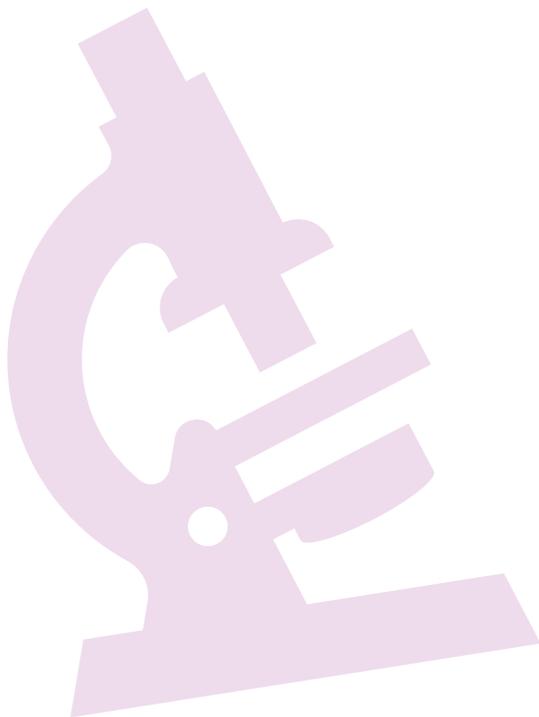




Policy plan
FSR FNWI 17/18

Table Of Contents

Table Of Contents	2
What is the Student Council?	4
Taskforce Student Participation	5
Taskforce Education Organisation	7
Taskforce Public Relations	9
Taskforce Regulations	11
Taskforce Collaboration and Finance	13
Taskforce Study Support, Facilities, and IT	15
Taskforce Information Provision and Extracurricular Activities	18
Summary	20



Dear reader,

The Faculty Student Council for 2017/2018 for the Faculty of Science proudly presents its policy plan. In this document, the council exemplifies what it will achieve for students this year.

The faculty has had an eventful year, partly due to the cancelled collaboration plans with the Free University. The council will try to support the parties affected by this decision where possible. This is one of the many ways in which we hope to safeguard the quality of education.

Another relevant development in terms of the quality of education is the position of programme committees (PCs). With the introduction of the *Law for Enhancing Governance Power in Higher Education* this year, PCs have become official representative advisory bodies for their studies. They now possess official rights, such as the right of say on certain parts of the regulations regarding the curriculum. In 2018, it will even become possible for PC members to be elected. The council will maintain contact with the programme committees to foster effective cooperation between the parties.

Aside from this, the council wants to improve information provision for study support, facilities, and extracurricular activities along with improving student politics and the council's itself. The seven task forces — “Student Participation”, “Educational Organisation”, “Public Relations”, “Regulations”, “Collaboration & Finance”, “Study Support, Facilities, and IT”, and “Information Provision and Extracurricular Activities” — will work towards a better faculty. Are you curious how the task forces will tackle this? Continue reading!

Sincerely, on behalf of the FSR 2017/2018,

Femke Mostert
Chair

What is the Student Council?

The Faculty Student Council (FSR in Dutch) is made up of 12 students. The FSR is an official representative advisory body which can influence the policy of the Faculty. The council does this by occupying itself with all matters which concern students. Examples of this are housing plans and the faculty's policy on education in English, but also smaller topics such as the library's opening hours and the contents of the *To Dah Loo*. The members of the council were elected last May to represent students this academic year.



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Taskforce Student Participation

The Task Force for Student Participation aims to improve students' say at the faculty. It will strive to create an environment in which students are taken seriously and in which they feel that they can voice their opinion. Students experience education policy first hand; they can accurately judge whether something works for them or not. Input from students regarding policy is therefore essential to improving the quality of education.

One of the duties of the representative advisory bodies (the Central/Faculty Student Council) is to ensure that the input students have is passed on to the executive staff. By having a right of say on policy through these councils, students have the opportunity to improve the quality of education. This task force has set multiple goals to achieve its main objective: improving public participation at the faculty.

Evaluate D&D-report and 10-point-plan

The 10-point-plan and the final Democratisation & Decentralisation Report made several recommendations to improve students' say at the university. The task force uses both of these reports as a starting point when looking for ways to increase student participation, and will continue the work that has been done by the previous council on the reports' recommendations.

Organise and evaluate the Hour with the Dean

This year, the Task Force for Student Participation will keep organising the Hour with the Dean and plans to evaluate its implementation. During this hour, students can voice their opinions directly to the dean of the faculty, giving them the opportunity to talk to him about subjects that are important to them in an easily accessible way.

