

VeSte Policy 2021



VeSte Wageningen
0317 - 485439
veste@wur.nl

Droevendaalsesteeg 2
6708 PB Wageningen

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Internal affairs	4
Internal functions	4
Chair	4
Vice-Chair	4
Secretary	4
Treasurer	4
Commissioner Internal Relations	4
Commissioner National Affairs	5
Commissioner Public Relations	5
Internal committees	5
Acquisition Committee	5
Events Committee	5
Promotion & Design Committee	5
Trainings	6
VeSte Elections	6
Ad hoc. VeSte Association	6
External affairs	6
Quality of Education	6
Resits	7
Quality Agreements	7
Extended Daytime Schedule (EDS)	7
Binding Study Advise (BSA)	7
Flexible studying	7
Digital education	8
Study Anytime Anyplace (SAA)	8
OSIRIS and TimeEdit	8
Student Charter	8
Quality and the amount of online Facilities	9
COVID-19	9
Facilities	9
Personal Development	9
Student Wellbeing	10
Sustainability	10
Inclusive environment at WUR	10
City and WUR and Students	11
Epilogue	11

Appendices

12

Appendix 1: party function division until September 2021

12

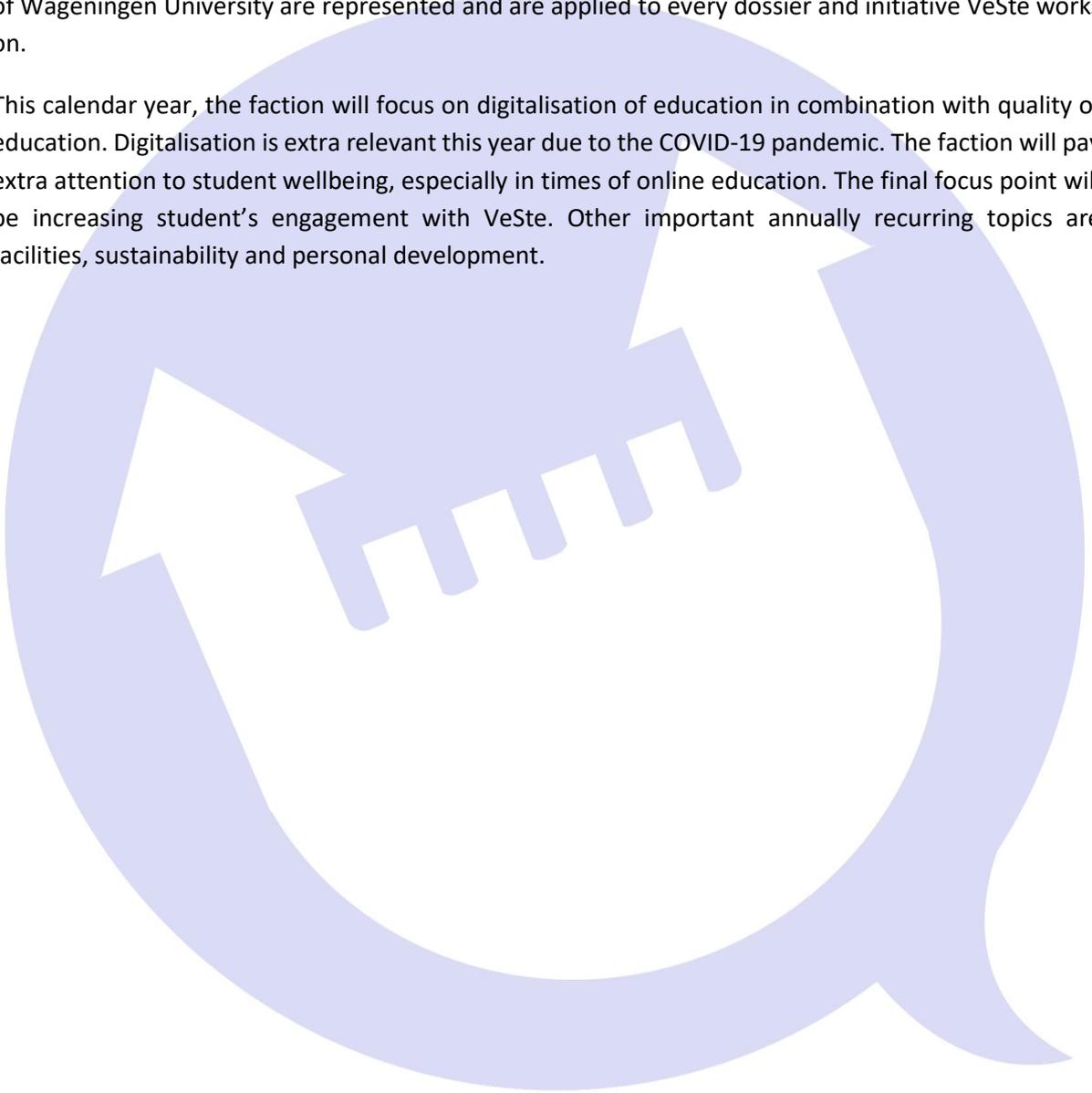


Introduction

VeSte is a party in the Student Council of Wageningen University (WU). The party represents and supports active students of WUR. In this Policy Plan, we elaborate on the vision and plans for 2021. If you are interested in the structure of VeSte, the Student Council and the structural vision of the party, we refer you to the Structural Policy.

The Policy of VeSte is based on our three core values: *World-Class Education*, *Broad Academic Development* and a *Vibrant Student Life*. These three pillars ensure that the interests of active students of Wageningen University are represented and are applied to every dossier and initiative VeSte works on.

This calendar year, the faction will focus on digitalisation of education in combination with quality of education. Digitalisation is extra relevant this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The faction will pay extra attention to student wellbeing, especially in times of online education. The final focus point will be increasing student's engagement with VeSte. Other important annually recurring topics are facilities, sustainability and personal development.



Internal affairs

Internal affairs refers to the functioning of VeSte as faction. This section consists of the different faction functions and VeSte committees for 2021. It is an addition to the Structural policy. The people which fulfil these functions until September 2021, can be found in Appendix 1.

In academic year 2020-2021, a couple of VeSte members also fulfil a specific function within the Student Council (SC). The Chair of VeSte is also the Chair of the SC, the VeSte Secretary is also the Secretary of the SC and the VeSte Treasurer is the SC Treasurer.

