



**STUDENT
REPRESENTATIVES**
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

YEAR REPORT: 2017/18

**Report on the activities of the Student
Representatives**

FASoS Student Representatives

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WHO WE ARE?



The Student Representatives is the FASoS internal student participation body, and therefore takes a central role in the organization of FASoS. It consists of 26 elected and co-opted (appointed) students of the Bachelor and Master programs who are representing their fellow students in various faculty bodies and in all levels of the faculty. Among others, students are represented in the faculty board, faculty council and the program committees. The FASoS Student Representatives connect the different student members, create collaboration between them and functions as a decision-making body. It allows students to receive assistance and staff members to receive broad student input.

FOREWORD

Dear Reader,

We want to use this report as an opportunity to reflect on the past academic year and report on the progress of our aims which we outlined in the beginning of the academic year. Furthermore, we want to share with you an outlook of how we think the next generation of Student Representatives and the Faculty could proceed with the topics which we tackled this. We hope you take some time to have a look through it. During the 2017/18 academic year the Student Representatives have worked on a multitude of issues. However, looking back on the academic year, four main themes can be identified which run like a red line through the past year, connecting most of the issues we have worked on. Therefore, I want to introduce each theme with a couple of words, as they set the frame for our individual projects.

Improving the Quality of Education is perhaps the most obvious theme, and we are surely not the first Student Representatives who have tackled issues in this regard. Although we have continued the efforts of our predecessors to try to find creative solutions to improve points of dissatisfaction of students. From strengthening E-learning, to improving the received

feedback we have tackled many issues. For us the quality of education was at the heart of our projects since this is what students are in direct contact with and what matters most for the experience of students at our Faculty. Moreover, the quality of education determines the skills and knowledge future FASoS graduates take on their future path and therefore was a top priority to us. From the beginning of the academic year we have acknowledged that the quality of education at FASoS is already rather high compared to other institutions, although we did not want to be satisfied with that, realizing that there is still more potential to improve the education at FASoS.

The second theme which can be found in many of our projects but also in our daily work is Student Empowerment & Responsibility. For us it has been important that the spirit of PBL, being a student-centered approach, is being not only lived in our class rooms but also beyond within the faculty. We see students at FASoS in the driver seat of their education. To realize this, students need to be empowered to take active part in the design and implementation of the education at FASoS. By the same token, students need to learn to take over responsibility for their own education and the choices they make within it. Active participation of the design and implementation of the education at FASoS has been conducted in the past academic year in several ways: Students have been involved in feedback panels for specific topics (e.g. Received Feedback on assessment), have been involved in the structural alignment processes of our degrees, have participated in informal forums and discussion rounds, and last but not least have come up with creative ideas on how to enrich their tutorial meetings.

In the ongoing discussions about the change of attendance rules, the Student Representatives have held the view that it is the self-responsibility of students to participate in the education offered to them. However, students are also responsible for the consequences if they do not attend tutorials and lectures without justified reasons. Therefore, we have welcomed the information the academic staff has shared about the connection between study success and attendance as this empowers students to take informed decisions. Overall, an empowered student body which is able to take over responsibility for its education, is an integral part of the philosophy behind PBL. Additionally, we believe that by empowering and giving students responsibility over their education, we teach students to take over responsibility for themselves, their peers and their environment – which are important skills for their future life paths.

The third theme worth addressing is our attempt to increase the voice of the students at FASoS. As Student Representatives we have been part of several participation and advisory bodies of our faculty and it has been important to us to take this responsibility serious. Our aim was to represent the student body to the best of our abilities by being both partners and critiques of other faculty institutions. Moreover, we have held the view that the student opinion should not only be considered when students are affected directly but also when important faculty decisions are being taken. Consequently, in the past academic year, we have actively shaped the allocation of the budget of the faculty, the design of old and new educational programs and the criteria of the appointment for new professors only to name a few examples. However, it was perhaps even more important to change the image of the Student Representatives than to influence specific decisions. While in previous years the Student Representatives have

sometimes been seen as another study association by students, we have worked hard this year to communicate our role as THEIR representatives, and to strengthen our role through accomplishments and the communication thereof. Consequently, there was more contact between students and student representatives, enabling us to represent the student body even better. At the same token, the other faculty institutions have also recognized the Student Representatives to be more active and to be a body which is worth to consult for advice or in case of problems.

The last theme I would like to address is perhaps the most invisible one: The contribution of the Student Representatives Team to a culture of “Going the Extra Mile”, the slogan of Maastricht University. But what does “going the extra mile” mean? – To me, it means to go further than what would be necessary or expected, also if one has to face additional challenges. But not because one is forced to do so but because one has a shared vision or goal which makes it worthwhile to go the extra mile, despite the additional challenges. As Student Representatives we could have restricted our work to participate in the faculty bodies and to mainly comment on the work of others which would have reduced our work to a few hours a month. But this would not have been in line with our philosophy that responsibility and change start with oneself. However, our decision to try to actively contribute to FASoS also meant to face additional challenges:

First of all, with an average of 15 hours per week of Student Representatives work (sometimes even higher) we had a higher workload than expected and it was at times difficult to balance the work of our studies with the work as a Student Representative. Secondly, we experienced that with power comes responsibility and we felt the weight of this responsibility pushing us down at times. Stress was not seldom our best friend when we were heading from meeting to meeting, working on proposals in our working groups, all the while preparing for our next faculty body meeting. Thirdly, we of course also experienced intercultural differences and had our internal disagreements which created additional challenges for us to deal with. Finally, we regularly encountered frustration about the little progress we seemingly achieved, and the occasional dead ends we reached in certain topics. I believe that to take all these struggles on oneself cannot be taken for granted, and especially not while following a full-time bachelor.

So why did we decide to take these additional challenges upon ourselves? The Student Representatives 17/18 team has shared the goal to make FASoS a little bit better than when we started. This might sound cheesy, but we know of the potential of FASoS to shape the lives of young university students and also of its staff members. Therefore, we decided that it is worthwhile to join dedicated staff members in “going the extra mile” to unleash the potential of FASoS to educate people to make a positive contribution to society. Moreover, by “going the extra mile” ourselves, we share the hope that others will join us in the future, creating a culture of doing more than what is expected for a common goal – creating a culture of “going the extra mile”.

These four themes have accompanied us throughout the past academic year and are the framework in which we conducted our projects. However, one could maybe even list a fifth theme, but one which is less positive than the other themes. As already mentioned above, throughout the year we had sometimes the feeling that we were not achieving anything, or at least not enough, and were only wasting our time and energy. I always tried to push these concerns away but even after finishing this year I believe many of my fellow Student Representatives and I doubted what we had achieved and if it was worth it. I would argue that our work was already worth it, out of principle, as we tried to work together towards a shared goal. But it took me to finalize this year's report and to create a list of all concluded and ongoing Student Representative projects, to realize how much we actually have achieved in only a year! I think we can therefore believe the staff members who have told us during the year that we were one of the most committed Student Representatives teams they have seen so far at FASoS. However, it is also due to these engaged staff members that we were able to contribute in the way we did. Therefore, I want to thank the many staff members which have been open to student suggestions and focused on problem solving in seemingly difficult situations. Moreover, I especially want to thank the Faculty Board for its leadership and dedication to make FASoS each day a little bit better!

