2019-2020
POLICY PLAN

PREPARED BY
STUDENT COUNCIL
VUB

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With this policy plan we hope to clarify to the students and services what the plans of our student council are for the academic year 2019-2020. It has been subdivided by coordinatorship, as we will do this year. Moreover, this year we will continue our efforts to optimize and professionalize the internal structures, so that the way of working gets a fixed structure that can be passed on over the years. We will try to make the Student Council increasingly attractive by creating a close-knit group and meeting the demands of all our members. The election procedure will also be given a new form, which will hopefully bring us closer to the students.

The number of students at our university continues to grow. This requires a good follow-up and a clear structure, so that problems can be reported and solved quickly. This policy plan clarifies the general approach and highlights a number of problems. This list is clearly not exhaustive, but illustrative.

We are looking forward to all the challenges this year!

Sofie Férauge, President of the Student Council VUB 2019-2020
STUDENT FACILITIES

The Student Facilities section is discussed in two ways. First, we clarify our approach in order to achieve a consistent and transparent operation. After that, some examples of the student’s existing needs will be explained and how we hope to be able to solve them. This list is not exhaustive.

The aim is to deal with the students’ needs in a consistent and transparent way this year. Therefore, we propose the following approach:

- A need/complaint of a student comes in (via e-mail, orally, ...).
- It is investigated whether this need is supported by the student population and for more information we ask advice from the right service (e.g. Infrastructure or Security).
- The need is placed on the agenda of the Student Council so that the right services are informed.
- The Student Council gives advice or makes a decision that is supported by the student population.
- This advice or decision of the Student Council is reported back to the students via social media or other existing channels.
- The services involved keep the Student Council informed of the state of affairs.

Capacity of the student restaurant

It is clear that the student restaurant is no longer sufficient for the number of students. In previous years it was decided to introduce the evening opening as a solution to this problem, so this year this will have to be closely followed up. As the number of students continues to grow, more in-depth solutions will also have to be considered. These will be discussed in brainstorm sessions with students and the best proposal will be put forward to the general manager.

Public sanitary

At the moment it is impossible for our students to use public sanitary facilities after 22 p.m. This causes pollution of the campus and even unsafe situations, when the students move away from the illuminated paths (will be discussed later). The possible solutions for this are, among other things, the installation of public sanitary facilities in the old Willy Van Der Meeren koten or the opening of a corridor with sanitary facilities, following the example of those available in building D. These solutions will have to be discussed again with the parties involved and implemented as quickly as possible.
People with disabilities

At the moment the evening opening of the restaurant is inaccessible for people in wheelchairs, which is a major deficiency today. Etterbeek station is also a very big problem for these people and is almost inaccessible. We will look for solutions and also check if there are other problems for people with disabilities.

Relaxation areas

The possibility of creating a relaxation area will be explored as there was a demand from students for a space to relax, meditate or have a quiet conversation. The Student Council can carry out this research in collaboration with Dirk Van De Wiele, the head of the Sport department, who has already proposed a 'Snoezelruimte'.

Housing priority rules

There is still a lack of clarity among students about the priority they have or do not have when applying for rooms. The Student Council will consider the possibility of entering a factor that takes into account the distance between the domicile address and the campus. The Student Council will also evaluate the relevance of other rules.

Student bar

Last academic year, the need for rooms where our students can meet has already been mentioned. The barbecue installation will soon be in use, but the needs remain. Students should be encouraged to engage in informal discussions with each other and thus also get to know students from different backgrounds. Folklore is an important part of this and deserves a place here. This plan has already been discussed and written out in detail. The question still remains and the Student Council will look into where and how this bar can best be placed.
STUDENT FACILITIES

SUMMARIZED THIS MEANS

1. See how we can increase the capacity of the student restaurant.
2. The implementation of public sanitary facilities on our campus which is open 24/24, 7 days a week.
3. Placing and follow-up of a student bar to bring students closer together.
4. See if we can place a relaxation area on our campus.
5. Take a closer look at the priorities of our facilities.
6. See where there are problems for wheelchair users on and around our campus.
EDUCATION

General functioning

In order to detect the educational needs and to be able to react decisively to them, we will try to strengthen the bond with the members of the programme councils. In this way we, as the Student Council, get to know what is going on in the study programmes. In addition, there will be regular consultations with the student representatives of each faculty in the Education Council in order to optimise the knowledge of and the impact on the educational dossiers.

