



Policy Plan 2018/2019



UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM

Inhoudsopgave

1 Preface	2
2 Taskforces	3
2.1 Housing and Finances	3
2.2 Programme Transcending	3
2.3 Education Organisation	4
2.4 Public Relations	5
2.4.1 Visibility of the Student Council	5
2.4.2 Support and Promotion	5
2.5 Facilities en IT	5
2.5.1 Catering	5
2.5.2 Laptop facilities	5
2.5.3 Canvas	6
2.5.4 MapIQ	6
2.5.5 Accessibility of Knowledge	6
2.6 Regulations	6
2.6.1 Teaching and Examination Regulations	6
2.6.2 Other important documents	7
2.6.3 Bridge between Student en Document	7
3 Sustainability Committee	7
3.0.1 Science Park 942	8
3.0.2 Catering	8
3.0.3 Enlightenment	8
3.0.4 Initiatives	8
4 Summary	9
4.1 Housing and Finances	9
4.2 Programme Transcending	9
4.3 Education Organisation	9
4.4 Public Relations	9
4.5 Facilities and IT	10
4.6 Regulations	10
4.7 Sustainability Committee	10
5 The Councillors	11

1 Preface

Dear reader,

The student council 2018/2019 of the Faculty of Science proudly presents his policy plan. In this document, the council explains what it wants to achieve for the faculty's students this year.

This year we have six task forces and one new committee that are all working towards the common goal of making our faculty an even better place than it already is. The task forces are Housing and Finances, Programme-Transcending, Education Organization, Public Relations, Facilities and IT, and Regulations.

The council has an interesting year ahead. The plans concerning the studievoorschotmiddelen (the funding that should compensate for the abolition of the basisbeurs) are being set up and we will help develop these plans. Furthermore, we are involved with the layout of the new building for the information sciences; ASP 942.

On top of this, we will try to ensure that students have an increased understanding of the regulations of this faculty. Furthermore, we will look at the possibilities for a holiday week somewhere in the second semester.

Just like the previous council, we remain committed to the visibility of the programme committees. We want to achieve this by, among other things, focusing on larger fora for programme committees. We have a brand new committee to deal with sustainability policy at our faculty.

Are you curious to see what the task forces are picking up this year? If you continue reading, your questions will be answered. Finally, you will find a short summary of our policy plan in the form of bullet points.

Yours sincerely, on behalf of the FSR FNWI 2018/2019,

Willemijn Beks
Chair

2 Taskforces

2.1 Housing and Finances

The task force Housing and Finances has the purpose of monitoring the finances of the faculty and considering the different ways in which the money can be used. Below you will find explanations of the important files that will be taken up by this task force.

First of all, the task force will occupy itself with the new building. The task force wants to exert its influence on the developments surrounding ASP 942 and wants to ensure these developments will be guided in the right direction. This will be achieved by taking part in several working groups where the layout of the new building will be determined. The task force will also initiate plans for improving the building.

Secondly, the task force will concern itself with the studievoorschotmiddelen. During the past years, the basisbeurs has been replaced by the loan system. The budget formerly used for the grant will be partially reinvested in education and the medezeggenschap (co-governance) will have an influence on how the money will be spent. The task force will take part in working groups and advise on the allocation of the budget. The task force will also come up with initiatives, with the help of students, on how to improve the quality of education with these funds.

Third, the task force will concern itself with the budget. We will take a critical look to see if the decisions made are favorable for students and advise the direction team on possibilities for improvement. Considering that the budget is where priorities in policy choices come to light, we will pay close attention to ensure the important affairs receive a sufficient amount of financing.

2.2 Programme Transcending

This task force occupies itself with very diverse topics, many of which are directly concerned with education at our faculty, but not concerned with a specific programme. In short: topics relevant for a large number of students. For this reason, it's very important that we remain critical of these topics, and are not afraid of inducing change when required. Here, we'd like to list some of our criticism, as well as potential solutions.

