

Secretarial Half-year Report 2019-2020

Introduction

Half a year has already passed where the board has enjoyed getting to know each other and getting to know the associations. During these six months, most of the policy plan has been realised. The first two FocOS groups were held where interesting insights were shared about how to deal with alumni and the increasing influx of students. More effort has put into the visual identity of OS, to let others know what we actually do as an umbrella. Opinions on the current keg system at OS events have been gathered and evaluated.

All in all, the board loved to represent all the study associations for the past half a year and is looking forward to do so for the upcoming six months. This time, with a new ET representative, who brings new positive motivation to the group.

In this report, the board reflects on the policy plan that was made at the beginning of the academic year.

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Structure of the Board

Function	Name
Chair	Jana Bergmann
Secretary & Treasurer	Niels Roosenschoon
Faculty Representative ET (CTW)	Ramon Oppers
Faculty Representative EEMCS (EWI)	Daniela van Meggelen
Faculty Representative BMS	Daan Peters
Faculty Representative S&T (TNW)	Rik Seelen

1. Reconstruction

Many structures that are prevailing within the sector study are already quite progressive compared to other umbrellas. Nevertheless, the Board of 2019-2020 thinks that it is important to further advance each aspect that shows potential for further improvements. Therefore, the faculty pre-meetings and ICOS meetings, as well as the visual identity, with focus on the website, have undergone and will undergo subsequently explained changes and updates. Furthermore, the Board has created an elaborate year planning which is accessible to all study association boards through the OS website.

1.1 Pre-Meetings

The Board wants to standardize their meetings so that they have a unified structure.

Reason: During the last year(s), the standard form of pre-meetings slowly disappeared. This had led to an inconsistency in discussed topics which led to less information sharing than desirable.

Status: All conducted meetings are standardized up to the point that is possible; meaning that OS-wide agenda-points are all discussed in the same manner. This is done by cross-checking the agenda's of the faculty representatives and discussing the 'to-be-discussed' agenda-points in our own board meetings. In the coming month(s) we will re-evaluate the standard agenda with the new ET board members to see if points should be changed.

1.2 ICOS

The Board aims to enhance the potential of monthly ICOS meetings with respect to its structure and level of engagement.

Reason: During the academic year of 2018-2019 board members criticised that due to the imbalance between the need to discuss certain matters related to internationalization

and the density of meetings, the usefulness of ICOS meetings decreased over the year. During the last two ICOS meeting of 2018-2019, that issue was discussed and put to a vote, which lead to the decision to continue the ICOS meetings but reducing the number of meetings.

Status: During three meetings which took place in September, November and January, the participating boards had the chance to share their experiences and concerns and discuss specific issues. To make the aim of ICOS more concrete, four main pillars have been chosen to be relevant for the rest of the year. The main focus will be on the organization of a culture fair, in which the majority of study associations will take part. Besides that, ICOS will try to provide constructive feedback for the Kick-In, support the Student Union with a potential strengthening of the Buddy system and together with UReka will look into opportunities of a minor dedicated to learning the Dutch language. Finally, a meeting will be organized to discuss the content of an advising document for the use of ICOS in upcoming year(s).

1.3 Visual Identity

The Board wants to focus more on the (social) media so associations and their members have more insight in what OS can do.

Reason: The website is currently functional, but not well-known, both outside of and within the sector study, although it is a very central platform to place information relevant for all study associations. Furthermore, it is not always clear to associations what OS exactly is doing and how they can provide aid for them.

Status: As Facebook's popularity is decreasing, especially amongst the new students, we have created an Instagram account. On both Instagram and Facebook, we will post relevant topics and events where OS is present. Lastly, we would like to remind the associations and other OS-related parties that you can ask us to post and share information about study-related events or happenings. We will look into options to be more active on social media during the second half of the year.

1.4 Year Planning

At the beginning of the academic year, study association boards will be given an indication of the approximate time frame in which GMA topics will arise and events will take place.

Reason: Currently, the OS websites presents important dates of events, GMAs and other momentums. It delivers a good overview about upcoming OS activities and conveys the dates of certain brother activities that can be valuable for fellow study association boards. The Board of 2019 - 2020 would like to additionally inform about upcoming GMA -, FocOs group- (see Policy Point 2.) and pre-meeting topics.

Status: The year planning has been created in the beginning of the academic year, sent to all associations and uploaded on the website. Most dates remained accurate and changes have been announced during GMAs or via email contact. For the second half of

the year, the planning will be updated and adjusted at least once. The usefulness of such a planning will be evaluated at the end of the year.

