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UNDERSTANDING *the* UVA STUDENT COUNCILS.

Welcoming message.

Welcome to our guide to the University of Amsterdam's student councils. One of the major goals of 020 is to render all University politics closer to the students and to raise individual awareness on the actual machinery that operates behind the scenes to improve everyone's experience at the UvA.

In order to do so, we have in collaboration with our Candidates put together this compact booklet about the Student Councils at the University to offer every student a more holistic understanding of what they are, what their functions are, and how exactly do they operate.

020 strongly believes in a more transparent and accessible system for the UvA's student politics. Instead of functioning as a de facto 'black box', in which policies are created without outsiders truly understanding how they operate, the Student Councils should act as a token of openness, inclusion, and stakeholder participation.

We hope that this booklet will not only offer you some insightful information on the ins and outs of the Student Councils but, even more so, functions as concrete proof on where 020 stands on this topic.

True inclusion takes courage and 020 will never back away from a challenge.

SEE *the* CHANGE.

Overview of the Council.

In its essence, the Council is a body that serves as the middle man between the students and the decision-makers within the faculty such as the Dean. By voting, students can elect their peers into office who will then go on to work on issues that they deem important. It is important to keep in mind the scope, however, within which the Council can operate.

The Council has the duty and responsibility to represent the students that elected it. In order to achieve their goals, they work on files with the help of certain experts.

During the meetings with the Dean, the objective is to get binding commitments that will help achieve these goals. For any kind of decision-making, a simple majority is needed. No one has veto power, not even the Dean.

Each member is held accountable for their actions and their work, and failure to dedicate to their assigned files and task forces could result in them being asked to resign. Council members cannot be fired but they can resign.

Files are mainly divided into two large policy areas: Education & Communication (E&C) and Organisation & Finance (O&F). For example, files found in the first category can be concerned with binding study advice (BSA), the Honours & Talent Programme, and flex-studying—the availability to lectures after they have been held, so that working and otherwise occupied students are not at a disadvantage.

Some example of files within O&F are Sustainability, Diversity, and Sexual Harassment. Creating a new file is not too difficult as members of the Council can choose themselves which files they wish to work on.

Therefore it is very possible for them to pick up a new file and work on it throughout the entire year. However, plenty of existing files already have some work done on them in the past, whereas starting a new file would mean that the formatting and research will take a bit longer, since it is started entirely from scratch.

For example, a major file that was pushed through by the last Council was the creation of a new bachelor (Humans, Society and Technology, or HST). Although it was finalised by the latest council, it was a project that was ongoing for around five years. It just goes to show how different Councils can collaborate to achieve major goals such as the creation of new study programmes.

Structure of the Council.

The Council is composed of twelve members that are divided amongst the following positions:

- Chair
- Vice-chair (that's Pablo!)
- CSR Delegate
- Treasurer
- Two Committee Chairs
  - Education and Communication Chair
  - Organisation and Finance Chair
- General council members
- Council assistants

Our two candidates Johanna and Alessandro both function as council assistants in the social sciences faculty. Given that 020 gained three seats in the last elections, but only one candidate on our list, we were able to place to additional candidates as council assistants into the FSR-FMG council.

Types of meetings.

There are many types of meetings, of which the most common ones are explained below:

OV-meeting
These consultation meetings take place with the Dean every six weeks. The goal here is to get the Dean to make legally binding commitments. Hence, essentially promising the council to look into a certain matter.

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PV-meeting

These plenary meetings occur every week with all twelve council members. During the meeting, the Secretary reads out the new mail, everyone shares updates on their files, and other action points are discussed. This also the time when votes are carried out.

Committee meetings

There are two kinds of committees at the University of Amsterdam: Education and Communication and Organisation and Finance whose members meet once a week. During a meeting, they discuss topics that affect their committee specifically. They are usually scheduled either before or after the PV. The Chair of the committee makes the agenda and chairs these meetings

Executive committee meeting

The DB (daily board) meets once a week. The daily board consists of the Chair, Vice-chair, CSR Delegate, and the Committee chairs. During these meetings, the upcoming PV agenda is discussed, as well as other meetings that are coming up, such as OVs.

Additionally, the personal matters of Council members that could affect their optimal functioning are discussed. The members of the DB give each other verbal updates. The minutes are prepared and distributed by the DB to the FSR, but are for internal use only.

The BOB-cycle.

The BOB-cycle is the name of the process through which all policy proposals go. It consists of three phases: imaging, judgement, and decision-making.

Imaging

first, information on the subject is presented, explained, and considered. The objective is for all participants to be informed of the facts on this subject. The goal is that everyone involved approaches the subject in the same way, hence identifying the same problems and key questions on the matter.

Judgement

Second, the objective of this phase is to find answers to the questions asked in the previous stage, carry out proposals for solutions,

evaluate the direction the Council should take regarding a matter, the pros and cons are considered, as well as the consequences of different courses of action.

Decision-making

Participants decide which of the proposals brought up in the second phase should now become reality and implemented. They will have to conclude the position that shall be taken by the council. The outcome will be clearly defined and the case is ready.

The concluding remarks.

We hope this booklet has given you a better understanding of what our Student Councils at the University of Amsterdam are actually about and how they operate in order to improve the study experience of all students in our University.

020 is always looking for more students to become new candidates or to help us out internally with organising events, write booklets, conduct research or join one of our many other teams.

We truly believe in a more open and transparent way of doing student politics. 020 strives to once again make the University an example for the rest of society, fighting for a more involved and direct democracy where the candidates truly represent their constituents and are held accountable for their actions.

Thank you for taking the time to read this booklet. Feel free to give us any feedback or ask questions through our socials or email!

Best of luck with your University deadlines and quarantining,

Your 020 Team.

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