



UvAsociaal's Party Program

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1. Diversity

UvAsociaal believes it is significantly important that every student feels at home at the University of Amsterdam, irrespective of disability, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, socio-economic status or sexual orientation..

We are pleased with the report of the Diversity commission because of the emphasis they put on intersectionality. Intersectionality in policy forming at the UvA implies that in thinking about diversity at the university, we need to consider intersecting social identities that relate to respective systems of oppression, domination and/or discrimination. We believe that focusing on only one marginalised group is not enough. Instead, we must consider all students and their place at the university. We stand for an inclusive and diverse university, not only in people but also in knowledge.

“Intersectionality is a theoretical framework that examines how multiple social identities such as race, gender, sexual identity, socio-economic status, and disability (to name a few) intersect at the level of individual experience (i.e., the micro level) to reveal multiple interlocking social inequalities (i.e., racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism) at the macro social-structural level” (Bowleg 2013: 755)

1.1. Diversity officers

In 2017-2018 the UvA hired a Central Diversity officer and required faculties also to hire Faculty Diversity Officers (FDO). We highly commend the UvA for doing this. However, there are several issues, especially with the FDOs: some have 0 hours for this job, they may not have sufficient facilities for the work and the hiring procedures do not always involve student representation as much as we would like.

We want to rally behind the report of the Diversity Commission (2016) regarding the Diversity Unit. The Diversity Unit should be made responsible for both forming policies on diversity and monitoring the progress of their policies. In addition to behind the scenes policy forming, the Diversity Unit should also ensure that bottom-up initiatives regarding diversity have a place at the UvA. Also, in addition to regular planned meetings with the councils, the Diversity Unit should keep in touch with social movements (i.e. Diversity Forum & Amsterdam United)

concerning diversity at the UvA regularly. After all, these social movements played a fundamental role in raising awareness on the issues of diversity, and have earned their place at any further diversity discussions. We also believe the Central Diversity Officer should be more accessible to students so they can ask questions, and try to better the awareness of their roles. One of our goals is to make sure the diversity officers are properly equipped with all the necessary resources and the time to be reachable for students. Lastly, the people in the Diversity Unit should have high enough positions in the organisation to actually illicit change; since the UvA managers also need to be educated about the issue of diversity, members of the Diversity Unit should not be impeded by their position to assist therein.

Furthermore, the diversity unit should concern itself with attracting students from high schools with a high percentage of students with a diverse background, to make sure that they know that the UvA is also an option.

1.2. Diversity literacy in education

It is disappointing to see that the university seems to be sitting on its laurels, simply for the reason that they have now hired staff to oversee the implementation of the Diversity Policy. Measures cannot and should not stop here. The UvA must acquaint the scientific community with the implications of diversity and its lack thereof on societally marginalised groups. UvAsociaal calls for the university to provide mandatory diversity training for hiring committees, to help mitigate any implicit biases that arise during the hiring process. Furthermore, diversity literacy is crucial in the education of students – the employment of diversity insensitive language can create a sentiment of displacement. Thus, the UvA needs to provide diversity training for scientific personnel, to make them aware that the way they teach has a significant impact on students. Our goal is that all personnel participate in this training.

1.3. The diversification of curricula and decolonization

Structural inequality is often found in and reinforced by the canon of curricula – the texts that we call ‘classic’ in the university are often written by authors who held discriminatory views. While we should continue reading and appreciating these texts for their academic merit, we need to offer the context in which and by whom it was written; ergo when John Locke said right to life, liberty and property he meant that concerning specific privileged groups in society. To accomplish this awareness, we need to create the opportunity at the university for doing diversity-focused curricula scans, helping teachers see the possibility for improving their curricula. The decolonization of course content should be explicitly integrated into our education, allowing for course content to better reflect our current era. Of course, this needs to happen in consultation and with approval of the faculty councils and the board of studies; diversity and democracy can go hand in hand.

