



VeSte Policy 2024



VeSte Student Council Party, Wageningen
For Active Students

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Introduction

Dear reader,

We are happy to present to you the VeSte policy 2024. VeSte is a party in the Student Council (SC) of Wageningen University & Research (WUR). As a party we represent and support the active students of WUR in the policymaking at our university. In this policy plan, we present our goals and vision as the 27th VeSte faction. This yearly policy plan is based on the Structural Policy, which can be found at www.vestewageningen.nl.

VeSte has three core values that are the foundation of the party: *Future-proof Education*, *Personal Development*, and an *Active Student life*. At all times, these three pillars ensure that the interests of active students within Wageningen University are represented and applied to every dossier and initiative VeSte works on. More information regarding these pillars can be found in the Structural Policy of VeSte.

The 27th faction has set several goals to achieve. Firstly, VeSte is focused to maintain the quality of education offered. Additionally, VeSte strives to preserve the Wageningen student life. Likewise, we strive to provide ample opportunities for personal development, sustainability at WUR and improving facilities to ease the life of students.

This policy plan is divided into two main chapters, *Internal Affairs* and *External Affairs*. The section *Internal Affairs* explains the goals and aims of individual functions and VeSte committees. The chapter *External Affairs* is divided further into three main categories: *WUR*, *Wageningen*, and *The Netherlands*, based on the different levels that VeSte has an influence on. Within the different sections, you can find a detailed explanation of this year's ambitions.

Finally, we are looking forward to the challenging task of improving the quality of education and student life here at Wageningen University. Enjoy reading our policy plan 2024!

Internal Affairs

The division of functions between the party members from September 2023 until September 2024 is presented below. This chapter covers an elaborate explanation of the 27th VeSte faction. By *Internal Affairs* is meant the functioning and structuring of the party. This entails the internal functions and internal committees.

Internal Functions

This year's faction consists of six members. Every member has their own function within VeSte, and some members have an additional function in the Student Council (SC). For the following members this is applicable:

- VeSte Chair fulfils the role of SC Chair;
- VeSte National affairs fulfils the role of SC Vice Chair;
- VeSte Vice Chair fulfils the role of SC Secretary.

Note that the functions explained below are only applicable within the VeSte faction, which is a separate body within the Student Council.

A more detailed explanation of the basic tasks and responsibilities per function can be found in the VeSte Structural Policy. The more specific priorities for the coming year are explained below.

Chair

This year, the Chair will focus on ensuring the continuity of the establishment of VeSte initiatives, by executing vision through directing discussions in internal meetings. Over the years, VeSte initiatives have proven to be impactful for active student life in Wageningen. Existing ideas will be elaborated and implemented, and new ideas will be generated. Additionally, the Chair will prioritise VeSte's influence on the policy of the university; to represent the interests of the active students of Wageningen. Close contacts and strong relationships with our constituency are vital.

This year, the Chair also fulfils the role of Student Council Chair. To prevent conflicts of interests and damage to the image of the Student Council Chair whenever VeSte needs to exercise their influence in the Student Council, another member of VeSte steps up as spokesperson.



Vice chair

With a varying composition of the faction every year, it is up to the Vice chair to ensure that there is close collaboration within the faction for organisational and content-wise consistency. As a result, the Vice chair is responsible for upholding the identity of VeSte and accountable for the policy of VeSte. Being part of various committees within VeSte, Student Council and WUR-council, the Vice chair delves more into content and supports the chair to get a better overview of the activities in the faction and council.

During the elections, the Vice chair takes the lead in recruiting potential candidates and ensure a smooth onboarding process and involvement during the elections. This year, the Vice chair

wishes to create better clarity and visibility for what VeSte does among its constituency and other external entities, which is done in close contact with commissioner Internal Relations. At last, the Vice chair, along with the Chair, is responsible for ensuring a positive spirit and smooth functioning of the party.

Secretary and Commissioner Public Relations

The Secretary of VeSte deals with both electronic and hardcopy mail. As contact person of the faction, the Secretary keeps a positive attitude towards external parties in general, and the constituency in particular. Being approachable is therefore also important to receive input from the constituency. Keeping the VeSte agenda up-to-date and making sure a VeSte delegation is present at important events (such as constitution drinks) is also something the Secretary is responsible for. Structuring the email and shared drive is essential for VeSte to function efficiently. Typically, the Secretary is responsible for taking minutes, but there has been a shift to rotate this responsibility. These aim to facilitate the secretary's participation in discussions, particularly given their dual function this year.

