



LONG-TERM PLAN

2020 - 2023

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PREFACE

Dear reader,

This is the Long-Term Plan for 2020 – 2023 of the Vereniging voor Studenten Psychologie en Pedagogiek aan de Vrije Universiteit (VSPVU). With this Long-Term Plan a guideline is drawn up for the upcoming three years. This ensures an association that keeps developing. In addition, this Long-Term Plan provides guidance and stability in the Policy Plans of the upcoming Boards.

This plan has been implemented through evaluations of the previous Long-Term Plan and by ideas that have emerged during a meeting where at least one delegate from the 70th Board, 71st Board, 72nd Board and 73rd Board was present. Feedback of 74th Candidacy Board has also been received and implemented when finalizing this plan. This Long-Term Plan will outline a profile of the association and objectives for the upcoming years. In addition, ideas will be put forward so that these key points can be realized.

With kind regards,

THE 73RD BOARD OF THE VSPVU

Chairwoman

Kirsten Koolhof

Secretary

Andrew de Ruiter

Treasurer

Alessia van Overbeeke

Commissioner Communication and Media

Kerem Özel

Commissioner External Relations

Karlo Welch

INTRODUCTION

The VSPVU was founded in 1947 and is a continuation of the Vereniging Studenten Psychologie aan de Vrije Universiteit and the Vereniging voor Pedagogische Wetenschappen, called 'Hilaritas'. This merger was mainly from a practical point of view, because the two associations were located under one faculty. The association started as a study-oriented association, but now it also organizes a variety of other activities.

Through this fourth Long-Term Plan we strive for steady progress within the association. This Long-Term Plan should be used as a guideline for the upcoming years and will give the upcoming Boards more guidance for their Policy Plan. The attachment to this Long-Term Plan contains specific ideas that will make it possible to achieve the goals for the upcoming years.

This Long-Term Plan, together with the Policy Plan, will be evaluated at the end of every academic year during the General Meeting.

CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS

In 2020 the VSPVU consists of 16 committees with 5 pilot committees, which are the Ouderdagcie, Liftcie, Opcie, Tranz and Sportcie. All the 16 committees organize different types of activities. In addition to these committees there is a Board, Advisory Board and a Financial Audit. The VSPVU consists of active members, inactive members, former members and alumni. An active member is a member who is active in one of the committees during the academic year. The activities of the committees have a broad spectrum with multiple subjects. There is a place for academic related activities such as lectures, excursions and career related events. And there is also a place for leisure activities such as parties, study trips and borrels. There are around 100 active members in the year 2019-2020. The growth of new members per year varies. During the academic year of 2019-2020 the association gained below 55% of the first-year students as new members. There are approximately 1800 members in 2020. There was a big increase in first year students for the bachelor Psychology. Therefore, the study will become numerus fixus from 2020-2021 onwards. This means there will be no more than 600 first year students.

In the academic year 2016-2017 the association has become international. All of her activities and communication is available in English and mostly Dutch, only the Pedcie is in Dutch since this is focused on the Dutch study 'Pedagogische Wetenschappen'. In the academic year 2018-2019 the Board has spent much time to develop further internationalization of the association by translating important documents and all transcripts into English except the Pedcie-documents. From 2018-2019 there is a new pilot committee, the Sportcie. This committee started in the year of 2018-2019 and focuses on different types of sports activities. The Tranz was changed into the Online Committee in the year 2019-2020. This was found unsuccessful and needs to be altered in the upcoming years.

In the year of 2016-2017 the VSPVU-Room moved to the Medical Faculty, there is a new Bavaria bar with two taps. Some furniture in the VSPVU-room is changed to make the room more inviting. The communication goes mostly through social media platforms with posts on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and through email. However, LinkedIn needs more attention than it is currently getting. From the year 2019-2020 Snapchat was dropped and a WhatsApp group for active members was created. The website has been redesigned to be more interactive, has more prominent images and the menu has been reorganized to be more accessible with a better overview. Offline there is still promotion through posters and regular lecture talks. In addition, changes have been made to the Internal Regulations that affect voting on the Candidacy Board and a mourning protocol has been added in the year 2018-2019.

LONG-TERM PLAN

Below you can find the goals of which the Long-Term Plan has been established.