1.4. Ombudspersons

We are delighted that a temporal acting ombudsperson was appointed (from the 1st June 2019). However, we think that several changes have to be implemented:

1. Multiple permanent ombudspersons must be designated. We believe that having only one permanent ombudsperson for the whole university leads to the lack of availability of the ombudsperson for all the students. We believe that permanent ombudspersons in each faculty have to be allocated.
2. Students must be aware of the presence of the ombudspersons. We think that information sessions about the role of ombudsperson should be implemented in seminars.
3. UvA indeed has a broad network, which includes confidential advisers, staff welfare, study advisers, diversity officers, occupational physicians, student deans and student psychologists. However, It is confusing to some students whom they should contact in case of undesirable behaviour. Therefore, we believe that a clear distinction should be made and students must be aware of the difference between the ombudsperson and the other existing support assistance.

1.5. Involvement of student councils

To be successful in dealing with the problems surrounding diversity at our university the student councils need to be included in future developments. The inclusion of the academic community is vital for working towards an inclusive and diverse university. The Central Diversity Officer needs to plan regular meetings with the Central Student Council to make sure that the student representatives are appropriately involved with the forming of diversity policy and the setting up of the training. Likewise, the Faculty Diversity Officers need to have regular meetings with their councils. The support and involvement of the student councils is vital to the success of positive developments concerning diversity.

1.6. Involvement of the social movement

There are activists and social movers that play an important role in society. There are issues currently being discussed that were not before the occupation of the Maagdenhuis. The current diversity discussion is in large part thanks to that. These activists and others that fight for similar values should be included and recognized in the process about diversity at the UvA. Therefore, the Central Diversity Officer needs to have regular meetings with the Diversity Forum and other such organizations, where the social movements are represented, to listen to opinions and ideas.

1.7. Silence Rooms

We are very happy that there is currently a silence room on every campus. However, we want to make sure that all students know about them and that they serve their intended purpose; a moment of silence, contemplation, prayer, or other. Eventually, we hope to have a silence room in every building. Right now, regardless of the size of the campus, there is one room. We want to make them properly available for all students regardless of the campus they are studying at.

2. Accessibility

One of the most important points for UvAsociaal is the accessibility of the university. We mean accessibility in the broadest sense; from the accessibility of buildings for people with a physical disability to the accessibility of digital educational means to measures of selectivity for education tracks. UvAsociaal wants the UvA to be as accessible as possible. To practice selection on educational tracks will only further the university in its unintentional (or intentional) quest to become an even more elitist institution. To not fully commit to making the university accessible for students with a disability is unjust. The Roeterseiland complex is the most recently finished one, so when students with physical disabilities cannot enter bathrooms in these buildings, progress is long overdue. In a similar vein, buildings currently being renovated are heritages, which is why the UvA says they cannot facilitate bathrooms for people with disabilities. However, we believe that the importance of students and their basic right to equal treatment should take precedence.

2.1. Studying with disabilities

In the Nationale Studenten Enquête (NSE) questionnaire the UvA has always been rated low by students with a disability. Even now, the university is not doing their best to mitigate this. UvAsociaal wants more commitment from managers for making all the buildings and digital resources of the UvA accessible for people with a physical disability. This includes the bathrooms and doors in the new buildings or the buildings that are done in the near future. We want the UvA to strive for the highest level of infrastructural accessibility. Right now, the UvA buildings only meet Dutch regulations, which are (as experienced with REC) way too low for a standard of accessibility. Being more disability-friendly as a university also includes subtitling of audio resources and making screen reader compatible text versions available for video resources for students with audiovisual disabilities. Furthermore, students with disabilities such as dyslexia or students who fall on the autism spectrum often have trouble with the facilities necessary for them to study properly. We want the UvA to form more straightforward procedures to attain certain facilities due to a disability. Often students need to go through all kinds of procedures to finally get what they need and often their privacy is not taken into account sufficiently. UvAsociaal stands for accessibility and wants to do all that needs to be done to improve the university experience for students with disabilities.