Altogether, I look back with pleasure at working with the Student Representatives Team 17/18. I admire their dedication to seeing things through to the end and will remember moments of intellectual arguments, good humor, pizza meetings, long creative working nights and sharp discussions. I hope that each one of us can take something valuable from this not always easy but definitely enriching year and that we can look back at some point to realize how much we learnt and grew during our time as a Student Representative. At least I think the work we have achieved is something each one of us can be proud of, and our successors will be measured against a high benchmark which is not that easily achieved. However, future Student Representatives will find a "cultivated field" and a well-structured organization, which we hope they can utilize to successfully represent the students. Or to say it with the words of a fellow Student Representative: "the expected challenges, trials, victories and lessons vary somewhat from year to year but the spirit with which any particular group plows forward indeed forges a pioneer trail". We have done our part to forge the pioneer trail, now it is upon the next generations of Student Representatives to follow this path.

Niklas Zerr

- President of the Student Representatives 17/18 -

WORKING GROUPS

The Student Representatives facilitate their work through various internal working groups. In addition to their obligations in different committees at the Faculty, all Student Representatives are part of one working group. This Final Year Report is structured along the lines of work conducted by the following working groups:

- I. **BA Education** is dedicated to the evaluation and improvement of the quality of education for the Bachelor Programs within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.
- II. **Diversity, Integration, Accessibility and Sustainability (DIAS)** is responsible for a broad spectrum of issues that occur within the faculty.
- III. **Marketing, Communication & Events (Marcom)** is responsible for the facilitation of communication between the body (SR), the faculty (administration), and the students as well as organizing regular events.
- IV. **Master Student Representatives** who have been integrated into the Student Representatives this academic year and form their own forum parallel to that of the Bachelor students.
- V. **Other Projects** have been set up with concrete goals to achieve. Once the goals have been accomplished, the projects have been dissolved again.

Status of progress

Throughout this Final Year Report, the Year-plan goals and topics each working groups has dealt with during this academic year provide information on the current state of progress. Specifically, the following icons will be used to display the current stage of development.

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
|  | Achieved/Successful completion |
|  | Ongoing/In progress |
|  | Requires follow-up |
|  | Postponed/No Progress |
|  | Dead end |

BA Education

Description

The BA education working-group of the Student Representatives is dedicated to the evaluation and improvement of the quality and administration of education within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Our committee considers issues, and points for improvement in this area by identifying the general opinion and/or stance of the FASoS student population and working together with the Faculty staff to ensure a positive academic experience for all students and staff. During the first semester of this academic year, our team has worked on several issues that will be elaborated on separately below.

Members

Danai Petropoulou Ionescu (AC, **Chair**)
Niklas Zerr (ES)
Paul Denfeld (ES)
Emma Kessenich (ES)
Simone Gavazzi (AC)
Carlotta Borges (ES)
Justine Skrotzki (BA ES)

Year plan goals & progress

I. **Feedback to students**

One of the greatest points of dissatisfaction amongst the student population at FASoS is the quality, quantity, and consistency of feedback given by tutors regarding the students work. The feedback that students receive, is very dependent on the tutor. While some assessors provide sufficient feedback and/or justification for the given grade, others provide minimal or no feedback. Students value feedback highly as it plays a vital role in their learning process and can act as a valuable basis for their academic improvement.

Progress: We have held a student panel to discuss student's perception of the issue, as well as possible solutions. Therein, students expressed that, currently, their learning process is halted after the termination of their examination and believe that feedback on their work is very important to gain additional knowledge.

Proposal: This issue was communicated within the OMT, to the Associate Dean of Education, and the Programme Directors of European Studies who all agreed that feedback is a decisive aspect of education at UM and FASoS. However, a proposal created by the Student Representative to standardize the feedback process (including the implementation of standard forms which can be adapted to each course) with the goal to guarantee at least a minimum feedback for each student was not adopted by the OMT. An additional meeting was held with the European Studies Programme Directors to discuss the feedback issue.

Outcome: The European Studies Programme Directors remain hesitant to impose the usage of standardized feedback forms on course coordinators who are the responsible examiners.

Moreover, the programme directors have also underlined the added value of flexible forms of feedback, as for example an oral feedback review session might go more in depth and both, help the student more and reduce the workload of the examiner compared to written feedback. Some action points were agreed to in the meeting which require follow up actions:

- The Programme Directors have agreed to advocate the usage of standardized feedback forms for appropriate examination without imposing the usage on Course Coordinators.
- Feedback review sessions (for written exams) and their date will in the future be included in course books, included in the timetable of students and held at a time at which not any other teaching obligation (lecture, tutorials) are taking place for the students. The Programme Directors will make sure of this.
- The Coordinators will be reminded that it is their responsibility as examiners to check if sufficient feedback is given to students. The Coordinators will be encouraged to take samples and address tutors if insufficient feedback is given. The Student Representative will keep the Education Management Team informed about improvements and problems.
- It was agreed to think in the upcoming months more about further possibilities of formative feedback forms to replace summative feedback forms in the curriculum.
- The Student Representative will meet with the Programme Directors in Fall to discuss any improvements achieved and how to tackle the remaining problems.

Remaining Problems:

- There is no sufficient quality management system in place which ensures that satisfactory feedback is given to students. There is no institutional check on the quality of feedback given and individual complaints of students have not been taken serious in the past.
- There is not yet an agreement between the involved parties (Faculty Board, Programme Directors, Course Coordinators, Tutors) if the problem is structural (the way feedback is given) or if the problem is based on a lack of allocated resources (not enough time to give sufficient feedback). A meeting in a bigger round might be helpful to come to a shared understanding of the problem.
- It has often been the case that the feedback was uploaded late in files4students.
- In 2017/18 the Student Representatives have focused more on the feedback issue within European Studies, however, there are similar problems in Arts and Culture which need to be tackled as well.