Evaluate non-binding referenda

It is important that students are taken into consideration during the process of making policy. Non-binding referenda and digital democracy — through means such as the platform denkmee.uva.nl or the UvA student panel — are important in order to achieve this. In the coming year, the task force will evaluate these instruments and suggest improvements.

Evaluate the office of Student Assessor

To ensure that the interests of students have been taken into account while writing policy, it is important there is an adequate collaboration between the Faculty Student Council and the board. To this end, there is a student who participates in the board meetings at this faculty: the student assessor. This year, we will evaluate this function. The task force will also be involved in creating the profile and the application procedure of the new student assessor, who will be appointed at the start of 2018.

Evaluate the office of Diversity Officer

The 10-point plan has highlighted diversity as one of the points of improvement for the university. This subject is also important to many students. The task force will, therefore, work on improving diversity at our faculty. Our focus will be on evaluating the office of Diversity Officer and thinking of ways to implement the recommendations made by the Diversity Report at our faculty.

Evaluate student privacy

Student participation is most effective when students are free to give their opinion; this is not possible if students feel they can be judged based on their opinion. The council will, therefore, evaluate how students' privacy is safeguarded and suggest improvements if necessary. The council will look into who has access to the personal information of students and will evaluate if it is necessary for staff and teachers to have access to this information. We will also look into the security of Blackboard and the protection of personal information in SIS.



FLTR: Fokel Ellen, Veerle Groot, Muriël Louman (head), Femke Mostert

Taskforce Education Organisation

In the past few years, students have highlighted certain topics at the university both through words and actions; take for example the occupation of the Bungehuis and the Maagdenhuis a few years ago. One of these topics was the decentralisation of the power to write policy, from a central level to a faculty or programme level. The Task Force for Education Organisation's main goal is to treat issues at a decentralised level. The task force believes it is important that issues that are at play at a central level are discussed at a programme level, but also that we attempt to find solutions to programme-level issues at the central level.

Stay in touch with Programme Committees (PCs)

To accomplish this goal, the task force believes it essential to be in close contact with all Programme Committees at the faculty. To this end, the task force will attend at least one meeting of each Programme Committee and organise the Forum PC's (FOC). Student members of each programme committee attends these forums, with the aim to improve dialogue between the different programmes.

Talk about the quality of education with Programme Directors

Aside from being in close contact with Programme Committees, the task force will also talk with all Programme Directors. These meetings have two goals.

Firstly, the task force will look at problems that arise at the programme level and see if a solution for these can be found at the faculty level. An example of this are the problems some programmes had with their Examinations Boards last year. This led the previous council to work to improve the procedures of Exam Committees across the whole faculty.