2.2. Mental Health

Throughout the year this has become an important topic amongst the student councils, with a lot of UvAsociaal council members pressing for the inclusion of the psychological well being of students on the policy agenda. However, the complexity of the causes of the increasing psychological problems of students makes this a challenging endeavour. In recent years more and more nationwide and university-specific regulations have increasingly forced students into a strait-jacket. The BSA, master selectivity, restrictions in study financing and administrative hurdles to organising studies have, amongst others, made sure that students are under pressure like never before. While we are going to continue to fight for breaking down these underlying causes, this will take a long time. In the meantime, the UvA needs to take responsibility for the students that are experiencing anxiety, study-related stress and depression.

There are three main points that we need to focus on; the facilities surrounding mental health, the visibility of these facilities and breaking down the stigma surrounding mental health. Concerning the first point, we need to look at the possibilities of strengthening the UvA's team of student psychologists. Since the number of students with psychological problems is growing, or at least the amount acknowledging it, and will only continue to grow due to the increasing uncertainty and changing educational environment caused by the coronavirus, we need more student psychologists. Moreover, we want to know the effects of the new 1.4fte being hired. Furthermore, we need to make sure that the facilities concerning mental health are known to students, and the process of getting an appointment should be streamlined. The UvA should put more effort into increasing the visibility of the student doctors and the facilities that they already put in place regarding mental health. Furthermore, we think that organising a mental health week to increase the visibility of the facilities is a good idea. During this week, we would engage with students not only about the facilities made available for mental health, but also on informing students of the symptoms of different mental health issues. Once students are informed of symptoms, they can do further research on mental health issues they relate to and seek the proper help they require. Our council members have already been working very hard on this dossier, we have every intention of keeping up the excellent work the coming year.

Currently, the UvA has several educational psychologists that will help the students with university-related issues. However, students with mental health issues that are not related to the University have turned away and encouraged to contact their GP regarding this issue. This is a long and complicated process that many students find difficult to go through, especially students with financial problems. UvAsociaal asks the University to acquire clinical psychologists that can aid students with any mental health problems that arise. When progress has been made with the individual, the clinical psychologist can also assist them in acquiring the help they need from other facilities, e.g. through their GP.

With the purpose to ensure the wellbeing of the student body during the Covid-19 crisis, we encourage the implementation of online courses, available in canvas, to help students identify symptoms of mental health issues. It is essential to combine these courses with the support of student psychologists. As well as online courses regarding time management and student

techniques as the program “toolkit”, available by default to all students at any point in the academic year.

We also encourage the UvA to organise online conferences to facilitate mental wellbeing during the Corona crisis. These could reach from meditation sessions to career advice which might give students a deeper feeling of purpose.

2.3. Selectivity of Master tracks

UvAsociaal is in general against selection for Master tracks. This does not mean that there should be no entry requirements. If there is a reason to believe there are specific basic requirements necessary to be able to pass the Master, applicants should meet those requirements. Upholding the quality of education is essential. However, everyone who passes these requirements should then be able to participate in the Master. The University should remain an open institution that welcomes all potential students. Selection measures, like GPA and motivation letters, often single out students from groups that are already marginalised in society. A better method of informing students about their supposed ‘adequacy’ for a particular master track would be non-binding advice regarding participating in the master. We understand that some tracks have a capacity problem concerning the number of students they can allow. In the short term, we believe this to be a reasonable concern. However, a master track should give a good reason for practising selectivity and should work on a solution to the capacity problem that leads to selection measures. In the cases that selectivity is practiced, it should be a temporary solution, while a more sustainable alternative is being considered.

2.4. Numerus Fixus

Considering the capacity problems at some programmes, and considering the constraints laid down by the national government on medicine and dentistry due to costs and narrow job options, we accept the inevitability of some forms of selection for some programs. However, we consider systems with a CVcheck or an interview too prone to bias. These methods facilitate direct or indirect favouring of groups based on irrelevant characteristics. Moreover, they may facilitate the favouring of individuals based on nepotism or friendship. For this reason, we seek to abolish these methods for admission to all programs.

