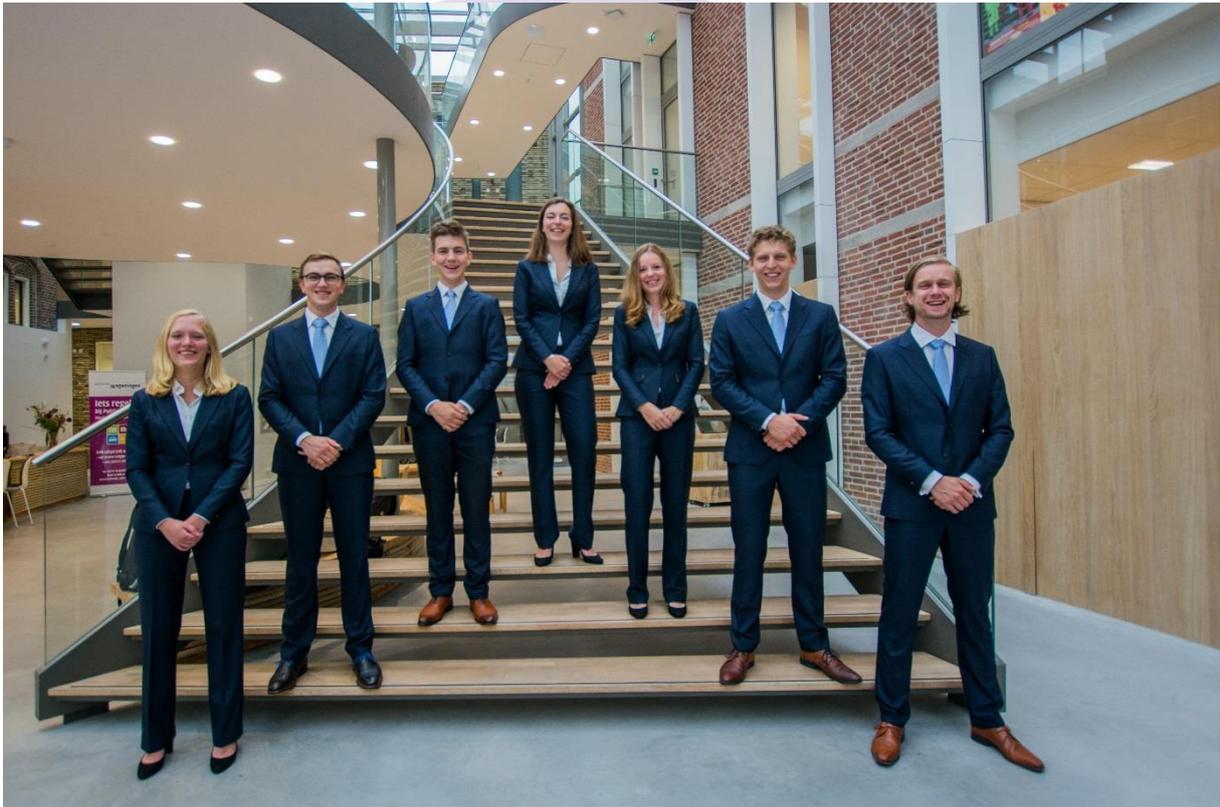


VeSte Policy Plan 2018

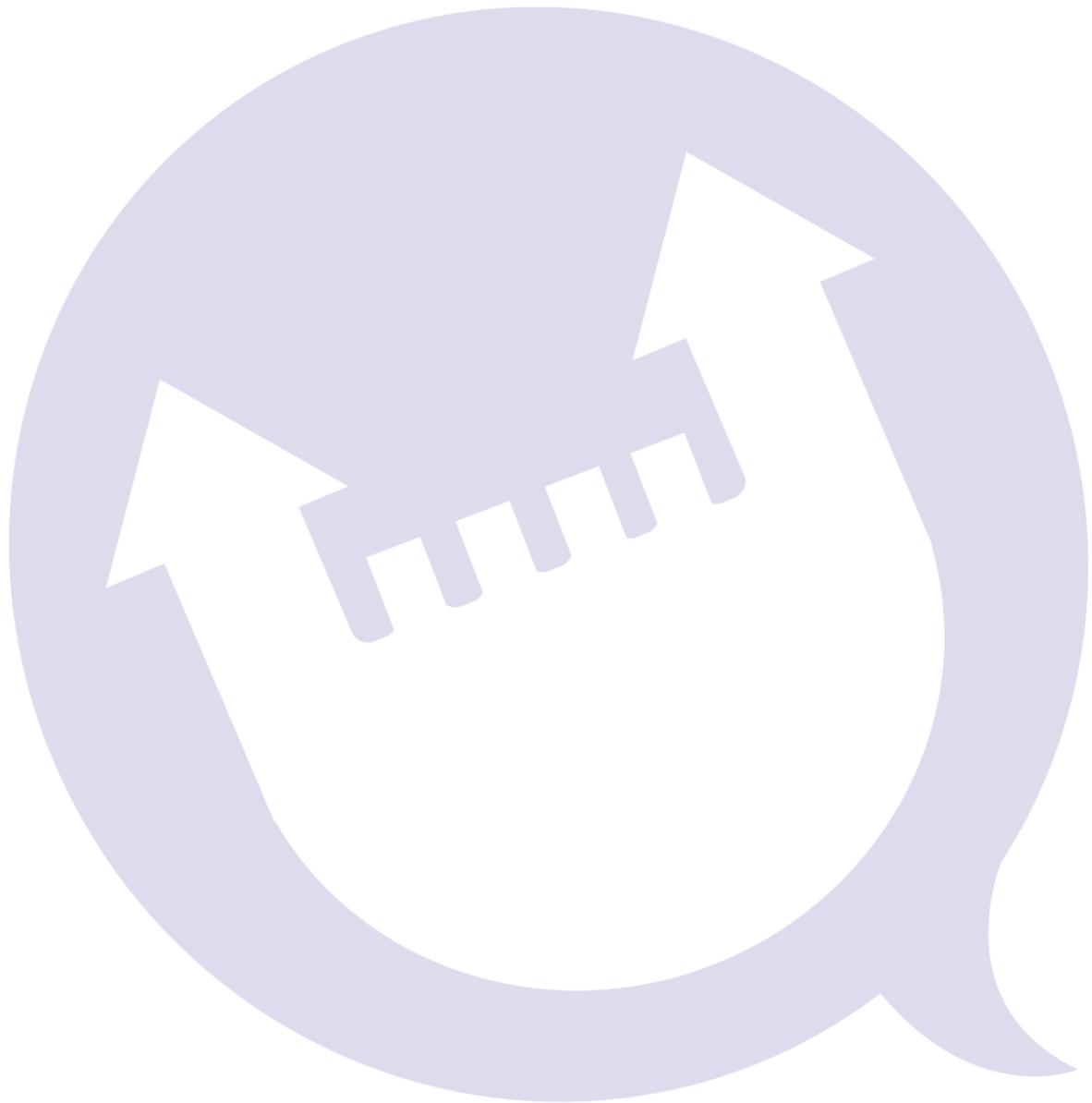


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Preface

Before you lies the policy of the VeSte faction for the year 2018. As a party taking place in the Student Council of Wageningen University we represent and support active students of Wageningen University. In this policy plan we elaborate on the vision and plan that is at the heart of our efforts. Please feel free to contact the VeSte faction with any thoughts or ideas you might have.



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Introduction

Current Faction

The current VeSte faction consists of

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| - Bregje de Regt | Chair |
| - Jaap Kerr | Vice Chair |
| - Lianne Kruiswijk | Secretary |
| - Tim van der Kuijl | Treasurer |
| - Menno Kasteleijn | Internal Relations |
| - Isa Vroom | National Affairs |
| - Matthijs Harmsen | Public Relations |



Identity and History

VeSte (Verenigde Studenten, United Students) is a Student Council party founded in 1997 by members of the Contractus student associations in order to represent these associations and their members in the newly founded Student Council of Wageningen University (WUR).

Over the years, VeSte has sought to become more inclusive by cooperating with various kind of organisations, both within Wageningen and on a national and international level.

VeSte represents active students, which forms the core of its identity. The VeSte faction 2017-2018 is keen on representing this group of students this year. A more extensive description of the phrase active students will be given in our vision.

Mission