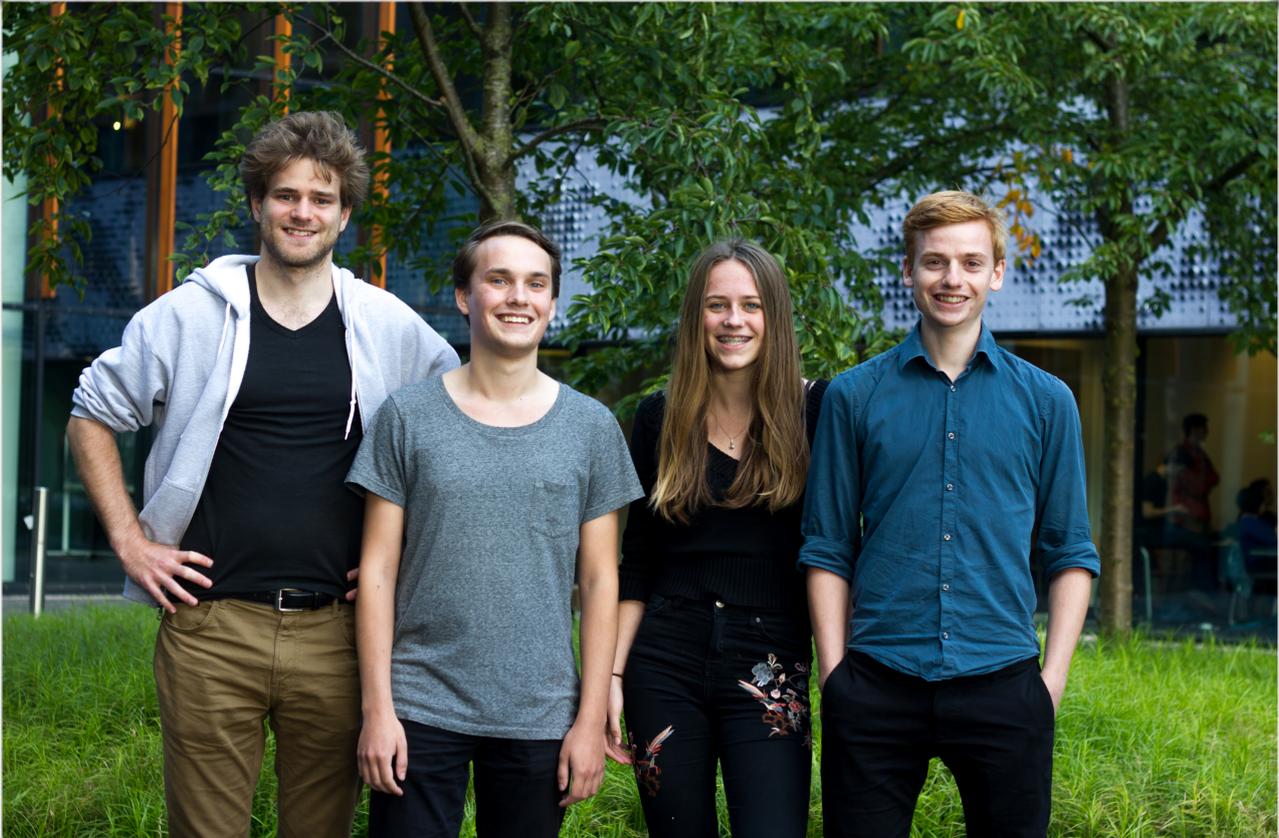
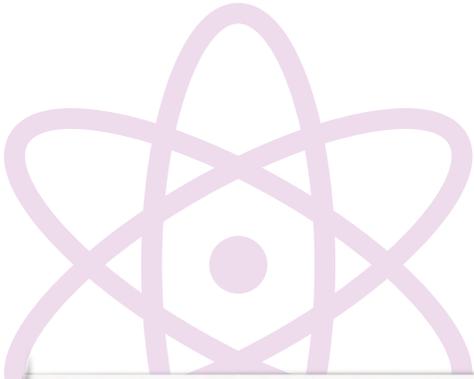
Secondly, there are certain issues being discussed at the faculty and central level that the task force wishes to analyse at a programme level. Examples of such topics are Programmes in English, Blended Learning, the evaluation of the Study Success Reports, and the academic calendar.

Be involved in the organisation of the PC-weeks

During the previous semester, the faculty organised its first week to promote awareness of and participation in Programme Committees among students. The faculty currently plans to organise this week two times a year. The task force will provide input on the plans in order to ensure that the PC weeks are effective.

Advise on appointments and reappointments

The task force is also responsible for advising on the appointment and reappointment of Programme Directors and College/Graduate school directors. The council has so-called "hearing rights" on these (re)appointments, which means that the council must be asked to provide its opinion on the chosen candidate before the selection can be finalised. The task force will talk with the candidate and communicate its findings to the Dean.



FLTR: Pieter van Niel, Roan de Jong, Muriël Louman, Tijn de Vos (head)

Taskforce Public Relations

It is important that every student knows that there are representative councils that look after their interests, and what these councils can do for the student. That is why it is important to inform all students of the FNWI about the existence of the central student council, faculty student council, and the programme committees.

Inform through social media

The task force will post blogs on Facebook about the council's activities on a weekly basis to increase the visibility of and knowledge about the work of the student council. It will also post a monthly blog on the website, in which the council reflects on the past month and promote events at Science Park. Besides this, the task force will actively point students towards the student-council website and Facebook page. It also aims to organise multiple contests this year to increase student participation and reward original ideas or suggestions for improving the faculty.

Organise Talk-with-the-Council-moments

Furthermore, there will be a Talk-to-the-Council moment in the central hall twice a week, so that council members can give updates on the work of the council and receive input in an easily accessible way. The council also organises monthly Talk-to-the-Council drinks, to which all students and student associations are invited to join and talk about what is going on at the FNWI. With this, the task force hopes to attract the part of Science Park's community that is less available for conversation during the day.

