

Report VeSte

Influence evening lectures on the functioning of boards and committees

Wageningen, 6th March 2017

VeSte Student Council Party
Wageningen University and Research

Introduction

During period 1 and 2 of the academic year 2016-2017, the Executive Board (EB) held the pilot evening lectures among 2000 students. The EB considers extending the course schedule in order to accommodate the growing number of students. An external agency is in charge of evaluating the pilot and has held a survey, as well as some in-depth interviews among students, lecturers and supporting staff. Experiences of student and study associations were only assessed via an online questionnaire to the boards.

In the online survey from the external agency, questions only comprehended activities in the evening and did not look into the specific functioning of the boards and their active members in committees. VeSte is of the opinion that the latter is of great importance, since the experiences students gain by doing a board or a committee help develop them. Therefore VeSte started a survey on December 6th amongst board and committee members of student organisations of Wageningen University. This report will elaborate on the results of the VeSte survey.

Contents

Introduction 2
Contents 5
Demography 7
Questions 8
Results 9
Conclusion 12

Demography

The total number of respondents is 113. From personal contact, it became clear that some boards filled in the survey together, instead of individually. It was estimated from the data that this might have been the case with five boards. Of the board members, 28 respondents reported that they, or other board members, have evening lectures. Of the committee members who meet in the evening (66 of 71), 49 respondents have evening lectures themselves, or other committee members do (Table 1). If the board and committee respondents are separated by their origin, an equal division is noticed in the board responses. In the committee responses, half of the respondents belonged to a student association and 20% to study associations (Table 2). The group 'other' consists of the organisations ISOW, IxESN, Integrand and Unipartners.

<i>Boards</i>	
nr. respondents	42
with evening lectures	9
other members have evening lectures	19
no evening lectures	14
<i>Committees</i>	
nr. respondents	71
with meetings in evening	66
with evening lectures	18
other members have evening lectures	31
no evening lectures	17
No meetings in evening	5

Table 1, respondents specified by evening/no evening lectures

<i>Boards</i>	
nr. respondents	42
study association	10
student association	12
sport association	10
Other	10
<i>Committees</i>	
nr. respondents	71
study association	15
student association	40
sport association	15
Other	1

Table 2, respondents specified by study/student/sport or other organisation

Questions

To the board and committee members, questions were asked regarding their personal performance and the quality of the board/committee meetings (Table 3 and 4). The respondents that did not follow evening lectures, and had no board/committee members which did, were directed to the last question in the questionnaire.

The respondent has to give a score on a scale from one to five to the questions in the survey (except for question 1 of the board members, and 1 and 2 of the committee members). 'one' indicated that there was no effect at all; 'five' indicated a very large effect. After each section of the survey, respondents were asked to give remarks to the question. These remarks were used to indicate if the impact of evening lectures on the specific aspect was negative or positive.

-
- 1 do you follow any courses which contain evening lectures?
yes > 2
no, but other board members do > 2
no, neither do other board members > 7
 - 2 do evening lectures hinder your tasks as a board member? > 3
 - 3 do you notice a change in personal motivation to perform your board tasks? > 4
 - 4 did you notice a change in frequency of your board meetings? > 5
 - 5 did you notice a change in quality of your board meetings? > 6
 - 6 did you notice a change in attendance at your board meetings? > 7
 - 7 do you notice a difference in turn-up rate of your members at activities?
-

Table 3, questions posed to board members

-
- 1 my committee meetings are
during lunch > 8
in the evening > 2
both > 2
 - 2 do you follow any courses which contain evening lectures?
yes > 3
no, but other board members do > 3
no, neither do other board members > 3
 - 3 do evening lectures hinder your tasks as a committee member? > 4
 - 4 do you notice a change in personal motivation to perform your committee tasks? > 5
 - 5 did you notice a change in frequency of your committee meetings? > 6
 - 6 did you notice a change in quality of your committee meetings? > 7
 - 7 did you notice a change in attendance at your committee meetings? > 8
 - 8 do you notice a change in interest among other members of your organisation to join your committee?
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Table 4, questions posed to committee members

Results

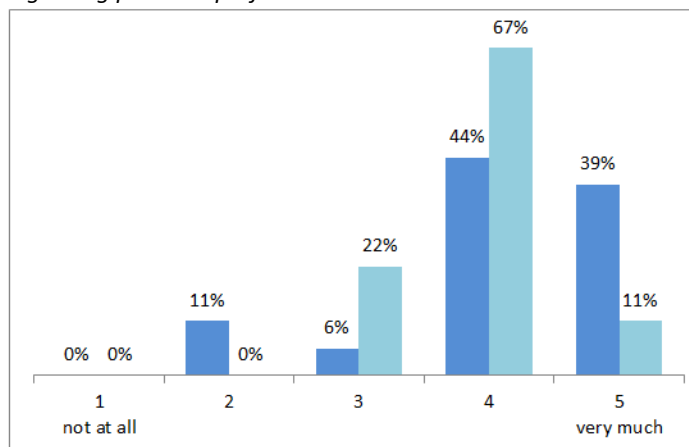
Personal performance

Evening education influences the performance of board and committee members. This shows from the responses given to the questions 'Do evening lectures hinder your tasks?' and 'Do you notice a change in personal motivation to perform your tasks?' as displayed in Figure 1.