As a Student Council party, VeSte represents and supports active students of the WUR. Those are students that are willing to develop themselves both inside and outside the classroom. By engaging in extracurricular activities in various organisations and associations and by engaging in activities concerning with talent, knowledge and skill development these students create an atmosphere in which academic and societal development can thrive.

Vision

The VeSte vision for working on our mission statement consists of three pillars. Therefore, our efforts are directed towards world class education, broad academic development and a vibrant student life. By improving the internal and external environment of the WUR with a focus on these pillars we aim to support all active students. Naturally, these pillars are intertwined as education cannot exist without development.

- I. World Class Education is something we would like every student to experience. Therefore VeSte actively contributes to maintaining the world class education at WUR, which is often seen as one of the foremost excellent institutions within its domain. This naturally has to do with the world class education offered at the WUR, which is not only visible in international rankings but also in the experiences of students and alumni. Therefore VeSte stands for small scale teaching, close supervision of courses and theses, international classroom and atmosphere, programme flexibility and multidisciplinary education. These are few of the aspects of education ensuring the transfer of skills and knowledge, thus contributing to the

educational ecosystem of the WUR that are held in high regard. This year, VeSte will strive to improve these aspects of WUR education by engaging with students and staff. However, there are issues that also need to be taken up in our work this year. The tension between growth and small scale education, academic excellence and accessibility and the correct implementation of the international classroom are topics VeSte will continue to deal with.