Actively involve new students

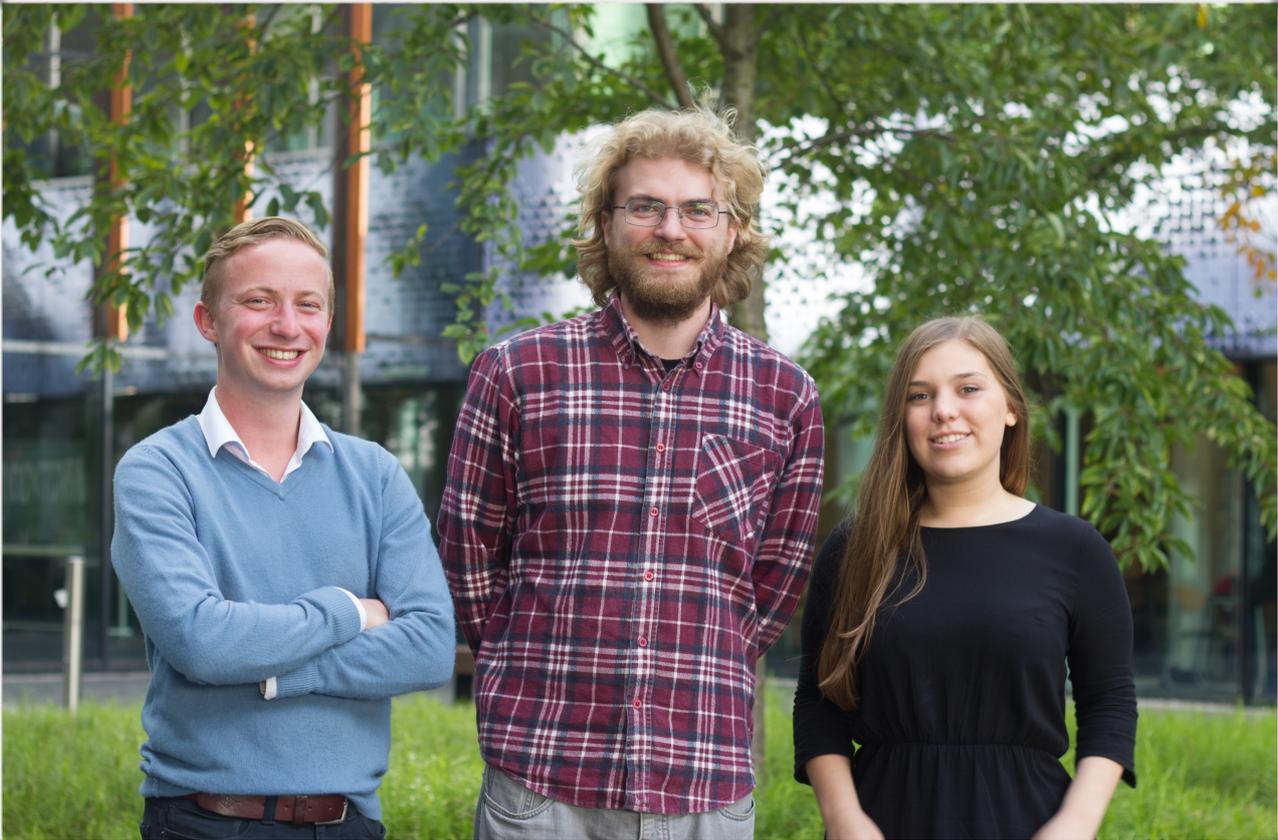
The task force will be present at the faculty introductions of the programmes to talk to students and inform them about the student council. The task force will strive to visit all first years in the first semester during lectures, to talk about what the council does and what it can do for students. This way, the faculty student council can reach out to a lot of first-year students at the start of their studies.

Create awareness on activities on the faculty

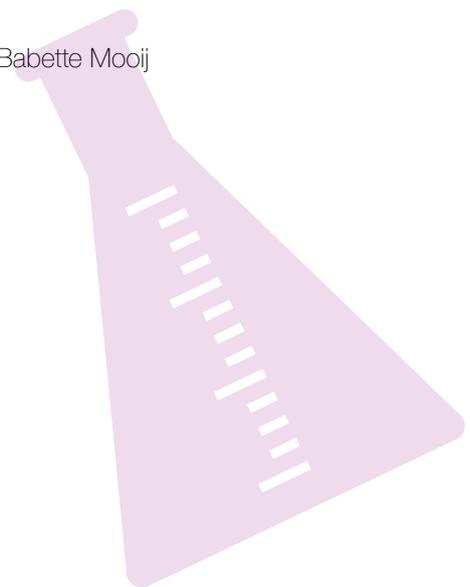
The task force collaborates with the faculty's department of communication in making the ToDahLoo. With this, the council can inform a lot of students about recent developments or interesting activities at the faculty. The task force will also organise and promote the Teacher of the Year election. Towards the end of the year, the council will help promote the elections of the central and faculty student councils, by providing neutral information about the parties and organising a debate between the lead candidates.

Improve the visibility of the council

The council wants to increase its visibility by sporadically doing publicity stunts. It is always possible to come up with new ideas and initiatives to inform students and improve participation.