Instead, we propose to have a lottery system with preferential requirements, i.e. programs will set up requirements which will allow students fulfilling them to automatically be accepted to the program. We also would like to see a limit to the number of lottery admissions programs students can apply to. We believe programs are best fit to define their own requirements as each program has different needs and skills from its prospective students.

2.5. Pre-masters (schakeltrajecten)

A pre-master is a one year or half year programme to prepare for a master outside of their original field of education. Next to maintaining accessible masters and bachelor tracks, thinking about the flexibility in master choice and upwards mobility is also crucial. When students want to do a master's that is not necessarily in the same scientific field at the university, this needs to be possible. To facilitate the development of one's educational career the university needs to ensure the existence of pre masters. These are important not only for students of the university but also for the upward mobility of students of the university of applied sciences. If these students want to develop themselves more scientifically via a master at the university, we need to make sure that they have a place here. Right now, different tracks need to fund their pre-masters, meaning that there is a large financial disincentive to take on students. We want the funding of these pre-masters to be taken up in the allocation model, so they are funded on a central level, as to mitigate this effect.

3. Environmental Sustainability

One of the greatest challenges facing society is climate change and environmental degradation. The university has to take responsibility for their contributions to these developments as well as to try to come up with solutions for these challenges. The university should educate about and research climate change and environmentalism, and the changes in society caused by that. We believe the university should take a prominent role in the battle against climate change and environmental degradation.

3.1. Education and research

We are incredibly proud to have had a significant contribution to the Sustainability minor. In the past decade, the UvA has made some significant strides concerning its research and education in sustainability, but there is still quite some work to be done. There are still too many bachelors that do not offer enough courses/minors on sustainability. UvAsociaal would like to see this changed; minors in for example environmental economics should help to address questions that are raised by energy policies.

3.2. Sustainability in UvA policy

The UvA has so far not been able to come up with a substantial and cohesive sustainability policy. Most projects related to decreasing its footprint have been linked to a couple of paragraphs in the “instellingsplan”, but the lack of real policy has prevented the development of more projects. We know the university is currently developing a proper sustainability policy. We want to ensure that what ends up being implemented is a comprehensive plan that will reduce the university's environmental footprint substantially.

3.3. Fossil Divestment

The last couple of years the university has taken small, but notable, steps to decrease its carbon footprint. The university has, however, overlooked the footprint caused by its financial decisions. The choice of banks, the choice of investments the pensions funds UvA deals with and the choice of banks the UvA advises international students to use, all matter.

On all these issues the university has failed to act appropriately. The UvA banks at Deutsche Bank and ING; two banks that have not made sustainable banking a priority. The UvA also advises international students to get a bank account at ING. UvAsociaal believes the UvA should take a stance and decrease the environmental impact of our financial decisions.

The UvA needs to:

- Advise international students to go to “green banks” such as Triodos or ASN Bank
- Switch banks now. This issue has been brought up for several years, and it is due time. UvA should not have financial ties with Deutsche Bank whatsoever, and should divest from ING.

4. Education

4.1. Feedback on open work

While we think grades can be suitable as a practical measure, we consider verbal or textual feedback more valuable as a learning experience. We, therefore, support textual feedback during theses and internships. We also think it would be valuable if final evaluations of theses or internships would contain detailed textual feedback as well as grades.

4.2. New forms of education and contact with the teacher

While we support experimenting with new forms of education, it should not come at the cost of contact time with a teacher. Contact with a teacher allows for the sharing of valuable insight based on a teacher’s experience that books or little quizzes online cannot provide. With the increasing role of digital means in education, it is important to guard the notion of education as interaction with teachers. After all, students are supposed to learn from them. There is a trend going on at the university that more and more digital means are being used in education. This is usually in the guise of Blended Learning, a mixed form of learning by ‘traditional’ means and digital means. We believe that sometimes Blended Learning can be beneficial to the learning process of students. However, we need to be wary of the implementation of Blended Learning and protect the time we are supposed to spend with the people that should teach us about our respective disciplines.

Exams as they are now, are about the reproduction of knowledge and repetition rather than progression. Exams put the emphasis on memorising fast and short-term knowledge reproduction rather than developing long-term skills. Therefore, the UVA should look into other forms of assessment instead of or supplementary to exams, for students to provide evidence of their achievement of learning outcomes.