- II. Another aspect of being a WUR student VeSte sees as important is the possibility to achieve broad academic development. For VeSte, this concept entails taking part in those activities that stimulate personal and professional development. Both take place in courses where skills and knowledge are combined in the classroom. However, development outside the classroom, where students take part in training programmes, (international) student exchanges, board tenures and other activities, is vital for a broad academic development. The VeSte faction will continue to support and facilitate these kind of activities. Special regard will be given to broad academic development in relation to internationalisation and excellence.
- III. In the external environment of WU, VeSte sees the need to support a vibrant student life. In our opinion the WUR should also play an active role in facilitating this. In this student life, a multiplicity of organisations is embedded, that are supporting students and making Wageningen their home. Student organisations contribute to the vibrant student life of Wageningen and create a truly global society within a small Dutch village. As VeSte, we support these organisations in their activities and we value these communities strongly. This is why we will continue contributing to the vibrant student life of Wageningen, in which topics such as the growth of the university play an important role. Topics that also need to be dealt with in this regard are the availability of student housing, especially with regard to the implementation of the English BSc programmes, and the availability of the WUR campus.

Veste will keep working on these three pillars within the WUR organisation. However, when external actors are involved in discussions, such as the municipality in the housing issue, the faction 2017-2018 will also be in close contact with them. The main objective of these three policy pillars however is to structure our view on university policies, mainly those on the central level. Thus, initiatives of the Student Council and decisions made by the Executive Board of the WUR involving the Student Council will have these pillars at their foundation.

To ensure the three pillars of our policy come to fruition, it is important that all WUR students have the ability to live in or nearby Wageningen. Without suitable living space for all students the International Classroom is prone to failure and if students are not able to live in Wageningen, they are also not able to be involved in the vibrant student life.

Student Support

In this vision, consisting of the aforementioned three pillars, VeSte's supporting student organisations play an important role that impacts us in two ways. Our support organisations deliver crucial input to us, which is vital for making just and correct decisions on WUR policies. Furthermore, VeSte takes her role as a central node in the Wageningen student community serious, which means we deliver valuable input to these partners. VeSte's support organisations also contribute a lot to the development of our three policy pillars. We value all these organisations as they all contribute to our work, even though we cooperate with these organisations in different ways.

Student associations play a vital role in organising leisure activities in Wageningen, in which they contribute a lot maintaining and improving the vibrant student life of Wageningen. Furthermore, by acquainting students with soft skills and a strong social network they contribute to the broad academic

development of their members. We collaborate by actively engaging with these organisations in various forms of consultation such as the meetings with the Contractus organisations.

Study associations also contribute a lot to the student community by organising social and academic activities. By doing so, they stimulate the broad academic development of their members and the development of the vibrant student life in Wageningen. Furthermore, the involvement of Study associations within the WUR organisation aids university staff and students in maintaining our world class education. We aim to proactively engage study associations in our decisions and activities, by inviting them for cooperation.

Likewise, in sport and musical organisations valuable support is granted to stimulating the quality of the vibrant student life of Wageningen. Moreover, by getting involved in the organisation of these kinds of activities, such as concerts or matches, students are developing their own skills and knowledge, thus contributing to their broad academic development.

Professional organisations facilitate students in broadly developing themselves by acquainting students with entrepreneurs and business opportunities such as internships. The skills students acquire in doing so can also benefit these students in their education.

The members of the VeSte faction will all be involved in realising our vision and mission this year. They will do so in their respective functions but also in the committees of VeSte, the Student Council and the WUR-Council which will subsequently be discussed in the next chapters.

Focus

This year the VeSte faction mainly will be dealing with the new Strategic Plan of the WUR, the Institutional Audit, the involvement of students as co-owners of their education and the (digital) presence of VeSte.

