

Mental-Health committee OS (MentOS)

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1. Introduction

Whilst the topic of mental health and well-being of students has been a topic within the university for some time now, the past year has only confirmed this importance even further. Awareness might be increasing but there are still steps to take in integrating and normalizing dialogue about mental health and student well-being at the university. Whilst the university has put mechanisms in place to assist students with their well-being, an even greater focus is expected for the coming years. The OSb 2021-1 believes the Student Associations can play an important role due to their close relationship with the students. Following a FocOS group about mental health in October 2020, an internal working group was set up to discuss mental health and well-being within the associations which was the driver in implementing an official committee under the supervision of OS. The following document will highlight the possible structure such a committee can have and matters it can focus on during the upcoming academic year. One must realize that the current proposal is not including strict guidelines but merely suggestions to the composition. The academic year 2021-2022 will be used as a pilot to explore the role this committee can have within the university structure.

2. Structure

Following internal evaluation and the consultation of external parties, a proposed structure was established. Comparable to committees such as the ICOS or CEO, the proposed committee will be constituted of representatives from associations and parties of interest within the university (see Figure 1). The general idea of the committee is that representatives of associations and parties of interest have, in the first place, a platform to discuss topics concerning mental health and well-being within associations. Depending on the topics, the committee can decide to meet monthly but as the first year will be used to figure out the inner workings of the committee, additional tasks can be assigned. The opportunity to start working groups within the committees who will work on projects, activities, or events will be supported. The committee will be led by one chair who will be chosen from one of the study associations. The room booking, secretary selection, and data storage can be all done according to personal preference. Whilst unclear at this point, OS can look into the possibilities to allocate a budget towards such a committee to support mental health and well-being initiatives within associations.

3. Involved Parties

The involved parties are for now split up into those who will be at the core of the meetings and parties that will be involved but less frequent or less actively. With regards to whom should attend this meeting, each party involved should search for a representative within their association to be the contact person that can influence the meeting. A full overview can be found in figure 1. Note that possible parties can be added at a later stage.

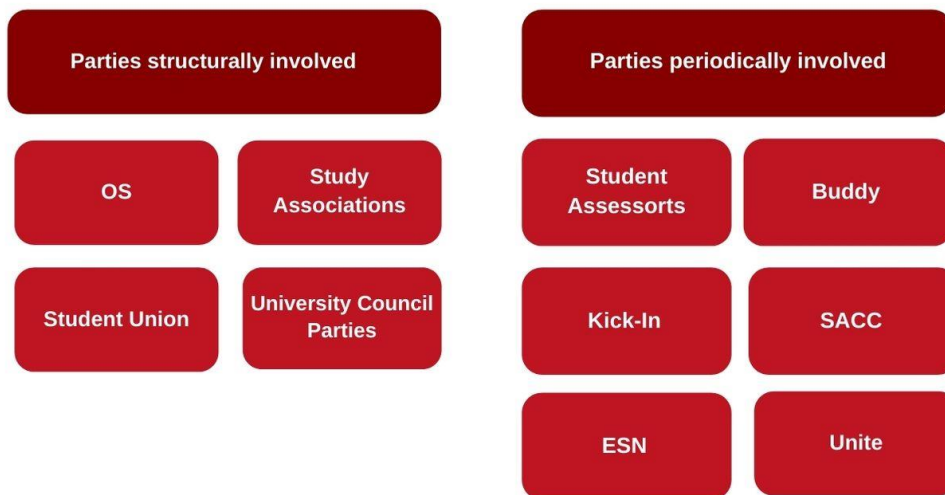


Figure 1: Organizational Chart Parties of Interest

4. Possible focus area's

The overarching theme this committee will discuss is the well-being and mental health at the University of Twente. Whilst this is a broad topic, a few focus areas should be established to work more effectively. The following part will provide some possible focus areas that this committee could work with but the room will be made available to add more throughout the year.

At the start of the academic year, a large focus will be on reintegrating students into physical education and this is accompanied by the mental health campaign. The committee could play a large role in integrating and involving the associations to create more awareness surrounding these weeks. The then-appointed boards are also given the opportunity to reflect on their policy and goals for the year to set the tone. Additionally, there are other areas at university that affect well-being, think about focus areas such as discrimination and inclusion, sexual misconduct, or LGBTQ+ matters. These are just some suggestions that the committee can be involved in. Leading up to the next academic year and throughout, the committee can gain more body as more parties will be consulted.

The OSb 2021-1 hopes to have informed you adequately about the proposition for a new committee next year and hopes the parties involved view the importance just as much as we do.