Responsible Student Representatives: Danai Petropoulou Ionescu (BA AC), Emma Kessenich (BA ES)

II. New Attendance Policy Evaluation



After the faculty has unlinked passing attendance as a requirement to participate in an exam, the faculty has invited the Student Representatives to monitor any possible changes within PBL

from a student perspective and to identify factors that might be relevant to students for attending a tutorial. It still has to be analysed by the faculty if there was a general drop in attendance over the whole year compared to other years, and if a possible drop in attendance is similar for all courses or if there are differences between courses. However, students have not indicated any general malfunctions of PBL due to a lower number of students attending the tutorials, besides some individual complaints in specific Arts and Culture tutorials. The general attitude of students seems to be positive towards the new increased self-responsibility of students. Additionally, more or equal motivation in tutorials is perceived by students and most students have indicated that they have not perceived a (large) drop in attendance. Moreover, the Student Representatives have identified besides personal factors (e.g. illness) several structural factors which are important for the attendance of students: The overall PBL experience, the perceived relevance of a course, the overall workload of the students, the design of a course and the self-responsibility of students.

Follow-up:

- Firstly, the faculty has to analyse if there is a general drop in attendance over a whole year and if there is a difference between courses when it comes to attendance.
- Triadó-Ivern et al. (2009)¹ and López-Bonilla, J., & López-Bonilla, L. (2015)² hold that absenteeism is a complex and multifactorial phenomenon. Therefore, it would be important to analyse the specific reasons why students are absent at FASoS if the analysis shows a drop of attendance before any (policy) measures are taken. The research of López-Bonilla, J., & López-Bonilla, L. (2015) can be used as a starting point for FASoS specific research. The research could be conducted in an interlinked way between academic staff members, the educationalist, study advisers and students. Possible formats to include students could be: A research internship, a marble project or with the help of a student assistant. Possible research could also be connected to the research project about study success lead by Patrick Bijsmans.

Position: The student body, and the Student Representatives whom they represent, are strongly opposed to any measures which would curb the self-responsibility of students. Therefore, in case research indicates that measures are necessary to increase attendance, the Student Representatives are advocating for measures which strengthen self-responsibility as a skill of students.

¹ Triadó-Ivern, X., Aparicio-Chueca, P., Guàrdia-Olmos, J., & Jaría-Chacón, N. (2009a). Aproximación empírica al análisis del absentismo de los estudiantes universitarios. Estudio del caso de la Facultad de Economía y Empresa (UB) [Empirical approach to the university students' absenteeism. Study on the faculty of economy and business]. *Revista de Formación e Innovación Educativa Universitaria*, 2, 182–192

² López-Bonilla, J., & López-Bonilla, L. (2015). The multidimensional structure of university absenteeism: An exploratory study. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 52(2), 185-195

Responsible Student Representatives: Danai Petropoulou Ionescu (BA AC), Emma Kessenich (BA ES), Justine Skrotzki (BA ES)

III. Evaluation of Skills Courses at FASoS

Students of both Arts and Culture and European Studies have repeatedly voiced their dissatisfaction with (some) of the skills courses in place. Complaints by the student community are both about the structure and content of some skills courses. While the Student Representatives have started a list of the most common complaints, there is still a need for more student input which could be conducted in a student panel. The results should be communicated to the Programme Directors and within the OMT.

Follow up:

- Hold a student panel for more student input
- Communicate the results to the Programme Directors and within the OMT
- Try to find solutions to the most common problems

Responsible Student Representatives: Justine Skrotzki (BA ES), Danai Petropoulou Ionescu (BA AC), Emma Kessenich (BA ES)

IV. E-Learning at FASoS

In an age of digitalization and changing learning and teaching methods, e-learning creates possibilities to strengthen the education at FASoS. Based on identified problems and points of improvement within PBL, e-learning can further enhance the level of education. Moreover, it can be used to ensure that our programs remain relevant and attractive to future students.

Progress: After inspiring conversations with different staff members the Student Representatives decided to not focus solely on recorded lectures but to examine the possibility of web-based learning at FASoS in a holistic way. The Student Representatives achieved an increase of the Budget for E-learning and the renewal of a Faculty working group. Furthermore, there was an emphasis set on the possibility for bottom up approaches to web-based learning.

Working group: In the 2017/18 academic year, the working group *Educational Technology* created a memo to define “the concept of video in (higher/academic) education”, “offering an overview of types of video usage and its didactical scenarios” and “sketching the current position of video at the faculty and how to move forward”. A cornerstone of the considerations of the working group for web-based activities was connecting them to the core principles of PBL: Self-directed, contextual, constructive, collaborative. The working group advised the faculty that the policy and educationalist perspective should be elaborated by the Cluster Board and Policy Support and Study Advice.

Follow up:

- While the memo was an important step towards rethinking the education at FASoS and to seek possible ways to improve the education at FASoS by deploying web-based

activities, concrete results have yet to be achieved. Therefore, it is important that specific goals are set up and an overall strategy is being created, and specific responsibilities are assigned.

- Looking at education more broadly, we see little innovation throughout the last 200 years, neither on a methodological level nor on a technological level. In fact, many educators complain that the digitalization wave merely digitizes analog processes. Most universities are now offering web-based lectures, yet the more interesting question of “Do we want lectures?” is often not being addressed. Therefore, with PBL at our heart and our aim to be “leading in learning” we should have platforms, including both students and staff, to discuss how we envision the future education of FASoS.

Responsible Student Representatives: Niklas Zerr (BA ES)

V. Foreign Languages for Arts & Culture Students

Many Arts and Culture students expressed a need and wish for language courses offered by the university, similarly to BA ES.

Progress: After lengthy debates, the Student Representatives convinced the Faculty Board to subsidize a limited version of language courses to AC students. All AC students who will go abroad to a University whose primary language of education is other than English, can take a language course at the UM Language Centre, which will be subsidized by FASoS with 250€. The money will be paid out when the concerned student presents his/her certificate of participation of the finished course. This system is in effect since earlier this academic year.

Follow up:

- As most language courses start only twice a year, the faculty should inform the students in the second year before the registration of the language courses at the language centre opens about the possibility to get a language course subsidized.

Responsible Student Representatives: Niklas Zerr (BA ES), Paul Denfeld (BA ES), Emma Kessenich (BA ES), Simone Da Ponte (BA ES), Sophie Schluderbacher (BA ES)

VI. Strengthening of the Mentor Programmes ES & AC

The mentor program is already an important part of the education at FASoS, however, students have expressed from time to time that it could be made even more relevant. Additionally, the Student Representatives see in the Mentor a possible tool to further strengthen the self-reflection processes of students with the aim to increase their self-responsibility as students but also beyond the academic bubble.

Progress: Considering the changes that have been made to the Mentor Programmes of BA ES and BA AC in effect this academic year, we are in communication with the respective coordinators Mr. Bijmans and Ms. Weusten to evaluate the programme in general and specifically the changes that were made, while discussing different opportunities for the future of the programme.