The university should also add courses worth credits as a part of programmes which have the aim of preparing students for the job market. This would include, but not be limited to, interview preparation, motivation letter and CV workshops and more by people active in fields of HR.

4.3. Programme overhauls

While we appreciate that a fresh start may sometimes be necessary for a study programme to allow for the proper integration of fixes accumulated over time, we also think new programmes inevitably start out with some mistakes in the first years after implementation. We, therefore, think programme overhauls should be backed with proper arguments and should reasonably be expected to fix a large number of issues that cannot reasonably be fixed with small changes.

To prevent too many issues during and right after implementation of a new programme, a finished set of OERs (Teaching and Exam Regulation), subjects (including goals, form of instruction, form of examination and requirements for admission) and schedule for implementation should be available before an overhaul should be accepted, preferably a year before starting the implementation. Each subject coordinator should be appointed at least a year before the subject starts and the division of content among teaching hours should be finished half a year before the start of the subject.

4.4. The autonomy and freedom of students and teachers

Due to the Binding Study Advice (BSA), students need to obtain 48 ECTS (usually), or they will be kicked out of their program. We believe this to be a bad and ineffective measure. Firstly, these kinds of measures are infantilizing our students. We are people with genuine intrinsic motivation to pursue our studies. The university should give the students more responsibility, thinking of them as autonomous adults. UvAsociaal believes that it is important to look at this measure critically, and if needed revise it. However, there is one problem. BSA is, unfortunately, a national policy, so only the UvA cannot stop with this policy. The UvA only has a say in how high the bar is for study advice. We propose to lower the amount of ECTS required in the short term and eventually to 0 ECTS. The university should put more faith in their students and treat them as responsible individuals.

Another thorn in the side of the autonomy and freedom of students and teachers is 8-8-4. This academic structure is highly inflexible and limited. However, the CvB has already ruled that this structure does not have to be adhered to, yet this is barely known amongst both students

and teachers. We believe awareness of this opportunity should be spread far more widely, resulting in more flexible academic structures being used.

4.5. Study advisors

The role of study advisors for students should not be underestimated. Given their position maintaining an overview on track and student development they need to be the people to whom students can ask their substantive questions about their academic career. It is very important that supporting the student is the central element in the work of study advisors. The primary consideration in their study advice should be the well-being and success of students, not any University interests (such as graduating as quickly as possible). By being widely accessible and open to the wishes of students they can contribute to students feeling secure & supported. We believe that study advisors play a vital role in signalling mental health problems of students, often being the first contact with a relevant authority that a student has. Because of the crucial part they play for students, study advisors should be supported in their tasks at the university. Depending on the faculty this could range from helping streamline the scheduling process, giving more training to study advisors or hire more study advisors to reduce their workload. However, we believe that the hours during which study advisers are available must be extended and be available every day of the work week.

4.6 Student Representation

To aid communication between course coordinators and students we want the university to implement a new system where each course has 2 student representatives who will be the first point of contact for students when there are course related questions or problems. This will not only increase the efficiency of education but ease the burden of teachers needing to communicate with hundreds of students asking similar questions.

A more detailed explanation can be found at: <http://www.rsmsr.nl/being-a-representative-iba/>

4.7 Proctoring

We are strongly against proctoring and believe no form of examination or external factors should have students choose between privacy infringement or a study delay. The UvA stated that they know it is a privacy violation, yet they still continue to use this form of invasive proctoring while also making the exams more difficult than before. This is not an adequate solution. This is why we propose more exams focused on knowledge of the depth of courses rather than simply applying material which is less fraud resistant.

5. Democratisation

Much work has been done with regards to democratisation since the Maagdenhuis occupation, but this work has not resulted in significant changes yet. To prevent democratisation from turning into a buzzword, we need real changes that give students and teachers the ownership of their education. In the next couple of years, UvAsociaal wants to push for these following democratisation initiatives.