Internal functions

Chair

This year, the Chair is responsible for the connections between the municipality, the city and VeSte. To achieve this, the Chair will continue to partake in meetings with the municipality and the mayor. In the meetings the voice of the active student will be shared. Additionally, the Chair will keep close contact with other central councils in the Netherlands. This will be done via attending meetings such as LOVUM.

Vice-Chair

The Vice-Chair is responsible for guiding the candidates of the faction 2021-2022. This year the Vice-Chair will focus on increasing the involvement of the candidates during the elections. This will be achieved by regular meetings with the candidates before the elections and by involving them actively in the promotion during the elections. After the elections of 2021, the candidates will get the opportunity to evaluate the elections, to optimise the contribution of the candidates in the elections.

Secretary

This year, the Secretary will give the newsletter a new modern look to attract students. Also, the Secretary ensures more continuity, by making sure contact is guided via the VeSte mail.

Treasurer

The Treasurer will optimise accounting by investigating the potential use of online programs and to keep better track of the assets through the whole year. Also, the Treasurer will ensure enough money is earned through work campaigns, even though there are less options during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the Treasurer increases the involvement of the control committee. This will be done by meeting at least three times and actively asking for advice. Lastly, this year's Treasurer will help the Commissioner of National Affairs by fulfilling the role of second Commissioner of National Affairs. This will be achieved by attending meetings, taskforces and general members meetings of '*Interstedelijk Studenten Overleg*' (ISO) and the 'Active factions'.

Commissioner Internal Relations

The Commissioner Internal Relations will focus on contact with the extensive network of study, student, sports and cultural organisations that VeSte has built up. An extra goal is to create more dialogues with the constituency in order to improve communication. This will be achieved by setting up a new meeting of VeSte with student organisations: the Blue Society Meeting, and also to have regular dialogues with chairs of study associations. Next to this, the Commissioner Internal Relations

strives to approach other organisations which are not part of the constituency of VeSte and see what possibilities there are for both organisations to work together.

