fellows, following the point made above about creating a research institute for PPE.
- The composition of the student body could be a great avenue to further diversify the programme. The panel offers the advice to not only look at geographical background or gender in this framework, but also to socio-economic backgrounds of students. Because of the higher fees the programme charges, it would be good to see if there are options to reinstate the scholarships or grants to allow students to start the programme.
- The programme could also look at strengthening the relationships with the programmes that we already have exchange agreements with. This could allow students with different background to come into the programme and further liven up the mixed classroom. The panel also mentioned the possibility of faculty exchanges as well, subject to feasibility constraints.