V.l.n.r.: Kjeld Oostra, Parcival Maissan (head), Babette Mooij



Taskforce Regulations

The Task Force for Regulations concerns itself with the rules and regulations regarding representative advisory bodies. An example of this are the new changes as a result of the introduction of the "Versterking van de bestuurskracht van onderwijsinstellingen" (The Law for Enhancing Governance Power in Higher Education or **WVB**). This law has made Programme Committees an official representative advisory body since September 1st. The council must be well-informed on these changes to the law to be able to properly check if they are correctly implemented at our faculty.

Oversee the implementation of the WVB

Programme Committees now have the right of consent on certain parts of the Teaching and Examination Regulations (TER) and must either be elected or selected by an official procedure established in the Faculty Regulations. The task force will check how the implementation of the law occurs at our faculty.

Carefully go through the TER-process

The Teaching and Examination Regulations (TER) stipulate the structure of your programme. For example, it specifies the official language of your Programme and which courses you need to have finished before you can receive the degree. The TER consists of two parts: the TER-A, which applies to all programmes at the faculty and the TER-B, which only applies to a single programme.

The TER is reviewed each year during what is called the "TER process". The council believes it is important that these documents and their implementation are analysed carefully, as this document establishes the rights and obligations of students.

The council wants to collaborate with Programme Committees during the TER process, as the council has "right of consent" on parts of the TER. In doing so, the council is jointly responsible for representing the interests of students when the rules of their programme are established.

Represent students through the formal rights of the council

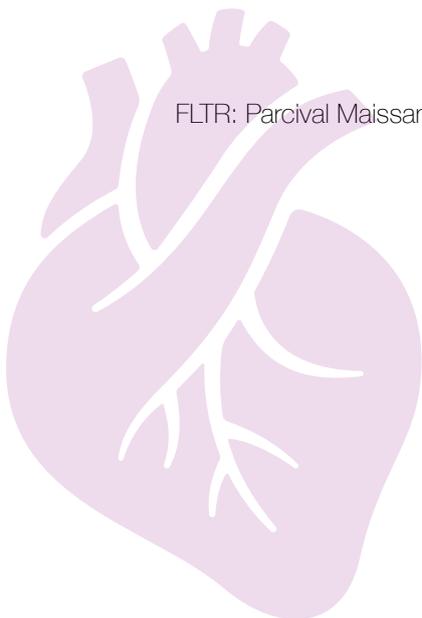
The student council also has legal rights established in Dutch law. It is the task force's responsibility to be familiar with these rights and act on them if necessary.

If the council has an insurmountable disagreement with the dean, it can start an official procedure called a "dispute". When the council starts a dispute, an independent party looks at the issue and gives a verdict on the interpretation of the Dutch law. The council views disputes as an easily accessible procedure to settle disagreements.

Currently, the Council has an ongoing dispute concerning the rights the council has on the selection procedure for Programme Committees. By settling this dispute, the council hopes to gain a clearer interpretation of the law.



FLTR: Parcival Maissan, Fokel Ellen (head), Annelene Schulze, Roan de Jong



Taskforce Collaboration and Finance

The Task Force for Collaboration and Finance is mainly a reactive task force that provides a supporting role within the council. It is a monitoring authority on policy that concerns collaboration with the Free University and/or financial matters.

Take stock of the problems arisen due to the cancelled housing plans

The taskforce is responsible for taking stock of the problems that have arisen as a result of the housing plans which were cancelled last year. The task force will try to achieve this by talking with Programme Committees, programme directors, study associations and other parties which were involved and will attempt to find solutions for the problems communicated by these parties.

Guarantee quality of education in Joint Degrees

Our faculty shares some programmes with the Free University in what are called "Joint Degrees". The task force finds it important to take stock of the way these Joint Degrees are represented in the student councils at the UvA and the Free University. The main reason for this comes from the council's responsibility to guard the quality of education at both universities, even after the cancelled housing plans.

Oversee problems in appointment of teachers

The task force will also continue the previous council's work in overseeing the problems in appointing teachers at the Swammerdam Institute for Life Sciences (SILS) and the Institute for Informatics (IvI). These institutes have had a structural shortage of teachers who are able to teach in the studies offered by the faculty. The council aims to safeguard the quality of education, even when the number of students grows.

Commit to achieve more lecture room in housing plans

The growth in the number of students also causes problems with the housing of students studying at Science Park. The task force wants to tackle this issue before it becomes critical. The task force will be receptive to solutions during this process and will regularly engage in a dialogue with all parties to defend the interests of students.

Defend the interests of the faculty in the new allocation model

The task force plays a supportive role in matters concerning finances. The UvA is currently developing a new allocation model that will be launched in 2019. This model determines how money is distributed among the faculties of the UvA.

The task force will inspect what the impact of the new model would be on the faculty. We will stay in close contact with the Central Student Council which, together with the Central Workers Council, has right of consent of the new model.

