Research Review

Communication Science

2008 - 2013

Report on the evaluation of research in Communication Science at University of Amsterdam, VU University Amsterdam and University of Twente

Contents

Foreword

The Review Committee is pleased to provide this Research Review of Communication Science at the University of Twente, the University of Amsterdam, and VU University for the period 2008-2013. We were honoured to be invited to learn more about the Research Review process itself, Communication Science in the Netherlands, and the quality and academic reputation, resources, productivity, societal relevance, strengths and weaknesses, strategy for the future, PhD training and supervision, and staff of each institute and programme.

We thank the participants for their generous hospitality and their informative presentations and interviews. We also thank the faculty staff and PhD students for their insights during the interviews. The Committee especially thanks Dr. Annemarie Venemans, secretary to the Committee, for her constant support, advice, explanations, guidance, good spirits, and very hard work in coordinating, revising, integrating, and completing all the members' comments into this final document. Accommodations, transport, meals, university tours, and keeping up with the Dutch success in the World Cup were all well organized and appreciated.

The Committee was supplied a useful array of background materials, including the 2001-2007 self-assessments and the 2008 review and the 2008-2013 self-assessments from the contemporary institutes and programmes, information and instructions about the Standard Evaluation Protocol for Research Assessment in the Netherlands, scoring forms, visit schedule, and other relevant information. The members read these documents, and then the first and second assessors for each institute or programme prepared their preliminary assessments/scores and shared them with Dr. Venemans and the other members before the site visit. During lunch and/or dinner after each university visit, the Committee discussed its impressions and substantive issues, and prepared the draft text. On the afternoon of the last day, and in the days after the Committee left The Netherlands, the members jointly discussed the materials, and the first and second assessors prepared drafts of their sections and provided them to Dr. Venemans. She carefully commented on them, raising questions, asking for more details from the Committee, and keeping track of the various versions. Finally, she provided the Committee with an integrated draft report, which everyone commented on, and prepared the final version you are now reading.

The overall process went very well, the Committee learned a lot and enjoyed the visits and interviews, and feels confident that this final report reflects our well-considered assessment of the institutes and programmes at the University of Twente, the University of Amsterdam, and VU University for the period 2008-2013. We hope that members of those institutes and programmes find our comments reasonable and helpful. We wish all the participants great good fortune and success over the next assessment period, and look forward to meeting you at conferences and visits in the future.

Prof. Ronald Rice
Chairman of the Review Committee

1. The review committee and the review procedures

Scope of the assessment

The Review Committee was asked to perform an assessment of the research in Communication Science at the University of Amsterdam, VU University Amsterdam and the University of Twente. This assessment covers the research in the period 2008-2013. In accordance with the Standard Evaluation Protocol 2009-2015 for Research Assessment in the Netherlands (SEP), the Committee's tasks were to assess the quality of the institute and the research programmes on the basis of the information provided by the institute and through interviews with the management and the research leaders, and to advise how this quality might be improved.

Composition of the Committee

The composition of the Committee was as follows:

- Prof. Ronald Rice (chair), University of California, Santa Barbara (US);
- Prof. Shanto Iyengar, Stanford University (US);
- Prof. Leen d'Haenens, KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Prof. Patrick de Pelsmacker, University of Antwerp (Belgium);
- Prof. Mary Beth Oliver, Penn State University (US).

A profile of the Committee members is included in Appendix A.

Dr. Annemarie Venemans was appointed secretary to the Committee by QANU (Quality Assurance Netherlands Universities).

Independence

All members of the Committee signed a statement of independence to safeguard that they would assess the quality of the institutes and research programmes in an unbiased and independent way. Any existing personal or professional relationships between Committee members and the programme under review were reported and discussed in the Committee meeting. The Committee concluded that there were no unacceptable relations or dependencies and that there was no specific risk in terms of bias or undue influence.

Data provided to the Committee

The Committee received the following detailed documentation:

- Self-evaluation report of the unit under review, including all the information required by the Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP), with appendices;
- Copies of the key publications per research programme.

Procedures followed by the Committee

The Committee proceeded according to the Standard Evaluation Protocol 2009-2015 (SEP). Prior to the first Committee meeting, all Committee members independently formulated a preliminary assessment of the programme. The final assessments are based on the documentation provided by the participating universities, the key publications and the interviews with the management and with the leaders and researchers of the programmes. The interviews took place on 18-20 June 2014 (see the schedule in Appendix 3) in Amsterdam and Enschede.

Prior to the interviews, the Committee was briefed by QANU about research assessment according to SEP, and it discussed the preliminary assessments and decided upon a number of comments and questions. It also agreed upon procedural matters and aspects of the assessment. After the interviews it discussed the scores and comments. The final version was presented to the participating departments for factual corrections and comments. The comments were discussed in the Committee. The final report was printed after formal acceptance.

The Committee used the rating system of the Standard Evaluation Protocol 2009-2015 (SEP). The meaning of the scores is described in Appendix 2.

2. General remarks

The Committee's overall assessment is that the status of The Netherlands Communication Science research infrastructure, research productivity and quality, leadership, staff and PhD students is very successful, with considerable growth in staff, funding, and productivity, but with some uncertainties about funding sources, and a need for more focus in some areas.

All three universities have very strong programmes. Beneficially for The Netherlands and the communication profession as a whole, the three institutes do not much overlap, and indeed have quite different identities, both in traditional communication research areas as well as in interdisciplinary and collaborative areas (such as user-centred design, technology-social perspectives, computer and information science, organizations, health organizations, European politics, etc.).

The three institutes are very productive overall. Though there is some discussion about the proper balance of quantity and quality in terms of article publications, they appear frequently in ISI journals, and several faculty members have impressive H-ratings. These programmes have international exposure and relationships. The Committee found good relations among staff and PhD students, with excellent PhD supervision and management, especially in ASCoR.

The Committee remarked several times that it discovered more powerful and positive information from the interviews about various aspects of the institutes or programmes than the self-assessment reports provided. This may have been due to understandable report length limits, but could indicate a need to better promote and publicize the range and depth of activities.

In some cases, the Committee recommends more focus on either a clear vision or a smaller number of interrelated research areas (especially for programmes with a small number of staff). It also suggests that some programmes could take more strategic advantage of their areas, collaboration, research interests, and unique contributions or context (e.g., health, organizational stakeholders, new media). Indeed, it found good opportunities for collaboration, and good emphases on interdisciplinary work. With all the foci, however, it notes that there could be greater emphasis on increasing awareness of and collaboration within and across programmes within institutes.

The Committee found that great effort had been exerted successfully to obtain external grants, though this varied from place to place. In some cases, there are appropriately different fits with funding sources for different programmes - such as more contract-funded projects that foster greater societal relevance when the research goals and interests are more applied or more user-oriented. There is definitely uncertainty about and change in government funding, which has implications for the teaching staff and creates a need for more research organisation and contract funding.

The past few years have seen a considerable reorganization in some institutes and programmes, at different stages. Partly, this is related to the prior assessment's recommendations, to university changes, and to refocusing of priorities. Most of these changes have been managed well, but greater stability would be welcome.

Assessment at Institute and Programme level

3. Research review University of Twente

Programme: Communication in a Technological Environment

Programme leader: Prof. Jan van Dijk
Research staff: 10 fte

Assessments: Quality: 4
                        Productivity: 4.5
                        Relevance: 5
                        Viability: 4

3.A. The institute

The University of Twente has a focus on new technology and considers the behavioural and social sciences to be crucial for the design and acceptance of technological innovations. The main areas of focus of research at the University of Twente are nanotechnology, biomedical technology, ICT, green energy, and behaviour and governance. Technical, natural, social, business and behavioural sciences, all firmly embedded in disciplines and technological fields, work together in resolving society's challenges. Communication is one of the important fields identified by the University in relation to the focus areas ICT and governance.

At the University of Twente, researchers are employed in faculties, but their research activities are embedded in thematic research institutes, which provide funding as well as a platform for collaboration with top researchers from different disciplines. Like the faculties, the research institutes are positioned directly under the Executive Board of the University. According to their research focus, the researchers and research groups may participate in different research institutes.

Until 2011, research programmes in the field of Communication Sciences were embedded in the research Institute of Behavioural Research (IBR). Since 2011, the communication research programmes have been embedded in two research institutes - the Centre for Telematics and Information Technology (CTIT) and the Institute for Innovation and Governance Studies (IGS). In line with the new strategic repositioning of the University of Twente, it was decided to merge two programmes ('Corporate and Marketing Communication' and 'Media, Communication and Organization') into 'Communication in a Technological Environment'. In addition, one of the former communication sciences departments, which had developed an increasingly psychological focus over time ('Psychology and Communication of Health and Risk'), was incorporated into the psychology programme in 2010.

The staff members are employed in the Faculty of Behavioural Science (GW) as well as participating in the research institutes. The Institute has developed relations with the Twente Graduate School, NESCoR, NefCA, International Communication Association, Society for Technical Communication, IEEE Prof Comm Society; U Washington on HCI & Engineering Department, and Northwestern U Social Networks in Communities; and it has covenants with universities in Indonesia and China.

Assessment

The Institute exists within an excellent technological infrastructure at the University of Twente, including the Faculty of Behavioural Sciences and CTIT's Smart Lab. The Committee was impressed with the broader university context of the programmes, with an explicit linking between the technological and social programmes. This suits the expertise and motivations of the 'Communication in a Technological Environment' (CITE) research programme and its members. CITE emphasizes interdisciplinary research and collaboration within the University. Certainly both faculty and PhD students are excited by this broader perspective, along with the orientation towards technology design, users' experiences (both as formative evaluation and as usage consequences), and implementations based on the combined technological/social approach, grounded in theory and empirical research. The Committee feels that this provides a unique, innovative, and valuable character to the Institute. It also notes that this unique, productive, and entirely appropriate approach was not clarified sufficiently in the self-evaluation report, but its value became very clear during the interviews.

3.B.1 The research programme

Two research groups are distinguished in the CITE research programme:

1. Corporate and Marketing Communication
2. Media, Communication and Organization.

The starting point of Communication Research at the University of Twente is that truly innovative systems, content and applications in user contexts (individual and organizational) must be based on sound theoretical and decision-supporting communication research. To realize this, the research programme uses the multidisciplinary approach of the research institutes, involving contributions from psychology, sociology, educational science, computer science and human resource management.