COMMITMENT

It is of great importance for the VSPVU to have interesting activities in order to gain engagement from members. It is also of great importance for the association to have members which are committed to joining and organising activities and to the VSPVU in general. Although interest for joining activities remains at a positive level, a decrease has been experienced over the past years, and the interest for joining committees to organize them is also decreasing. This has been demonstrated clearly by the fact that despite the increased efforts to attract active members, it is still a challenge to find enough members and often times a committee has to start without getting full, or even some committees got cancelled due to not finding enough members. It has also been noticed that the commitment in the structural activities and organisations, with for example the General Meetings and the Board, has been decreasing significantly over the past years. To improve the commitment of members for the association and how to gain interest of students in becoming an active member and in structural meetings and organisations, consideration should be given into how gaining commitment to the overall foundations of the VSPVU can be improved. It is also of great importance perhaps to evaluate the application procedures that we implement. Since it is difficult to find both active members, chairmen and board members, one can argue that our application systems are outdated and needs to be reformed.

ACTIVITIES

The VSPVU has a lot of amazing committees and with all the committees we try to offer a broad spectrum of subjects. In this way we hope that all the VSPVU members and Psychology and Child Studies students are interested in the activities and feel connected to the association. We noticed that the year schedule was delayed and altered resulting in some weeks having too many events (up to 4 or 5). Besides that, sometimes they were not well balanced; such as more alcohol involving than educational activities were present. There is a decrease in attending activities from the members and this is due to various factors which can be related to for example, having an unbalanced year schedule. Therefore, new Boards should take the problem of finding active members and the amount of activities into account when making a year schedule and policy plan. It is advised that the current board assess their current situation carefully and look into influences on their year such as the prior board's year and the introduction week preceding their board year. It is also advised that boards focus on attendance to activities and quality of activities instead of the amount of them. Focus on the evaluation of events so that patterns of low attendance or unsatisfactory events don't persist.

INTERNATIONALIZATION

Internationalisation was a very important aspect beginning with the addition of the English track of the Psychology course in the academic year 2017-2018. By internationalization it is meant that an adaptation was made to the VSPVU in order to welcome international students from around the world. During this year, the 71st Board adapted well by presenting lectures in English, having the website and posters for events in English and overall the internationalization went successful. However, since then it has been stated by multiple members, during meetings and events that internationalization has not been achieved in the best manner, such as, but not limited to, renaming the committee names. Therefore, upcoming Boards should evaluate the added value of internationalization and optimal steps be taken.

TARGET GROUPS

The VSPVU is an association for all Psychology and Pedagogical Sciences students and thus, has the responsibility to reach out to and represent all of them. However, according to the increasing feedback, VSPVU, at times, has failed to maintain the balance between her social and educational aspects. Due to this, it is especially important to avoid piling up certain types of events, such as 'drinking events' or 'educational events', whilst neglecting the other types. Furthermore, over the years, we see that the educational aspect of the VSPVU is focusing mainly on providing lectures and failing to provide career related content. It is important to also target those students who wish to enhance their future career in the work-field, such as Master Students and third-year students. In other words, it is important not to neglect students who are primarily interested in the social or educational side of the VSPVU and important to differentiate giving lectures on certain topics and providing career content. Furthermore, the main promotion platforms of VSPVU events are Instagram and Facebook. But there are many students who are either unaware of these platforms, or choose not to follow them and therefore, it is important to come up with solutions to reach out to these students as well. Finally, it has been shown that the interest to join events from third-year students is decreasing. A reason might be that these students are much busier with their minor courses and with writing their Bachelor Thesis. A way to attract these students can be by making sure the 'education' and 'career' aspects of VSPVU is optimally promoted and reached out to them.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Looking back to the past couple of years it has turned out that cooperation with Externals should be considered more. Organising big events such as the Career Day together are experienced as less effective. On the other hand, the cooperation with other study associations during low key events, such as a borrel or the MF-Battle, has been very positive for both members and external connections. That brings us to the suggestion to look into options for organizing more approachable activities along with other study associations.

EPILOGUE

With this Long-Term Plan, we hope to provide guidance for the upcoming Boards. For the goals that are stated here, the aim is to achieve them within three years. It is important that every Board remains aware of the Long-Term Plan when writing a Policy Plan and when implementing their policies. With this Long-Term Plan, we expect to preserve the VSPVU as a sociable, professional and innovative association.



ATTACHMENT

In this attachment you will find concrete ideas for achieving the goals per aspect. This plan is created to be a guideline, so examples given are not mandatory to be implemented.