Monitor financial cycle of the faculty

Aside from monitoring developments in the internal finances of the UvA, the task force will concern itself with the yearly financial cycle of the faculty, including the yearly report, the budget and its framework.

Taking stock of educational investments

In 2015, the government suspended student grants. At that time, promises were made that the money saved would be used to improve the quality of education. In the past few years, this money has reached programmes through what are called the educational investments.

Besides concerning itself with these funds, the task force will try to get more insight into what the funds from previous years have been used for. The task force finds transparency towards students of utmost importance in this matter.



FLTR: Kjeld Oostra, Femke Mostert, Pieter van Niel, Willemien Zuilhof (head)

Taskforce Study Support, Facilities, and IT

It is important that students can function optimally in the academic environment of Science Park, especially since the faculty has grown substantially in the past few years. Personal circumstances or a functional impairment can strongly influence the ability of a student to study. The task force will monitor if the support provided by the faculty are sufficient.

Improve registration for electives at the Free University

As mentioned before, the UvA shares programmes with the Free University through Joint Programmes and Joint Degrees. Students who follow these study programmes are automatically registered at both universities. Yet bachelor students of Bèta-Gamma and Future Planet Studies who major in these shared study programmes are not. Because of this, they cannot register for courses at the Free University. This is frustrating for many students. The task force will look into how this structural problem can be solved.

Bring attention to mental health problems among students

Mental health is an important focus for the faculty, especially as many students are not aware that the faculty provides support for students on this front. As many students struggle with mental problems such as stress and depression, it is important these students get the support they need. The task force, therefore wants to increase awareness for the available support and make it more accessible.

Improve sustainability

Sustainability is a worldwide problem, but this issue is also relevant for our faculty. This is why the task force finds it important to support initiatives proposed by students, companies and the faculty to improve sustainability. Unfortunately, these initiatives are not always visible. The Council wants to make a framework to monitor sustainable initiatives and increase their visibility. On top of this, the council wants to introduce more vegetarian and vegan options in the canteen and promote the separation of waste on the faculty.

Process student input

The council is most visible for students in what it can mean for them in terms of the facilities at the faculty. Much of the input the Council receives concerns the facilities. The task force will use this input to try to make Science Park a more pleasant working environment.

Improve security on Science Park

As a result of a series of break-ins at Science Park last year, study associations have raised questions about security at Science Park. The burglaries have caused some students to feel unsafe on campus. By starting a conversation with security, Facility Services and the study associations, the council will attempt to alleviate this feeling of insecurity among students.

Examine options to increase the number of lockers

Due to the rapid increase in student numbers, there is a huge shortage of lockers. Student often cannot store their belongings in the main building as almost all lockers are permanently occupied or broken. The task force will explore the possibilities for placing more lockers and fixing the ones that are broken.

Examine the possibilities for mandatory readers

Many courses utilise mandatory readers that students have to print at the university at their own cost. The cost of readers is out of proportion with that of other study materials. Besides, in many courses, it would suffice to only use digital readers, which renders printing them unnecessary. The task force will attempt to make printing readers optional in many courses.

Evaluate the opening hours of Science Park

After extensive research last year, the study centre has adjusted its opening times. The FNWI is open until 8 PM instead of 6 PM in the week before finals. This year, the council wants to evaluate these changes by looking into the use of these extra hours, and assessing the demand for longer opening hours.

Improve dietary options in the canteen

Surveys from last year indicate that there is a high demand for affordable food in the new cafeteria. The current options are not sufficient. The task force wants to improve this by keeping in contact with the Central Student Council about complaints that we have received at the faculty.

Be involved in the implementation of MapIQ

MapIQ is an application that can be used to book computers and rooms at the UvA. Currently, the university is running a pilot at the Roeterseiland campus. The council wants to put more pressure on the implementation of MapIQ at Science Park, so that students are better informed about the availability of study places and are able to book them. The task force will also pay close attention to the regulations of MapIQ, concerning things such as the number of days rooms have to be booked in advance or the maximum total of hours a student is allowed to book.

Explore the possibilities of standardising laptop options

A lot of programmes have a “Bring Your Own Device” policy (BYOD), in which students are expected to purchase a laptop for their studies. Several students have indicated that they find it difficult to choose an adequate laptop. The diversity of laptops sometimes causes problems, due to compatibility of software or operating systems. This increases the workload for employees. The council, therefore, wants to look into the possibility of offering standard models at the faculty. A good example is the laptops available for loan at the library, which meet the requirements for every programme with a BYOD policy.