The mission of the research programme is to study and develop the optimization of communication processes in a technologized world, focusing on the individual, the organizational and the societal level, from a user/consumer, a design, and a network perspective. In addition, the goal is to understand the role technology plays in human communication processes and the role communication plays in the development, dissemination, appropriation and evaluation of technology.

The research programme focuses on five research themes:

- Appropriation of new technologies by users;
- Innovation of online public services and service organizations;
- Information processing and decision making (conscious and unconscious) of consumers, patients, citizens, employees, communication professionals and media users;
- Identity, empathy and trust of users employing traditional and new media and communication processes and content;
- Design research and the innovation of new design methodologies supporting the communication profession (a meta-perspective).

Assessment/remarks

The Committee is of the opinion that the five research themes bring together communication and ICT in a variety of important contexts (use of new forms of ICT, public services, individuals' information processing and decision-making, design research, and identity and trust of media users).

Overall, this is a small research programme trying to cover many areas, yet it is very productive, and doing interesting and valuable research. The Committee confirmed the programme's awareness of and emphasis on its own interdisciplinary, socio-technical vision and that of the University. Indeed, the strategic advantage of the uniqueness of this context should be highlighted more in publicity and recruitment, because the programme is innovative, interdisciplinary, and focused on the intersection of both the technological and the social.

The Committee wondered whether the separation from the staff members who tended more to psychology and health/risk is not seen as a loss. On the other hand, the imminent merger with Business Administration, Sociology and Management is welcomed. In general, the recent and imminent mergers into one programme is seen by the faculty and the Committee as a positive development, helping to improve the focus and coherence of CITE.

3.B.2 Quality and academic reputation

The programme has a well-known and influential director with a strong and productive research programme. There is a good range of evidence of his reputation: division chair, editorial board member, visiting professor, research awards, best paper awards, dissertation award, NeSCoR dissertation award, fellowships, grants.

The self-evaluation report lists a number of researchers and publications that have contributed substantially to the scientific debate. Prestigious awards and grants have been won by a number of researchers. In the self-evaluation report the programme claims that most researchers operate at an international level and publish articles in high-impact journals, conference papers, books and book chapters.

Assessment/remarks

The Committee read four key publications provided in advance of the site visit. It found that all of them were detailed and rigorous and published in good journals: from developing and testing a typology of internet skills, and integrating organizational identity theory with group identity theory in a cross-race university merger, to providing a comprehensive and well-structured review of offline and online trust, and reporting an experimental assessment of the role of space and interpersonal distance on medical disclosure. The first three could easily be required reading in relevant courses.

The Committee itself noted, and heard several comments about, the diverse range of topics studied by a small number of groups (relevant to the small number of faculty and of PhD students). Thus, it supports CITE's strategic plan to develop a greater focus, perhaps by orienting projects toward shared technology, theoretical and user issues.

The Committee also encourages the programme to communicate more about its philosophy of the centrality of communication in technological processes and issues. This perspective gives it a strong foundation and role in the joint analysis of technological and social factors, a core mission of the University. Furthermore, as the relationship between technological and

social factors is now encouraged by NWO, it provides CITE with a greater likelihood of research funding. Perhaps CITE could propose joint sessions at ICA, ISIS, OCIS in the Academy of Management, or other conferences where the benefits of this integrated approach could be highlighted.

3.B.3 Resources

Three full professors are active in the research programme. In December 2013 one endowed professor was installed. In 2008, four associate professors participated in the research programme. Currently, the programme has two associate professors. Between 11 and 16 assistant professors have participated in the programme.

	2008		2009		2010		2011		2012		2013	
	N	Fte	N	Fte	N	Fte	N	Fte	N	Fte	N	Fte
Faculty	21	6.03	22	7.74	23	8.83	17	7.25	22	7.36	17	7.1
Post-docs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PhD students*	11	9.23	7	6.17	7	6.38	5	4.57	3	3.34	4	2.69
Total research staff	*32*	*15.26*	*29*	*13.91*	*30*	*15.21*	*22*	*11.82*	*25*	*10.70*	*21*	*9.79*

* only internal PhD students

During the assessment period many contract research projects were acquired (Ministries of Finance (Tax Office), Economic Affairs, Justice, Health, Welfare and Sport, Internal Affairs, and External Affairs). Four new NWO/ZonMW projects were granted in the assessment period.

	2008		2009		2010		2011		2012		2013 (Nov)	
	fte	%	fte	%	fte	%	fte	%	Fte	%	fte	%
Direct funding	2946	80	3011	80	3072	82	2977	77	2931	84	3057	88
Research grants	144	4	241	6	96	3	85	2	62	2	65	2
Contract research	568	15	500	13	564	15	809	21	515	15	333	10
Other	23	1	0	0	0	0	18	0	0	0	0	0
Total funding	*3681*		*3752*		*3732*		*3889*		*3508*		*3455*	

Assessment/remarks
The keywords that come to mind after reading the self-evaluation report are: decrease (in staff, PhD students, income, output, due to the split in programmes), reorganization due to University changes, shift in focus, and merger. In that context of change, an explanation was provided for the decrease in fte in 2013 compared to 2008. This results in a very modest programme in terms of staff, covering a very broad range of research areas.

The Committee noted during the interview with staff that they have clear information about their career paths, in terms of expectations and timetables. It appreciates this.

The Committee heard from the interviewees about their difficulties in obtaining research grants from research organisations. Partly this is due to the explicit interdisciplinarity of their work, making it difficult for funding agencies to assign the work to a particular funding unit. Also, the orientation toward design, use, and application – which the Committee values – may make it difficult for funding agencies to easily identify the more purely academic (theoretical, research) dimensions. The Committee encourages the programme to continue to highlight the very strong value of this approach, and to underscore the theoretical and research aspects in their proposals.

The self-evaluation report states that "The scientific directors have strategic funds at their disposal to support particularly promising research programmes and to stimulate the collaboration between the social sciences research groups and the technical research groups". Additionally, the programme's earning capacity is mostly oriented towards Dutch funds. Thus, the Committee suggests that near-term strategy discussions might clarify how this discretionary funding, and funding within the research institutes CTIT (Centre for Telematics and IT) and IGS (Innovation & Governance Studies), could affect CITE's future research collaboration, the hiring of PhD students, the hiring of one or more post-doctoral students (none at present) to help in grant proposal writing, and the focusing of CITE's efforts and identity.

3.B.4 Productivity

During the assessment period there was an initial increase and then a decline in total publications from 100 in 2008 to 142 in 2010 and 82 in 2013. On average, 5.5 peer-reviewed articles per research fte were published each year (in the last assessment period, the final score was high, 7.6). On average, 3.7 ISI-ranked articles per research fte were published each year. Of the ISI-ranked articles, on average 1.8 (47%) were published in Q1 journals (the top 25% journals in their category).

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Refereed articles	58	35	41	40	39	30
Books	4	0	1	2	3	3
Book chapters	14	8	13	8	15	8
PhD theses	3	4	5	4	2	4
Conference papers*	6	19	13	14	15	4
Professional publications	8	49	56	46	18	18
Publications aimed at the general public	0	0	3	1	0	1
Other research output	7	13	10	14	6	14
Total publications	*100*	*128*	*142*	*129*	*98*	*82*

* Only substantial peer-reviewed proceedings papers are included here. In the assessment period faculty members also gave many conference presentations (e.g., ICA Annual Conferences), which are not listed here.

Assessment/remarks
In general, the Committee is of the opinion that there is an excellent score of peer-reviewed publications per fte, although a decrease is evident (2008 being an exceptional year with 7.6 peer-reviewed articles per fte). It understands that the drop is related to the loss of the Psychology programme, and possibly to the very low number of PhD students until recently. The self-evaluation report appendix lists a wide range of journals in which staff members have published (including a lot of non-communication journals).

The self-evaluation report notes that the decline in PhD students and research faculty (though not in total faculty staff) is somehow related to the recent split of the programmes, and thus to the understandable drop in research output. Still, there is a very high percentage of articles in top journals. Based on the self-evaluation report and the interviews, the Committee understands that few of these articles are published in Communication Science journals, although this was a specific recommendation of the previous review committee. The Committee values the powerful interdisciplinary research and collaboration of CITE, and the associated diversity of publication venues. Perhaps CITE members can develop a good strategy for focused publication in Communication Science journals of those projects explicitly applying a communication perspective and displaying how collaboration with more technological partners benefits communication research.

The Committee mentioned in the interviews that the large number and range of conference papers, research reports, and other research output provides a rich basis for additional refereed journal articles or book chapters. The Director indicated he is aware of this, and there will be more focus on that strategy.

3.B.5 Societal relevance

The research programme has strong links to societal institutions, and its members contribute to societal debates. Some stakeholder relations include The Center of eGovernment Studies (part of research institute CTIT), covenants with government institutions (Dutch Tax and Customs Administration), National Administration of Labor and Social Benefits, city of Enschede, and STAP (Dutch Institute for Alcohol Policy).

Assessment/remarks
The Committee notes that there is a very strong focus on the social aspects of technology from a user/citizen/employee perspective, on a design perspective involving both technical and social aspects, and on a network perspective (relations and social contexts). The societal relevance aspect is the unique aspect of this programme within the Netherlands. Along with the integrated technological and social perspective, this adds to the innovative and strategic identity of the programme. Indeed, this focus and range of stakeholder relationships could be publicized more to increase awareness of this strategic advantage of CITE.

3.B.6 Strategy for the future

The strategy for the future includes several major points:

- To investigate theoretically important questions about communication processes in ICTs and other technologies;
- To continue to work within its research focus on studying, analysing and evaluating the changes in acceptance, use and effects of communication systems, messages and practices in an ever changing world of communication and information technology;
- To achieve more success in terms of Veni, Vidi and other NWO grants;
- To step up the level of valorisation; the current level of 20% of contract funds is expected to increase.

Assessment/remarks
The SWOT analysis was clear in identifying the strengths (social relevance of ICTs, design based on user evaluation, organizational innovation, professional communication) as well as the weaknesses. One major weakness (identified by CITE itself) is the high current dependence on direct funding. As the University's direct funding continues to decline, CITE must focus more effort on research organisation and contract funding. The SWOT analysis notes the need to attract strategic funding, research grants (only 2% funding source in the past few years), researchers and students. However, there is some challenge in obtaining funding due to the innovative and interdisciplinary profile of the programme. Nonetheless, there is a good number of contract research projects, and the interviews stressed that in general such contracts are not taken up unless there is a good possibility of academic publications stemming from the project.