Government agreement

The new government has proposed some changes that could have a major impact on us as students. First of all we will try to inform the student through an opinion piece in the Moeial. After this, we will discuss some important points of the government agreement with the largest possible number of students in a debate and use this as a basis for taking a position that is supported by our student community.

Educational leave for working students

Currently, Brussels and Flanders work with different systems when it comes to compensation for working students. In Brussels, this is less favourable for our students as they do not get days off per credit taken, but depending on the hours of lessons taken. Together with VVS, we will try to change this by switching to the Flemish system.

Appeal procedure

There are still an enormous number of complaints relating to the rules of the appeal procedure regarding the study progress decisions. Some of these have been laid down by decree, but there is still room for improvement in terms of communication. We will meet again with the people who distribute this communication to see how this can be improved.

Certification of extra-curricular competences

At the time of graduation, we want students to receive a certificate with the qualification of competences not related to their curriculum, which they have acquired at the VUB. A kind of diploma will then indicate the extra curricular activities for which the student is committed, such as educational councils, research projects, summer schools, association life,... In the future, this may also be a motivation for students to participate in projects, in addition to their lessons. Together with for example ‘Info-Group’ we can see if we can automate this process.
1. Follow-up of the government agreement together with the student affairs department and the opinion of our students themselves.
2. Adapting the educational leave for working students to the Flemish system.
3. Clarifying the regulations on the appeal procedures for study progress decisions and mapping out the communication about them.
4. Examine the (possibly automated) certification of non-curriculum-related competences.
INTERNATIONALISATION

General idea

This year we would like to focus on restoring the contact with ISP. We would like to improve their general internal operations and external communications. During the first year, some pilot projects should help finding out their possibilities on campus and structure their collaboration with student council. Below you can find some of the possible topics we can work on together.

Inclusion of international students

Including our international students in the student community is getting ever more important since the numbers of non-Dutch speaking students keeps rising. First, the mails sent by the university should always be bilingual or it should be noted if the e-mail is not relevant for non-Dutch speakers. Also, most of the events on campus are in Dutch. In collaboration with Pilar for example, cultural events for international students can be organized and listed. IRMO should be contacted to smoothen the registration and housing process once here and obtaining the VISA before leaving their home country. Finally, more jobs on and off campus should be available for English speaking students.

EUTOPIA

First of all students should be made aware of our new international alliance. It should be clear for our students what new possibilities this offers them. We should work with our partners to organize conferences and other events in these partner universities, so the alliance is strengthened and used to its full potential.

Erasmus possibilities for medical students

Erasmus is currently unavailable for medical students, while it is possible for medical students from Ghent and Antwerp. We could use their experience to make sure our medical students can also gain experience in other countries.

Peace Jam

In 2020, VUB will organize this event, where students of 12 to 18 years old can learn and follow a path of a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate in their curriculum. As a student council we want to bring awareness to the event, as we are the ones selecting the mentors. This mentor will attend this conflict as a link between the students and the Nobel Prize Laureate (this year that is Rigoberta Menchu, a Guatemalan activist who fought for the rights of indigenous people).