Ensure there are enough power outlets at study places

Due to the rapidly growing number of students, study places have been made available in locations in the building that were not originally intended for this purpose. This has resulted in a lack of power outlets. As a result of the BYOD policy, it is necessary to provide power outlets in these study places too. The task force will strive for more power outlets.

Support the transition to Canvas

The FNWI intends to start using Canvas in the academic year 2018/2019. This is a virtual learning environment that will replace Blackboard. Because most information provision happens on Blackboard, it is important to ensure that the transition from Blackboard to Canvas runs smoothly. The changes that are being made will need to be clearly communicated to staff and students.



FLTR: Babette Mooij, Veerle Groot (head), Willemien Zuilhof

Taskforce Information Provision and Extracurricular Activities

Your time at university is not defined by just the programme you have chosen; it is the moment for broadening your views and developing yourself in areas that interest you. The university can play an important role in this personal development. The Task Force for Information Provision and Extracurricular Activities wants to make sure that the university optimally fulfils this role.

Further the provision of information on exchange experiences

At the UvA, students can complete parts of their curriculum or a minor abroad. Studying abroad is an enriching experience for many students, and the UvA, too, believes it to be valuable. The council is of the opinion that studying abroad should be accessible to everyone. The task force therefore wishes to improve information provision on study-abroad options. It will collaborate with the International Office to organise a study-abroad event at the FNWI, so that students can easily get to know more about the possibilities for studying abroad.

Improve general provision of information

Sufficient information provision about the choices that a student can make during his or her programme is an important factor for a successful academic career. Information about things such as study tracks, final projects, and extracurricular activities is crucial; it should not be hard to find. Specific information about the programme, such as contact information of relevant personnel, should also be available.

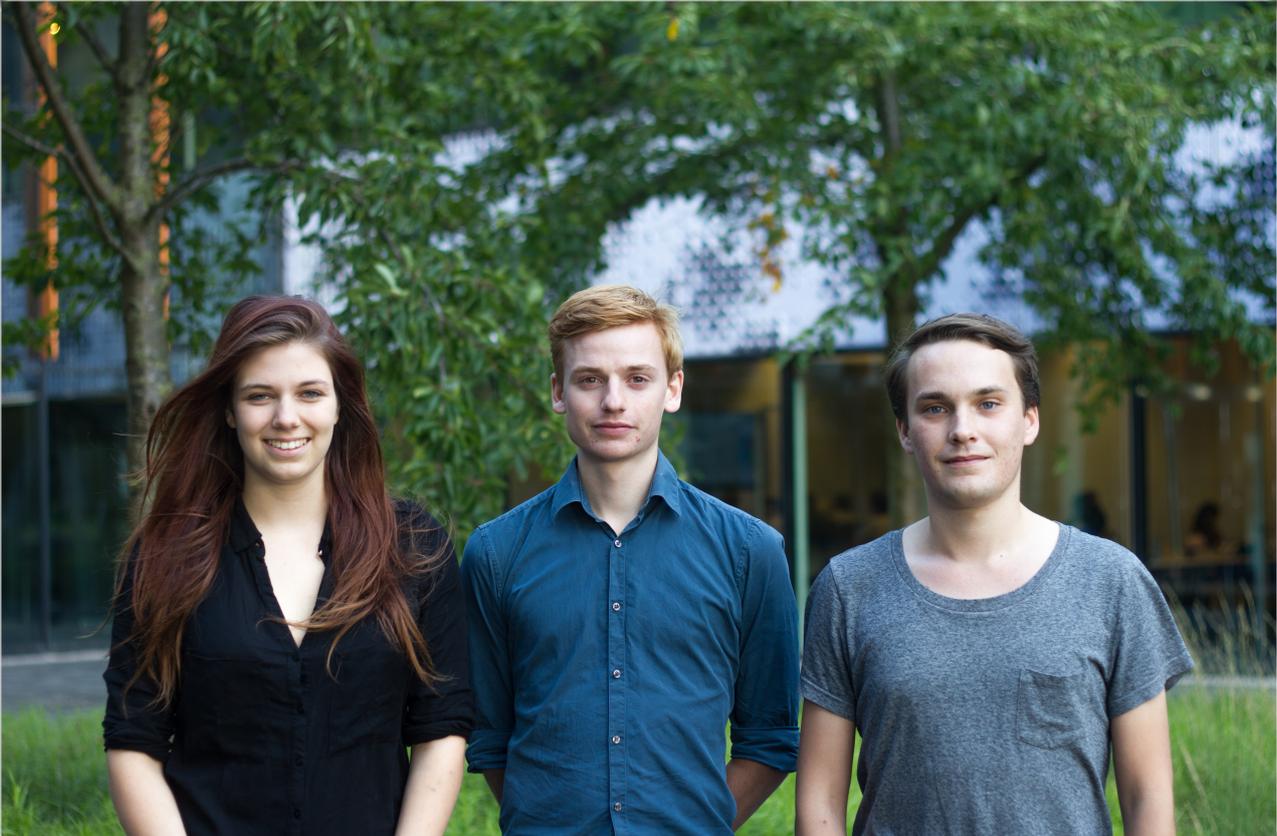
The task force will strive to make information provision as accessible as possible. To achieve this, it will stay in close contact with the faculty's bureau of communication, and explore how to improve information provision. The council is of the opinion that students should have a central source of information. Currently, most information can be found in the A-Z list; the task force will evaluate if this format is advisable. If problems emerge, the task force will look into them together with the communication bureau.