The potential of the programme is high, thanks to the multidisciplinary context of research institutions, provided certain conditions are met (stability, growth, less dependence on direct

university funding). From the interviews the Committee did note that the institutes are providing good seed money for H2020 preparation. One useful change at the central level of the University is the switch from requiring PhD students to be funded by external sources only.

The Committee felt, however, that the vitality and feasibility section of the self-evaluation report did not describe its near-term goals in sufficient detail. It consisted primarily of a call for continuing with the emphases, more integration, more focus, and continued focus on interdisciplinarity and societal relevance while underscoring the role of communication science.

3.B.7 PhD training and supervision

In the period from 2005 to 2009 a total of 13 PhD students graduated. The majority of them took four years or less to successfully finish their PhD project (65%); another 21% took an extra year.

The supervision of PhD candidates is done in all cases by daily supervisors and the responsible professors. The PhD candidates of the programme follow a full training programme with NeSCoR (Netherlands School of Communication Research), including the research themes 'Communication, management and policy' and 'Persuasive communication'. In addition, they are encouraged to follow specialized courses offered by the Communication Science departments themselves or by other scholars at the UT or other universities. Since 2009, the Twente Graduate School (TGS) has provided supplemental training modules for PhD candidates (e.g., on particular methodologies, such as design methodology, and interface and interaction research methods).

Assessment/remarks
The Committee interviewed PhD students about their supervision, research facilities, graduate school, and possible constraints on their research.

The students confirmed good methodological training and exposure to non-traditional technologies and methods from the other disciplines (e.g., design methods, formative evaluation, critical incident analysis, scenarios analysis, HCI, virtual reality for message testing and environmental contexts, and experimental analyses). The Committee noted that PhD students could 'tailor' the educational programme to their specific research interest.

In general, the PhD students feel well guided and supported by their supervisors. The ones that the Committee met were autonomous in defining research topics and exploring new theories. They were enthusiastic about the flexible, social atmosphere in the institute.

According to the PhD students, job placement is generally good, with graduates flowing into the University of Twente or other universities, and some into industry (government, ad agencies, research agencies, IT companies). Students can take career development courses, and engage in networking at conferences.

However, the Committee feels there is some room for improvement. In its opinion, the number of PhD students is too small. Although there is quite a number of external PhD students, the Committee strongly advises the programme to increase the number of standard PhD students. Those the Committee spoke with are also hoping for more PhD students in the same research area. Currently, they have to develop their own networks (mostly external).

4. Research review University of Amsterdam

4A. The institute

4.A.1 The institute: Amsterdam School of Communication Research (ASCoR)

The Amsterdam School of Communication Research (ASCoR) is a research institute in Communication Science, housed in the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences of the University of Amsterdam. Its research concentrates on the production, uses, and consequences of information and communication in informing, persuading, and entertaining citizens. It benefits from leading one of the University Research Priority Areas. Its approach is multidisciplinary: Core communication science theories and methods are combined with theories and methods from other social sciences.

Research is carried out in four programmes:

- Corporate Communication (as of September 2013);
- Persuasive Communication;
- Political Communication & Journalism;
- Youth & Media Entertainment.

Assessment/remarks
The Committee cannot find much to criticise or any recommendations to make for this very successful institute. It is large enough to support these four programme areas. Each of the programmes could consider involving more of the new media, though there is already some presence in their studies of stakeholder communication, health interventions, online political participation, and, perhaps most explicitly, youth and media. Also, it should be possible to highlight, such as through ASCoR's website, how the three main themes of production, uses and consequences link projects within and across the four programmes. In other words, it may be useful to develop some way of communicating the overall ASCoR vision or mission underlying the four programmes and the very large number of research projects and publications. With the increasing emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration, research, and grants, staff could benefit from further training and advice on how to accomplish those goals, and from greater awareness of what the other projects and teams are doing.

4.A.2 Quality and academic reputation

According to the self-evaluation report, the ASCoR research is internationally embedded and recognized. All research programmes have strong collaborations with top institutes worldwide. ASCoR stimulates high-quality, empirical research that is publishable in international top journals with a high impact factor in their specific research areas.

The self-evaluation report stated that several staff members have received national and international awards. ASCoR research quality is recognized in international university rankings (QS World University Rankings) and social sciences at the UvA (number 1 in Europe according to the Times Higher Education).

Assessment/remarks

There is no doubt that ASCoR is one of the top Communication Science institutions in the world. Its research is respected by academics throughout the diverse discipline of communication worldwide, and its scholars are leaders in highly visible and noteworthy initiatives. Its researchers routinely publish in top-rated ISI journals, the academic research staff is very successful in securing funding for their research, and their work forms the basis of countless studies within the discipline and within closely related fields (e.g., developmental psychology). Professor Valkenburg recently won the top academic award in The Netherlands. Its high international ranking (e.g., QS World) is well deserved.

ASCoR has four very strong programme areas, a large number of senior researchers and PhD students, recent international hires, high-quality dissertation theses, good infrastructure support from the University, and their own ComLab as well as FMG labs.

4.A.3 Resources

During the assessment period there was an increase in faculty, postdocs and PhD students.

	2008		2009		2010		2011		2012		2013	
	N	fte	N	fte	N	fte	N	fte	N	fte	N	fte
Faculty	42	13.8	44	14.3	49	15.1	52	18.3	55	21.2	62	20.4
Post-docs	8	3.0	4	2.3	6	2.7	6	4.6	11	5.4	10	6.6
PhD students	34	21.8	42	28.4	40	26.0	40	27.8	46	27.9	39	28.7
Total research staff	*84*	*38.7*	*90*	*45.0*	*95*	*43.8*	*98*	*50.7*	*112*	*54.5*	*111*	*55.6*
Support staff	5	2.7	4	2.8	5	3.0	6	3.3	7	4.1	8	4.2
Total staff	*89*	*41.4*	*94*	*47.8*	*100*	*46.8*	*104*	*54.0*	*119*	*58.6*	*120*	*59.8*

During the assessment period, direct funding increased by 30%. Income from research grants increased from €0.4 million in 2008 to €1.1 million in 2013. Several grants were obtained from NWO each year, including Veni grants for 5 consecutive years. In 2013, about 5% of all funding was obtained by contract research.

	2008		2009		2010		2011		2012		2013	
	fte	%	fte	%	fte	%	fte	%	Fte	%	fte	%
Direct funding	21.4	55	28.6	64	26.2	60	28.9	57	31.1	57	30.2	54
Research grants	11.3	29	10.8	24	14.6	33	18.7	37	18.9	35	20.7	37
Contract research	2.2	6	1.5	3	1.1	3	1.7	3	2.6	5	3.0	5
Other	3.8	10	4.1	9	2.0	4	1.3	3	1.9	4	2.3	4
Total funding	*38.7*	*100*	*45.0*	*100*	*43.8*	*100*	*50.7*	*100*	*54.5*	*100*	*56.2*	*100*

Assessment/remarks

There has been an exceptional growth in research staff (from 84 in 2008 to 111 in 2013). Based on the self-evaluation report, the Committee wondered how such a large staff could be managed. The interviews provided good explanations in terms of explicit hiring criteria, team-based projects that each deal with some aspect of the ASCoR mission, sharing and commenting on each other's work, and funding for cross-team work.

The Committee heard in the interviews about the increasing professionalization of the grant process, with a grant advisor and a financial controller each spending one day a week at ASCoR, and the increase in opportunities associated with leading an UvA Research Priority Area. Staff reported receiving good support in grant preparation. The Committee applauds this professionalization.

In general, the balance between teaching and research is good, and the transparency is also good. However, the teaching is labour-intensive, especially in the small course groups. ASCoR should take measures to increase staff research time relative to teaching time.

During the assessment period, ASCoR substantially increased research funding. It should continue providing training and seed grants to develop expertise and consortia for generating proposals for the upcoming H2020 grants. The Committee notes and appreciates the strong support that staff receive throughout their grant proposal process. ASCoR may wish to pursue more contract funding as a way to develop greater societal relevance through stakeholder interaction and real-world research settings, while also providing PhD students with more experience in professional contexts and contacts. The focus should lie on organizations and contexts that would foster publishable research.

4.A.4 Productivity

During the assessment period the number of refereed articles increased from 85 in 2008 to 149 in 2013 with a peak of 172 refereed articles in 2012. The number of ISI publications also increased. As stated in the self-evaluation report, ASCoR researchers are among the top within the Netherlands, both in terms of publications and citations.

	2008	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**
Refereed articles	85	100	112	145	172	149
Books	4	2	2	3	2	0
Book chapters	40	51	14	54	37	34
PhD theses	5	9	12	6	8	15
Conference papers	197	192	237	207	221	227
Professional publications	47	54	65	48	44	81
Publications aimed at the general public	9	9	19	10	12	37
Other research output	32	59	74	96	81	129
Total publications	*419*	*476*	*535*	*569*	*577*	*672*

Assessment/remarks
Since the last assessment, the research productivity in ASCoR has enjoyed tremendous growth and now demonstrates a steady level of very impressive output. There is extensive and continuous productivity in refereed articles, book chapters, conference papers, and PhD theses. The average number of ISI publications is now about 4 per fte per year, and the faculty are extremely successful in placing their output in some of the most esteemed and visible outlets in the discipline. Many articles are in the top 10% and 25% of specialist publications, but they also appear in journals from other disciplines. Most of the refereed articles are in ISI journals. There is a large number of book chapters, about 2 books per year, and about 9 PhD students per year. Several faculty members are very frequently cited, esp. Leydesdorff, Valkenburg, Peter, and De Vreese. Likewise, the tremendous growth in research grants from 2008 to 2013 points to the impact of the scholarship flowing out of ASCoR, as well as its promise of continued contributions.

4.A.5 Societal relevance

Members of ASCoR are very frequently cited by news sources, demonstrating the interest and appeal that their scholarship holds for general audiences. They are also active in disseminating their scholarly expertise via public lectures, participation on advisory boards, and involvement as experts on numerous scientific councils. The self-evaluation report indicates many invited presentations; memberships on boards and advisory councils; providing expertise to government agencies; communication about patents; endowed chairs; and communication with stakeholders.