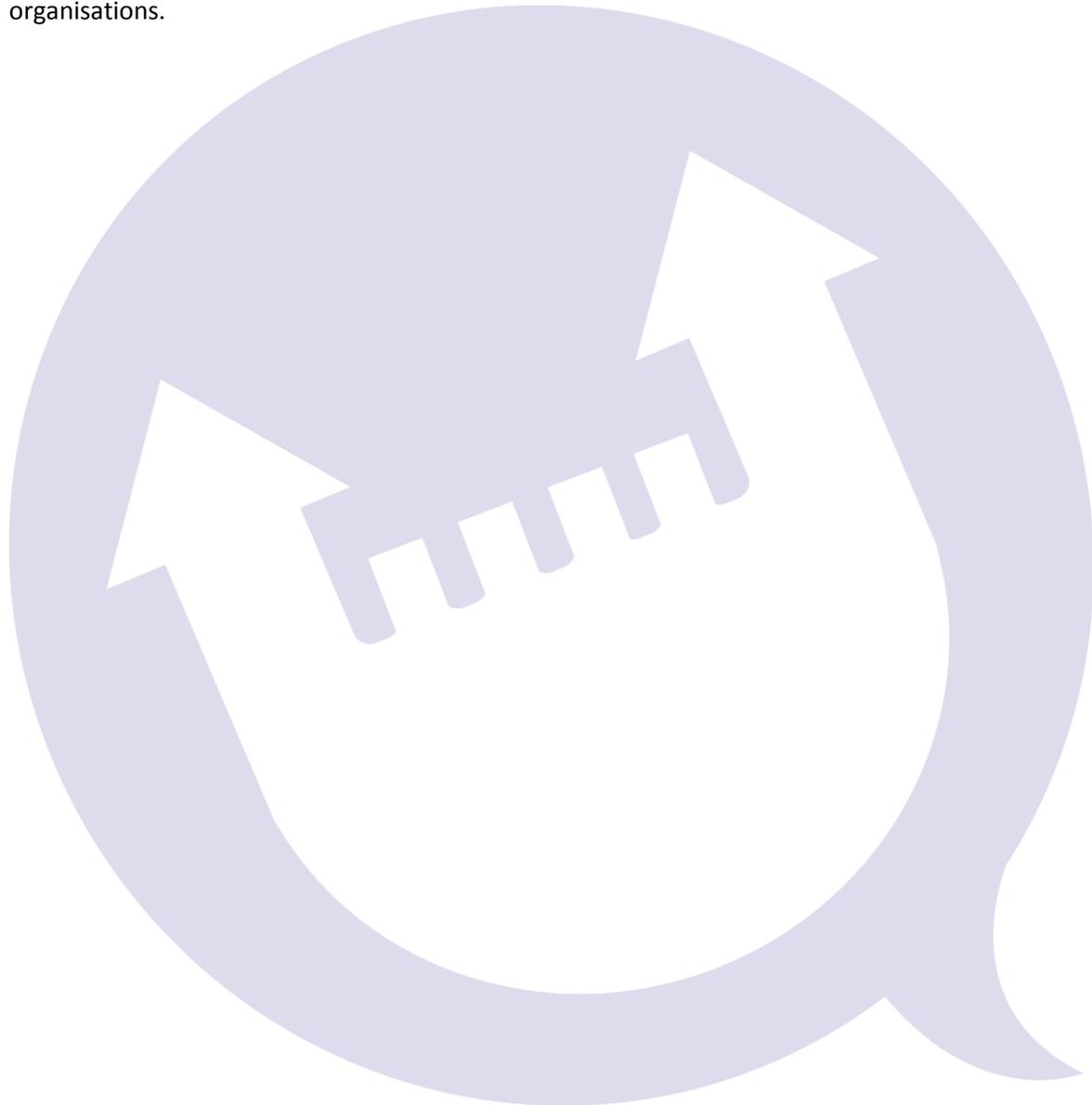
The Strategic Plan will be set-up in various steps, in which we aim to bring forward the role of the active student as good as possible. We will ensure the opinion of the Student Council in the Strategic Plan set-up is representing active students well. Next to this, we aim to take part in many activities surrounding the Strategic Plan. By giving advice on topics such as growth, excellence, the domain of the WUR and internationalisation and diversification of the university, we feel we are able to represent students best.

The Institutional Audit saw Wageningen University being scrutinised on the way it maintains and enhances its educational quality. VeSte is an outspoken advocate of maintaining and enhancing the educational quality in Wageningen and by being intensely involved with the process of the accreditation, but also by working with the results of the accreditation, we aim to improve further on this issue.

The involvement of students in the vibrant student life of Wageningen is something VeSte has always supported. Next to this topic, the current VeSte faction would like to aid in strengthening the position of students in the educational ecosystem of Wageningen University. By organising events to

this aim, such as the Grand Meeting, but also by cooperating intensely with the internal organisation of Wageningen University, we will continue working on this topic.

One of the things VeSte is always striving for is visibility. Not only are we striving for this in a regular way, we see this as one of the key elements of our functioning this year. By increasing our digital presence through making more optimal use of our digital accounts, but also by increasing our physical live presence at Campus, not only during activities, but also during regular moments in the academic year. We also strive to be more active in engaging our constituency and support organisations.



Portfolio's

Events

The main goal of the events VeSte organises is to create awareness of VeSte in an entertaining way among students of the WUR. This is specifically not for electoral purposes but with the aim to involve students in the governing of their university and the way their education is set up. In the end, the Chair is the main responsible for ensuring all events are correctly taking place.

As many VeSte events have become custom over the years, the current VeSte faction will maintain the organisation of these to ensure continuity and professionalism. On top of the events VeSte will keep on organising; new events that will be organised this year are a municipality debate in cooperation with other organisations, publicity actions and several trainings.

The events VeSte will organise this year are:

- Board Market
- DOT- Dinner
- Board Congress
- Thymos VeSte Ball Tournament
- Grand Meeting
- Pubquiz
- Publicity stunts
- Open LinkedIn training

Design

Design is a VeSte portfolio which is this year taken up by the Commissioner Internal Relations, with the Commissioner National Affairs functioning as the back-up Design Manager.

The aim of this portfolio is to present the actions and efforts of VeSte interestingly, so that we are able to provide information in the best way we can to support organisations and students. Promotion of VeSte events is also an important motive for ensuring attractive design. Designing the newsletters and posters of VeSte is among the responsibilities of this portfolio.

Trainings

VeSte is a party of the SC which is being offered a lot of useful trainings in different skills. These are valuable for SC members and help a lot in the work we do every day. The trainings offer us a lot of information which should be available for all active students in Wageningen. Therefore VeSte decided to offer trainings to groups or committees who want to learn how they can effectively work together and get things done.

VeSte already developed some workshops in the past, on which the reactions were positive. This year new trainings are developed which will provide students some tools useful for their committee work or activities. The offering of knowledge in the form of workshops helps VeSte to become more known amongst students.