Stimulate optional subjects

There are several options to broaden or specialise your studies, such as honours, minors and elective courses in a curriculum. A lot of students find it difficult to make use of these opportunities. The task force wants to look into increasing the flexibility of your options at university. It also wants to ensure that there is room for elective courses in every programme of the FNWI, so that students have the opportunity to further develop themselves. The report *Studiesucces 2.0*, published in 2017, evaluates measures that have been taken to increase 'study success' of students. This will be used by the task force to formulate advice on the education provided at the FNWI. The council also aims to improve information provision of minors and will explore possibilities such as a minor fair at Science Park.

Explore the possibilities of rearranging holidays

The previous council did extensive research into the possibilities for rearranging holidays. In a survey held by the council, 87% of the 763 students indicated that their workload was too high, and expressed the need for a break in the second semester. This year, the council wants to explore the different options and possibly take the first steps to implement this at the FNWI.



FLTR: Annelene Schulze (head), Tijn de Vos, Roan de Jong



Summary

Student Participation

- Evaluate the recommendations in the D&D-report and 10-point-plan
- Organise at least six instances of the Hour with the Dean and evaluate its effectiveness
- Formulate new ideas and provide suggestions on digital democracy and non-binding referenda
- Provide feedback on the profile and discuss the solicitation procedure for the new student assessor
- Conduct multiple meetings with the faculty's Diversity Officer in order to evaluate the function and to help implement the recommendations made by the Diversity Rapport
- Research who can see what of the personal information provided by students, and whether this information is securely stored

Education organisation

- Organise a Forum for Programme Committees every two months, in order to strengthen contact with Programme Committees (PCs)
- Meet with all PCs and Programme Directors, to discuss and analyse important topics at the local level
- Be actively involved with the PC weeks intended to promote PCs, and provide feedback on their execution
- Speak to candidates for the appointments and reappointments, and advise the dean

Public Relations

- Post content for students at least once a week via Facebook and once a month on the website

- Organise Talk-with-the-Council moments: twice a week in the hall and once a month with a drinks event
- Actively generate involvement amongst first-year students by holding short talks during lectures and during Introduction Day
- Create awareness of activities at the faculty through informative posters and the ToDahLoo
- Improve the visibility of the council using the screens throughout Science Park and organising publicity stunts

Regulations

- Oversee the implementation of the WVB
- Carefully go through the TER-process
- Evaluate changes to the Faculty Regulations
- Represent students through the formal rights of the council

Collaboration and Finance

- Take stock of the problems that have arisen due to the cancelled plans for collaboration with the Free University and, where possible, support solutions
- Guarantee quality of education in Joint Degrees
- Oversee problems in the appointment of teachers in SILS en Ivl, and play a supporting role where possible
- Reduce housing pressure at the faculty by emphasising providing for lecture rooms in the housing plans
- Defend the interests of the faculty in the new allocation model
- Monitor the financial cycle of the faculty for discrepancies with previous years
- Create transparency for students with regards to the educational investments made after the suspension of student grants

Study Support, Facilities, and IT

- Highlight problems surrounding registration for electives at the Free University and discuss these with the dean and the Free University
- Improve visibility of study advisors and the student psychologists, through means such as a potential 'Mental Health' week
- Push for more sustainable options in the canteen and ensure more waste is sorted
- Meet with the head of security at Science Park
- Find solutions for the lack of lockers and ensure there are regular maintenance rounds
- Examine the possibilities for mandatory printed readers
- Evaluate the opening hours of the study centre at Science Park
- Be involved in the implementation of MapIQ
- Explore the possibilities of standardising laptop options
- Ensure there are enough power outlets at study spaces
- Support the transition to Canvas



Information Provision and Extracurricular Activities

- Further the provision of information on studying abroad
- Improve general information for students, such as the A-Z list
- Stimulate the ability to take electives, as mentioned in *Studiesucces 2.0*
- Explore the possibilities for rearranging holidays, possibly using a survey to generate student input