Assessment/remarks
The Committee noted that the self-evaluation report did not provide much coverage of societal relevance. However, ASCoR has several programmes with great potential for direct impact: Corporate Communication; Political Communication & Journalism; and Youth & Media Entertainment. When the Committee asked about societal relevance in the interviews, a wide range of examples was provided, such as government reports, industry relations, faculty members in media agencies, presentations to parliaments, outreach centres, public debates, etc. And while there was little mention of SWOCC (the Foundation for Scientific Research on Commercial Communication) in the self-evaluation report, the Committee understands that this represents a major form of societal relevance in terms of providing research summaries to organizations. Indeed, the self-evaluation report strategy section mentions the need to develop a more explicit strategy for research impact on society. The Committee does not see this as a major problem, and some ASCoR programmes emphasize this more than others, but it does encourage paying more attention to this dimension. As noted above, contract grants may contribute to this.

The Committee noted some tension between the demands and nature of ISI ratings and societal relevance. For example, the turnaround time from submission to publication, and then to any possible application, is considerable, in some cases making the initial topic or results societal less relevant.

4.A.6 Strategy for the future

To ensure the future quality of research, ASCoR will work hard to maintain its position among the top programmes by continuing to focus on theory-driven empirical research published in leading international journals and by important publishers.

Based on the self-evaluation report and the SWOT analyses, ASCoR will:

- Further develop the targeted investments made to maintain and expand the track record in National Science Foundation and EU (H2020) funding in particular. Intensification of professional guidance of grant applicants has been made through a structural collaboration with *Bureau Kennis Transfer,* the grant office of the UvA;
- Collaborate with the Department to develop talent and career planning for junior faculty;
- Continue the search for 1-2 stellar senior faculty;
- Initiate a discussion of publication traditions (including Open Access), norms, and performance expectations;
- Further stimulate cross-programme group collaboration;

- Invest in greater awareness and formalized procedures around issues like ethics and scientific integrity (already started new PhD course, faculty-wide ethics committee, data repository, etc.);
- Review options and allocate budget for bringing in advanced methods, statistics, and programming knowledge, through intensified collaboration with colleagues from the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences in the new location;
- Prepare for an expected decrease in university budget;
- Continue the work on a more explicit strategy for research impact on society;
- Develop a new research programme (2015-2020) with specific themes for the programme groups as well as cross-group overlaps.

Assessment/remarks

ASCoR has a clear vision for how it wants to progress, how to achieve its goals, and what weaknesses may be evident. The Committee agrees with the self-evaluation report's conclusion that ASCoR has experienced a "steady series of successes, both in terms of grant acquisitions, publications, impact, and recognition".

Many of the goals and threats relate to funding, with an awareness of the importance of securing grants, coupled with a realization of tightening budgets. Although there is already a high percentage of research grants (37%), this must increase in the future, as direct funding will decrease. Efforts continue to recruit and train stellar faculty, and there is a desire to enhance interdisciplinary collaborations. Although a substantial number of new hires and promotions has been made, there is the issue of the large number of junior faculty with fixed-term contracts.

There seems to be some concern among a few faculty members that the emphasis on research productivity may override issues of quality. The Committee agrees with the SWOT analysis that there should be some discussion about publication norms. However, it does not feel in general that publication quantity and quality are independent, much less negatively associated. However, there should be some space to consider publication venues for more innovative, or longer, publications. Of course, this is a general issue for any academic unit emphasizing research publication.

The Committee agrees with the SWOT analysis that there could be more intellectual exchanges across the four programme groups, and that there should be more emphasis on training in newer methods and data analysis.

The imminent move to a new building will result in better facilities and research lab resources, and unification of the social sciences, which should facilitate more interdisciplinary collaboration.

ASCoR's self-evaluation report provided an excellent, detailed list of goals for the near future (especially guidance in grant preparation and submission and development of a new research programme for 2015-2020 for within and across-group themes).

4.A.7 PhD training and supervision

The directors of the Graduate School and ASCoR share the responsibility for the selection and training of PhD students. The main aim of the ASCoR PhD programme is to promote the training of young academics in the study of fundamental scientific research issues in the

field of communication science. Students are offered a combination of hands-on research, coursework, and teaching tasks.

As stated in the self-evaluation, a Training & Supervision Plan is submitted within 2 months after the PhD project start date. This plan includes the project description, agreements on frequency of meetings, coursework, the First-Year Paper topic and deadline, and a publication plan. The document is signed for approval by the PhD student, the supervisors, the ASCoR Director, and the Graduate School Director.

The supervision team typically consists of 2-3 senior researchers, including at least one full professor (promoter). The PhD student meets at least once every fortnight with his/her supervisors.

Assessment/remarks
The Committee praises how ASCoR's many PhD students enjoy collaborative relationships and project development, with senior ASCoR faculty providing funding, and supervisor teams with mentors providing both content and methodological expertise. The students have clear goals, supervision, evaluation, and PhD Club discussions at regular intervals. They receive excellent supervision, career development, and research conditions. The Committee was especially impressed with the progress portfolio and explicit benchmarks along the way. It encourages the continued good support for international and conference travel. There is a high level of trust and flexibility in the PhD component of ASCoR.

The Committee was pleased to hear that the PhD students feel they receive as much support as they want, and gain expertise through the NeSCoR required course, the one-week teaching course and follow-up interview and assessment. The Research Master provides them with good pre-PhD training. The Graduate School of Communication is a leader in the development of the 2-year Research Master, which has the immediate and direct effect of much better trained PhD students.

Although currently PhD placement is very successful, there is concern by both students and faculty about the near-term levelling-off of academic job opportunities in the context of increasing numbers of PhD graduates. Thus, the Committee recommends developing some support for workshops on non-academic positions and careers.

A few areas for possible improvement include:

- Exploring ways to keep up with new and more sophisticated analysis methods;
- Having a methods/statistical analysis expert available for consultation;
- Considering ways to improve internal communication, such as about other members' and programmes' research, and about some hiring decision processes;
- Investigating means of providing more information, handbook, guidelines, resource sources, availability and description of summer courses, and possibly a newsletter for new and continuing PhD students.

4.B Programme level

4.B.1 Programme Corporate Communication

Programme leader: Prof. Rens Vliegenthart
Research staff: 3.8 fte

The 'Corporate Communication' programme was launched in September 2013. As the programme is so new, no numerical values will be given. The programme focuses on the development, execution and effects of communication strategies towards internal and external stakeholders of organizations. These organizations include companies in the private sector, but also civil society and public organizations. Communication strategies are directed towards mass media (public relations), government institutions (public affairs), investors, and employees.

Quality

The research programme in Corporate Communication is a recently established group of academics, some of them formerly active in other communication sub-domains. Its creation is presented as a follow-up to a major recommendation by the previous review committee. As it is so recent, assessing its track record is difficult. The programme states an intention to develop a niche of its own. Yet the Committee is not fully convinced it can achieve such a goal - being distinctive - by following its mission statement: studying the development, implementation, and impact of communication strategies directed at an organization's internal and external stakeholders. It welcomes the programme's aim to solidify the empirical basis of corporate communication studies. However, the chosen emphasis on content analysis methods as well as stereotyping and framing as guiding theoretical principles may be somewhat narrow. Further, the programme may wish to concentrate its efforts on the external (e.g., governmental, industry, non-governmental organizations) stakeholder communication relationships - that is, a more macro-perspective - as a way to bring its currently small resources to bear.

Productivity

The programme's overall 2013 output is excellent, mostly in ISI-ranked journals, but is primarily driven by the senior staff members' publications. The Committee suggests that the programme draw up a publication strategy so that publications will be the result of all group members' research activities, thus contributing theoretically and empirically to the field of corporate communication.

Relevance

The programme has close connections with professional organizations and media outlets, and it maintains good contacts with SWOCC and other potential contract grant partners. It has a substantial number of lecturers and an endowed professorship. Although, in general, they do not contribute substantially to the research efforts of the programme, they are a valuable link with the professional field of corporate communication. This link should be explicitly developed. Major companies are represented on the advisory board of the programme, such as E&Y and Deloitte. This provides opportunities to improve societal relevance by more

closely involving them in research project development and empirical research directions. Judging from its past research output, the 'media and organizations' label would be a better fit than 'corporate communication'. The Committee understands, however, that the latter provides more interesting opportunities to link up with industry and other relevant stakeholders.

Viability

The Corporate Communication track recruits a lot of students, who require numerous teaching hours while also ensuring a steady stream of direct University funding. The staff's heavy teaching load may lead to suboptimal research performance should recruitment of additional staff not be successful in the near future. The group is small (current research time: 3.8 fte) and is described as young: apart from programme leader Vliegenthart and Ter Hoeven (both successful awardees), members are mid-career staff with lower H-indices, some of them bringing no past experience in corporate communication to speak of. In light of the above, the Committee suggests strengthening the group through hiring well-established corporate communication scholars with solid empirical experience, as well as creating new PhD positions with direct University funding. The Committee has two concerns about future viability: research focus, both in terms of theory and methods, and group visibility. The Committee would welcome more theoretical and methodological innovation. In this respect, ASCoR's impending move to a new building together with the Faculties of Law and Economics should foster multi-method and multidisciplinary research approaches and designs. As to visibility, one of the group's major challenges for the future will be to bring focus to its research activities by stimulating cooperation between group members, developing a growth strategy, and promoting core research activities both nationally and internationally. Additionally, the programme should continue to develop access to organizations for its research activities.

Conclusion

Well embedded in the strong ASCoR research context and infrastructure, the research programme in Corporate Communication could be strengthened by improving its research focus and emphasizing its distinctiveness. The Committee feels the group will be able to tackle these issues in the future under the leadership of an excellent research group director and in light of the strong track record of a number of its members.

4.B.2 Programme Persuasive Communication

Programme leader: Dr. Julia van Weert
Research staff: 21.7 fte

Assessments: Quality: 4.5
                 Productivity: 5
                 Relevance: 4.5
                 Viability: 4.5

The 'Persuasive Communication' programme addresses those communication processes intended to achieve specific persuasive goals, for instance, marketing communication, health education, and public information campaigns. The foci of this programme are understanding the dynamics that shape the uses and effects of mediated persuasive communication and applying this knowledge in the design of communication campaigns and interventions.

Quality

The 'Persuasive Communication' programme is without doubt an excellent research programme. It has a long tradition at the top of the global academic communication science scene. The research programme has a clear focus on two domains: marketing communication and health communication. There are three thematic research lines: embedded persuasion, tailoring, and empowerment of individuals. These three research lines are consistently applied to the two domains. The research lines are mainstream, as they should be for an institute of this scale and scope, but they are also tapping into important new developments in the communications environment (the blurring of content and persuasive messages, interactive media and increased empowerment of individuals).

