

**VU**  **VRIJE  
UNIVERSITEIT  
AMSTERDAM**

**POLICY 2018-2019**

**VU** 

**FSC FSS  
Faculty  
Studentcouncil**



**HG-1A62  
FSR.FSW@VU.NL**

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## 1. Preface

The Faculty Student Council (FSC) is the democratically chosen participation body of the students of the Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS). As FSC we represent the interests of all students within the faculty. This we do by the means of the consent and advisory rights we have on faculty policy. To be able to represent all students, it is of grave importance to stay in close contact with the students and to stay informed of developments within the faculty. It is the responsibility of the council to articulate the needs of the students in order to guarantee the quality of education, among other things.

In the coming year we will achieve this by continuing the work of the FSC 2017 – 2018. The themes ‘quality of education’ and ‘visibility and accessibility’ are therefore also of paramount importance to us. With seven enthusiastic, sociable and motivated members we begin the council year of the FSC 2018 – 2019.

## 2. Who is the FSC?

The FSC FSS 2018 – 2019 consists of seven council members, each with their own tasks and corresponding portfolios. The daily board is formed by the chairman, the vice-chairman and the treasurer. We have chosen to rearrange a number of functions. For example, the position of secretary-treasurer is split up, the vice-chairman will get the role of secretary added to her duties. The position of treasurer and project coordinator are in their turn put together as well. In addition to this we have created a new position: the so-called communication coordinator. We have made this choice so that we are able to intensify contact with the students. Specifications of the task distribution and the corresponding portfolios can be found below (see 2.1. Council members and 2.2. Portfolios).

### 2.1. Council members

#### Chairman

This year Sanne-Minouk van den Broek is the chairman of the council. Sanne-Minouk is a third-year student in Public Administration and Organisation Science. In her position she is the first point of contact, and ultimately responsible for the functioning of the council. The chairman provides all council member with sufficient handles and information, so they are able to carry out their duties properly. This is primarily a facilitating role, in which the chairman in cooperation with the vice-chairman supervises. In addition, the chairman maintains in frequent contact with external parties to keep abreast of all developments within the faculty and to represent the interests of the students.

#### Vice-chairman & Secretary

Esther Veefkind holds the positions of vice-chairman and secretary. This year, the duties of the secretary will be a part of her duties. This entails that in addition to being responsible for supporting the chairman, the vice-chairman will also perform tasks such as checking the minutes, updating the internal agenda, archiving documents, and writing council evaluations. Besides that, Esther will also oversee the mid-year report.

### Treasurer & Project Coordinator

Megiel Kerkhoven will hold two positions: treasurer and project coordinator. Megiel is in his function responsible for the finances; drafting and accountability over the FSC budget. Within the function of project coordinator, he is primarily involved in organising projects and events. Some of those projects are annual, such as the recruitment and selection of, and the transfer to the new student council. In addition, events such as a lunch lecture and the education awards are organised by the project coordinator.

### Communication coordinator

The position of communication coordinator is held by Yousif Salhi and was created to put more focus on communication with the students. The communication coordinator is responsible for answering the mail, maintaining the social media, the VU-timeline, and the internal communication of the council members. The importance of the communication coordinator is that he is not only aware of what is going on among students, but that he communicates the actions of the council in a sufficient manner back to the students. In addition, the communication coordinator is cognisant of each council member on a personal level to ensure the cooperation within the council runs smoothly.

### Bachelor and Master Coordinator

The bachelor and master coordinator are responsible for the quality of the education of all programmes thought at the faculty of social sciences. Loes Mik will focus this year on the bachelor studies and pre-masters. Sanne Veeneman will focus on the master studies. The education coordinators are responsible for maintaining close contact with the programme committees (PCs) and for ensuring the quality of education. The PCs are in closer proximity to the programmes and therefore have a better view on programme specific issues. In addition to this, the education coordinators are responsible for everything concerning the exam regulations and all educational developments, including pre-master and minor programmes.

### Research & Internationalisation Coordinator

Thijmen Santen will combine the positions of research coordinator and internationalisation coordinator with great enthusiasm. The research coordinator is responsible for setting out, for example, questionnaires among students and analysing the results. The FSC uses these results to get a better grasp on the opinions of the students.