A common problem among students is the anglicization of Dutch universities. An increasing amount of courses are being taught in English. Although this makes them accessible for a larger amount of people, which is great, it all too often results in teachers with an unsatisfactory grasp on the English language. This leads to subpar quality lectures, whereas these teachers can often give fantastic lectures in Dutch. It's common knowledge that students are, more often than not, against this development. Despite this, there are talks of converting some Bachelors at our faculty completely into English, as an English programme attracts more students, which in turn, provides the programme with more money.

We want to start a discussion with the faculty about this, in the hope of introducing regulations for Anglicization to guarantee the quality of education and to prevent a split faculty (where some Bachelors are Dutch and some are English).

Another common issue among students is the increasing amount of stress students experience due to the so-called 'rendementsdenken' ('efficiency-mindset): the governments wish for more degrees in less time, pushing students to study faster, and rush through their programmes. We have some ideas to relieve this mental stress.

We want to critically evaluate the structure of programmes, and investigate the introduction of a holiday week in the second semester. A survey has already shown support for this plan from the student body. We also want to improve the availability of information on mental health among students so that they have a clear idea where to go when suffering from certain symptoms in order to increase prevention and cure rates. We hope that this will lower the threshold for students to seek help.

Furthermore, the binding study advice (BSA) policy is being evaluated this year. We want to ensure that this evaluation will include the effects on the mental health of students and not just the effects on study-efficiency. Should this evaluation show a negative influence on the mental health of students, a solution should be found.

There are a few more topics we will tackle. The Honours programme will probably be restructured in some way. We want to be included in this process, in order to increase the quality of the Honours subjects and improve the programme as a whole.

The UvA Matching programme (a short two-day try-out of a Bachelor programme for new students to check compatibility) is also being evaluated this year. We want to make sure the interests of students are properly included in this evaluation, and that the Matching programme isn't abolished without good reasons.

Lastly, we want to work on improving the diversity of our faculty. In particular, the lack of students from lower socio-economic classes concerns us, causing us to continue our predecessors' plans for a homework center. We will also be involved in the recruitment of the new Faculty Diversity Officer: the person coordinating the faculties diversity policy.

2.3 Education Organisation

The most important goal of this task force is to support the Programme Committees (OC's). We will commit ourselves to visit all the OC's so we are informed as to what is happening within all of the programmes.

We will also organize the 'Forum voor Opleidingscommissies' (FOC) every six weeks. This is a meeting meant for student members of the OC's to talk and learn from each other. Education Organization wants to help organize the 'Campagne voor opleidingscommissies' and improve the visibility of the OC's.

We want to speak to all programme directors after we spoke to the programme committees. At the end of the year, this task force will study all the new TERs-B and discuss them with the OC's. Files we will also keep in mind are the new bachelor and the Interfaculty Teacher Training Programmes (ILO).

2.4 Public Relations

2.4.1 Visibility of the Student Council

For the Faculty Student Council to best represent the interest of the students, the existence and rights of the council should be well-known. In previous years, however, there was a lack of awareness surrounding the student council for most students. The task force Public Relations will be working on the improvement of the visibility and name recognition of the council. This year we aim to significantly increase the voter turnout during the elections in May, which should be a clear indication of the engagement of students.

Enhancing the visibility and popularity of the council will be achieved through a variety of fun activities and informational postings. Some examples are our 'Talk to the council' drinks, educational posters, a special activity during the elections and our weekly Facebook posts.

2.4.2 Support and Promotion

Besides promoting the council as a whole, the task force wants to bring to light the various different issues the other task forces are working on. For example, if student input is needed to make certain decisions, we will be out in the main hall asking for your opinions, or if there is something the council feels should be promoted to all students we post this on Facebook.

2.5 Facilities en IT

The main task of the task force is to create an optimal study climate at the Science Park for all students, both physically and digitally. To achieve this, the task force is in contact with all facility services at the Science Park, from the caterer to the library. The task force thinks along with, for example, renovations, the placement of new self-study areas or coffee machines and supplies student input where necessary. Coming year we will focus on a number of things that we would like to present to you below.