The research record is exceptionally distinguished. The senior faculty are prolific and highly visible at the national and international level. Student demand is high, and the programme has experienced dramatic growth in the number of faculty, staff and PhD students. PhD drop-out levels are very low. The programme has an excellent international reputation, is very well connected to international research groups and organizations with several members holding important positions in international academic organizations. As part of ASCoR, the programme operates in a well-organised context with top-level resources and support.

One area in which there is room for improvement is the level of external funding (especially from research organisations, such as NWO) for PhD students. The programme finds it difficult to attract external funding due to the applied focus of its work. On the other hand, industry is not ready to fund PhD students.

Productivity

The programme has a focused strategy in terms of scientific performance. The publication record is outstanding. The overall level of productivity is very high. The ability to publish in highly ranked outlets spanning multiple disciplines is especially impressive (e.g. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, *Health Psychology*). Because of the strong cooperation with SWOCC and other aspects, the output of the research programme is made widely available to diverse audiences, and there is cross-fertilization between the academic and the professional field.

Relevance

As mentioned under the previous points, the research lines of the programme are focused on societally very relevant and contemporary topics. Faculty members are often sources of news, invited speakers at high-profile conferences, etc. As a result of the structural cooperation with SWOCC, societal relevance is incorporated in the research strategy, and the societal impact is substantial. The programme is establishing a 'Center for Health Communication'. This is an excellent initiative to develop greater visibility for the 'health communication' research domain and to strengthen its ties with government departments and other health-related stakeholders, much along the lines of the successful SWOCC initiative for 'marketing communication'. Although the research programme connects well with stakeholders, more effort could be devoted to involving stakeholders more explicitly in developing and carrying out specific research projects, and in that way it would become even more societally relevant than it is now.

Viability

The research programme has a clear and relevant strategy for its focal domains and research lines. However, there are concerns about issues that may jeopardize its future success. One of these issues is the potential decrease in direct funding from the University. As mentioned above, the programme finds it difficult to attract external funding from NWO due to the "applied" nature of its work. This may pose a threat to the stability of the programme in the medium term, since it limits the enrolment of PhD students. Though the funding processes are different for 3rd stream funding, the health field offers many research and project opportunities for the Persuasive Communication programme, perhaps especially in the areas of tailored messaging and individual empowerment, and the combination of health and communication campaigns through the framework of social marketing.

At present, the programme is bottom heavy with a 1:5 ratio of full to assistant professors. Given the wide range in subject matter – from public health to marketing – intellectual coherence may be problematic. Many of the relatively young and inexperienced staff are employed on fixed-term contracts. This may be a threat to a stable and more thematically focused development of the group. Moreover, since the programme attracts many undergraduate students, there is a heavy teaching and management load that may further compromise the research time of the staff in the future. The research programme should develop a clear strategy to cope with this threat. The number of senior staff should be increased, and additional efforts should be invested in "selling" research proposals to mainstream funding sources such as NWO.

Conclusion

The 'Persuasive Communication' research programme is well embedded in the strong ASCoR research context and infrastructure. The quality of the programme is excellent, and its productivity is outstanding. Initiatives such as SWOCC and the planned 'Center for Health Communication' reflect a clear strategy to connect with societal stakeholders. Nevertheless, the programme should strengthen its level of external research funding. More effort could be devoted to involving stakeholders more explicitly in research projects. The number of senior staff should be increased to ensure intellectual coherence and PhD guidance.

4.B.3 Programme Political Communication & Journalism

Programme leader: Prof. Claes de Vreese
Research staff: 14 fte

Assessments: Quality: 5
                 Productivity: 5
                 Relevance: 4.5
                 Viability: 4

The 'Political Communication & Journalism' programme addresses the information function of communication. The research studies how, and under which conditions, news and other communication with informational purposes are produced. The programme investigates the contents of this information, how audiences use and process it, and what effects it has on cognition, affects, attitudes and behaviour. A central question is how citizens, public organizations, and political institutions use media and communication to become informed about public affairs and to participate in them.

Quality

The 'Political Communication & Journalism' programme is the leading programme of its kind in Europe and is within the top ten programmes worldwide. The research output features cutting-edge theoretical and methodological contributions using cross-national rather than country-specific modes of analysis, as well as large-scale and over-time data. The programme focuses on campaign communication (both national and international) and examines the empowering-informative effects of mass media on voters. A secondary emphasis concerns the interplay between politicians, voters, and journalists. Recent junior faculty hires have diversified the research portfolio to cover democratic deliberation, selective exposure, and political polarization. This provides an unusual breadth of coverage relative to other graduate programmes in political communication. The teaching faculty provides excellent mentorship; all of the PhD graduates obtained positions in academic institutions.

Productivity

The programme's visibility in the professional field is excellent. It publishes frequently in highly cited journals in both Communication (*Political Communication, Communication Research, International Journal of Press/Politics*) and Political Science (*Journal of Politics, Electoral Studies*). The ratio of ISI papers per faculty remains very high. Since the last review, the programme has also embarked on more book-length efforts, which enable greater emphasis on theory development and synthesis. There is a major book on the practice of political journalism (Cambridge University Press) and an edited volume on European elections and voting behaviour. The faculty and students are well-represented as presenters of papers and panel organizers at scientific meetings.

The group has also won very significant grant support, including four Veni awards, one large Vici award and two open competition NWO grants. The scholarship funded by these grants is not only theoretically motivated (e.g. specifying the conditions underlying media framing), but also addresses important real-world political phenomena (e.g. Dutch and EU election campaigns). Methodologically, the group has pioneered the implementation of large-scale cross-national research on campaign effects, linking (automated) text analysis of media outlets

in 27 nations with survey data on the attitudes and preferences of voters. By using panel surveys, the group is able to provide compelling evidence on the causal impact of exposure to news coverage.

Relevance

The senior scholars in the group have established themselves as the leading authorities on Dutch and EU elections. They appear frequently in news programmes and are in demand as policy consultants. The Center for Political Communication hosts events with academic and practitioner speakers, and faculty members frequently address public audiences. Given the recent outcomes of the EU elections and the surge in voting for anti-Europe parties, the newsworthiness of the group will only increase. The Committee suggests that the group strengthen its societal presence by sponsoring public events focused specifically on EU-related themes. This will solidify their reputation as the major source for journalists covering EU politics.

Viability

While the overall state of this programme is strong, the Committee has two concerns with regard to its future development. First, there is a lack of balance between the dominant political communication subfield and the smaller group working on journalism. While the Committee by no means recommends parity between the two fields, it does believe that journalism can and should be strengthened in the near term. Ideally, a senior scholar whose work intersects the two fields could be recruited. The Committee's second concern is the lack of a sufficient critical mass of senior scholars. Two associate professors have left the group to take up full professorships elsewhere, and there is a large gap in reputation between Professor de Vreese and the other tenured faculty. The Committee recommends that the group be authorized to hire two relatively visible senior scholars in light of the recent departures. The University should exert strong efforts to recruit and retain quality faculty.

The Committee also notes an interesting opportunity for the group, deriving from the impending move of ASCoR to a more modern building with state-of-the-art experimental labs. At present, the vast majority of publications are based on observational data (panel surveys) coupled with content analysis. This move should permit deployment of more current methodological approaches extending beyond survey research. More specifically, the group will be able to pursue experimental work on verbal and non-verbal measures of political attitudes, and the neurological underpinnings of voters' responses to campaign communication.

Conclusion

Overall, with opportunities for further growth, we believe this group will retain its position as a cutting-edge and world-class programme in political communication and media effects.

4.B.4 Programme Youth & Media Entertainment

Programme leader:	Prof. Hans Beentjes
Research staff:	15 fte

Assessments:	Quality:	5
	Productivity:	4.5
	Relevance:	4.5
	Viability:	4.5

The 'Youth & Media Entertainment' programme addresses the entertaining role of communication and information with a focus on children and adolescents. Research is based on the perspective that differences between audience members or groups cause them to seek out different media content, use this media content differently, and respond to it differently.

Quality

The Youth and Media Entertainment group is an outstanding programme in the discipline of communication. One of the strongest programmes in the world, it has gone from garnering very favourable attention in its earlier days to being the world's leader in systematic, sustained, and visible research in the area of entertainment and youth. The scholars in this programme are extraordinarily well respected, central to the discipline, and innovators in terms of theory and methodological development. Their work forms a foundation for many researchers interested in the role of media in the lives of children and adolescents (e.g., their instrumental role in the development of the International Communication Association's Children and Media Division). Its original theoretical and vast empirical contributions to the field of youth and media studies, including its development and validation of measures and use of longitudinal/panel studies, make it a beacon of quality for other research groups in Europe and beyond.

The scholars in Youth & Media Entertainment routinely publish in the flagship ISI journals in the field. Additionally, the interdisciplinary nature of the topics investigated by this group has resulted in publications in related top-tiered journals (e.g., *Pediatrics*), broadening the reach of this group's scholarship to wider academic audiences. It is important to note that in addition to the high quality of the research published in academic journals, additional members of the programme also enjoy a very healthy level of quality publication in book-related outlets (i.e., books, book chapters).

The quality of scholarship in the programme is further proven by the stellar track record of receiving research funding and the highest academic honours. Staff members have been the recipients of numerous grants over the last six years, including some very competitive, visible, lucrative, and prestigious awards, e.g., NWO Vidi awards and an award from the ERC.

Productivity

As noted above, the research productivity of the programme is excellent. Its scholars publish at a rate that surpasses most communication programmes, averaging around 3 ISI publications/FTE a year, although with some fluctuation and considerable discrepancies among researchers.

Members of the programme group are trend-setters in the discipline. They have a regular, visible and award-winning presence at the International Communication Association, they regularly collaborate with some of the discipline's most respected and productive scholars, and their work represents fundamental theoretical and methodological innovations.

As a result of both the quality and quantity of their work, it is not surprising that the programme enjoys a very high level of citations as evidenced in both Web of Science and Google Scholar. Although three scholars in the group were particularly heavily cited, several other members also demonstrate wide-ranging citation of their scholarship.

As they continue to work on and publish the research that grows out of an exemplary record of grants (which the guidelines for ratings state must be counted as indicators of quality rather than productivity), the programme will undoubtedly enjoy a very high rate of productivity that will continue to showcase the importance of the scholarship from this impressive group of researchers.