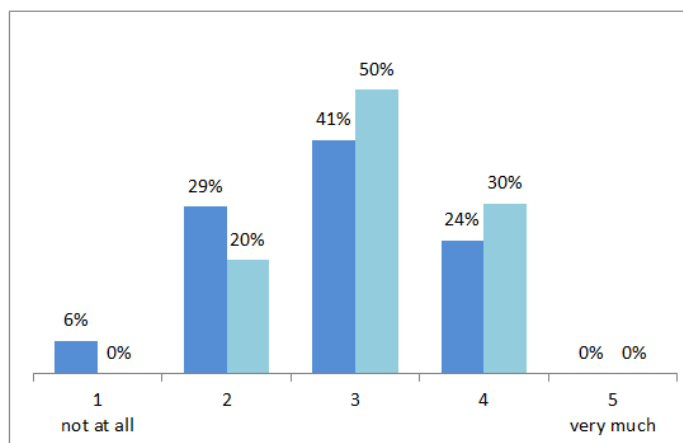
There is a slight change noticeable in the dispersion of boards (light blue) and committee members (dark blue) on the question if evening lectures hinder their tasks; a few committee members do not experience hinder compared to board members. Several respondents indicated that tasks are put on a lower priority due to the evening lectures which increases work related stress, while another respondent said that lectures were missed in order to properly execute tasks.

Board and committee members both indicate a change in personal motivation. One respondent mentions that "After the evening college I am very tired and I am not in the mood to discuss things with the committee after that", thereby indicating a decrease in motivation.

Figure 1, response of board- (light blue) and committee members (dark blue) to the questions regarding personal performance



'Do evening lectures hinder your tasks?'



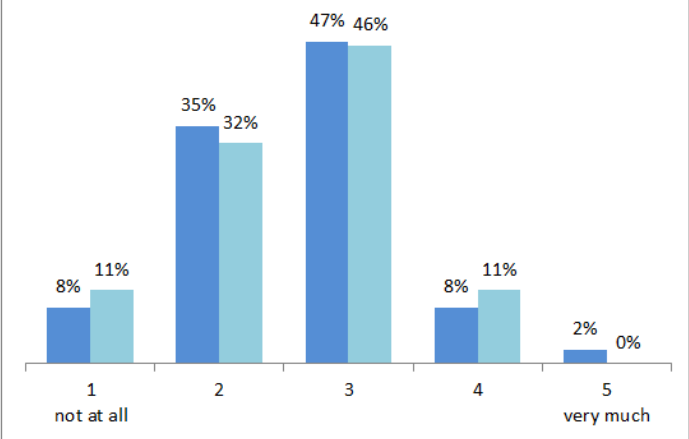
'Do you notice a change in personal motivation to perform your tasks?'

Quality of meetings

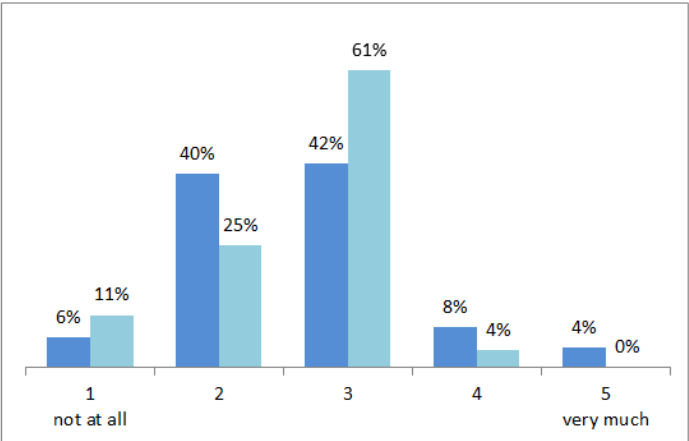
In Figure 2, the influence of evening lectures on the frequency, quality and attendance is displayed. There is a similar response from committee and board members on the first two parameters. On the third, the attendance, board members indicate that evening lectures have a bigger influence compared to committee members.

Adding to the previous questions which showed that it was more difficult to execute tasks, Figure 2 shows that evening lectures tend to influence the attendance, quality and frequency of the meetings. The committee respondents mentioned that meetings had to be replaced more often, that it was difficult to find an appropriate moment, resulting in shorter meetings. Board members reported that meetings had to be rescheduled and were sometimes replaced from evening to lunch time.