Commissioner National Affairs

For this year, the Commissioner National Affairs will try to maintain and improve the close relations VeSte has with the other active factions. This will be achieved by setting up one to one meetings to exchange information and ideas, which especially is very useful during the COVID-19 pandemic. Next to this, the Commissioner National Affairs will keep the proactive attitude towards ISO, amongst others by participating in a committee about the elections of the Dutch House of Representatives, which takes place in March. This year, VeSte will encourage students to vote during the national elections, by informing them about what is at stake for students and what different parties represent. This will be brought into practice in close collaboration with the Commissioner Public Relations.

Commissioner Public Relations

The Commissioner Public Relations will pay extra attention to increase the visibility of VeSte online. Due to COVID-19, visibility online deserves attention this year, since it has become difficult to reach students, and create active social media channels. The Commissioner Public Relations will investigate how to communicate best via social media and how to create an interactive channel. To achieve this, VeSte will use paid promotion during the entire year, make use of personal pictures and posting consistently. The Commissioner Public Relations, together with the Promotion & Design committee, is going to be active on LinkedIn and will investigate the use of new channels.

Internal committees

Acquisition Committee

This year, the Acquisition committee will focus on the elections and thereby supporting the Election committee. We aim to increase the visibility of VeSte by facilitating and distributing tangible promotion materials. There is a possibility that, this year again due to COVID-19, the elections will be held online. If this will be the case, the tangible materials will still be used for promotion of VeSte during the elections, but will be spread around instead of handing it out to students directly.

Events Committee

The Events committee will strive to organise a wide variety of relevant and informative events for all students. This will be achieved by organising events around topics that need (extra) attention throughout the year. The events that will be organised during the COVID-19 pandemic will be blended (combination online and offline). We will switch to online if needed. This year the committee strives to organise a Board Market, a Grand meeting and an event supporting the elections of the House of Representatives. If possible, the Events committee collaborates with other student organisations in Wageningen. It is aimed to organise one event per period throughout the year, about at least three different topics of interest for our constituency.

Promotion & Design Committee

This year the Promo and Design committee has set the goal to create a balance between sharing content-wise/informative posts and creating an interactive platform. The committee will focus on recent developments, structures and policies of WUR but also pay attention to current trends in social media. Moreover, we will try to collaborate with other organisations. This will be done by reaching out

to new organisations, or improving current collaborations VeSte has. Lastly, Promotion & Design will use different platforms such as LinkedIn more intensively to promote and show VeSte to all the students of WUR.

Trainings

VeSte provides different trainings to share the knowledge and the skills we have obtained. These trainings are Effective Meetings, Team Building and Time Management. The committee will focus on optimising the trainings for an online environment. To promote the trainings we will add information about the trainings to our site and mention it during drinks and meetings with our constituency. Afterwards, VeSte will ask for an evaluation moment.

VeSte Elections

VeSte wants to represent active students, now and in the future. Therefore, VeSte Elections aims for the majority of seats in the Student Council. To reach this goal, proper contact with the constituency is necessary to make sure their members are going to vote during the elections. Also, the committee strives to involve the candidates actively during the elections, as they are the future of VeSte. The elections also provide an opportunity for increasing awareness among students about what VeSte can do for them. This can be done by showing them the position of VeSte within WUR, provide examples of successful initiatives from VeSte and elaborate on our three pillars.

Ad hoc. VeSte Association

VeSte wants to focus on increasing the involvement of students with the party. This year VeSte wants to create an opportunity for students to be actively involved in decision making of the university and the party. VeSte wants to achieve this by creating a VeSte Association, which students of WUR can join by becoming a member. The first goal is to stimulate the representation of students of WUR, by offering information about the structure of the participatory bodies in WUR and showing all the possibilities for students within WUR and within the party. Next to this, another goal is to give students the opportunity to participate in co-governance and being involved in student politics, achieved by organising activities such as input nights and training days. The last goal is to offer students the possibility to get in contact with a diverse group, which will be done by facilitating a platform for a diverse group of students from different study programmes, different student associations and different backgrounds.

External affairs

In external affairs the faction gives an insight into topics discussed in the Student Council, the WUR Council, with the Executive Board and with the municipality. Important topics for the upcoming year are elaborated upon in this section.