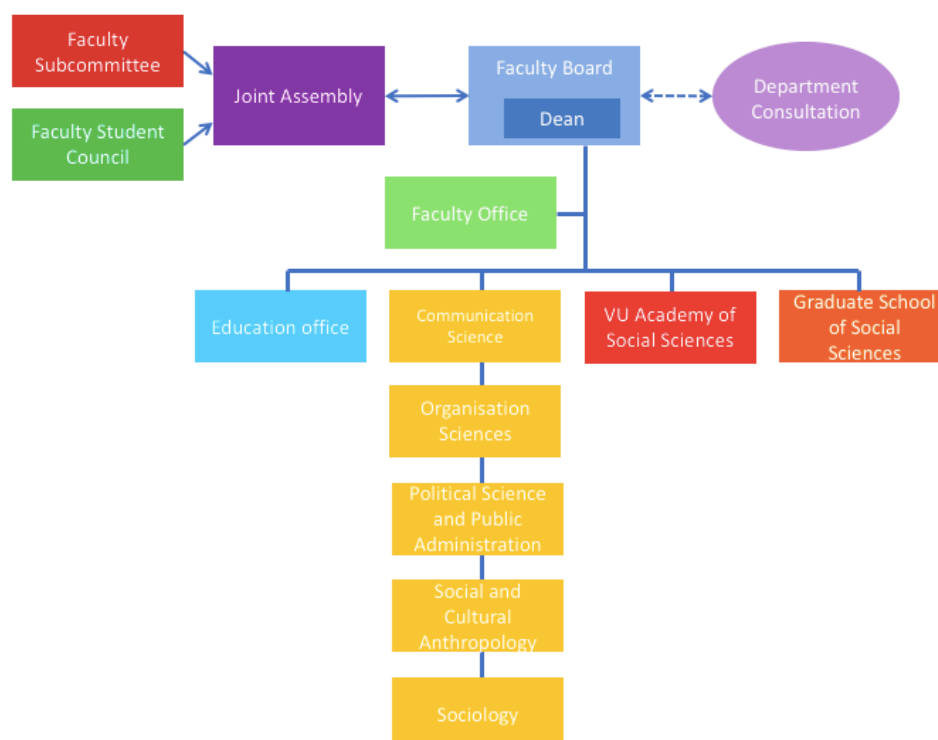
In the past year (2017 – 2018) a new role has been created which will be continued this year: internationalisation coordinator. The aim of this is to give extra strength to the internationalisation of the faculty. The coordinator, in cooperation with the Internationalisation Committee (IC), is working on the development of an international character of the faculty and the guidance of these students. Next to this, he also ensures that the internationalisation process of the faculty will proceed smoothly.

## 2.2. Portfolios

Portfolio	Coordinator	Supportive
<b>Budget</b>	Treasurer/project coordinator	Chair, vice-chairman/secretary, communication coordinator
<b>PC</b>	Bachelor and master coordinator	-
<b>Examination</b>	Bachelor and master coordinator	Research/ internationalisation coordinator
<b>Internationalisation</b>	Research/internationalisation coordinator	Chair, vice-chairman/secretary
<b>Communication</b>	Communication coordinator	Vice-chairman/secretary
<b>Timelines</b>	Communication coordinator	Bachelor and master coordinator, vice-chairman/secretary
<b>Activities</b>	Treasurer/project coordinator	Communication coordinator, research/internationalisation coordinator
<b>Mid-year report</b>	Vice-chairman/secretary	-

## 2.3. How does joint decision-making work?

Below you will find an organisational chart concerning the participation the bodies of the faculty of social sciences. The FSC is equivalent to the faculty subcommittee (ODC) and is treated as such. The personnel committee consists of delegated teachers who are committed to the interests of all teachers within the faculty. The faculty board (FB), the ODC and the FSC meet in the joint assembly (GV) to discuss important faculty topics.



## 2.4. Rights

Legally, the FSC has seven types of rights: right of consent; advisory right; right of initiative; right to information; the right of hearing; education right; and protection right. Of these, consent and advisory rights are by far the most important.

### Advisory right:

- Matters concerning the course of affairs of the faculty;
- The faculty policy regarding educational facilities;
- The faculty policy regarding student facilities.

### Right of consent:

- Determination of or changes to the faculty regulations;
- Determination of or changes to a part of the education and examination regulations (OER);
- Adoption or changes to the regulations of the joint assembly;
- Determining the most important aspects of the faculty budget, including any annual reports.

## 3. Vision

We want to make a FSC community from our faculty where all students, Dutch and international, feel free and motivated to join more than just the classes, like side activities within the faculty and their professional development. All action we will perform this year will be in the best interest of this vision to create a motivational ambiance at the faculty. This vision we be made more concrete in the objectives below.