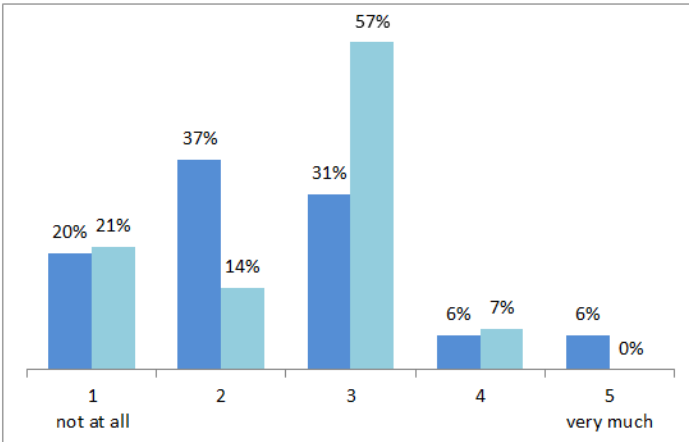
Figure 2, response of board- (light blue) and committee members (dark blue) to the questions regarding quality of meetings



'Did you notice a change in frequency of your meetings?'



'Did you notice a change in quality of your meetings?'

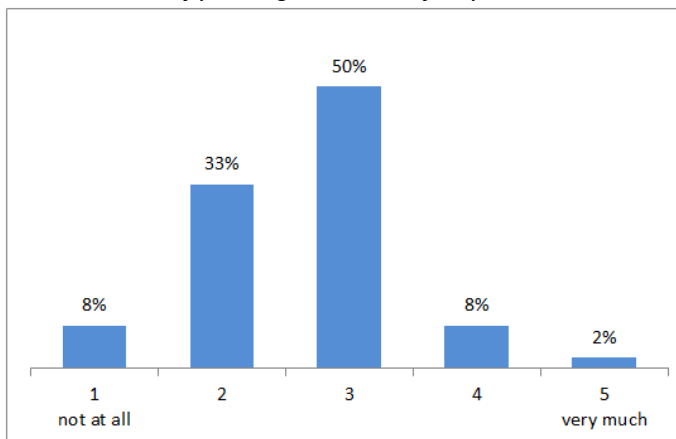


'Did you notice a change in attendance of your meetings?'

Interest among members

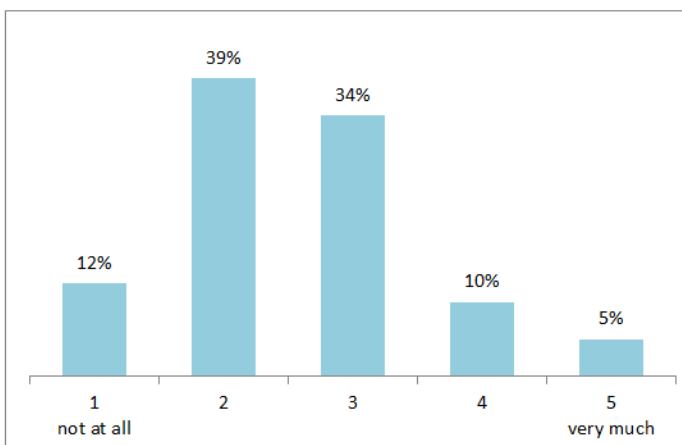
To committees it is important to have enough interested members to secure future existence. Therefore the committees were asked if they noticed a change in interest among other members to join their committee. The results to this question are displayed in Figure 3, and show that there is a change noticeable. Respondents mention that it was problematic to find new committee members, and that especially first year students were less interested. The attendance by certain evening activities was lower as well, mentioned two respondents, making organising such activities harder.

Figure 3, response of committee members to the question 'Did you notice a change in interest among other members of your organisation to join your committee?'



Boards were asked if they noticed a difference in attendance at activities organised by their association (Figure 4). A slight difference was noticed, and comments reveal that there was a short decrease at members meetings and certain activities organised (lectures, rehearsal, training etc.). Especially the later joining of members due to evening lectures was viewed as unwanted. One respondent mentioned that active members decided to miss the evening lectures scheduled in order to join activities and doubts if this is a good trend.

Figure 4, response of board members to the question 'Do you notice a difference in turn-up rate of your members at activities?'



Conclusion

Although the number of participants prevents strong conclusions to be drawn, the results show that evening education influences the functioning of boards and committees. Questions on the personal motivation show that a hinder to execute tasks properly was experienced strongly by both boards and committees and that the motivation to perform these tasks was influenced too. The quality of the meetings was also affected by evening education; both committee and board members mention that it was more difficult to schedule a meeting and that the meetings were shorter. These results show that there might be serious issues ahead, when evening lectures become reality, and should therefore be monitored closely.

The long term effects were assessed by asking questions about the interest of members to join committees, and about the turn-up rate at activities. The results to both questions show that they are influenced negatively. This is reason for concern since these aspects depict the core structure of each association, and negative effects might be a threat for the continuation of the associations as we know now. Respondents confirm these worries, especially when a larger percentage of students will have evening lectures.