Quality of Education

VeSte highly prioritises *World-Class Education* and wants to ensure quality of education is at top level, no matter the external circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Examples of ensuring good quality of education means guaranteeing sufficient amount of excursions and practical work during

courses. Via taskforce-, informal- and negotiation meetings we will focus on high educational standards for courses, theses and internships. This will contribute to *World-Class Education* and *Broad Academic Development*.

Resits

VeSte believes students should be given sufficient opportunities to take resits during the year in normal forms of education, meaning education without COVID-19. That is why VeSte ensures that students can partake in an exam three times a year.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there may be a possibility that a student will not be able to take an exam. This can cause unnecessary study delay. WUR policy states there has to be an online alternative for the exam. VeSte wants to ensure that the alternative does not come at the expense of the three exam options per year and will remain in close contact with the Dean of Education to prevent unwanted study delay. This will ensure *World-Class Education*.

Quality Agreements

This year the Student Council discusses the annual evaluation of the Quality Agreements via the WUR Council. Extra attention will be paid to whether the goals of 2020 have been achieved and whether all the money is being spent. In addition, it will be critically examined how the feasibility of these goals has been evaluated. VeSte believes it is important that the Quality Agreements fund is spent in an efficient manner, so that many students will benefit the most from it. The impact of COVID-19 has to be limited. In consultation with the steering group, VeSte will be a constructive discussion partner and will ask critical questions on the evaluation, ensuring *World-Class Education* and *Broad Academic Development*.

Extended Daytime Schedule (EDS)

The Extended Daytime Schedule (EDS) was implemented in academic year 2018-2019 and evaluated in academic year 2019-2020. During the first half year of 2021, the EDS will be adjusted according to the remarks pointed out during the evaluation last year. An evaluation was, amongst others, also done by VeSte to investigate the impact of the EDS on students. The adjustments on the EDS will be handled via the ad hoc EDS committee of the WUR Council. VeSte thinks it is important to optimise the opportunities for a *Vibrant Student Life* within the EDS, but also keep ensuring *World-Class Education* and *Broad Academic Development* possibilities.

Binding Study Advice (BSA)

The Binding Study Advice (BSA) will most likely be abolished nationally, because research shows that BSA increased the pressure first year student experience, which is deteriorating for their wellbeing. Moreover, there is no proof that the current BSA serves its purpose of helping students find out if a program fits them. VeSte wants to ensure that WUR students will be able to see whether a study programme fits them or not and that they receive help if needed. VeSte will have discussions, in cooperation with ISO, to optimise the current form of BSA or look for alternatives.

Flexible studying

A second round of the modular learning pilot of the ministry has been announced. The pilot could provide an outcome for active students who are e.g. doing a part-time board year, being part of a big committee, being an athlete or an informal caregiver, ensuring *Broad Academic Development* and a *Vibrant Student Life*. Within the BEE committee of the SC, VeSte provides the opinion of active students

on this topic. VeSte also looks for ways to make flexibilisation opportunities available to students and seeks for ways to overcome current challenges. VeSte supports educational innovation and thinking outside the binary of either being a fulltime student or no-student at all.

Flexibilisation within education includes three important parts. Firstly, students can study time and place independent. Secondly, students can format their own programmes as minor by following courses from several universities within or outside the Netherlands. Thirdly, students can pay per ECTS they follow, facilitating modular learning. VeSte wants to stimulate WUR to participate in the flexible studying pilot, to have preparation trials for flexible studying in later years and ensure *World-Class Education, Broad Academic Development* and a *Vibrant Student Life*.

Digital education

Digital education will be important in the upcoming year. Due to COVID-19, most education switched to online. VeSte wants to ensure the quality of education and availability of hereunder specified services for all students. In this section we elaborate on specific topics for the upcoming year.

Study Anytime Anyplace (SAA)

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Study Anytime Anyplace (SAA) project was accelerated. This year VeSte will be involved in the monitoring of this project within WUR. In September 2021, the whole project should be completed to go live officially. VeSte sees the potential of SAA, like availability of software on one device, and more freedom and flexibility to study anytime at anyplace. On the other hand, VeSte wants to remain critical.