The Committee observed that the research productivity is unevenly spread. It recommends that efforts be made to improve the output of less visible members and that, where relevant, more collaboration be undertaken with members of the other ASCoR programmes.

Relevance

The scholarship and research trajectories of the programme are not only of great importance to theory development within the discipline, but are also of central concern to members of the public at large. It is not surprising, therefore, that scholars in Youth & Media Entertainment are routinely asked to share their work and to comment on issues related to the focus of their research agendas. Their work has also been highly influential in media directed at youth (e.g., *Sesamstraat*), in the Dutch rating system, and in websites informing parents about children and media. Their work has a broader reach than traditional academic communities, also providing a wealth of information to the public and to policy makers concerned about media and children. The Committee suggests that the programme put more emphasis and effort into building further constructive relationships with governments, media, industry, policy makers, educators and media practitioners at national, European and international levels so as to improve the societal valorisation of the programme's research and accompany development of media content and innovation in media products and tools aimed at children, based on the programme's empirical evidence and theoretical insights.

Viability

The programme is very healthy in terms of its resources, planning, and facilities. Although the SWOT analysis acknowledges the significance of potential budget cutbacks, the current facilities and the young and vibrant scholars that are part of the programme point to the strong likelihood of continued success and impact in the field. One concern of the Committee is the considerable gap in reputation between Valkenburg and Peter and the other tenured faculty. Hence, the programme's effort to increase mid-career faculty members is seen as a laudable goal. In addition to coaching talented junior staff, the Committee suggests that the programme group attract excellent, relatively senior scholars, so as to secure additional external funding, and to further expand collaborations.

Conclusion

The Youth and Media Entertainment programme is a world-class research group that is providing a foundation for the discipline. Its scholarship is of the highest quality, and its success in securing prestigious funding and high academic distinctions is notable and well deserved. Its visibility in terms of productivity will undoubtedly continue to grow as the research out of the grants comes to fruition and as the staff continue their momentum in being a trend-setting programme in media and youth in the discipline.

5. Research review VU University Amsterdam

Programme   Communication Choices, Content and Consequences

Programme leader: Prof. Jan Kleinnijenhuis
Research staff: 15.5 fte

Assessments: Quality: 4
                      Productivity: 5
                      Relevance: 5
                      Viability: 4.5

5.A. The institute

The Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) aims to strengthen research in specific domains of the social sciences: i.e. integration and diversity, religion and identity, security and conflict, media communication, societal participation, aging and the welfare state. These themes accommodate six disciplines and their research programmes. The research programmes of FSS are:

- Constructing Human Security in a Globalising World (CONSEC);
- Communication Choice, Content, and Consequences: New Media, New Methods (CCCC);
- Organizations & Processes of Organizing in Society (OPOS);
- Multilayered governance in Europe and beyond (MLG);
- New Public Governance (NPG);
- PARticipation In Society (PARIS).

FSS is one of the twelve faculties at VU University Amsterdam (VU). Since 2008 the University Board has stimulated the Faculties to organize their research in interfaculty research institutes. In accordance with this university policy, FSS researchers participate in interfaculty research institutes, such as ACCESS, AGCI, NI and CLUE. The FSS is directed by the Faculty Board, consisting of the dean, associate deans for education and research, and the managing director. The programme leaders and department heads share responsibility for research within FSS. The Board therefore develops its policies in direct interaction with the department heads.

5.B.1 The research programme

The CCCC research programme focuses on the societal and personal consequences of media content that result from communication choices made by senders and receivers in a changing media landscape. The programme strategically addresses three niches in the Dutch academic Communication Science landscape - Media Monitoring, Social Media, and Media Psychology.

Assessment/remarks
The CCCC programme represents a growing and important programme in the FSS. Its work is clearly central to the mission of social sciences, but is also of great importance to a number of additional disciplines, including those in the natural sciences. The CCCC's recognition of

the importance of interdisciplinarity is uncommon and commendable. This programme has the potential to be transformative in enhancing our understanding of the role of media in our rapidly evolving media landscape, providing a theoretical basis for how to understand communication processes, networks, and effects, and for how to harness media communication (from social media to sensors and remote information devices) for purposes of addressing issues of social relevance and concern. As the University continues to recognize and support related initiatives (e.g., the Network Institute) and to focus on university themes central to CCCC's mission (e.g., the Connected World), the Committee believes that the research coming out of the CCCC programme will continue to gain prominence both within the University and with its international audiences as well.

The CCCC research programme has shown substantial growth since it was evaluated in 2008. There is evidence of a clearer concentration and agenda, as well as a strong focus on areas of scholarship that holds great promise in terms of its theoretical contribution, the enhancement of our understanding of evolving communication technologies, and its utilization of opportunities afforded by interdisciplinary collaborations. The programme and its specific areas of concentration in media monitoring, social media, and media psychology reflect an awareness of the important issues facing the field of communication as well as issues of increasing importance in related disciplines such as computer science and psychology, among others.

The emergence of large-scale text analysis as a methodological paradigm allows the group to interact with scholars in computational linguistics and computer science, generating important cross-disciplinary synergy as well as an important tool for examining the content and structure of communication in social media. The programme has recently made available to the wider academic community a software package of its own AMCAT toolkit as well as a variety of different machine learning algorithms. Given the important developments in automated text analysis in the United States – leading to the extensive use of machine learning – it is important that the media monitoring group continues to integrate these methodological innovations into its research agenda.

As the CCCC programme grows, it may be helpful for the faculty not only to focus on the connections that it has with disciplines outside of communication, but to take advantage also of opportunities to form *intra*-disciplinary collaborations as well. The three areas of focus in the programme undoubtedly share many common interests and have many overlapping concerns (e.g., how does media psychology inform our understanding of social media?). As a result, collaboration within the programme itself may be helpful in further enhancing a sense of cohesion among the faculty and staff, and may ultimately result in even greater productivity and visibility.

An exploration of potential inter-connections among the members of the CCCC programme itself may also allow for a greater ability to "present" or "publicize" the programme to external constituencies. At present, the programme is very strong – and appears to be much stronger than is evident in the brief amount of space allowed for this in the self-evaluation report. There are a host of important scholarly activities being carried out by the faculty and graduate students that may not be readily apparent across the programme. Consequently, in addition to seeking external collaborations, the programme may find it profitable to promote collaborations among the very talented group of scholars housed in the same programme when such collaboration may be relevant.

5.B.2 Quality and academic reputation

According to the self-evaluation report, the CCCC programme is visible at the top level. Within each of the three thematic foci of the research programme, CCCC members have published well-cited articles in top-level journals of ISI Communication and adjacent disciplines. The group offers important theoretical (media and morality) and methodological contributions (automated content analysis) to the field.

Members of the CCCC programme are very good scholars studying media content, social media, and media psychology. Their work often appears in top-tier ISI journals, with their publications being heavily cited and replicated/extended. CCCC scholars have a strong presence in the discipline at academic conferences, particularly the International Communication Association. They have served as editors or editorial-board members of a host of visible and notable journals in the field, including the *Journal of Communication*, *Media Psychology*, and the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*. They have delivered numerous keynote lectures in international venues, including in the US, Ireland, Norway, and Spain. They received or were nominated for awards for outstanding research performances, and received best-paper awards at international conferences.

Assessment/remarks
The CCCC programme is involved in an interdisciplinary approach to understanding social media and media technologies. Although this type of interdisciplinarity appears to be long-standing, its involvement with initiatives such as the Network Institute now make these efforts more formally and institutionally supported. Indeed, publicity and outreach activities should emphasize its collaborations with Computer Science and the Network Institute more (funding, projects, research, publications, personnel), as they clearly distinguish this communication science program from most others. These types of activities not only provide the CCCC programme with access to world-class research facilities, they also afford the opportunity to join forces with researchers in a host of related disciplines, including those in the natural sciences, in ways that we believe will encourage and support successful applications for external funding. These sorts of interdisciplinary collaborations are not the only ones that should be encouraged, but ones that we hope are nurtured by the University as the programme continues to flourish.

As the CCCC programme grows, it may be helpful for the Faculty to focus not only on the connections that it has with disciplines outside of communication, but to also take advantage of opportunities to form *intra*-disciplinary collaborations as well. The three areas of focus in the programme undoubtedly share many common interests and have many overlapping concerns (e.g., how does media psychology inform our understanding of social media?). As a result, collaboration within the programme itself may be helpful in further enhancing a sense of cohesion among the faculty and staff, and may ultimately result in even greater productivity and visibility.

An exploration of potential inter-connections among the members of the CCCC programme itself may also allow for a greater ability to "present" or "publicize" the programme to external constituencies.

During the evaluation period the CCCC's strategy was to focus on publications in peer-reviewed (Communication) journals, because they imply timely high-quality research, reputation and visibility in the field, and are important for grant acquisitions. Certainly, the

level of their publications in Communication Science journals did increase. Yet the Committee does understand the need and relevance of publishing in relevant interdisciplinary journals, given the nature of CCCC's work and collaborative projects.

At present, the programme is strong – and appears to be much stronger than is evident in the brief amount of space allowed for this in the self-evaluation report. There are a host of important scholarly activities being carried out by the faculty and graduate students that may not be readily apparent across the programme. Consequently, in addition to seeking external collaborations, it would be beneficial to promote collaborations among the very talented group of scholars housed in the same programme when such collaboration may be relevant.

5.B.3 Resources

From 2008-2013 the number of CCCC members steadily increased from 23 in 2008 to 36 in 2013. The number of PhDs increased from 6 in 2008 to 12 in 2013. However, the total amount of research time of faculty members stayed roughly the same. Accordingly, the average research time per faculty member dropped from 0.39 fte in 2008 to 0.30 fte in 2013.