## 4. Objectives

### 4.1. Quality of education

The main goal of the faculty is to guarantee the quality of education. The FSC contributes by letting the students' voice be heard within the faculty. One way of achieving this is to provide the students with tools and sufficient information. By this means every student can get the best out of their studies.

To ensure the quality of education, the FSC takes part in various task groups and meetings. These are the regular tasks of the FSC. Next to that there are a number of things we want to promote in the academic year 2018 – 2019, such as the state of affairs concerning course information and the monitoring of the development of the new English bachelors programme Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology.

#### 4.1.1. Course information

At the start of a new term there are certain things expected of a student in preparation of the courses. Often the student has to have read some literature and textbooks must be purchased. What is expected of the student can be found in the course manual, which the teacher uploads on Canvas before the new term commences. We strive that teachers will make all the course information available at least one week before the term starts. This way students can prepare for the first week of the term by purchasing the textbooks and studying the right material.



#### 4.1.2. Examination

As the FSC we consider representative exams as crucial. An examination must be taken in a suitable manner, that is exams with several open questions – in which a lot must be written – have to be made digitally.

A great wish of the students is the availability of a representative trial exam for each course. Many students are dissatisfied, either about the quality of the trial exams or about the availability. By making a trial exam, students can properly prepare for the final exam. We want to encourage teachers to make a trial that accurately reflects the material.

#### 4.1.3. Course and programme evaluations

At the end of each course a course evaluation will be made available on VU.net. We want to stimulate students to fill these out, so a clear view on the course will be developed. Not only the content of the lectures is a part of the evaluation, but also the didactic skills of the lecturers, the workload, and the examinations are discussed. These evaluations are then reviewed by the programme committees (PCs) of the relevant studies, and the results are reported to the students who have followed the course. In this manner, insight is gained into the workings of the course any problems will come to light. The same applies to the programme evaluation at the end of each academic year. The feedback from the evaluations and the PCs are also processed by the FSC.

#### 4.1.4. Open dialogue

In order to give students the opportunity to express their opinion on the faculty and the curriculum, this year we will organise so-called ‘walk-in sessions’. As student council we like to hear from as many students as possible. Additionally, by ensuring good communication with the programme committees we will hear what the state of affairs is within the bachelor and master programmes.

#### 4.1.5. Guidance students in special circumstances

Little attention within the faculty is paid to students with a disability or who have other special circumstances. For example, a healthcare coordinator is not present in our faculty. This year we want to ensure that this will be placed high on the agenda of the FSS, to make sure we represent all students.

#### 4.1.6. Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology

This academic year a new bachelor’s programme was introduced at the FSS: ‘Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology’. This is an English version of the Dutch bachelor ‘Culturele Antropologie en Ontwikkelingssociologie’. The two programmes will coexist within the faculty. The introduction of the bachelor is in line with the internationalisation process at the faculty (see 4.3. Internationalisation). Since other bachelors at the faculty will also develop in a similar way in the coming years, it is very important that this first English-taught bachelor’s programme is developed properly. We will monitor this by having close contact with the students – both international and Dutch – and teachers within this programme, including the PC.

#### 4.1.7. Social Sciences for Society

Social Sciences for Society (SS4S) is a collective of courses in the second year of all bachelor students at the faculty. These courses are spread over two periods in which three topics can be chosen: Diversity, Networks, and Globalisation. Last academic year, this course was introduced to the faculty with the aim of students working in an interdisciplinary environment in order to create a full-fledged view of social problems in contemporary society.

Since SS4S was a new course, it came with teething problems. Many students experienced difficulties with choosing a subject as there was too little information on the

content of the courses. Also, the registration for the working groups did not function as desired and the differences between the courses were greater than expected, while they should be of the same calibre. As the FSC, we will closely monitor the process at the start of this course.

## 4.2. Information provision

### 4.2.1. Educational guidance

Many moments during your study requires making choices that are of great influence on the rest of your career. By providing counselling and information from specialized personnel at the right time, students are given a fair chance at making a choice that is in their best interest.

#### 4.2.1.1. Study tracks

Several studies require students to follow a certain track, so called “specialty”. We have learned from previous experience that students find it hard to get this information concerning the content of a track and the impact it has on their career. By creating defined moments we want to facilitate students in their choice. Students with experience within those tracks can share their knowledge and help other students to make a choice (see 4.2.2).

#### 4.2.1.2. Elective semester

Every study within the FSS has an elective semester in the first semester of the third year. In this period students are free to choose a minor, an internship or extracurricular courses at this university, at another university or abroad as long as it is worth 30 EC. Former research from the FSC taught us that there is a lack of information concerning the different possibilities for the elective semester. Especially minors at other universities or internships severely lack information provision towards students. By organising meetings for students, we want to provide more information considering all the possibilities which should make it easier for students to make a choice.