The first focus point is on development of CANS/RSI. VeSte thinks it is important to monitor the SAA project by looking closely to the ergonomics of workplaces, the use of CANS/RSI tools and courses provided by the university. The second focus point is on software problems and laptop issues. The faction will work together with the project team to ensure that all software is working on the devices of all students, independent of what device they use and that laptop issues are fixed when occurring.

OSIRIS and TimeEdit

In December 2020, WUR changed their Student Information System (SIS) from their own developed SSC to OSIRIS, a platform used by many universities. In 2021, VeSte wants to make sure every student is provided with complete and correct information how to use OSIRIS, to keep ensuring *World-Class Education*. This should be communicated in a central way via email or Brightspace, but also in a decentral way via study advisors. When OSIRIS is implemented, every student gets a new student card and student number. VeSte wants to ensure that this process of handing out new student cards is done efficiently and timely.

In 2020, TimeEdit replaced MyPortal. For 2021, VeSte wants to resolve issues with the transition to TimeEdit.

Student Charter

This year, VeSte has the goal to include regulations about digital education in Student Charter. VeSte wants to ensure *World-Class Education* by making sure that students have certain rights and that they are aware of these rights, when it comes to digital education and examination. VeSte wants WUR to

check if all their Student Charter documents are in line with the recent developments and the digitalisation of education.

Quality and the amount of online Facilities

VeSte thinks it is important to facilitate online facilities to safeguard the high quality of education at WUR and ensure *World-Class Education*. In order to do so, WUR should outsource the development of knowledge clips for courses to increase the quality and accessibility. Next to this, the amount of online facilities, such as cameras and recording materials, should be increased. In this way it will be possible to have recordings of more lectures than at present, but also tutorials can be recorded. Besides this, teachers and students should be offered access to different online educational platforms and video conference software. In this way, the teachers can use the platform that suits their course best and they can facilitate online interaction among students and teachers.

COVID-19

This year's Policy is framed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which we are still in since the beginning of 2020. VeSte thinks it is important to facilitate physical education, which results in blended education, ensuring *World-Class Education*. When the situation slowly reverts back to times without COVID-19, there are possibilities to rethink what education at WUR will look like. VeSte thinks it is important to facilitate optimal transition after COVID-19, ensuring *World-Class Education, Broad Academic Development* and *Vibrant Student Life* afterwards.

Facilities

This year, VeSte has multiple focus points regarding facilities. Firstly, within the digital learning environment, it is important that RSI prevention is taken into account. This will be achieved by striving for RSI prevention tools available for students, inform about Workspace and test with replacers for Workspace. Additionally, with the arrival of new student associations, the need for new facilities for students has increased. We want to ensure students have a place to organise activities. This will be achieved by looking into a new use of old buildings of WUR and look into the use of current facilities of WUR, ensuring a *Vibrant Student Life*. Thirdly, we believe it is important that with the construction and tender of the third educational building Aurora the opinion of students is considered. This will be done by making sure that VeSte is included in evaluating different companies that provide furniture and that the student perspective is included in this evaluation period. Lastly, we noticed there is a shortage of good thesis workplaces. Within the committee 'Huisvesting, Arbo en Milieu' (HAM) a research into the quality of the workplaces was executed. This year, it is our goal to improve the quality and quantity of thesis spots by doing research at chair groups, ensuring *World-Class Education*.

Personal Development

VeSte supports *Broad Academic Development*, and believes that development also takes place outside the classroom. That is why one of the focus points this year is Personal Development. VeSte strives for more focus from the university on career orientation, both in the bachelor's and master's degrees. An example is promoting guest lectures by alumni. In addition, VeSte finds extracurricular activities also valuable for personal development. That is why VeSte is involved in the development of the EDU badges and wants to promote student challenges. VeSte believes it is important that extracurricular

activities are accessible to students, even during the COVID-19 pandemic. VeSte will explore how students can be motivated to do extracurricular activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Next to this, WUR launched a digital platform 'Student Training and Support'. VeSte promotes and supports this platform by spreading out flyers and posting on social media, building on *Broad Academic Development*.