	2008		2009		2010		2011		2012		2013	
	N	fte	N	fte	N	fte	N	fte	N	fte	N	fte
Faculty[1]	16	6.3	16	5.1	17	6.4	20	5.4	22	5.6	22	6.7
Post-docs	1	0.5	2	1.2	2	0.8	3	0.7	1	0.8	1	0.8
"Judo's"[2]	-	-	1	0.1	1	0.5	1	0.5	1	0.5	1	0.4
PhD students[3]	6	3.2	3	1.5	3	2.2	4	2.0	13	5.1	12	7.0
Total research staff	*23*	*10.0*	*22*	*7.9*	*23*	*9.9*	*28*	*8.60*	*37*	*12.*	*36*	*14.9*
Support staff[4]	3	0.7	3	0.7	3	0.8	2	0.70	2	0.6	2	0.6
Total staff	*26*	*10.7*	*25*	*8.6*	*26*	*10.7*	*30*	*9.30*	*39*	*12.6*	*38*	*15.5*

Note 1: Comparable with WOPI categories HGL, UHD and UD
Note 2: Junior combined researcher/teacher appointment with the goal of obtaining a PhD
Note 3: Standard PhD (employed) and Contract PhDs (externally or internally funded but not employed)
Note 4: Includes 30% of secretary work allocated to research support and .20 FTE of research manager.

Before 2012, CCCC research was mainly based on direct funding (> 80%). Since 2012, there has been a shift towards a more balanced share of funding (45% direct funding in 2013).

	2008		2009		2010		2011		2012		2013	
	fte	%	fte	%	fte	%	fte	%	Fte	%	fte	%
Direct funding[1]	8.2	82	6.3	80	9.0	91	7.2	84	6.3	53	6.7	45
Research grants[2]	1.4	14	1.4	18	0.9	9	1.0	12	2.9	24	4.6	31
Contract research[3]	0.4	4	0.20	3	0	0	0.40	5	2.80	23	3.60	24
Total funding	*10.0*	*100*	*7.9*	*101*	*9.9*	*100*	*8.6*	*101*	*12.0*	*100*	*14.9*	*100*

Note 1: Research FTE based on direct funding by the university / KNAW / NWO.
Note 2: Research FTE based on research grants obtained in national and international scientific competition (e.g., grants from NWO, KNAW and ERC, European Research Council)
Note 3: Research FTE based on research contracts for specific research projects obtained from external organizations, such as industry, governmental ministries, European Commission (e.g., FP7 consortium funding calls) and charitable organizations.

Assessment/remarks
The self-evaluation report notes concerns about the decreasing amount of time allocated to faculty research, and the Committee reiterates this. Impressively, in spite of this change, the faculty has continued to enjoy a high level of output.

At the same time, though, the CCCC programme has seen successes in other avenues that point to an enhancement of resources allowing for strong research productivity. The

relationship of the programme with the Network Institute is but one such example of a resource that appears particularly important and lucrative.

The growing reputation of high-quality scholarship by the CCCC programme group is also evidenced by their growing success at securing grants. These successful grant applications have resulted in a substantial growth in the number of PhD students – a growth that should further enhance their research profile. Given the notable and highly competitive grants recently secured (e.g., two NWO Veni grants, a NWO Creative Industries grant, a EUROSTARS grant, among many others), it seems reasonable to conclude that this trend has momentum and will serve to increase the favourable visibility of the CCCC programme even further.

5.B.4 Productivity

In the assessment period, on average, CCCC members published 34 peer-reviewed journal articles per year. About 80% of all articles were published in ISI-ranked journals. On average, CCCC faculty (incl. post-docs) published 4 ISI articles per research fte.

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Refereed articles	32	35	31	36	36	39
Books	-	1	2	3	-	-
Book chapters	29	23	11	18	4	10
PhD theses	3	1	-	1	1	1
Conference papers	22	19	30	18	26	26
Professional publications	1	5	3	2	8	3
Publications aimed at the general public	-	-	-	3	2	2
Other research output	1	2	3	2	1	3
Total publications	*88*	*86*	*80*	*83*	*78*	*84*

Assessment/remarks
The productivity of the CCCC programme is very strong, particularly for a "growing" programme. Indeed, this qualifier ("growing") to describe the programme may be accurate in terms of years, but it may no longer aptly describe a programme that has become established as one of the most productive in the discipline. Its goals are centred at the heart of contemporary theoretical, political, and technological questions of interest in today's rapidly changing media landscape.

Its publications in top journals is noteworthy, particularly given the description of the dwindling research time/faculty. As evidence of their productivity and quality, the CCCC document reports an average of 4 ISI journal publications per research fte. Further, the faculty enjoy high levels of citation, further bolstering their research visibility.

There has been a large increase in the number of PhD students, particularly in the last two years. Indeed, the total number has generally doubled since 2008. As the students in the programme succeed in completing their degrees and become active members of the research community, the number of theses will naturally rise and will further contribute to the overall research productivity the programme currently enjoys.

As the programme continues to evolve, particularly with regard to interdisciplinary collaborations, additional outlets for research publications may become necessary and often helpful. The Committee concurs with the previous 6-year evaluation regarding the publication in communication-specific journals. At the same time, though, it recognises the utility of

greater flexibility in journal placement, noting that high-quality journals in topic-relevant fields may help to nurture interdisciplinary efforts.

5.B.5 Societal relevance

The self-evaluation report states that valorisation and societal involvement play a key role at the VU. The programme was frequently approached by public stakeholders, and CCCC research contributed to the societal valorisation of research outcomes in contract research and business ventures. In addition, CCCC researchers founded companies that apply scientific tools and knowledge for societal gains. The interviews noted a wide range of projects - sustainable travel, gamification of self-assessment, media use by adolescents, social media by government ministries and public opinion development, organizational crises and legitimacy, mobile city map apps, among others - that make this institute stand out from other communication science entities.

Assessment/remarks
The societal relevance of the CCCC programme is exceptional. The scholarship and expertise of this group are of great interest to a variety of public and governmental bodies, and the CCCC is very good at making its research available and offering its expertise in the interest of societal and policy concerns. It is involved in monitoring media content for a variety of concerns/topics (e.g., Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Nieuwsmonitor" and "Kieskompas"), and its use of social media to further its societal relevance is masterful. CCCC members also have a presence in terms of media interviews and public discussion, with these types of appearances further increasing their visibility and reach. A possibly unique and suitable societal relevance area would be issues of morality in videogames.

5.B.6 Strategy for the future

The CCCC strategy for the future includes the following points:

- To further enhance the impact of CCCC research on international Communication Science by focusing on the three CCCC themes;
- To advance the debate about research integrity and quality in Communication Science (and neighbouring disciplines);
- To strengthen the social media domain after the departure of Sonja Utz. A new full professor position on social media has been announced and will be filled by the end of 2014;
- To further protect research time by increasing PhD positions and grant acquisitions by focusing on peer-reviewed articles, building "grant-careers", continuing knowledge dissemination about research funding opportunities, developing a new research master to recruit talented students for PhD grant proposals, and establish a fourth full professor position.

Assessment/remarks
The CCCC programme is in a strong position as it moves forward. Its existing research profile has positioned it as a leader in the discipline. It continues to hire new, bright, and productive young scholars who will undoubtedly continue to garner favourable attention. Although concern has been expressed about a decrease in research fte per faculty member, there are also plans to hire more senior scholars. The primary threats concern decreases in budget allocations. However, its growing research profile and successful grant applications, as well as its stated strategy to hire in line with this strength, will undoubtedly help it address

these types of concerns. The committee agrees with CCCC's proposed strategy for the future, with some additions.

The Committee would like to see greater intellectual coherence in the mission statement. One of the University themes, "Connected World," fits the programme's research focus very well, and so do the Network Institute's plans for a Master's programme in Social Analytics.

The extensive national research programme on empathic robots in which CCCC members have played substantial roles did not appear in the self-evaluation report, nor does much of the stakeholder-related project work. Given its grounding in communication and interaction, it seems this should have a more prominent role in the programme's publicity and research identity.

Perhaps the most under-emphasized yet most powerful strategic advantage for the CCCC programme is its relationship with the Network Institute and the several technology labs. The Committee was impressed with the various forms of support in both funding (including, for example, providing expertise in EU grant-writing and development) and interdisciplinary synergy fostered by the Network Institute. For example, support for the development of custom software, virtual environments, online games, and mobile apps provides communication researchers with the ability to design and conduct cutting-edge research in new media. The innovative and interdisciplinary forms of research and collaboration in the CCCC programme stimulated by the Network Institute should be emphasized more. They should form the basis for a unique, innovative and influential academic identity in communication science.

5.B.7 PhD training and supervision

The Netherlands School of Communication Research, NeSCoR, is the national research school for the PhD programme in Communication Science, which unites all Dutch universities offering teaching programmes in Communication Science that are rooted in the social and behavioural tradition. In addition, most of the CCCC PhD students are members of the VU Graduate School of Social Science (VU-GSSS), which offers an interdisciplinary course programme. PhD students are also able to participate in high-quality courses at other institutions like the Graduate School of Communication Science at the University of Amsterdam, international summer schools, and methodological workshops.

The VU-GSSS monitors the progress of individual PhD students and their projects. After eight months, PhD students write a progress report, which is followed by a go/no go decision. After that, there are yearly performance evaluations.

Assessment/remarks
The growth of the PhD programme is noteworthy in and of itself. In addition, the graduate programme seems to be particularly healthy in terms of meeting educational goals, mentoring its students, supporting the students' research goals, and positioning the students for placement in academic and industry positions (in some cases). The committee was impressed by the innovativeness and interdisciplinarity of the doctoral projects. The graduate students speak very highly of the support they receive and of the collegial atmosphere that the programme has successfully created. They value the support for conference attendance, opportunities for seeking additional travel and research support, available resources from the Network Institute, and the interdisciplinary research participant pool. They are appreciative of the guidance that they get from the Faculty, the extent to which they are integrated into the

discipline, and the diversity of opportunities afforded to them for research and teaching. The graduate students praised the possibility to engage in many interdisciplinary projects, and their independence and ability to make choices. These positive characteristics at the same time generate a need for greater development of relationships with other mentors and graduate students, as they are often working on their separate projects outside of the programme.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Curricula vitae of the committee members

Leen d'Haenens (PhD, Political and Social Sciences, University of Ghent, Belgium) is full professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Institute for Media Studies, KU Leuven. She holds an MA in Romance Languages, an MSc in Press and Communication Sciences (University of Ghent), and an MSc in Information Studies (University of Toronto). She is vice dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences (as of 2012). Between 2007 and 2011 she was chair of the Communication Science program, responsible for implementing the academic integration of the journalism programs at the Antwerp and Brussels campuses into the Faculty of Social Sciences. Between 2002 and 2007 she chaired a Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence for the Interdisciplinary Assessment of Initiatives for Public Governance. As of 2010 she is a member of the expert panel for social, political and communication sciences of the Research Foundation Flanders. She is vice-chair of the Chamber for Impartiality and Protection of Minors of the Flemish Media Regulator (as of March 2009) and board member of the Netherlands Press Fund (as of April 2006). Her current areas of research include digital media and youth, news media (e.g. portrayal of Islam and Muslims in the news, longitudinal studies on news diversity), media and ethnic minorities (e.g., ethnic discussion forums as a source of social capital for ethnic minorities), and western media policy and governance mechanisms.