2. FocOS Group

One focus group session will be organized per module to discuss matters that concern many or all associations more in-depth than it can be done during the OS GMAs.

Reason: Usually all topics that concern several associations can be either discussed during the pre-meetings or during the OS GMAs. However, both momentums are usually limited in time, to discuss urgent matters and therefore do not leave a lot of space for elaborate discussions. Additionally, during the OS GMAs a rather formal atmosphere is prevailing, which might keep Board members from speaking up or diving deeper into certain discussions. The atmosphere during the pre-meetings is less official but is limited in the sense of diversity of associations. Within each faculty, different problems might occur but also solutions for or ideas about specific topics might vary.

Status: The first 2 FocOS Group sessions have been organized. These were about Alumni and the Influx of students. In the sub-chapters, these sessions are further elaborated on.

2.1 Sustainability

Organise a moment to discuss the possibilities for a more sustainable association.

Reason: Sustainability is a hot topic nowadays. Last year, some study associations felt the need to discuss certain topics about sustainability during the OS GMA. Therefore, it is assumed that there is a need to discuss 'sustainability' in a more extensive way.

Status: The sustainability FocOS Group session did not take place yet. The prevailing idea is to make it take place in March and combine it with a small workshop/presentation provided by the student association Sustain. A survey has been send out on behalf of OS and Sustain to prepare for that session. The two boards are currently discussing potentially concrete plans for a feasible structure and execution.

2.2 Mental Health

The Board wants to spread awareness for the Red Desk (SACC), psychologists, and other forms of mental support.

Reason: As the pressure on students is only increasing and the burnout rates are higher than ever, it is very important to make them aware of the possibilities of mental support that are present here at university.

Status: At the moment of writing, the first steps for organizing this FocOS session have been taken. An e-mail is send to the SACC (the Student Affairs Coaching & Counselling), where also the Student Psychologists are working. The session is planned to be organized in April, and will contain 2 different subtopics. The first topic is: "What can

we do as a Board, if someone from our Board has struggles?” The second topic is: “What can we do as a Board, if we see a member of our association has struggles?”

2.3. Alumni

Initiate discussions with respect to alumni (associations) across different faculties.

Reason: Many boards are facing struggles to get in touch with Alumni or at least prompting those alumni to remain active. At the same time, the university and faculties are expecting the study associations to bridge the gap between alumni, current students and the programme.

Status: Due to some miscommunication, the minutes were distributed quite late. Nevertheless, we think that it was a nice opportunity for the associations to learn from each other. An additional benefit was the presence of Arianne Colenbrander from the alumni office. Both the study associations and the alumni office were able to learn from each other.

2.4. Influx of students

Gather data about the influx of students and present the outcome to the study associations.

Reason: For years has the influx of students not only affected, the student life and study atmosphere within the university, but also at other academic institutions of the Netherlands. The number of students in the coming years is expected to increase further and thereby the associated consequences (inefficient room scheduling, insufficient student housing, overcrowded campus facilities). It is not the task of study associations to regulate this influx but due to the fact of being directly affected by it, they might have to adjust to the circumstances.

Status: The FocOS Group session dedicated to the discussion of the Influx of students has taken place. Representatives of UReka and DAS have attended that session to inform the University Councils and brought the topic up to the Executive Board in written and verbal form. Furthermore, after study association boards and independent students have been asked for input, employees of relevant departments, such as the University Council, several positions within CES and SAS, several positions within Marketing and Communications including the Alumni Office, several positions within Campus and Facility Management and each faculty, have been inquired and the information gathered in a document which is being presented to the Executive Board. Two meetings have already taken place to discuss the matter with members of the Executive Board and another one is taking place to discuss more concrete steps, which could be taken on the short term and on the long term. We will continue collaborating with the Student Union and the University Councils on this topic, also with respect to the effect of internationalization of the UT.

2.5. Attention towards smaller associations within OS

The Board wants to include and engage the smaller associations within OS more.

Reason: These associations are often more on the background and possibly forgotten by other associations whenever big activities are being organised. As they are also a significant part of OS, the Board wants to focus on them to integrate with other associations and be more actively present.

Status: Smaller boards, especially within the BMS faculty, have proven to be a challenge to integrate, due to their board members often being part-time. As their time is limited, it is understandable that they are not as active as other boards in the many events there are. However, these associations should not be forgotten. We are focusing on representing these associations as good as possible during for example discussions with the Student Union about activism grants and recognition. The Focus Group aiming at finding solutions to integrate those associations, as well as looking into ways to facilitate the ET faculty to connect with others more easily after their board change in February will still take place at a later stage in the year.