Position:

The Student Representatives developed a 5-Point plan on how to make the Mentor Program more attractive:

1. Introduce a peer (2nd or 3rd year student) mentor in addition to the academic mentor. The peer mentor could take up the role to help mentees in more personal matters, effective learning and finding their way around university. Peer mentors could be a tool to provide emotional support, personal feedback and friendship while reducing the workload of the academic mentor.
2. Reduce the number of lectures and evaluate for which topics a lecture is indeed the right format and what could be communicated in other ways. Make sure that all information can also easily be found online (e.g. video clip) so that students do not have to rely on rumors to receive the necessary information.
3. Increase the number of group meetings with either the peer mentor, the academic mentor or both, depending on the topic. The group meetings could be split in an open part (in which students could ask the mentor and each other questions and offer advice) and in a closed part (for which there is a specific topic to be discussed). Additionally, some workshops could be set up by experts who are trained to steer self-reflection processes in groups. Examples of topics discussed in group meetings or in workshops are: Intercultural learning, personal-development, learning learning, time-management, code of conduct and sexual harassment.
4. Design the individual meetings more openly, let the mentees take ownership of the mentor program and strengthen self-reflection processes of students. Students should be encouraged to reflect on their academic and personal developments without the obstacle of choosing specific skills they want to work on from a list. We support the idea of setting year goals, which can be academic or personal, specific or broad. In the Individual Meetings, these topics can be assessed, and the student can reflect on their development. An additional tool which is used at other universities is an open (e-)learners portfolio in which the student has to keep track of their progress regularly and which is being graded on the basis of the self-reflection of students, not on their actual achievement. Such an open (e-) learners portfolio could be linked to the duplin descriptors, course objectives and intended learning outcomes which are until now mostly ignored by students. More ownership could be given to students by letting them prepare the agenda for the individual meetings and letting them set specific goals of what they hope to achieve from the mentor-mentee relationship.
5. Raise awareness of the social support structure of FASoS and Maastricht University through the peer mentor and the group meetings.

Follow up:

- Continue the evaluation process of the mentor program with the mentor program coordinators

- Set up a meeting (or use the OMT) with all responsible stakeholders (Dean of Education, Program Directors, Mentor Program Coordinators, study adviser) to discuss the ideas of the Student Representatives
- Discuss with the Faculty Board and the Faculty Council in how far means of the Studievorschoot could be used to strengthen the mentor program.

Responsible Student Representatives: Carlotta Borges (ES), Justine Skrotzki (BA ES), Niklas Zerr (BA ES)

VII. Excellence at FASoS (Honours)

Progress: During the current semester, we focus on the evaluation of the FASoS Honours Programme and especially its limited capacity.

Proposal: We are considering an adaptation of the capacity that will include 5% of each BA instead of 5% of FASoS. Our aim is to create more opportunities for Honour's and/or Excellence at FASoS – for instance, leadership trainings – in order to make sure that all students are well-equipped upon graduation.

Outcome: The excellence program coordinator at FASoS has communicated to the Student Representatives that students are already invited to the honours program according to the rule that the best 5% of each program are invited.

Follow up:

- Check in the 2018/19 academic year if students are invited to the honours program according to the rule that the best 5% of each program are invited.

Responsible Student Representatives: Paul Denfeld (BA ES), Simone Gavazzi (BA AC)

VIII. Evaluation of PBL practice at FASoS

At the heart of our education and an important factor for the satisfaction of students, a continuous monitoring and rethinking of PBL is important if we want to live by our slogan 'leading in learning'.

Progress: postponed

Follow up:

- Hold a student panel to gather the student opinion on the practice and value of the PBL method at FASoS.
- Link the evaluation to the ongoing project in E-learning and on remodelling the skills courses.
- Examine future possibilities for the application and improvement of PBL.

Responsible Student Representatives: Justine Skrotzki (BA ES), Danai Petropoulou Ionescu (BA AC), Emma Kessenich (BA ES)

IX. Resit Procedure

The current resit procedure (that coincides with regular exam weeks) has severe negative effects on the study success of many students. If one exam is failed, the workload increases in the next period (in which regular exams and the resit coincides) and the likelihood that at least one of the exams is failed again is high. This can lead to a Vicious Circle of Resits with increased stress of students, possible study delay or dropout and a general negative effect on the study results.

Progress: Within the current semester, we considered possible alternatives in BA ES for the resit procedure since the re-structuring of the BA ES offered new opportunities.

Outcome: The Student Representatives agreed with the Program Directors of European Studies that in the academic year 2018/19 the resits of take home exams and the deadline of resit papers would be placed in the first week of a new course to reduce the workload in and before the exam week.

Follow up:

- Communicate with the Director of Studies of European Studies that the new policy is being announced in the beginning of the year.
- Contact the Director of Studies of Arts and Culture and discuss if a similar solution can also be implemented for Arts and Culture, discuss the topic in an OMT meeting
- Monitor if students are more satisfied with the new policy

Responsible Student Representatives: Paul Denfeld (BA ES), Simone Gavazzi (BA AC)

X. Exchange Programme: Additional Partner Universities

Many Bachelor students have expressed a wish for more diverse exchange destinations. Therefore, we approached the International Office to request the establishment of additional exchanges with universities in the Global South.

Progress: Our request was received positively by the International Office who agreed with the Faculty Board to contact a list of Universities proposed by the Student Representatives. As long as the potential exchange partners agree to a cooperation, the new options should be in place for the next academic year according to the international office. The proposed universities are:

Country	University	Language	Programmes/Faculty
South Africa	Stellenbosch University	English/Dutch	Faculty of Arts and Cultures
Botswana	The University of Botswana	English	Faculty of Social Sciences Faculty of Humanities
Ecuador	Universidad San Francisco de Quito	Spanish	Colegio de ciencias sociales y humanidades
Argentina	Universidad de Buenos Aires	Spanish	Facultad de ciencias sociales Facultad de filosofía y letras

Peru	Pontificia Universidad Católica del Peru	Spanish	Facultad de ciencias sociales Facultad de letras y ciencias humanas
Mexico	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México	Spanish	Facultad de ciencias políticas y sociales Facultad de filosofía y letras
Costa Rica	San Jose State University	Spanish, English	College of Humanities and the Arts, College of Social Sciences
Brazil	Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul	Portuguese	Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas
Israel	Tel Aviv University	English	Faculty of Humanities
United Arab Emirates	Abu Dhabi University	English, Arabic	College of Arts and Sciences
Egypt	American University Cairo	English	Broad number of BA of Arts

Follow up:

- Contact the International Office and the Faculty Board to receive information about the newly implemented exchange agreements.

Responsible Student Representatives: Paul Denfeld (BA ES), Emma Kessenich (BA ES)

XI. Recognition of ECTS earned during student exchange

Students have expressed their dissatisfaction with the recognition of earned credits during exchange programmes. Currently, only ECTS are included in the total amount of credits for the BA, however the specific courses and their respective fields are not taken into consideration. This creates an issue for students that wish to follow a Master's in a different field than their BA (e.g. for the Masters' in the European Law School (LLM) at Maastricht University, a student from FASoS needs to have obtained 30 ECTS in modules of Law). Thus, it is vital that students are able to prove in an official manner that they have followed modules in different disciplines during their exchange.