Shanto Iyengar holds a joint appointment as the Harry and Norman Chandler Chair in Communication and Professor of Political Science. Iyengar is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Science. His areas of expertise include the mass media, public opinion, and political campaigns. He is the author of *News That Matters* (University of Chicago Press, 1987, 2010*), Is Anyone Responsible*? (University of Chicago Press, 1991), *The Media Game: American Politics in the Television Age* (Macmillan, 1993), *Explorations in Political Psychology* (Duke University Press, 1995), *Going Negative* (Free Press, 1995), and *Media Politics: A Citizen's Guide* (Norton, 2011). Iyengar is the Managing Editor of *Political Communication*, the top-ranked ISI journal in Communications.

Mary Beth Oliver is a distinguished professor at Penn State University in the Department of Film/Video & Media Studies and co-director of the Media Effects Research Lab. Her research in media effects focuses on entertainment psychology and on social cognition and the media. Her recent publications on these topics have appeared in such journals as the *Journal of Communication*, *Human Communication Research*, and *Communication Research*. She is currently an associate editor of the *Journal of Media Psychology*, and is former editor of *Media Psychology* and associate editor of the *Journal of Communication* and *Communication Theory*. Most recently, she served as guest editor with Art Raney on a special issue of the *Journal of Communication* (in press) pertaining to broadening the boundaries of entertainment scholarship. She is co-editor of several books, including *Media and Social Life*, *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, and *The Sage Handbook of Media Processes and Effects*. Dr. Oliver was the recipient of a Fulbright scholarship to conduct research in New Zealand in 1996, was the Roy H. Park Distinguished Visiting Professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and was recently elected as a fellow of the International Communication Association.

Patrick De Pelsmacker is professor of marketing at the Faculty of Applied Economics, University of Antwerp (Belgium), and part-time professor of marketing at Ghent University (Belgium). He is visiting professor of marketing at the Universita della Svizzera Italiana (Lugano, Switzerland), Université de Genève (Switzerland) and Institute for Business Studies (Moscow, Russia). He teaches marketing, marketing communications and marketing research.

He has been the editor of the *Journal of Marketing Communications*, and associate editor of the *Journal of Advertising*, and is a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Business Research, Journal of Public Policy and Marketing, International Journal of Advertising*, and *Journal of Interactive Marketing*. His research interests are advertising effectiveness, advertising in new media and new formats, international branding and advertising, ethical consumption behaviour, and social marketing. He is a member of the board of the European Advertising Association (EAA), and president-elect of the EAA. He has published books and articles in academic journals, such as *Journal of Advertising, International Journal of Advertising, Journal of Advertising Research, Marketing Letters, Journal of Interactive Marketing, Cyberpsychology, Behaviour and Social Networking, International Journal of Research in Marketing, Journal of Business Research* and *Internal Marketing Review*.

Ronald E. Rice, chair (PhD, MA in Communication Research, Stanford University, 1982; BA in English Literature, Columbia University, 1971) is Arthur N. Rupe Chair in the Social Effects of Mass Communication in the Department of Communication, Chair of the Department of Communication, and Co-Director of the Carsey-Wolf Center at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He has co-authored or co-edited *Organizations and Unusual Routines: A Systems Analysis of Dysfunctional Feedback Processes* (2010); *Media Ownership: Research and Regulation* (2008); *The Internet and Health Care: Theory, Research and Practice* (2006); *Social Consequences of Internet Use: Access, Involvement and Interaction* (2002); *The Internet and Health Communication* (2001); *Accessing and Browsing Information and Communication* (2001); *Public Communication Campaigns* (1st ed.: 1981; 2nd ed.: 1989; 3rd ed.: 2001; 4th ed.: 2012); *Research Methods and the New Media* (1988); *Managing Organizational Innovation* (1987); and *The New Media: Communication, Research and Technology* (1984). Dr. Rice has been elected divisional officer in the International Communication Association and the Academy of Management, elected President and a Fellow of the ICA, awarded a Fulbright Award to Finland (2006), appointed as Wee Kim Wee Professor of the School of Communication and Information at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore (2007) and as Nanyang University Professor (2008, 2009).

Appendix 2: Explanation of the SEP scores

Excellent (5)	Research is world leading. Researchers are working at the forefront of their field internationally and their research has an important and substantial impact in the field.
Very Good (4)	Research is nationally leading. Research is internationally competitive and makes a significant contribution to the field.
Good (3)	Research is internationally visible. Work is competitive at the national level and makes a valuable contribution in the international field.
Satisfactory (2)	Research is nationally visible. Work adds to our understanding and is solid, but not exciting.
Unsatisfactory (1)	Work is neither solid nor exciting, flawed in the scientific and/or technical approach, repetitions of other work, etc.

Quality is to be seen as a measure of excellence and excitement. It refers to the eminence of a group's research activities, its abilities to perform at the highest level and its achievements in the international scientific community. It rests on the proficiency and rigour of research concepts and conduct; it shows in the success of the group at the forefront of scientific development.

Productivity refers to the total output of the group; that is, the variegated ways in which results of research and knowledge development are publicised. The output needs to be reviewed in relation to the input in terms of human resources.

Societal relevance covers the social, economic and cultural relevance of the research. Aspects are:
- societal quality of the work. Efforts to interact in a productive way with stakeholders in society who are interested in input from scientific research, and contributions to important issues and debates in society.
- societal impact of the work. Research affects specific stakeholders or procedures in society.
- valorization the work. Activities aimed at making research results available and suitable for application in products, processes and services. This includes interaction with public and private organizations, as well as commercial or non-profit use of research results and expertise.

Vitality and feasibility. This dual criterion regards the institute's ability to react adequately to important changes in the environment. It refers to both internal (personnel, research themes) and external (developments in the field, in society) dynamics of the group. On the one hand, this criterion measures the flexibility of a group, which appears in its ability to close research lines that have no future and to initiate new venture projects. On the other hand, it measures the capacity of the management to run projects in a professional way. Policy decisions and project management are assessed, including cost-benefit analysis.

Appendix 3: Programme of the site visit

Wednesday June 18, 2014

12.00	Opening, by Dean FMG/UvA
12:15	Lunch and preparatory meeting
14.15	Taxibus to the VU
14.40	Arrival + brief tour
15:00	*Institutional representatives:*
	Prof. Karen van Oudenhoven-van der Zee, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences
	Prof. Leo Huberts, Faculty Board member for research
	Prof. Peter Kerkhof, Dept. Chair Communication Science
15.15	*Programme I:*
	Prof. Jan Kleinnijenhuis, Programme leader
	Prof. Frank van Harmelen, Director of the Network Institute
	Dr. Tilo Hartmann, Research manager
16.00	Coffee break
16.15	*Staff:*
	Prof. Elly Konijn
	a Christiaan Burgers
	Dr. Alisson Eden
	Dr. Anita M.J. van Hoof
	Dr. Friederike Schultz
	Dr. Martin Tanis
	Dr. Ivar Vermeulen
17:00	*PhD students:*
	Anika Batenburg
	Celine Klemm
	Jolanda Veldhuis
	Bob van de Velde
	Kasper Welbers
17:45	Committee meeting
18:30	End - Taxibus to center of Amsterdam
18:45	Dinner at Brasserie Harkema (small room)

Thursday June 19, 2014

09.00	Arrival UvA + brief tour (start tour at Reception Bushuis)
09.30	*Institutional representatives:* Prof. Jochen Peter, Scientific Director Prof. Claes de Vreese, Scientific Director (until Aug. 2013) Ms. Dr. Maaike Prangsma, Research manager
10.00	*Programme I: Corporate Communication:* Prof. Rens Vliegenthart
10.45	Coffee break
11.00	*Programme II: Persuasive Communication:* Dr. Julia van Weert Prof. Edith Smit (until September 2012)
11.45	*Programme III: Political Communication & Journalism:* Prof. Claes de Vreese
12.30	Lunch
13.30	*Programme IV: Youth & Media Entertainment:* Prof. Hans Beentjes Prof. Jochen Peter (until August 2013)
14.15	*Staff:* Prof. Peter Neijens Dr. Ir. Peeter Verlegh Dr. Magdalena Wojcieszak Dr. Jonas Lefevere Dr. Guda van Noort Dr. Sophie Lecheler
15.00	*PhD students:* Annemarie van Oosten Mark Boukes Jelle Boumans Corine Meppelink Jasper van de Pol Karin Fikkers
15.45	Committee meeting
17.30	End
18.00	Dinner at Radisson Blu Hotel, The Atrium Garden room above the reception)
19.30	Taxibus transport to Twente (expected arrival ca. 21.30)

Friday June 20, 2014

09.00	Arrival UT + brief tour
09.20	*Institutional representatives:*
	Prof. Jaco van de Pol, Scientific Director of the Center for Telematics & Information Technology (CTIT)
	Prof. Kees Aarts, Scientific Director of the Institute for Innovation and Governance Studies (IGS)
	Prof. Jan van Dijk, Programme leader
9.40	*Program I:*
	Prof. Jan van Dijk, Programme leader
	Prof. Menno de Jong
	Prof. Ad Pruyn
10.25	Coffee break
10.40	*Staff:*
	Dr. Ardion Beldad
	Dr. Alexander van Deursen
	Dr. Anna Fenko
	Dr. Mirjam Galetzka
	Dr. Thea van der Geest
	Dr. Sabrina Hegner
	Dr. Joris van Hoof
	Dr. Joyce Karreman
	Dr. Mark van Vuuren
	Dr. Lidwien van de Wijngaert
11.25	*PhD students*
	Niels Baas
	Yvon van den Boer
	Edward Figee
	Maartje de Graaf
	Suzanne Janssen
	Christina Jaschinski
12.10	Lunch and committee meeting, preparation preliminary conclusions and report
15.00	All representatives present at UT
15.30	Presentation of preliminary conclusions
16.00	Drinks
17.00	Committee & Amsterdam representatives travel back to Amsterdam (2 taxis)
19.00	Dinner (optional) at Restaurant Indrapura