5.1. Referenda

In recent years student and workers councils have had numerous discussions with the Board of Directors and other managers about support from students and staff outside of the councils to reach a better decision. Even though almost everyone agrees that the support from the academic community is of utmost importance for ethical decision making, nobody exactly knows whether there is enough support from the community for decisions. Because of this, opposite parties claim to have the support of the community. UvAsociaal believes that these discussions neither tend to be productive nor fruitful and thus proposes that the UvA organises referenda at the moment that this is asked by students or staff. These referenda could be organised on program, faculty and central level. This will strengthen the position of ordinary students and staff and make sure that their voice is heard instead of just claimed. We find it important that students participating in a referendum are making an informed decision. Therefore, referenda should be prepared carefully and information needs to be transparent. In order to ensure a legitimate decision, we also propose that referenda need to pass a participation threshold of ten percent on the central level and fifteen percent on the faculty level to be considered binding.

5.2. Program Committees

UvAsociaal sees the recent strengthening of the Program Committees as a small success for democratisation at the UvA. These boards are representative institutes that are closest to bachelor and master programmes and can be the place where students and staff come together and take ownership of their education. This, however, is not the case right now. Education directors and deans have often tried to bypass the programme committees when making plans for education. More rights for the program committees can strengthen their position and increase the role that students and staff have in their education. UvAsociaal believes that programme committees should get more rights and will promote this in the councils.

5.3. Elected deans and board of directors

UvAsociaal believes that in the next couple of years the university should experiment with elected members of the board of directors and deans. The people in these positions have enough of a significant influence on the university and academic community that we believe that the academic community should have the final say in who gets to fulfil these positions. This might be a big change for the UvA, but it is not unheard of. In Flanders students and staff elect the rector magnificus of major universities, such as the Catholic University of Leuven. We believe that students and staff will make good use of this opportunity.

6. Sustainable internationalisation

In recent years internationalisation has become a topic of interest. As some of you may already know, UvAsociaal stands for inclusivity, and that also entails the inclusion of international students. However, it is important not to be careless about the trend of internationalisation in higher education and make sure that policy forms to adequately deal with developments concerning internationalisation. UvAsociaal stands for internationalisation that is handled carefully and sustainably.

6.1. Education as the primary concern

We believe that education should also be the primary concern when talking about internationalisation. This does not sound controversial, but often the educational context & content is underappreciated when the language of instruction is changed to English. UvAsociaal believes that when the internationalisation of tracks is being deliberated the primary concern should always be the quality of education. We need to make clear in our university vision on education (Onderwijsvisie) and other superordinate policy documents that we put education before prestige and financial gains that come with internationalisation.

6.2. Taking responsibility for previous policy

In recent years a lot has been happening in terms of internationalisation without a clear vision and direction for these developments. A considerable amount of tracks have English as the language of education, resulting in a considerable amount of international students. However, the institutional structures of the UvA have fallen behind with the inflow of international students; we need to take responsibility for the inclusion of these students. The UvA needs to build institutional infrastructure to make sure that these students can be fully involved at their university since they are also part of the academic community. The institutional infrastructure includes a.o. supporting the bilingualism of student councils, educating the non-scientific personnel in English and. Next, to language skills, it is also important to work on intercultural skills when studying and working in an international environment; this improves the mutual understanding of students and teachers from different backgrounds. We need to take responsibility for the international students that are already here and not only use them for financial gain. Furthermore, we need to take responsibility for previous internationalisation policy that was implemented without the proper infrastructure in the organisation.

7. Financialisation

The University of Amsterdam is an academic community consisting of students, scientists, teachers, supporting staff and more. The organization creates a lasting societal impact. Taking this into consideration, we must guard against the unfortunate habit of operating as a “diploma fabriek”, or knowledge factory. The university must continuously strive to be a hub of the

impact that allows every member to maintain their intellectual sovereignty, prioritizing people over financial gain.