Research delegation

As for students who want to take their research from the theory to the practice. This is one opportunity to do so. The creation of an interdisciplinary research delegation will allow students to work in one umbrella topic for their dissertation and bring it to different international and national conferences. We want students who want to start their career in research to have the opportunity to experience what is like to be undergraduate/graduate ‘academics’ with the help of the VUB.
INTERNATIONALISATION

SUMMARIZED THIS MEANS

1. Improve the inclusion of international students in the student community through various initiatives.
2. Communicate the EUTOPIA project and find out how our students can use this as an opportunity in the future.
3. Look for possibilities for medical students to go on an Erasmus program.
4. Co-organize and communicate the PEACEJAM event.
5. Organize a research delegation as a way to motivate and reward students looking for challenges during their studies.
Kick Off

Organizing a Kick-Off event in Jette remains a very important demand of many students in Jette. They also deserve the opportunity to get to know their university and associations. Moving to the Kick-Off in Etterbeek is still too much of a hurdle, so they don’t get to know their own campus. This Kick-Off has now been promised, but will certainly have to be followed up by our members.

Meeting places

Just like in Etterbeek, there are far too few places in Jette where students can relax and get to know each other, especially inside. Students who don’t have a room have few options, which causes pollution and overcrowding where there is space. In the long run, seats will be created, but a temporary alternative must be found. One possibility is to open up spaces in the restaurant for a longer period of time, as well as to promote some of the existing spaces, such as the Lounge.

Vending machines

The students asked for additional vending machines to be installed and for these to be filled more consistently. During the block period it is almost impossible for them to buy snacks, as there are no shops on or around the campus. The possibility to offer healthier alternatives also needs to be looked at.

Sports offer

The sports mix in Jette is much more limited than in Etterbeek and also here came the request of some students to expand it.

Print cards in the medical library

The card currently used in the library is not optimal. It is a paper card with a magnetic strip and can be damaged when it is placed next to other bank cards. This way, students lose their printing units on a regular basis. The head of the Medical Library will be contacted to see if they can introduce a plastic card. The cards that are still available will have to be used up anyway, so a solution will have to be found in consultation with the head of the department.
SUMMARIZED THIS MEANS

1. Follow-up of the Kick-Off in Jette in 2020.
2. Searching for new meeting places for students on campus.
3. Placing healthy food and beverage vending machines.
4. Expanding the sports offer in Jette.
5. Improving print cards in the medical library.
The internal functioning of the Student Council is taken over from the past year where we work in groups, each with a coordinator. This structure is being used again because last year it resulted in better communication and increased efficiency. In this way, each member can work around his interests.

We also strive for uniformity, structure and clarity by using all documents for both internal and external use. The intention is to further standardise all visual material through templates so that we become more recognizable on social media, which is currently the most effective way of flowing information.

To support us, three student workers will be hired to help us with our administrative, communication and financial insights.

Ecology and sustainability

This year our focus is on good contact with the core team on sustainability. By listening to experts in the field, we can do our bit without having to reinvent the wheel. For this reason, we are participating in the Green Impact project to make our office more sustainable. We also take into account the sustainable and ecological impact of our decisions throughout the year, from vegetarian food on weekends to policy changes. We would also like to offer support for projects such as the reusable cups of BSG as, in order to create a more sustainable campus together.
OUR TEAM

PRESIDENT
SOFIE FÉRAUGE

VICE-PRESIDENT
QUENTIN LIEVYNS

COORDINATOR STUDENT FACILITIES
MOHAMED BOUSSABAT

COORDINATOR INTERNATIONAL
PAULINA RIOS MAYA

COORDINATOR EDUCATION
LIESL DE PAUW

COORDINATOR JETTE
LIO EGGERS

MEMBERS
AUDREY DEVOS

JONNICK FONKE

LISA JONGMANS

JOLIEN LERSBERGHE

VIKTOR LOX

SASHA SOLAU

SUEANN VANDEPUTTE

BERND WETHMAR

More information is always available on our website https://student.vub.be/studentenraad#leden.

You can e-mail us via studentenraad@vub.ac.be.

Via our facebookpage 'Studentenraad VUB' or 'Studentenraad Jette' you can always follow the latest developments.

On our instagrampage you can also find pictures of activities https://www.instagram.com/studentenraadvub/.

OKTOBER 2019
Aim for face-to-face

Be who you want to be

Stick together

* Positive
* Respect
* Be who you want to be

* Listen to each other
* Appreciation
* Don’t be a loser

Aim for constructive