COMMITMENT

To improve the commitment of students and active members for the association, it is important to understand if the current setup for reaching students is sufficient. For example, we recommend to organize and distribute a survey or questionnaire at the start of the academic year to get an understanding of what students hope to experience or achieve with VSPVU throughout the year, and to have another survey at the end of the academic year to get an understanding if those experiences or achievements have met and if not, how improvements can be made. This way, the Board gets an understanding of what the students want this year and at the end of the year students get a feeling that their opinions actually matter and that VSPVU thinks about them, which might ensure commitment for the upcoming years. Perhaps for promoting the survey and evaluating what steps have been done with it, giving a brief mention in a lecture talk can be beneficial. More effortless solution such as asking students what they want via Instagram Stories can also be an option. What can also be of great use when getting commitment from current active members is to use and promote programs like the Battle of the Committees. Even though the most optimal incentive for members to join the General Meetings would be to gain insights for actively listening to what's being said in there, rather than receiving points for attendance, BOTC is still considered useful to get more members to join to the General Meetings because it also promotes a sense of 'being together' and creates commitment. Perhaps it would also be of great use if chairmen encourage their committee members to join the meeting by emphasizing their importance for the well-being of the association and for their committee as well, since they might hear things that are important for the well-functioning of their committee. In order to make sure chairmen engage in such encouragement, a minor training at the beginning of the year can be given by the current board. Furthermore, to get non-active members to join the General Meetings as well, their importance to the association should clearly be emphasized in the promotion materials. Providing further benefits, such as free meal and drinks, can also help, and it is important to promote this aspect to members as clearly as possible. Perhaps use of themes, such as the ones we have with borrels and parties, and additional activities which complement the General Meeting can be implemented to make them perceived as more 'fun'.

ACTIVITIES

The committees are considered an added value to the associations. Though it was found that there are too many activities. Therefore, there should be relooked into the committees during writing the policy plan and setting up the year schedule. Some committees have an overlap in activities, such as the Opcie and the LEX. These committees can be easily combined in a for example 'Psychology Committee'. The interest in the parties have been decreasing in the couple of years, though the interest in the borrels has grown. Activities of Barcie have also been popular. There should be looked at how to combine these three and make it a separate successful addition to the association.

A suggestion can be a gala committee who will organize one big gala a year. The Board can organize the Barco activities since this will be a low effort. The Barcie can then organize the borrels at the Heeren van Aemstel in her place. These are all recommendations which do not need to be followed but can be beneficial for the continuation of the association.

INTERNATIONALIZATION

One main aspect that sticks out of the internationalization efforts are the committee names, which used to rhyme as they were Dutch words and for many internationals this added an essence of mystery and some motivation to find out about the committees thus learning some Dutch. Currently, we have English adapted names that don't rhyme too well. It is good to always remember that the VSPVU provides for both Dutch and English-speaking members but it is suggested that some things can be returned to Dutch without affecting the internationalization aspects of the VSPVU. An example of this being the committee names or lectures/workshops that are accessible to international students, but which revolve around the Dutch language and/or culture, such as a language course.

TARGET GROUPS

In order to avoid putting much emphasis on one aspect and neglecting the other, such as organizing too many drinking activities, it is highly advised to set up the Year-Planning in a way that different types of events are distributed evenly throughout the year. Also, it is highly advised to check the year schedule regularly and apply it with flexibility. During the beginning you may have missed certain aspects that might be crucial to an evenly spread schedule. Furthermore, VSPVU consists of committees with a main goal of promoting interaction within students and some of these committees are specifically created to produce alcohol involving events. Therefore, it is important to stimulate other – social related - committees to organize events which do not promote alcohol and can still promote social interaction. In order to reach out to students who don't follow VSPVU on social media as well, it is advised to hold consistent lecture talks and try to be more interactive with students when the lecture is over. This can be achieved for example, by setting up a stand next to the exit of the lecture hall and providing them with flyers or any other promotional material. The website can also be a great way to reach the target groups. Also, it is recommended to keep good relationships with tutors because they can also help promoting VSPVU to their students. A 'good relationship' can be achieved with for example, organizing a Tutor Borrel at the beginning of the year. To increase interest of third-year students which can as well be done via consistent lecture talks and good relationships with tutors. And as already mentioned, attention should be given to make sure educational side of VSPVU is not neglected and promoted optimally (perhaps more effort is needed in the platform LinkedIn to promote educational events) just like other types of events. Finally, don't hesitate to contact other associations to receive tips on how to deal with issues that are mentioned in here.