Student Wellbeing

Student (mental) wellbeing changed due to recent developments like the loan system, pressure to finish your study program nominally and a different housing- and job market. As VeSte, we believe it is important to create awareness about this issue. It is important that it is normalised to talk about mental health and that together we can work towards preventative action. A way this will be done this year, is by starting the dialogue about this topic, that knowledge and concrete tools can be shared to prevent mental wellbeing issues. This goal is partly fulfilled by the 'Surf Your Stress' week, which VeSte co-organises. Another way of providing support for these issues rather than solution-based help, is to make all students aware of the existing wellbeing structure at WUR, by informing students through our social and online network. In BEE and Student Facilities, VeSte critically reviews what is available to support student wellbeing and looks for ways to improve the system. For example, supporting realisation of relaxation spots in Aurora and sufficient sport facilities.

Especially during COVID-19, student wellbeing has even further deteriorated. VeSte believes in these times it is essential to increase social interaction and create more social cohesion in order to prevent loneliness. Due to the major changes students get to deal with, they experience more stress. Some students can even develop depressive complaints. It has become even more essential to have a well-functioning student counselling system in place. VeSte will critically review the current system and will signal when the system is not sufficient, but also wants to work together with students who have new initiatives for the student counselling system.

Sustainability

This year, a new vision on the food and beverages offered at WUR will be written. SC committee Student Facilities is closely involved in writing this vision. VeSte thinks it is important to focus on sustainability. In this project, extra attention will be paid to sustainable to-go packages, but also reusable packages, boxes and utensils. Also, extra attention will be paid to food, such as plant based and vegan options.

Next to this, VeSte initiated the Sustainability fund a few years ago. This fund makes it possible for student organisation to invest in sustainability within their organisation. It was stated in the original plan that per September 2021 a fund will become available. This fund will contribute to the sustainable ambitions of WUR. VeSte will continue working on this project in the upcoming year.

Inclusive environment at WUR

The past year the attention for social injustices has grown society wide. More awareness about discrimination based on e.g. race, gender, sexuality, social "class", disability or religion has been raised.

VeSte believes it is important to keep an eye on biases and potential forms of institutional discrimination within our own institution. This can for example be done by starting a dialogue with organisations in Wageningen who stand up for marginalised groups in society.

In order to create an inclusive environment within WUR, it is important that the voice of all students is heard within WUR. A way of facilitating this is the inclusion of students in participation bodies. If more students are aware of the possibilities to participate in the policy making bodies of the university, the representation of all students can be accomplished. Taking part in a Program Committee, the Board of Education or the Student Council are also ways of developing oneself outside of the classroom, ensuring *Broad Academic Development*.

An important aspect of abolishing discrimination is by creating social safety at WUR. Students who face harassment, such as sexual intimidation, bullying, discrimination or (verbal) aggression, should be taken seriously in their complaints and should be supported by WUR in dealing with their complaints. Confidential counsellors have been appointed to mediate and help students with processing incidents. This year, VeSte wants to create awareness among students about the existence of these counsellors, by posting on social media and having open dialogues with the university.

City and WUR and Students

VeSte wants to increase the interaction with the citizens of Wageningen, its students and WUR. VeSte joins discussions with the municipality about the measures from the government regarding the COVID-19 pandemic every other week, both with the mayor as with other employees from the municipality. VeSte believes it is important that the gap between the citizens of Wageningen and students of Wageningen is reduced, to ensure a *Vibrant student life*.

Next to that, we support the founding of the “Wageningse Kamer van Verenigingen (WKvV)”, because they strive to improve communication between the student associations, municipality and WUR. The WKvV contributes to *Broad Academic Development* and a *Vibrant student life*. VeSte will stay in contact with the board, cooperate and assist them where necessary.

Epilogue

In this last section, VeSte would like to thank the parties involved in the evaluation of this Policy. In addition, we would like to express our appreciation for the students and our constituency for giving input, opinions and support on all kinds of topics! With the input the faction receives, VeSte will keep striving for attaining our three pillars: *World-Class Education*, *Broad Academic Development* and a *Vibrant Student Life*. Lastly, we would like to thank you for reading our Policy. We hope you enjoyed it!

Appendices

Appendix 1: party function division until September 2021



Irene van der Boom
Chair

Marieke van Vonderen
Vice-Chair

Judith Kikkert
Secretary

Renee Rooijackers
Treasurer



Sam Hoogaars
*Commissioner Internal
Relations*

Wieb Devilee
*Commissioner National
Affairs*

Jette Breedijk
*Commissioner Public
Relations*