



2017-2018

ANNUAL REPORT

VESTE WAGENINGEN

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VeSte Wageningen

Student Council Party Wageningen University

Foreword

Before you lies the Annual Report of the VeSte faction for the year 2017-2018. As a party taking place in the Student Council of Wageningen University VeSte represents and supports active students of Wageningen University. In this Annual Report, VeSte elaborates on the vision and plan that is at the heart of our efforts. Furthermore, it also summarizes VeSte's main accomplishments, initiatives, the main events we organized and our committees. We would like to thank all our supporters and the Student Council staff for their tremendous support through the year and please feel free to contact the VeSte faction with any thoughts or ideas you might have.

It was our pleasure representing you,

VeSte Faction 2017-2018

Bregje de Regt
Jaap Kerr
Lisanne Kruiswijk
Tim van der Kuijl
Menno Kasteleijn
Isa Vroom
Matthijs Harmsen

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Introduction

Faction 17-18

The VeSte faction 2017-2018 consisted 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.

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 aide 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.

Main achievements

Extended Daytime Schedule

In the Academic Year 2017-2018, there has been much discussion around the topic Extended Daytime Schedule (EDS). It was decided that the implementation of the EDS will be monitored closely and that an evaluation of the EDS will be done one year after the implementation of the EDS instead of after two years. VeSte is very pleased with this outcome of the discussion. Together we will put down what exactly will be monitored by ESA and the Scheduling Department. VeSte monitored the implementation of the EDS closely, besides that VeSte also launched a contact point for the EDS. VeSte strived for a good communication to all our supporters with the upcoming changes in the schedule, therefore VeSte informed their supporters about the EDS by giving presentations in person.

Housing

Since the increasing problems with housing are affecting all students in Wageningen this issue is high on the VeSte agenda. As part of the Student Council we defended the students in a “rondetafelgesprek” at the City Hall, where also spokespersons from Idealis and Wageningen University were present. VeSte also took the lead in writing official emails to the Executive Board of Wageningen University and to the Municipality Council in cooperation with the Contractus associations. Partly based on our continuous efforts to address the problem through the year more student rooms are currently being build.

Strategic plan

VeSte worked on writing position papers together with the Student Council which we contributed to the working groups of the strategic plan. Once every four year the University writes a Strategic Plan showing the plans of Wageningen University and Research Centre from 2019 until 2022. We are glad that we could incorporate our vision, that was made with help of our supporters into the general Student Council vision.

Municipality

Both Wageningen University and Wageningen municipality need each other just as students are living together with other Wageningers. Maintaining a good relationship between the various stakeholders is therefore also something VeSte is striving for. VeSte co-organized the celebration of 100Years WUR in the city which content of a festival weekend full of diverse activities. Furthermore, it co-organized a large municipality elections debate where all local political parties debated in front of 300 students. Last but not least, VeSte had regular talks thorough the year with different municipality parties and the mayor of Wageningen Geert van Rumund.

Investments Student Loan System

The Student Staff Council had to write two budgetary proposals as a result of the WU Budget discussions on which it has the right of approval. As result € 50.000,- will be spent on Student Counselling and € 300.000,- on Study Skills. VeSte made sure that its vision was incorporated while writing these two proposals. Next to that, also the extra investments made on the Council’s advice to hire more staff fits in VeSte’s pillar of world class education.

VeSte Initiatives

Student Assistants

VeSte together with the Education Support Centre is organising a training to improve the didactic skills and knowledge of student assistants. A pilot ran in period 6 of the academic year 17-18, and it will be continued in the academic year 18-19. This is in favour of the student assistants, and also a huge advantage for the students receiving the courses.

Catering Involvement

VeSte proposed the idea of more cooperation between the caterers on campus and students in the field of food and nutrition, in the form of projects or research. This is for the students and chair groups a nice opportunity to have a real life test field and place to try out new ideas. Also, it will increase the quality of the catering with the direct links to the research facilities. Also, the student engagement with the caterers will be improved, and with the right promotion this will attract more students to the catering facilities which is beneficial for the caterers. This can be with the current caterers or in the third educational building, the modular building.

Modular Building

VeSte was involved with the plans concerning the new modular building. We gave input from the student side. VeSte took place in a working group where coat racks inside lecture halls and a coffee corner were realised. The Student Council also met with the project manager where critical questions on sustainability goals were asked and an initiative was proposed for a rooftop garden, of which the general idea is now under consideration.