This year, the Secretary wants to assist the party in making processes more efficient. The address file is being updated, and the Idea box process is under construction. By structuring these kinds of processes, the Secretary strives for higher productivity among the Faction.

This year the Secretary also has the responsibility of the Commissioner Public Relations (PR). To divide the workload, this function is mainly taken up by the whole Promotion & Design committee, where the commissioner public relations is the chair.



Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for the financial health of the VeSte faction. For this year, the Treasurer wants to keep a complete record of all expenses and income generated and all the documents made for declaration procedures. The Treasurer will also further professionalize the different financial reports by giving more explanation on the financial figures and making the reports easier to

understand for other members of the faction. As a result, there will be more transparency towards the other members of VeSte as well as predecessors and coming successors. Moreover, clear explanations on financial choices that will be made this year can assist the next year's Treasurer in making good decisions.

Furthermore, the Treasurer will continue organizing working actions to strengthen the liquid assets of VeSte. As the head of the acquisition committee, the treasurer aims to attract better collaborations with companies for promotion during the elections. The Treasurer wants to do this by putting more effort into approaching companies and by critically thinking how to benefit the students.



Commissioner Internal Relations

In the coming year, the Commissioner Internal Relations (IR) aims to stay closely connected with VeSte's community, making sure everyone feels heard and truly represented by our organization. The Commissioner Internal Relations will engage with constituency boards through both formal and informal meetings to address queries, provide updates throughout the year. This year the Commissioner internal relations will be aided by the Vice Chair in maintaining contact with associations. By combining forces, constructive meetings with student boards can take place with the goal of finding effective ways to engage more with their members. In addition, the Commissioner of Internal Relations will communicate VeSte's policy to its constituency and create appropriate expectations. Together with the Vice Chair, the VeSte Internal Relations will discuss the policy with student and study associations. Furthermore, the Commissioner Internal Relations will continue to update the Contact Plan to improve and maintain the relationship with and bolster awareness of VeSte's activities within the constituency.



Commissioner National Affairs

The Commissioner of National Affairs represents VeSte and therefore the (active) students of Wageningen University on a national level. This is done by spreading VeSte's vision on different topics, as well as keeping VeSte members informed about relevant topics that are being discussed on a national level. The Commissioner National Affairs will stay in close contact with the Interstedelijk Studenten Overleg (ISO) and the Landelijk Overleg Fracties (LOF). By attending meetings of the ISO, valuable information is gathered about national student and political affairs relevant for WUR. And on

the other hand, we have the opportunity at those meetings the represent the interests of Wageningen active students.

This year, the focus of the National Affairs will be on updating position papers of ISO to represent the interest of active students in the Netherlands. Over the past years VeSte developed valuable relationships within ISO with like-minded parties. This year the time has come to reap from the investments of the past years. Therefore, the National Affairs will defend the position of Wageningen active students regarding topics like: BSA, Internationalisation and internship compensation. We will also use our like-minded parties in other cities to gather information regarding elections so that for the upcoming elections we will get the best result possible.



Internal committees

Within the VeSte faction several committees are operating to pursue and support the mission of the party. Every member takes part in a couple of these committees respectively. This year the VeSte committees are:

- Acquisition
- Elections
- Events
- Promotion & Design
- Trainings
- Ad hoc FOS Association Boards

The specific focus points per committee are explained below. A more general overview of the committees, excluding the ad hoc committee, is included in the VeSte Structural Policy.

Acquisition committee

The Acquisition committee will continue to follow the local vision as done in the past few years VeSte wants to focus on giving local and student orientated companies a chance to collaborate with us. This way we hope to provide a podium for our local economy and increase the awareness of VeSte among students. We will try to increase this awareness by handing out coupons with the relatable VeSte logo by the members of the VeSte faction. In comparison to last year, we will not only hand out coupons during the election week, but also during the year to ensure continuity of our visibility. For example, our collaboration with Urban Roots in Wageningen.

Elections committee

This committee coordinates the actions of VeSte during the SC elections and aims to ensure a good result in the elections. Similar to the previous few years, the Vice chair, Commissioner PR, Commissioner IR, and the Treasurer take part in this committee, as they are in their function involved with selecting new candidates and keeping in touch with other organisations. The Treasurer here is present as she is closely involved with the spendings and is aware of the finances.