Progress: We have communicated this issue with the FASoS International Office who will make sure that in such cases, an official transcript will be obtained and the ECTS earned will be recognised as of their respective discipline.

Follow up:

- Contact the International Office and get information about the procedure for students and ask it to be communicated to students in the second year.

Responsible Student Representatives: Simone Gavazzi (BA AC)

XII. Bachelor Thesis Allocation Procedure

Currently, the allocation for the Bachelor thesis works on a ‘first come, first served’ basis. There was some criticism by the student body about this system as students felt that the results would be unfair.

Progress: We were considering the prospect of utilising the system used in the Erasmus/Exchange allocation procedure (without GPA being a decisive criterium) in which students are asked to input four choices of topics. After communicating our idea with the Programme Committees of BAs Arts & Culture/European Studies and the International Office who is responsible of the Exchange Allocation system, we have come to the conclusion to have reached a dead end and that this topic should not be pursued by Student Representatives any longer.

Dead end:

- The usage of the exchange allocation procedure for the bachelor thesis allocation is too costly
- The first come, first serve system is (apparently) statistically better in providing the fairest results
- The majority of the student body was satisfied with the choices received, there will always be some dissatisfied students
- The work and effort put into this by the Student Representatives and faculty staff members without coming to a conclusion does not justify proceeding this topic any longer

Responsible Student Representatives: Simone Gavazzi (BA AC), Carlotta Borges (BA ES)

XIII. Arts & Culture BA Thesis Themes & Supervisors

Students have notified us of an issue concerning the topics available for the Arts & Culture BA Thesis. Third-year students (2017-2018) have informed us that the topics were either too broad or too specific, and the division of themes between the four specialisations was not equal.

Progress: Due to other priorities, no progress could be achieved

Follow up:

- The BA Thesis themes from the last years can be analysed and the AC Student Representatives can collect information in the AC student body if there is general discontent with the available bachelor thesis topics

Responsible Student Representatives: Simone Gavazzi (BA AC), Catharina Wahls (BA AC)

Diversity, Integration, Accessibility and Sustainability (DIAS)

Description

The working group Diversity, Integration, Accessibility and Sustainability (DIAS) is responsible for a broad spectrum of issues that occur within the faculty. Issues we deal with range from the facilities available in our faculty -such as the common room- or the accessibility for people with disabilities to the buildings to the ratio of domestic/foreign students and the practice of an overall sustainable environment. We are closely connected and often meet with the facilities manager of the faculty and it is our job to form a link between the students and the staff that deal with these subjects. It is our goal to create the best facilities possible by enhancing diversity, integration, accessibility and the sustainability of our faculty.

Members

Melisa Delphia (**Chair**)
Simone Da Ponte
Sophie Schluderbacher
Leander Nielbock
Catharina Wahls

Year plan goals & progress

I. **New common room**

The students have expressed high demand for a common space for students and staff members to take a break, do group work and socialize.

Proposals:

1. The **attic in GG80-86**: This is the preferred option by most students. However, we were informed about the limited capacity that only a maximum of 50 people are allowed in there at any time.
2. **GG76 0.16**. This room is often used for large size tutorials and small lectures.
3. **The basement previously occupied by Books4Life** has been opposed by the Student Representatives due to its limited capacities, difficult accessibility, dark isolated environment, inexistent internet connection and claustrophobic atmosphere. Furthermore, an end of the usage of the room saves FASoS a lot of money.
4. Sharing the **common room in the GG76 building** with SBE by opening the connection door from the FASoS courtyard.

Outcome: After carefully considering all the available options and having many talks, the Faculty and SBE decided to share the common room in the GG76 building. Conversely, SBE students are invited to come to Banditos, thus, strengthening the inter-faculty integration which has been a goal of Maastricht University. While SBE covers the cost of the room, FASoS will use an available budget to decorate the room and make it as attractive as possible.

Follow up:

- Communicate the existence of the new common room in the beginning of the academic year to all students
- Organize the decoration of the common room
- Organize events to strengthen inter-faculty integration

II. Accessibility of BoE and student services 

The student body has repeatedly raised its dissatisfaction with the accessibility of the Board of Examiners and the student services at FASoS. Described problems are:

- Long waiting time for the study advisers and for the student psychologist
- There are too many unnecessary steps and bodies who (might) have to be contacted in case of an urgent matter (Front Office -> Study Adviser -> Board of Examiners -> Student Representatives -> Student Dean (legal advice))
- For many students it is unclear who/which body is responsible for their questions. Both the Front Office and the Student Intranet are not known to all students as a source of help.
- Students feel that many administrative decisions are taken against them and that often the consequences are not proportional to the context of the decision. Moreover, the student body shares the understanding that rules are generally interpreted narrowly and seldom in the favour of the student.
- Many students feel that there is a general negative attitude of the student services (and specifically of the Board of Examiners) towards students which is shown in general mistrust of students.
- The student body has raised the concern that there is a lack of assistance in the case of formal procedures (E.g. Hardship clauses, Plagiarism Procedures) and that there is no advocate for students when these decisions are being taken.
- Some students have raised discontent about the decision-making process of the Board of Examiners for individual cases as they experience it as being non-transparent.

Progress: The long waiting time for the study advisers and the student psychologists were raised several times as problems by the Student Representatives. The Faculty Board has acknowledged the problem and discussions were started in the Faculty Council if part of the Studievorschoot could be spend on recruiting an additional study adviser to reduce the workload and waiting time of the current study advisers. Moreover, discussions on the University level were started if the framework for the rules in the hardship clause could be relaxed to encompass more situations and be applied in a more flexible manner.

Follow up:

- To have a better basis for discussions with the faculty, a survey should be made amongst students about their opinion and experiences on the problems described above.
- After analysing the results of the survey, the topic should be put on the agenda of a Faculty Council meeting or a meeting with the Faculty Board should be arranged to discuss the issues and find possible solutions.

- To follow up on the discussions to relax the framework of the hardship clause, the University Council should be contacted and discussions with the University Board should be sought.

III. Catering Services for FASoS

The central level of the university is re-visiting the catering services of FASoS. They therefore seek to re-evaluate what type of caterer would fit best at our faculty and are considering whether Banditos should be replaced by for example Albron (which is currently in SBE and the inner-city library). We have taken up this conversation with the facilities manager of our faculty and will continue to work with the university to make sure that it is made clear what the wishes are of both students and staff of FASoS.

IV. Decoration of tutorial rooms

We have proposed to make tutorial rooms more interesting. Particularly, the idea was to dedicate the different rooms to different countries or themes, and hang up excerpts, quotes, pictures, maps, paintings, and other artworks relating to that theme.

Progress: This project has been postponed as our limited resources have been channelled towards other projects.