The Trainings currently offered are the LinkedIn training and the training on having effective meetings.

Student Council committees

The Student council has various rights regarding the dossiers it takes up. These rights are the right of approval, the right of advice, the right of information and the right of initiative. To exercise these rights, the dossiers need to be processed properly. This processing is done in the various committees of the Student Council, each with their own expertise.

Boekel Education Enhancement

In the Boekel Education Enhancement (BEE) committee issues are discussed with a relevance for the education offered at the WUR. This committee focuses mainly on the insurance of education quality, but also deals with education innovation and improvement. It does so by critically reviewing the central educational policies of the WUR, but also deals with complaints and questions students have on their education which are brought forward to the SC directly. Furthermore, the BEE committee also independently proposes ideas to ensure the world class education offered at the WUR stays world class.

Vision VeSte

In the vision of VeSte, important topics this committee ought to deal with this year are the implementation of the International BSc programmes and the Extended Daytime Schedule, especially the consequences these changes in the educational set-up will have for the quality of education. Furthermore, this committee will work on skills education and the effects of growth on the quality of education. In the vision of VeSte, these topics need to be taken up keeping in mind the focus of VeSte on the pillar of world class education.

Changes set-up education

- Implementation IB (International BSc) programmes. With the implementation of IB programmes, structural changes will be made in the organisation of the WUR. All three pillars of our policy will be affected, but in the BEE committee, VeSte will work to ensure the world class education of the WUR is not impacted in a negative way. The implementation of the international classroom should be dealt with satisfactory in all courses.
- Implementation EDS (Extended Daytime Schedule). As the implementation of the EDS might have consequences on the decentral level of the WUR in the way courses are set up, the quality of education might be affected. VeSte will monitor the implementation of the EDS closely to ensure the supply of information to staff and students is done properly. VeSte will also work on making sure the Student Council is maintaining the convenience of students right at the start of the implementation of the EDS next year.

Growing Student numbers

The growth of the university continues to sort out its effects on the education offered at the WUR, and these effects are in VeSte's opinion not always positive. These effects should not only be dealt with on a strategic level, but also on the practical level within the organisation. The BEE committee will come up with proactive solutions for growth, but is also reactive to problems that come up as a result of the growth. In this way the BEE committee will ensure the continuity of world class education at the WUR. In the opinion of VeSte, growth is only desirable if the quality of education can be maintained.

Therefore, when consequences of growth, such as the widespread introduction of Multiple Choice exams and group work, hamper the quality of education, VeSte is of the opinion that growth of the student number ought to be limited, albeit be it on the programme level.

Skills education

This committee will this year also look into the skills education at the WUR, and work to ensure WUR students acquire the skills necessary to transfer their knowledge in a professional environment. For active students at the WUR the possibility must be there to acquire and use skills in the education offered at the WUR.

International Classroom

For students to be active within the international classroom, communication is key. Therefore, this year VeSte wants to look into the English language proficiency requirements currently maintained at the WUR. Additionally, other ways of improving the international classroom, especially with regard to group work will be explored. The awareness of teachers concerning issues arising from the application of the international classroom is also a field in which improvements can be made.

Active Students

Furthermore, VeSte wants students to be active in their education. Currently, this is already taking place on a large scale throughout the WUR by means of students active as student assistants or Programme Committees members. The aim is to strengthen the position of these students within the educational ecosystem of the WUR. Therefore, VeSte would like to improve the support these students receive from the university. Involvement of students in the evaluation of their courses is also an issue that ought to be taken up this year.

Finance committee

The Finance committee is responsible for ensuring the opinion of students is taken into account in financial matters of the university. By reviewing the WU Budget, the budget for the Student Profiling Fund budget, and by coming up with initiatives, VeSte can ensure there is enough money available for policies supporting the three pillars in our policy. A thorough understanding of Financial processes is vital, which is why a close cooperation with the WUR-Council Finance committee is necessary.

VeSte vision

VeSte wants to retain its pro-active attitude towards the finances of the university. To be able to assert this pro-active attitude, there is a vision on specific financial issues that we want to work on this year.

WU Budget and investments

As the SC has the right of advice on the WU Budget, VeSte wants to work on this topic to make sure the wishes of active students are taken into account. The focus is mainly on the financial viability of our world class education in relation to growth of the number of students enrolled at the WUR.

This year is the first year that the Student Loan System is functioning in its full scope. This means that funding is available for allocating investments to the quality of education. We want to work on this topic specifically, as this is funding made available due to the introduction of the SLS (Student Loan System) which affected students. Allocating this money for viable purposes is one of VeSte's main goals

this year. Improving the involvement of the Student Council in allocating this funding is also important to VeSte, as it opens up the possibility for students to be active in determining where the educational investments are spend.

Profiling Fund budget

Due to changes made in the reimbursement for Social Sciences students paid out of the Profiling Fund budget, VeSte aims to look into these budgets during this tenure. As changes in the organisation are also imminent, these budgets need to keep updated too. The Financial Support Payments (FOS) payments supporting the vibrant student life in Wageningen are viewed to be vital parts of these budgets.