Microwaves

VeSte was co-involved in the appearance of microwaves on the ground floor on Forum. When money was reserved to spend on more quiet spots, the Student Council advised to spend it elsewhere as these spots were not regularly used. Now there is more opportunity to warm up your own meal!

Flex studying

VeSte twice addressed Flex Studying (paying per ECTS) to the Rector Magnificus. We once discussed joining the pilot that runs on other universities and once discussed an “extra step-in” opportunity on this pilot. VeSte sees huge advantages of implementing flex studying for the students of Wageningen University and sees that flex studying perfectly fits in with the University’s “Vision for Education”. Unfortunately, the Rector Magnificus both times declined to join the pilot and promised to discuss it again when the first evaluations of the pilot are there. At this moment he did not want to join the pilot, but he is positive about the idea of flex studying. See you back in a few years!

Social Science Transportation Card

The fact that MSc Social Science students are not equally financially compensated for their public transportation card as MSc Life Science students are by the university has already been a topic for quite some years. VeSte took the initiative to take this topic up again with as result that the Student Council wrote an official initiative letter to the Executive Board. Unfortunately, the Executive Board did not agree with the Student Council and will not reimburse students of Social Science MSc programmes for their travel expenses made during the 6th year of their study. The Council would like to address the issue now via programme committees and study advisors.

Functional limitations

When a student has functional limitations and needs therefore for example more time for an exam, a student needs to request this at every single course, which takes time and is quite insufficient. Therefore VeSte created an initiative where the requirements due to functional limitations are digitalized on the new DLO (digitale leeromgeving) which will be implemented in 2021.

PACE

Privacy

Within the Student Council and for the regular students at Wageningen University, there was not a lot of awareness about what is done and how the university deals with the personal data of students. Moreover, students are often unaware of the programs they use and their privacy regulations.

The following four points are of interest: Safe data storage, integer processing of data, learning analytics and living labs. VeSte worked this year on enlarging this awareness with students and organised an event to create awareness for this topic with students. On a university level, VeSte managed to get involved in the creation of a vision on learning analytics and have the university aid the study associations in their compliance to the new GDPR.

Major Events

Board Market

Board Congress

Thymos VeSte Ball Tournament

VeSte considers students who play sports also as active students and therefore is glad with an organization as Thymos representing all students with sport rights. The Student Council made sure this year that these sport rights did not raise above € 100,- which the Executive Board intended to do so. In cooperation with Thymos, VeSte organized the yearly recurring successful ball tournament. More than 21 teams contested each other in ball games varying from black light volleyball to blinded football.

Grand Meeting

Together with the student members of the Programme Board, VeSte organized the annual Grand Meeting on March 20, 2018. The Grand Meeting is organized for students involved in the education matrix of the WUR. The aim is to strengthen the positions of the students. Several trainings and presentations were given to provide the students with more information about their rights, the

university and developments in education. This year, 40 students visited the Grand Meeting which made it a huge success.

Trainings

One goal of VeSte this year was to give every board our supporters the possibility to also profit from VeSte's knowledge of LinkedIn, having an effective meeting & about teambuilding. With this knowledge of VeSte, VeSte has created three different trainings this year. VeSte's supporters can ask VeSte to give one of these trainings.

VeSte committees

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

VeSte Acquisition

This year, VeSte created a partner map with a structured overview of VeSte, what she offers,

VeSte Goes Abroad

After the launch of the website in June 2017, a lot of surveys were put on the site. VGA is a platform allows students to use an interactive global map in which information about the city, university and general local lifestyle options are provided. It is based on the experiences of students and aims to improve the decision making process for students to go abroad. The best global universities are now literally one click away. This year, a huge amount of surveys were added to the site. Also, VeSte translated the survey to English so the content of the site would also be available for international students. Next to this, different forms of content are now allowed on VeSteGoesAbroad. Next to surveys, students can now also find several blogs, and more diversity is to come in the future.

VeSte Promotion

With visibility as one of VeSte's main focus points the use of social media was extended drastically. Increasing the amount of Facebook posts and expanding the Instagram account undoubtedly bore fruit. Next to that, VeSte and the Student Council appeared in media varying from de Gelderlander, de Stad Wageningen, the Resource and the NOS. The promotion peak moment was as usually the Student Council election week with a fantastic result. But VeSte also succeeded in making students aware of what VeSte does thorough the rest of the year.

Elections

Exactly 37.72% of all students at Wageningen University voted during the Student Council election week. Also this year VeSte managed to get the majority of the seats in the Student Council. Namely, 7 of the 12 seats. Meaning that also next academic year 7 enthusiastic active students will represent you.