V. Smoking policy

The original introduction of a smoking policy by the faculty was met by harsh criticism by a lot of students as they felt that the decision being taken in summer and the new rule reflected not their needs but only the staffs' opinion. After the new smoking policy, non-smokers still complain about the smoking area in front of the Turnzaal and GG76 which is necessary to pass for tutorials and smokers complain about missing smoking facilities.

Progress:

The area in front of GG76 was declared a non-smoking zone. Moreover, the smoking area next to GG76 was extended and additional sitting facilities were added to create a nice smoking area for smokers.

VI. Utilities and plugs in faculty

More extension power plugs have been added to the study room in GG76 and in Banditos. In addition, more white board markers were added to the tutorial rooms in January. However, the constant shortage requires a better system of distribution for markers to tutorial rooms.

VII. Bicycle shed

The bicycle shed under GG80-86 reaches its very limited capacities during peak hours with high demand from students. Conversely, the bicycle shed under the 76 building of SBE has no such problems and we would encourage FASoS students to use the available spaces in this shed as well.

Progress: A notice board for SR has been set up. Therein, we want to post reminders that the other bike shed is also available for parking.

VIII. FASoS Sustainability Study Association

Initially, we developed the idea of starting a Sustainability Study association that would spread awareness about sustainability amongst students and staff, work together with the Faculty Board to promote sustainability at FASoS and analyse the progress that is made and put concepts of the Green Office and other ‘sustainability hubs’ in Maastricht into practice. To initiate and develop this idea, we were planning to cooperate with the Green Office and the UCM Sustainability Association GECCO.

Progress: An initial meeting was held with representatives of the Green Office, GECCO and Fossil Free Maastricht but it was decided to postpone the idea to next year due to a lack of resources.

IX. Accessibility to the faculty for people with disabilities

All the buildings at FASoS are quite difficult to access for people with physical disabilities. However, due to the monument protection of the buildings, the legal procedures and the costs it has become clear that such measures would be too complicated to endure only as a preventative measure. In order to change this, there needs to be a concrete case of a student whose enrolment would be obstructed by the accessibility to the buildings.

Marketing and Communications (Marcom)

Description

The working group Marketing, Communication & Events (Marcom) is primarily responsible for the facilitation of communication between the Student Representatives, the faculty and the students. The students are informed about announcements, surveys and faculty-related events mainly through the Student Representative's Facebook-page and within Facebook groups of each individual year. Moreover, Marcom is responsible for scheduling and organizing student events (together with other faculty bodies/organizations), such as the Faculty Drinks.

Members

Alex Foos (**Chair**)
Louise Mollenhauer
Stephanos Kantor
Lennart Kleinschmidt

Year plan goals & progress

I. Management of SR social media accounts

- Activity and response on Facebook has been maintained and consistent communication has improved the outreach to students compared with previous years
- Active in replying to messages on Facebook
- Active in participating in student discussions about student issues within Facebook groups of each academic year
- Active in informing the students about SR initiatives, events and surveys

II. Formalizing channels of communication

The Student Representatives have encountered that the faculty relies heavily on the Student Representatives to communicate with the student body. Until now, the main communication happens through social media which is not a perfect solution. Therefore, there is a need to create formal channels of communication between the Student Representatives and the Student Body.

Proposal:

- Give the Student Representatives the option to announce important updates on the Student Portal.
- Create a contact point in the Student Portal or the FASoS Student Intranet in which specifically the Student Representatives can announce updates.

Progress and Follow up: The Student Representatives have been in contact with internal affairs staff members of the Faculty (Fransje Muijsken & Khalidad Ahmadi) who are looking into it. However, until now nothing concrete could be achieved. Therefore, it is important to follow up on this topic in the beginning of the new year.

III. Explain organizational structure of FASoS and SR in creative ways: 

- During the introduction days students have been informed about the structure of the Student Representatives and the faculty
- However, we want to promote the Student Representatives and explain the faculty structure through more accessible forms of media (e.g. animation video, info graphics). So far Lennart has drafted a storyboard and recorded a voice over to narrate such a video. Due to limited resources progress in this area has stalled.

IV. Post small video updates of news/issues of the Student Representatives 

- As much as we like the idea, this goal could not be pursued because of the heavy workload on the individual members in the working group, thus it has been postponed. The idea still stands, can be transferred to next year.

V. Ask for feedback, ideas and opinions of students: 

- Active participation in the social media sphere has allowed SR to acquire information on student issues through online surveys – information crucial for SR activity on solving student issues together with the faculty
- We have organized a pilot Student Panel on the “Feedback for examination” which has proven itself as a useful practice to be further continued for the accumulation of student opinions.
- Utilization of SR notice board in the “lounge area”: decorate the board with SR-related activity, as well as putting up an “opinion” / “student ideas” section

VI. Monthly updates (FASoS Weekly) 

- Utilization of FASoS Weekly varies between periods of intense and less-intense SR activity.
- However, FASoS Weekly is being utilized to promote SR activity; working groups have the ability to individually submit FASoS Weekly forms to promote their respective “agenda” of SR activity

Proposal:

- Create a compilation of our FASoS Weekly posts. The compilation would serve as an information point of SR activity, for the students. This next step is left for the new members to decide if they are going to pursue it or not.

VII. Make new FASoS Hoodies 

Progress: There has been an initiative to re-start the production of FASoS Hoodies, which is still in the “designing” phase. A poll was created for students to express their liking over 3 different designs. However, the project turned out to be more difficult and the Student Representatives decided to leave the goal for next year.

VIII. Open Office hours: 

- Due to the nature and workload of the studies, such a goal would be very difficult to achieve. SR members, in most cases, tend to have extracurricular activities other

than SR, which when combined with SR responsibility does not leave much free time for additional Open Office hours. In addition, there has been relatively limited demand from the student body.

Proposal:

- Although difficult under the current scenario, this idea could be implemented in the future. Open Office hours could be achieved if SR members provide a timetable of their activities each period and then are allocated 1-2 hours a week of Open Office hours.

IX. Faculty Drinks: 

- Faculty Drinks have been a trademark of SR activity each year and it has been upheld this year as well. The goal is to create a platform for discussion, getting to know each other and integrating students of different programs and staff members into one faculty community.

X. Strategic Framework for Communicating Student Representatives Achievements: 

- The Marcom working group is developing a document which would provide a framework for publishing the activity and achievements of SR to the FASoS students. This framework will include a description and a link to all available communication channels within FASoS that can be utilized. The document will also contain descriptions of “why/when/how to” correctly utilize those channels for maximum outreach.
- The document will serve as a guide for future SR generations, thus bridging the gap in SR activity between present and future SR members.