2.5.1 Catering

This year we will work hard to make the catering of the UvA more sustainable and more accessible for students. The plan is to make more plant-based options available in the canteen and to further explore the possibilities for cheap and healthy food.

2.5.2 Laptop facilities

The previous council has worked hard for improved laptop facilities. We want to continue the trend this year by installing sufficient electrical sockets in all rooms. Furthermore, the council wants to focus on standard laptops this year. The university now recommends a number of laptops via Campusshop and the requirements on the website of the programs are adjusted. The laptops that are recommended are often expensive, while students, according to the Students' Charter, should spend a maximum of €650 extra study material per

year. We want to go through all possible solutions to ensure that these costs are not exceeded even for first-year students.

2.5.3 Canvas

As of this year, the UvA has switched from the digital learning environment Blackboard to Canvas. The council wants to ensure that this transition runs smoothly and that at the end of the year all students can make use of a comprehensible and well-functioning digital learning environment.

2.5.4 MapIQ

MapIQ was introduced at the beginning of 2018. This digital service makes it possible to explore UvA buildings through an intelligent 3D map, to search for available workspaces and, where possible, to reserve them. This year the task force wants to monitor how the existing functions please the students and where to possibly contribute to the improvement of this new system.

2.5.5 Accessibility of Knowledge

We will work on ideas to broaden the accessibility of knowledge that is provided by the UvA. Other universities already preceded ours by making lectures from introduction-level subjects available online free of charge. Through these types of projects, the university can contribute to raising the level of knowledge of everyone.

2.6 Regulations

The task force Regulations concerns itself with the rules and regulations regarding education and representative advisory bodies at the Faculty of Science. The Faculty Student Council possesses several legal rights, established in Dutch law, that individual students do not have. Therefore, a large part of the yearly work of the task force Regulations consists of giving advice or (no) consent on regulations and documents of the faculty. This is done with the aim of representing the students of the Faculty of Science and to stand up for their rights and interests. After all, the representative advisory bodies of the university (and therefore in the end also the Faculty Student Council of the Faculty of Science) were established to increase participation from (staff and) students, for the purpose of a more democratic university. Moreover, the task force Regulations, in cooperation with the task force Public Relations, hopes to increase the knowledge of students on their own rights and the formal rights of the council. Because the task force Regulations is well read in on the documents concerning the rights and duties of students, she also fulfills an important informing role towards the rest of the council. Below, a couple of important files of the task force Regulations are explained briefly.

2.6.1 Teaching and Examination Regulations

The Teaching and Examination Regulations (TER) of a degree programme stipulates the structure of the programme. The TER of a programme consists of

two parts: TER-A and TER-B. There exist two TER-A; one of them applies to all bachelor programmes of the faculty and the other applies to all master programmes. Articles in the TER-A are therefore widely applicable. For example, the TER-A contains articles on the determination of a final mark, or the right of inspection of an exam/paper. The TER-B is established for each programme individually. This gives all programmes of the faculty a unique TER. TER-A and TER-B are revised on a yearly basis. A large part of the year, the task force Regulations concerns itself with reviewing the TER-A. As the council has a right of consent on part of the TER-A, and advisory right on other parts, the dean is obligated to take the remarks of the council into serious consideration in the revision process. Since the TER-A concerns all students, the Faculty Student Council finds it very important that this is inspected with a critical eye.

2.6.2 Other important documents

Ofcourse, the task force Regulations concerns itself with more than just the TER. Two other documents the task force Regulations takes a close look upon each year, are the Faculty Regulations and the Students' Charter. The Faculty Regulations mainly describes the organization of the faculty, whereas the Students' Charter describes the rights and duties of the students and the university. The Students' Charter goes before the Faculty Regulations and the TER and is, therefore, a very powerful and important document. The task force Regulations assigns itself the duty to act on the rights of the council regarding all these documents.