7.1. The Full Cost model

Everything at the UvA has a price, at least since the introduction of the full cost model. If you want to set up a table in a UvA building you need to pay; if you want to use a couple of flip-overs, it can cost you over a hundred euros. Organising public events at the UvA can sometimes result in a lot of unexpected costs because students will need to pay for security and in-house emergency service personnel (BHV). These are some of the ridiculous consequences of the full cost model; a system in which faculties, students and study associations pay for renting space and services offered by the combined services department of the university. We can conclude that the UvA needs to take a critical look at the full cost model while coming up with short term solutions for students and study associations. Faculties should involve their FSRs regarding the expectation of the central services.

7.2. Budget Transparency

In the last fifteen years, universities throughout the Netherlands have seen a steep increase in student numbers. This increase, however, was not met with a significant increase in government spending. This has caused extraordinary pressure to reduce costs at almost every bachelor and master programme at the UvA. UvAsociaal believes that student councils should keep this in mind when looking at “new and innovative ideas” for education because these might be hidden budget cuts. One of these hidden budget cuts has been associated with blended learning. This new way of learning, which might have the potential for improving education, has been and will likely be used to cut the costs of wages by teaching online rather than in the classroom. This is just one example of where a hidden budget cut can be presented to you as a new and innovative idea; we, therefore, believe that student councils should always be critical when new ideas come from the managers rather than teachers themselves and watch out for any hidden budget cut.

7.3. Collaborations with other institutes

Next, to cutting budgets of programmes, the UvA has also tried to set up new collaborations and mergers with other academic institutes in Amsterdam to reduce costs or create extra income, most notably the late administrative union with the HvA and the collaboration with the bètasience faculties of the VU. Some parts of these collaborations have been successful, but overall we can conclude that these major collaborations can be seen as failures. Merging for the sake of efficiency has proven not to necessarily increase quality. On top of this, with more than 35.000 students and 6.000 staff members, the University of Amsterdam has already become too bureaucratic.

Furthermore, the extra complexity introduced by joint degrees, joint programmes and mergers of entire faculties create an unnecessarily complicated bureaucratic environment and fragmentation of student representation. The university should refrain from further collaborations motivated by efficiency. New collaborations should only be accepted if they add significant value to the quality of education or research, or the student experience (in terms of diversity and accessibility). In all cases, the rights of students should be warranted. To ensure this, all relevant student representation should be respected in the decision-making process and all relevant councils, not just CSR, should have the right to consent.

8. The Academic Community and its underrepresented groups

In the past couple of years, the role of the Academic Community in policy making has been strengthened. UvAsociaal is happy about this renewed interest of students, staff and policymakers and will fight to strengthen this discourse further. We do however believe that some groups of the academic community have been neglected in the past couple of years. Next years' student representatives should make sure that these groups become part of the Academic Community to make sure that the community is inclusive.

8.1. Cleaners, guards and caterers

The academic community does not stop at scientific personnel and students. The uproar about the university's treatment of the cleaners shows that the underrepresentation of the cleaners has added to their problems significantly. We, the students, need to stand for the interest of the whole academic community and thus for cleaners, guards and caterers as well. These employees might not officially work for the university, but they play a significant role in a students' experience. These workers should, therefore, become part of the academic community. Representation in, for instance, the new Senate is therefore deemed to be necessary by UvAsociaal. The voices of these people have long fallen on deaf ears, and it is important that they become part of our university once again. Next, to give them a voice in the representative bodies of the UvA, we also believe that they should become employees of the UvA once again. The UvA should hire these people directly instead of using third parties.

8.2. International Students

In recent years the number of international students has greatly increased, but their role in the academic community has not kept pace with this increase. There has been an increase in international students in the student councils. UvAsociaal believes that to facilitate both the Dutch and international students, all documents should be both in English and Dutch.

8.3. PhD's

While PhD students might have to contend with the most extensive workloads at the university, they are hardly represented in policy making of the university. They cannot represent

themselves or vote for worker councils. While there are PhD councils, their influence is not even close to that of a worker or student council. The PhD's have a huge impact on research and education, and they work actively in the academic community. It should, therefore, be evident that their underrepresentation is a shame for the university and changes need to be made.

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