



K O N I N K L I J K E N E D E R L A N D S E
A K A D E M I E V A N W E T E N S C H A P P E N

To:

The Director/Manager of the Fryske Akademy
The King's Commissioner
The Supervisory Board Chairperson
The Social Advisory Council Chairperson
The Scientific Advisory Committee Chairperson

From: The Academy Board

**FRYSKE AKADEMY EVALUATION
ACADEMY BOARD OPINION**

The Board of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences was gratified to read the thorough and carefully worded evaluation report about the Fryske Akademy (FA), an institute affiliated with the Academy. The Board is duly impressed by how closely the FA has remained connected to Frisian society, more than 75 years after its establishment. It has a large measure of support in the community. There is no doubt that the FA's research is of great relevance to society, an achievement that is very much to the institute's credit.

The institute's ties to the Province of Fryslân give it unique opportunities to work with its partners in the province to achieve its stated mission, which focuses on applying knowledge in practice, for example within the context of the current government policy (Ministry of Economic Affairs) on regional hotspots. A regional hotspot takes shape and gains substance in alliances between knowledge-based institutions and relevant businesses. Such a context may offer more opportunity to develop the Laboratory Fryslân concept.

The Board is pleased that the FA is collaborating constructively and with vision on developing University Campus Fryslân (UCF). It is no more than logical that the University of Groningen is a key partner in this endeavour. The UCF is referred to as the University's 'eleventh faculty'. The institute and the university could continue to build their relationship in the years ahead. This would allow the FA to develop into a trendsetting institute within the knowledge infrastructure of the northern Netherlands.

The Academy Board is confident that the FA's internal reorganisation, which dispenses with its former faculty structure, will lead to further innovation at the institute and provide more opportunity and more support for mutual (interdisciplinary) cooperation than in the past.

The Academy Board supports the special nature and position of the FA and agrees with the committee that the institute would indeed do well to extend its output beyond a few articles. Mercator and Boppeslach are fine examples of projects with broad spinoff potential.



Without wishing to detract from those parts of the research programme that the committee has rated 'very good', the Academy Board is concerned that the quality of research as a whole is rated as no more than 'good'. In all communications concerning its institutes, the Academy describes their quality, without exception, as 'excellent' or at least 'very good'. The FA must make the relevant improvements in this regard.

The committee was right to point out that the FA's output needs to become more international in nature, and that it has so far concentrated too much on publishing in journals of only modest scope. It is not living up to its potential or pursuing its stated ambition in this way, including international visibility. The institute would do well to develop a targeted strategy in this area and to assess the effect of that strategy regularly.

The internal reorganisation referred to above may create the right conditions for the quality improvement that the committee would like to see.

Regarding the potential of HISGIS, the Board agrees with the evaluation committee, although it would point out that the FA's head start in this area is tenuous and could soon evaporate. It advises the FA to investigate whether it can continue developing HISGIS by means of a public-private partnership. It also recommends seeking closer alliances with other research groups in the Netherlands and joining network programmes such as CHAT.

The Academy Board shares the evaluation committee's concern when it comes to IT support for the institute's research. If the FA truly aims to become a leading centre, then this issue will need close attention in the period ahead.

The Fryske Akademy is working to change direction and modernise. The Academy Board understands that it will take time to effectuate all the changes that it wishes to make. However, in the period ahead, the Board expects the FA to be able to report specific improvements in research quality every year, and it also expects to see demonstrable progress by the next mid-term evaluation. An agreement will be concluded with the institute identifying specific annual targets that will serve as a concrete measure of its improvement.