Housing

Since the Student Council does not have legal rights on housing, the most important function of this committee is trying to influence the policy of the municipality and university by lobbying. The main focus in 2017 will be to keep contacts proper and monitor the housing situation within Wageningen. To ensure this form of influence, good cooperation with other actors, such as the municipality, political parties, the Student Alliance Wageningen and actors within the WUR is required. The Housing Committee will also need to monitor ongoing projects that have to do with student housing.

VeSte Vision

In the vision of VeSte, which is based on the three pillars, it is important that all WUR students have the possibility to live in Wageningen. Therefore, VeSte is in favour of expanding the student housing availability within the current city limits of Wageningen. Expanding the acreage of Wageningen by building new student housing outside of the current city is not favourable, just as increasing student housing availability in other municipalities.

Housing on campus

Furthermore, we see an increase in the availability of student housing on campus not as a development that is necessarily desirable. As the prime aim of the campus is to house education and research facilities, VeSte feels it is better if an increase in student housing takes place in the city itself.

Competition

Increasing the number of providers of student housing beyond the two organised providers currently operating in Wageningen (Idealis and DUWO) might be an interesting option which VeSte would like to continue discussing.

Internationalisation

Wageningen University promotes itself as one of the most international Universities in the world. This is not only about students coming to Wageningen from all over the world, but it is also about students going abroad. Many students are going abroad for courses, internships and to write their thesis. Exchange possibilities for students of Wageningen University are important to maintain. Next to

exchange possibilities the WUR is focussing on developing its international identity. This is in line with the idea of the online educational ecosystem. Another focus of the university is the international classroom, also for bachelor students.

VeSte Vision

It is the vision of VeSte that the WUR is essentially a Dutch institution, though ongoing internationalisation of the WUR can be seen as a positive development. The international environment and classroom contribute to the experience, skills and knowledge students acquire during their time studying at the WUR. However, a rapid process of internationalisation must not harm the convenience of students currently enrolled in the WUR. Furthermore, offering world class education should be the main priority, on which internationalisation must not be allowed to have negative effects.

That is why this year VeSte aims to be cautious in implementing structural changes with regard to internationalisation of the university.

International BSc

Concerning the internationalisation process, this year VeSte will monitor the implementation of the IB programmes. The BEE committee also deals with this topic in collaboration with the SSC. However, in internationalisation, the consequences of the implementation of the IB for other aspects not directly related to our world class education are examined and taken up.

Integration

This committee also ought to work on a thoughtful process of further integration of international students in the vibrant student life of Wageningen. By collaborating with international organisations, student associations and study associations we strive to ensure that the outcomes of the implementation of IB programmes are agreeable to everyone. It is important that bottom-up initiatives are rewarded and that no top-down approach is used to set up the internationalisation process. Ensuring a feasible level of English proficiency in the student population is an important aim in this regard.

This year, we also want to keep working on the VeSte Goes Abroad website and expand it (More on this later).

IT

The IT committee is a committee where a lot is possible due to the frequent contact with employees. This year VeSte expects a lot of changes which will take place in this area which means future developments will have to be taken into account. The IT committee has a realistic view on idealistic and hurried initiatives such as the educational ecosystem, while always taking the student perspective into account.. With this committee we will make sure the new developments will be in favour of the students in Wageningen, keeping our three pillars in mind.

VeSte Vision

In the opinion of VeSte, important policy topics this year are the implementation of MyWorkspace for students, the further development of online education and the privacy policies of the WUR.

MyWorkspace

Open access to the online educational environment is crucial to a sustainable growth of the university. Therefore, this year VeSte would like the MyWorkspace programme to be accessible to all WUR students. With the implementation of the BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) policy, this is also a necessity to ensure everyone can learn anywhere at any time.

Online Education

VeSte sees online education as a complementary form of education in relation to real-life on-campus education. The increasing use of online learning methods should therefore not lead to a decrease of the quality and quantity of on-campus education offered at the WUR. In reviewing policies and setting up initiative this year this viewpoint will be taken into account.

Privacy

In the vision of VeSte, it is important to take a look at the policies regarding privacy of the university. To accommodate students in their time at the WUR, it must be ensured their privacy is not harmed.

Quality versus Quantity

The university is changing, constantly increasing in its student numbers and new technologies make that the university could and should adapt. The Quality vs Quantity committee has made it its task to be aware of what the university is doing regarding this topic and to make sure the Student Council develops its own idea regarding these adaptations. This year the Quality vs Quantity committee will target its efforts mainly on the Strategic Plan.

VeSte Vision on the Strategic Plan

This academic year the Strategic Plan of the University for the period 2019-2022 will be determined and written. The VeSte faction has a clear vision on what this strategic plan should entail to accommodate all active students of the WUR. This vision will be described according to various dilemma's and scenario's set up to serve as guiding issues for the strategic plan.

Accessibility

The opinion of VeSte is that unlimited access and growth of the university is not desirable, but access restrictions with a focus on numeric excellence alone are not desirable either. VeSte sees opportunities for methods like matching and motivation as a form of admission control. VeSte believes that student who develop themselves in an extracurricular way are also excellent students, even though excellency is not always explicitly academic. By ensuring that selection does not harm the prospect of these students, an optimum might be reached.