XI. FASoS Winter Ball 

- The FASoS Winter Ball is organized primarily by ESA (Concordantia). Organizing the FASoS Winter Ball is not Marcom’s responsibility, however we do play an active role in promoting the event and providing hands-on help either before the event (helping the organizers with some of their tasks) or during the event (by taking up “work shifts”).
- This year, the Ball was successful and SR help was provided in all phases of organization, enhancing our relations with the other organizing parties (ESA, Orakel).

Master Student Representatives

Description

The Master student representatives worked in three different settings. First, each master student representative is a member of a Graduate Programme Committee. Second, the student representatives are divided over different working groups where they work on events, projects and proposals. Finally, the Master student representatives have weekly meetings where we deal with problems in the different Master programmes, share information about the GPC meetings with each other and keep everyone up to date about working group progress.

Graduate Programme Committees:

I. Evaluation of intended learning outcomes

- Per Master's programme the Student Representatives were responsible for evaluating the intended learning outcomes of the overall programme. The proposed learning outcomes were distributed and assessed by the student representative (optionally also by the students in the programme). The opinion of the SR was presented during the Graduate Programme Committee meeting and communicated to the respective programme coordinators.

II. Constructive alignment (some MA programmes)

- Several Master Programmes were going through the process of constructive alignment this year. The student representatives have been involved in evaluating the amount of ECTS allocated to a course, the workload of a course, and the learning objectives. The assessment of the student representatives was communicated in the GPC meetings.

III. Course Feedback (& IWIO)

- The Graduate Programme Committee meetings are used to reflect on the IWIO scores as well as provide additional feedback about the courses in a period. Student representatives collect feedback from students in their respective programmes, summarize and prioritize the findings and communicate these in the GPC meetings.

IV. Changes to the education plans

- In some MA programmes changes were made to the education plans. The education plans were shared with the student representatives and during the GPC meetings their feedback on the changes was discussed. The feedback was communicated by the chair of the GPC to the respective programme directors. Education plans were distributed and discussed during the programme committee meeting. Comments were collected by the chair and communicated to the respective programme directors.

General:

I. Problems changes IWIO surveys

- Following the changes in the IWIO survey in period 2, many students expressed concerns about the survey to their student representatives. The changes were discussed within the MA student representatives and it was decided that the problems would be addressed in the different GPC meetings. A list of problems with the new survey was created (new scale, no more neutral position in answer categories, 2 surveys (feedback fatigue), removal of general open questions) and given to the chairs of the GPC's to communicate to Ms. Mesman.

II. Thesis supervision

- Within the MA student representatives, the issue of thesis supervision was addressed. Students had experienced difficulties finding a thesis supervisor or were hearing who their supervisor was very late. Furthermore, in some MA programmes the programme coordinator is also the thesis supervisor for some students. It was discussed how to deal with potential problems with the thesis supervisor and who to address in case the supervisor is also the coordinator. The issues were resolved with input from other student representatives and advice was asked during the GPC meetings.

MA Education:

I. Grading tables

- Based on stories we heard about developments at Utrecht University, we started looking into how diploma supplements can support conversion of grades into international systems. The idea is based on the premise that even though countries use grading scales that look similar, the cultural differences make it hard to compare those grades. An 8 in country A might mean something different than in country B. It turned out that grading tables showing the distribution of grades in a certain programme, faculty or university can help understanding how grades relate to academic performance. However, it turned out the UM diploma already comes with such a supplement, something which is apparently not wide-spread knowledge nor easily accessible information. This year's master team has not managed to establish new ways to promote this, perhaps this could be something that next year's team can continue.

II. Buddy system MA Students

- Comments were raised by students on the perceived absence of a buddy system for new international Master students. It turned out this system is in place, but not well recognized. This is a point of attention for the communication to new Master students.

III. Application Procedure (work in progress)

- There were comments on the language and overall communication during the different steps of the application process. Most seemed to be based on simple translation

nuances that would easily be solvable. However, as the application process is centralized, this needs to be taken up with the SSC. This year's team has not managed to make concrete changes in the clarity of the application procedure. Perhaps the next cohort could coordinate with the BA students to approach the admission's office about the issue.

IV. PhD information

- A final point of attention was the availability of information on doing PhDs at Maastricht University and the Netherlands in general. Although there is some information available on the website, more information and perhaps experiences of other post-grad students who decided to pursue a PhD. The next team of student representatives could try to continue this topic by trying to promote PhD information.

New SR structure:

I. Integration Master Student representatives into overall SR structure:

- The inclusion of the master student representatives in the overall structure of the Student Representatives lead to some confusion on what the requirements of a master student representative would be and what the position would entail.

Proposal:

- For future MA student representatives, an information package on what they can expect if they are a student representative is created. This will help clarify the role of MA SRs with programme coordinators and GPC members. The letter has been distributed to the programme directors of the MA and MSc programmes.

Other Projects

Description

Besides the points we worked on, and the progress which we achieved in our internal Student Representatives working groups, we also worked on points and projects outside of our working group structure.

Overview

- I. **Faculty Budget negotiations** 
 - After a lengthy discussion, the budget of the faculty was altered in a way to include resources for: A provisional common room, a subsidy for language courses of Arts and Culture students going abroad and not having English or their mother tongue as the language of teaching in their host country, a career orientation event, more investments in E-learning.

- II. **Restructuring of the Student Representatives** 
 - The structure of the Student Representatives was changed to promote effective work, to make sure that Student Representatives in different faculty bodies can work together on the same issues and know of the discussions taking place at other levels of the faculty. Moreover, the master student representatives were included in the structure to enhance the cooperation between bachelor and master students. Some difficulties in the beginning of the year were moderated and the current structure will be passed on to next years student representatives with a description of the various responsibilities.

- III. **FASoS Career Orientation Event** 
 - A FASoS Career Orientation Event has been organized on the 7th of April 2018. The goal of the event was to inform and inspire current students from both BA and MA level about their opportunities after graduation, to pass on useful advice from FASoS Alumni to current students about employability and to offer networking opportunities. The event was a great success, around 15 speakers (most of them FASoS alumni) were present at the event.

- IV. **Course registration issues (in period 4)** 
 - The new course registration system introduced in 2017 has disclosed some unexpected and not anticipated negative consequences in the registration process. Additionally, technical errors occurred for some students in the registration process of period 4, with the results of more than 30 students not being registered for their respective courses, some of them facing severe consequences. The intensive efforts of the Student Representatives, and the problem-solving attitude of all involved parties, lead to a one-time-only exception by the Faculty Board to post-register first-year students and students that claimed to have encountered technical errors in the registration procedure in period 4. The number of students who were helped by the pleas for settlement by

the Student Representatives and the decision taken by the Faculty Board amount to more than 20 students.

- The faculty, with support of the Student Representatives, is looking for ways to improve the current course registration system in order to avoid students not being registered. However, we agree that the final responsibility of being registered lays with the students in every system.

Follow up:

- Contact the Faculty Board about measures taken that students are specifically informed about the status of their registration (registered, not registered).