2.6.3 Bridge between Student en Document

Although the documents the task force Regulations sinks her teeth into, are of great importance for all students, they tend to be tough to read and therefore most students stay away from them as far as possible. As mentioned before, however, the task force assigns itself, on top of the issues concerning the content of these document, the job to assure that students are aware of both the legal rights of the Faculty Student Council as well as the rights of the students as described in the faculty and university documents. The previous council has made a good start on this. For example, they have worked on the realization of an accessible document called "Rechten en plichten van de student" ("Rights and duties of the student"), highlighting important articles from the different faculty and university regulations in easily readable Dutch. As the title shows, this is yet to be translated into English. This year, the task force Regulations would like to cooperate with the rest of the council to continue this and relatable work to improve awareness of the rights mentioned - this, of course, includes the translation of the aforementioned document.

3 Sustainability Committee

This year, in concern of sustainability policy at the UvA, a new committee has been added to the Faculty Student Council. This committee shall work independently as well as in collaboration with various task forces to be able to influence the sustainability policy as efficiently as possible. After all, as

an institution of science, the UvA should accept the 97% consensus on human-induced climate change and take an exemplary function to facilitate a transition to a sustainable future. The Sustainability Committee shall work on subjects such as the following.

3.0.1 Science Park 942

The UvA has been working on the development of a new building for the Faculty of Science. According to the plans, the building will be near energy neutral. In collaboration with task force Housing and Finances, an eye will be kept on the developments of the building.

3.0.2 Catering

In collaboration with task force Facilities and IT, the possibilities to decrease the ecological impact of the catering of the Faculty of Science will be explored. One of the most effective ways to decrease the individual ecological footprint is to substitute animal based food for plant based food. The Sustainability Committee will thus do its best to help increase the amount of plant based food in the cafeteria.

3.0.3 Enlightenment

A lot of people are not aware of the effect that their lifestyle has on the environment. Without this awareness, there will not be any incentive to change their behavior, which will lead to unsustainable practices to continue. Because of this, the Sustainability Committee will help organize informative action to increase awareness for sustainable behavior.

3.0.4 Initiatives

Climate change is not a problem that can be solved individually - only collectively. That is why the Sustainability Committee will support student initiatives, such as Green Student Lab, to ensure that students with a passion for sustainability can develop ideas and contribute to a sustainable transition.

4 Summary

4.1 Housing and Finances

- Contribute to developments surrounding the new building, Science Park 942
- Leading the funds for the study advancement funds into the right direction
- Advising on the budget

4.2 Programme Transcending

We want

- clear guidelines to regulate the Anglification of Bachelors to prevent money from having the upper-hand
- to introduce an extra holiday week in the second semester
- better information on mental health and what steps to take when suffering from a mental illness
- make sure student interests are included in the evaluation of BSA and Matching
- join the talks on the restructuring of the Honours programma
- help to improve diversity at our faculty

4.3 Education Organisation

- Making contact with the board of studies and the programme directors
- Organizing FOC's
- Supporting the OC's
- The process of the OER-B and TER-B
- The new bachelor
- OC-weeks and visibility of the OC's

4.4 Public Relations

- Enhancing the visibility and popularity of the council
- Supporting the other taskforces by promoting their activities

4.5 Facilities and IT

- Catering: Sustainable and affordable
- Laptop facilities: Everywhere for everyone
- Canvas: Better than Blackboard
- MapIQ: The fastest route to a successful education
- Accessibility of knowledge: Online and open

4.6 Regulations

The coming year the task force Regulations aims to

- represent students in the revision process of formal documents, like the TER, the Students' Charter and the Faculty Regulations
- inform students on their own rights
- inform students on the formal rights of the council

4.7 Sustainability Committee

This academic year, the sustainability committee will work on

- ASP 942
- increasing the amount of plant based food in the catering of the UvA
- ensuring the sustainability of waste management
- increasing awareness for sustainability
- supporting student sustainability initiatives

5 The Councillors

1. Willemijn Beks *Chair*
2. Nina Wagenaar *Vicechair*
3. Lisa Blijleven *Secretary*
4. Malou Sprinkhuizen *CSR-delegate*
5. Willemijn Bulterman
6. Martijn Brehm
7. Casper van Eijden
8. Simon Ilić
9. Nadav Joosten
10. Feline Lindeboom
11. Simon Wittkamp