VeSte thinks that the way one ought to look at this question is from the viewpoint that the university has to be the best university in the world. With that in mind a decision has to be taken.

Excellency does not stand in contrast to broad accessibility. There is no question on changing the excellence of our education, this should be the best quality. Selection however is not a method of improving education, and this is why the university must remain accessible. Still, concerning facilitation, the growth is reaching its peak. Therefore, according to VeSte, when selection is necessary, leave excellence in the middle and select on motivation.

Research Orientation

VeSte does not favour a central template of research. A researcher should be free to choose what topic he/she wants to investigate. The discussion about market driven or curiosity-driven (fundamental) research is important within the WUR, and both forms of research have to be practised next to each other in order to be able to fully complement each other.

Domain

VeSte thinks that the university has to at all times hold on to the mission: 'explore the potential of nature to improve the quality of life.' Moving along with time is something different from broadening our domain or to focussing on certain topics. The WUR does not need to be scared of a shift in focus within the domain, as changes in the direction of the university and societies interest are inevitable.

(Inter)national scope

It is the vision of VeSte that the WUR is essentially a Dutch institution, even though ongoing internationalisation of the WUR can be seen as a positive development. The international environment and classroom contribute to the experience, skills and knowledge students acquire during their time studying at the WUR. However, a rapid process of internationalisation must not harm the convenience of students currently enrolled in the WUR.

Digital domain

VeSte sees online education as a complementary form of education in relation to real-life on-campus education, and not as a supplementary form of education. The increasing use of online learning methods should therefore not lead to a decrease of the quality and quantity of on-campus education offered at the WUR.

Efficiency

Efficiency is not the goal but the means. One size fits all isn't applicable everywhere. Too much centralization is harmful, but best practices can be imposed centrally and can be applied on a decentral level. An issue such as the implementation of the new law on administrative force also deals with this issue.

SC Elections

The SC election works to ensure the elections for the new student council are taking place properly. The elections committee is partly dependent on the work of the promotion committee. Better work of the SC promotion committee during the year lightens the work of the election committee during the elections.

VeSte Vision

Gentlemen's agreement

The vision of the VeSte faction 2017-2018 is that such a gentlemen's agreement should be set up for the elections to ensure these are properly conducted. The Election committee should therefore start scheduling and discussing the elections well in advance.

Voting percentage

In the vision of VeSte, an important aim of the election committee ought to be raising the number of students voting in the elections, both in a relative and an absolute sense. By increasing the visibility of VeSte and the Student Council before and during the elections, setting up a feasible and interesting elections programme and actively campaigning this aim can be achieved. In the election manifest of VeSte, this will be worked out more thoroughly.

Student Council Promotion

The goal of the Promotion committee is to increase the visibility of the Student Council by organising several events.

VeSte Vision

In the vision of VeSte, the promotion committee has a twofold purpose. The first is to make knowledge of and support for the Student Council more widespread within the student community of the WUR. By organising inspiring events and making sure the promotion of the Student Council is properly arranged, students can be inspired to participate in organisational affairs of the WUR themselves. Furthermore, the promotion committee can also gather input for the Student Council when getting in touch with students.

Student Charter

In the Student Charter committee VeSte will monitor the rights students have and whether they are implemented correctly by the university. The Student Council has formal rights on the Education and Examination Regulations (EER), which is handled by this committee, but also various other documents with a legal standing pertaining to several policy topics.

VeSte Vision

This committee should always think from the perspective of the active student when reviewing documents. Policy changes should therefore be beneficial for that group. VeSte will also monitor whether the promised changes will be performed.

Law on Administrative Force

Due to a new law, Programme Committees have received more rights on their programmes. This gives students the opportunity to be more active in their educational organisation, however, this also comes with a responsibility. Therefore, VeSte wants to ensure the involvement of students in their Programme Committees is developed in a practical and beneficial way.

Student Facilities

The Student Facilities committee is a committee where concrete ideas considering facilities can be executed quickly. An important task for this committee is monitoring whether the capacities of buildings and facilities satisfy the requirements, since the number of students at the WUR keeps increasing. Due to this growth, signals of shortcomings are becoming more apparent.

VeSte Vision

Current Facilities

In the vision of VeSte, the opinion of active students always ought to be taken into account when reviewing the utility of facilities offered at the WUR. Initiatives should be based on the input of this group of students. This means that flexibility for students ought to be encouraged, as well as a healthy and sustainable environment.

Future Facilities

VeSte is not completely unwilling to invest in educational facilities besides regular investments in education. Therefore, when the financial circumstances allow it, new educational facilities might have a merit. We see it as important that this possibility is investigated this year and that all students have enough room for study.

Library

VeSte is keen on improving the library facilities all over the Campus as this is an aspect that is very important to a lot of students. This is also taken up by the Library Committee with regard to the current library facilities.

Contact of the Student Council with the Student Alliance Wageningen

The Student Alliance Wageningen (SAW) is a recently founded student union that represents the interests of all WUR Students on different topics. The collaboration between the Student Council and the SAW has been shaped and consolidated.