Table Overview Student Representatives Projects

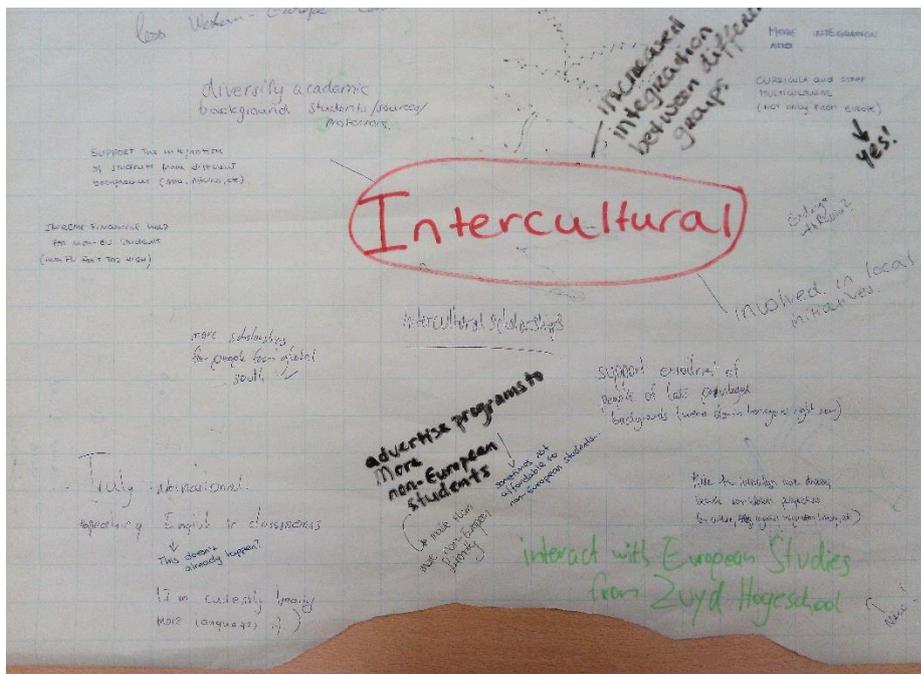
Achieved	Requires follow-up	Ongoing	No progress /Postponed	Dead end
Excellence at FASoS (Honours)	E-learning at FASoS	Feedback to students	Evaluation of PBL practice at FASoS	Introduce a sixth period to reduce workload
Smoking policy	Recognition of ECTs earned during student exchange	New attendance policy evaluation	Arts & Culture BA Thesis Themes & Supervisors	Use Exchange Allocation procedure for bachelor thesis allocation
Utilities and plugs in the faculty	Resit Procedure	Evaluation of Skills Courses at FASoS	Decoration of tutorial rooms	Accessibility to the faculty for people with disabilities
Bicycle shed	New Common Room	Accessibility of BoE and student services	FASoS Sustainability Study Association	
Ask for feedback, ideas and opinions of students	Formalizing channels of communication	Catering Services of FASoS	Explain organizational structure of FASoS and SR in creative ways	
Updates through FASoS weekly	Application procedure		Post small video updates of news/issues of the Student Representatives	
Faculty Drinks	PhD information		Student Representatives Open Office hours	
FASoS Winter Ball	Course registration issue			
Evaluation of intended learning outcomes				
Constructive Alignment				
Course Feedback				
Changes to the education plans				
Problems changes IWIO surveys				
Thesis supervision				
Grading tables				

Buddy system MA Students				
Integration Master Student Representatives into overall SR structure				
Faculty Budget Negotiations				
Restructuring of the Student Representatives				
FASoS Career Orientation Event				

Student Representatives Vision – FASoS 2025 Ideas

Description

During the past academic year, we have often wondered what we want to achieve and how our individual projects fit into a bigger picture of how we envision FASoS in the future. For this reason, we have organized brainstorming sessions with both bachelor and master Student Representatives to create a common Student Representatives Vision – FASoS 2025. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, an official version was never adopted by the Student Representatives. However, it would be a waste of energy and time to ignore the ideas from the brainstorming session altogether. Therefore, the collected ideas will be summarized here in the end of this report without any official status, but to give both the Faculty and future Student Representatives an idea how the Student Representatives 17/18 envisioned FASoS.



IFlipchart paper brainstorm FASoS Vision

We envision a faculty:

- Which is **intercultural** and fosters **diversity**.
 - A faculty which does not take intercultural learning for an automatic mechanism, but which provides intercultural learning opportunities, helps to break down cultural barriers, highlights possibilities to integrate into Dutch culture and which is aware that an international environment is not automatically an environment of cultural awareness.

- Moreover, we envision a faculty which supports diversity by encouraging the enrolment of students of less privileged backgrounds and students from a non-EU background.
- Which has as its mission to **critically rethink politics, society and culture**.
 - A faculty which is willing to leave the academic mainstream both in its research and teaching to offer a greater variety of viewpoints and question the status quo in various academic disciplines.
 - A faculty which understands that many of tomorrow's problems cannot be understood without incorporating new ideas and theories.
 - A faculty which is willing to follow new paths, and if necessary to support pioneers who forge a trail for future academics.
- Which strives to be **leading in learning**.
 - By not being satisfied by good rankings and evaluations but always critically analyses what could be done better.
 - By focusing on the core principles of PBL: Self-directed, contextual, constructive, collaborative.
 - By critically questioning the way we teach and not being afraid of radical changes if necessary.
 - By including best practices from leading universities around the world and adapt them to FASoS.
 - By further individualizing our education to students' needs.
 - By supporting bottom up initiatives about the innovation of education.
- Which has the goal to make a **positive impact on society by educating students to be changemakers**.
 - By teaching students to assume responsibility.
 - By teaching students to understand that leading is an opportunity to serve others and society.
 - By teaching students that creative and innovative solutions might be required for complex problems in a globalized world.
 - By empowering students to already assume responsibility during their studies in various regards and to teach them to reflect upon their experiences.
- Which offers opportunities to both students and staff to actively **participate in shaping FASoS**.
 - By offering forums and other discussion platforms.
 - By including students and staff in decision making processes.
- With a culture of **“going the extra mile”**.
 - In which students and staff are willing to do more than the minimum because they share the goal to make both FASoS and society a little bit better.

- In which student matters are not handled according to inflexible rules but in which student matters are assessed based on rules but according to their individual situation.
- Which **teaches, researches and practises sustainability**.
 - By taking sustainability into account in all decision-making bodies at FASoS.
 - By releasing a report annually about the endeavours concerning sustainability.
 - By supporting bottom up initiatives concerning sustainability.
- Which takes **psychological problems, workload and stress of students and staff** seriously.
 - By enabling easy and fast access to the necessary institutions.
 - By conducting surveys regularly and introducing measures in case they are needed.