3. Integration

Working together, you can achieve a lot more. That is why it is very important for the boards of different study associations to get to know each other. To achieve this, The Board is taking a look at how OS can accommodate the networking amongst brother associations.

3.1 OS-Cup - Restructuring

Make the OS-Cup (visible on the OS website under “Important Documents”) more open and likable to all associations.

Reason: The OS-cup is a way to stimulate integration by handing out points for doing things with or at other associations. While the goal of this competition is clear and very nice, not every association participates actively in this.

Status: Associations have been quite active in showing the Board what they are doing to gain OS points. These are mostly for fun and social activities, but some other (more serious) topics are also being participated in. It is not certain whether the OS-cup actually invited board members to do certain activities more, but it is nice to see how much the board members and their associations are integrating with each other.

3.2 OS - Kegs

The “Throw in a keg”-system will be evaluated on, to see what most associations prefer.

Reason: During the past years, during the OS activities, OS throws in a keg first, and afterwards other boards can throw in a keg. According to our opinion, this could lead to high financial costs for smaller boards, while they are ‘forced’ or at least feel they are ‘forced’ to throw in a keg as boards. Another problem that appears is that there are associations that do not throw in a keg often, so they only ‘profit’ from the kegs of other associations.

Status: First, an investigation of the “thrown-in kegs” in the last years is made. The anonymous division is shown in figure 3.1. This is the division of all the kegs thrown in over the last 5 years. However, there is no factor used to compare with attendance of associations. As can be seen, there is a lot of difference between different associations.

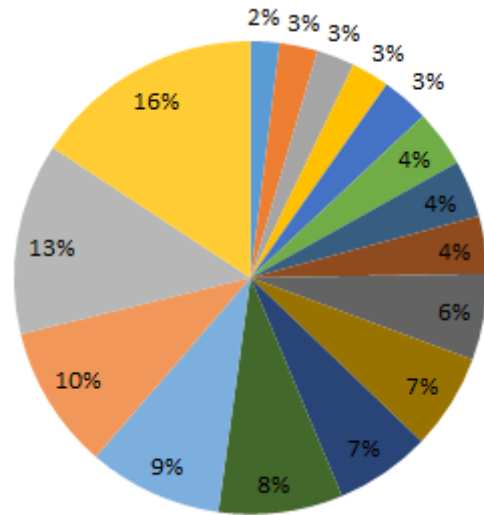


Figure 3.1 Division of kegs during the last 5 years

In order to investigate if the current system is still appropriate, a survey is send around all associations. 14 associations did fill in this survey and the result is that the majority of the associations is in favor of this system (57%). Therefore, it is decided **to not change** the system. However, a very useful remark is that Boards should inform their Candidate-Boards about the system, so that expectations become clearer.

4. Representation

Study associations are there to represent the students. OS is there to represent all study associations. This is especially important for the new students.

4.1 Freshmen

The Board will be serving as an information source representing all study associations towards freshmen.

Reason: Most of the time it is impractical to let all study associations be present at an informative event for students. Letting OS be there instead, The Board can represent all study associations as every faculty has their representative and have one central point of contact.

Status: OS was present on the facility market of both, the normal Kick-In, as well as the Winter Kick-In, to represent all study associations. In case of the latter, the board also requested all study associations to provide them with some information about their

association so that OS can represent them even better. It works well in the sense that new students have one central spot to go to, instead of 19 different stands. For board members, it is also nice that they don't have to stay at the event for a whole day to answer only a few questions. It seems like a more efficient system.

Committees and Responsibilities

Committee	Responsible Board Member
Activism Grants Committee (AC)	Jana Bergmann
Alcohol Umbrella Committee	Ramon Oppers
Audit Committee	Niels Roosenschoon
Convention of Education Officers (CEO)	Daan Peters
External Affairs Assembly (EA)	Rik Seelen
Internationalisation Committee (ICOS)	Jana Bergmann
Kick-In Organisation of Study Associations Committee (KIOSK)	Daniela van Meggelen
Study trip Committee (SC)	Niels Roosenschoon
University of Twente Educational Award (UTEA)	Rik Seelen

Responsibility	Responsible Board Member
BHV/IVA	Daan Peters
FOBOS	Ramon Oppers, Niels Roosenschoon
GalOS	Daniela van Meggelen
ICT/Website	Daniela van Meggelen
Student Union Meetings	Jana Bergmann
Umbrella Meetings	Daan Peters, Jana Bergmann