#### 4.2.1.3. Bachelor thesis

Students experience a late provision of information considering the bachelor thesis in the third year. We would like to stimulate teachers and coordinators to provide this information earlier on so that students can better prepare for the course. We also want, in cooperation with the programme committees, to give students the opportunity to get in contact with students who have already written their bachelor thesis to gain knowledge about expectations during the thesis.

#### 4.2.1.4. Master thesis

We want to stimulate teachers and coordinators of the master thesis to provide information on time, like we argued in 4.2.1.3.

### 4.2.2. External curricular activities

There is a lot more to VU University than just studying. The FSC would like to promote the possibility of the different student jobs. The VU provides student jobs such as student assistant positions which you can help coordinate a course. Additionally, there is a possibility to promote your programme at high schools or assist at the open days of the university.

### 4.2.3. Faculty policy

Faculty policy concerns all students at the FSS. We want to notify students of changes in this policy, such as the OER, as clear as possible and give further explanation were needed.



### 4.3. Internationalisation

The VU has set the goal of making the VU a ‘truly international university’, where students and staff members are stimulated to look across borders. The internationalisation and research coordinator will work on: the development of the international character of the VU and the faculty; the quality of the English tuition; supporting international students. Lastly, the interests of students will be substantiated by research (such as surveys) to gain a clear image of what students want.

The FSS has an internationalisation commission since 2018 where two members of the FSC take part in. We will keep in close contact with the commission to represent the interests of students in the best way we can regarding internationalisation of the VU and the faculty and everything that come with it.

Furthermore, the FSC wants to provide tools to mix international and Dutch students so internationals will feel more at home at the university. An example of this are mixed classrooms and organized events.

Also, all documents and announcements will be provided in Dutch as well as in English.

### 4.4. Visibility and accessibility

It is important to us that the students we represent are well informed about the developments and possibilities at the faculty. To ensure that students receive the information that they need the FSC will take an informative roll on social media, like Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, but also through Canvas. The posted information will be available in both Dutch and English. This way we ensure that international students and exchange students receive the same information as Dutch students.

#### 4.4.1. VU time-lines

Next to social media we also provide the FSS-timelines to place information on. Last year the FSS-timelines only provided information for bachelor students. This year the FSS-timelines will also be available for master students. The platform was launched last year and contains a lot of practical information such as dates and deadlines. This year, the site will also be published in English.

## 5. Projects

This year, the FSC will organise projects that firstly aim to create a community of students and teachers and secondly to incite and motivate students. This ensures a community that has a strong content-wise foundation. To achieve this goal, we strive for a more active cooperation with faculty association EOS. Activities will be organised regarding the next three themes: student-teacher relationship, professional orientation and inclusion of international students.

### 5.1. Student-teacher relationship

Last year we experimented for the first time with the lunch-lecture, which was received very well. The goal of the lunch-lecture is that FSS-teachers present their interesting research in a lunch break. This way FSS students can learn about other research and topics outside of their discipline. This year we are planning on organizing multiple lunch-lectures.

### 5.2. Professional orientation

The FSS organises a lot of events to stimulate students to think about their professional career. Most of these events aim to help students make the choice for a certain sector or job. For the FSC the best way to improve the professional orientation of students is thus to help

them compete in the labour market. Whatever profession students will work in later, it can always help to receive good help in creating a resume or a professional LinkedIn-page.

### 5.3. Inclusion of international students

Studies in previous year have shown that international students have little knowledge of the FSS and the FSC. This year the council wants to organise an internationals lunch in the beginning of the academic year.

### 6.0. Epilogue

We are at the start of a new academic year and we are very excited to make this a great success. We want to keep on developing and improving ourselves, through new ideas and active participation in education policies at the faculty. To achieve this, we would like to hear from the students. You can stop by our room (HG-1A62) or contact us at [fsr.fsw@vu.nl](mailto:fsr.fsw@vu.nl). Furthermore, the FSC wants to thank the FSC 2017 - 2018 for their hard work and efforts in the past year and everything they have accomplished for the faculty and university.

We are ready for academic year 2018 - 2019!

On behalf of FSC FSS 2018-2019,

Sanne-Minouk van den Broek  
Esther Veefkind  
Megiel Kerkhoven  
Yousif Salhi  
Sanne Veeneman  
Loes Mik  
Thijmen Santen