This cooperation entails that the Student Council and SAW complement each other. By cooperating on topics on which there is an overlap, breakthroughs might be achieved. Furthermore, the network of SAW has differently developed than the network of the Student Council. Whereas the Student Council functions mainly within the organisation of the WUR, the SAW also has connections with external actors. Mainly the housing, QvsQ and internationalisation committees have to be in touch with the SAW through the Student Council Chair. In regular meetings the Student Council and the SAW discuss ongoing affairs.

VeSte Vision

In the opinion of VeSte, collaboration with the SAW is valuable, and should be strongly maintained. This cooperation should especially take place on those issues where the Student Council and SAW have joint interests.

Contact of the Student Council with the municipality

The Municipality of Wageningen is of great importance to VeSte as various matters pertaining to the three pillars of our policy are discussed here. Interesting developments take place, partially these also have to do with the municipal elections for a new city Council in 2018. One of these developments is the foundation of Connect Wageningen. Connect Wageningen is a newly founded political party that aims to represent the interests of students in the municipal council. The collaboration between the Student Council and Connect will be examined this year, keeping the neutrality of the Student Council in mind.

VeSte Vision

In the vision of VeSte, the Student Council remains independent and does not favour any political party over another, although we do support students being active in local politics. This means, we aim to stay in contact with all political parties active in Wageningen. Mainly the housing and internationalisation committee are dealing with topics relating to those issues taken up by Connect, as well as the Commissioner PR.

By organising events around the municipal elections for a new City Council we aim to stimulate the awareness and involvement of active students in local politics.

WUR Council

The VeSte faction sees the involvement of students within the WUR-Council as an important aspect of the representation of students. It is in this Council that support for ideas can be discussed and important decisions are taken.

Several of the committees of the WUR-C, such as E&R, Finance and Communication are closely related to the functioning of likewise committees within the Student Council. Therefore, close cooperation is of the utmost necessity. A good way of ensuring this cooperation is the involvement of students active within a committee in the SC in a similar committee in the WUR-Council. Also the appointment of students as committee chairs in the WUR-Council is a good way of ensuring the voice of students is being heard.

Furthermore, we feel that students also ought to actively voice their opinion in the other WUR-C committees. The topics discussed here are also (in)directly relevant to students, which is why these committees must not be neglected by VeSte.

As important policy dossiers, such as the budget, the implementation of the IB programmes and the EDS are discussed here, this is a good forum to discuss important matters. However, the VeSte faction would like to work not only based on dossiers, but would also like to be involved in the course of the WUR. The set-up of the new strategic plan and the discussion on this in the WUR-C is relevant to us and we want the voice of active students to be taken up in this strategic plan.

VeSte committees

VeSte Committees are committees dedicated to the functioning of the VeSte faction in representing and organising active students.

Acquisition

To keep VeSte in close contact with our supporters we organise several activities. To finance these activities external funding is needed. With this committee VeSte will therefore focus on approaching companies actively and set a target amount for acquisition, preferably so-called in natura sponsoring. These funds will be used in the promotion during the elections and will be used to organise events. To have an overview it is most convenient when the Treasurer is the chair of this committee. Furthermore, by working for bodies within the WUR and externally, funding might be acquired.

VeSte Elections

This committee coordinates the actions of VeSte during the elections and aims to ensure a good result of the elections. Therefore, it is important that at least the Vice-Chair and Commissioner Internal relations take place in this committee, as they are in their function involved with selecting new candidates and keeping in touch with other organisations.

This committee sets up a strategy for the elections at the end of the year and does so by having regular meetings. In cooperation with the SC Elections committee a gentlemen's agreement needs to be set up, an important issue we see in this as VeSte is the use of digital systems during the elections.

VeSte also feels it is important to have a range of highly qualified and motivated candidates for next year's faction, with diverse backgrounds within Wageningen available in the elections so students can feel confident to vote for VeSte.

What we see as important during the elections is that the VeSte ideology, which focuses on active students, is correctly transferred to students, so everyone knows what a vote for VeSte entails. Furthermore, we see the elections in relation to all the exposure as a great moment to gather input from students on our functioning and policy.

VeSte Goes Abroad

This committee started in 2016 in order to communicate better between students which are or were planning to go on exchange. The committee had an idea about a website where students can leave their stories and experiences and contacts to be able to inform and help other students.

This idea developed to an application on the VeSte website ([link](#)). It will provide students with information on a specific universities abroad. The uniqueness of the application will be that the information is provided first-hand by students who have been to that specific university. This facilitates a platform to get in touch with students which already went abroad in a way which helps answering specific questions.

During this academic year, the reach and content of this platform are to be increased, which is the main goal of the committee members. Furthermore, the VGA website is translated and blogs are added on the website.

Promotion

This committee's main focus point will be to create more visibility and awareness of VeSte among active students. A special focus is on reaching out to and informing first year students who are not aware of the existence of VeSte yet. VeSte does not want them to have their first acquaintance with VeSte in the elections week. This committee must therefore ensure students and student bodies and organisations are able to reach us when they feel the need.

In collaboration with the promotion committee publicity actions can also be set up. Furthermore, a central aim this year is to involve our support organisations more with the policies of the university.