During the year, this committee sets up a strategy for the elections. During the elections VeSte strives to get as many votes as possible. VeSte believes it is important to have a range of highly qualified and motivated candidates for next year's faction, with diverse backgrounds within Wageningen, so that all active students feel confident that their voice is represented in the new VeSte faction.

In order to achieve this, we try to be as visible as possible to our constituency, during the whole year. Prominently featuring our name during events, actively engaging with student and study associations and being active on social media are ways to enhance our visibility. As a result, during the election week the students may easily recognize us.

It is vital that the VeSte ideals focussed on Active Students are effectively transferred to students, so that they are aware what a vote for VeSte entails.

Events committee

The Events committee plans and organizes events throughout the year. The goal of the events committee is to promote VeSte and to educate, communicate, and connect with active students. The events that the faction organizes are line with the pillars of VeSte. Events that will be organised this academic year are for example the RSI/CANS workshop, the Board Market, and the Grand Meeting. Throughout the year, VeSte collaborates on events with other associations. Prior to the elections, VeSte will organise two or three events that promote VeSte and their candidates. For example, the list pusher drink, where list pushers are encouraged to promote VeSte and its candidates.

Promotion & Design committee

The Promotion & Design committee will proceed with enhancing the visibility of VeSte as a Student Council party. This year the responsibilities of the commissioner PR has been shared among members of this committee. This committee wants to improve communication and interaction with the constituency. The committee believes that this will result in increased visibility. Internal communication is also a topic considered important by the committee. With early involvement of the Promotion & Design committee the promotion becomes easier and more effective. Therefore, communication with other committees within VeSte is as important as the promotion itself.

For promotion within the constituency, the committee has developed a guideline: structural promotion is important to maintain a strong connection with the constituency. To explain the purpose and significance of VeSte's actions for active students will contribute to gaining more exposure. This faction aims to create a promotion strategy towards constituency more personal. This could be done by asking more specific questions with the idea box and making social media content more personal. Also, creating more posts that explain what VeSte is, does and is currently working on is a goal of the Promotion & Design committee this year. This consequently increases the awareness of active students about VeSte.

Training committee

The faction members of VeSte receive trainings from the university to increase their capacities and strengthen their capabilities as Student Council members. The purpose of the VeSte training committee is to pass the knowledge gained with these trainings on to boards and committees of other (student) associations in Wageningen. The training committee gives five different trainings: 1) Find your team role 2) effective meetings 3) Time management 4) Lobbying 5) Public speaking. Last year the supply of trainings was revised, resulting in a new offer of trainings. This year, the training committee will continue the optimisation of the offered trainings, by exploiting opportunities to tailor the trainings to the audience. After a training, the boards will be asked to evaluate the given training. This feedback can then be used to potentially further improve the VeSte trainings.

Ad hoc FOS Associations and organisations

This year, an evaluation of the Financial Support Students (FOS) regulations will be carried out. The ad hoc committee will focus on being well prepared when this review takes place, with the aim of ensuring that the associations (both student and study associations) receive the amount of FOS deemed necessary. This is needed to endure as a healthy association, as well as to provide the possibility for students at WUR to have an active student life and develop themselves outside the lecture rooms. Wageningen as a student city does not have the same facilities as big cities such as Amsterdam or Utrecht. Associations, and thereby student boards are the heart of student city Wageningen. It is seen that at this moment that gusto of filling fulltime or parttime boards and committees is low with the financial effects of study delay as one of the main reasons. Last year, the FOS regulations were slightly adjusted to improve the compensation provided to boards. However, associations still see a rise in members leading to an increase in workload and demand for growth in size of boards and committees. As a result, the current evaluation is for number of months of FOS received by each association must increase for the continuity of these associations.

The committee knows boards are having more troubles finding successors, but only from word to mouth. Therefore, the aim of this committee is to work in close contact with the constituency and find a possible solution. From there, work will be done to find a suitable solution whereby the associations can continue to exist in a healthy way.

Next to that it is also important to note that the past years a high inflation percentage arose, increasing the costs of all associations, therefore we will try to index the FOS-amounts of all associations to a sufficient amount.

External Affairs

Within the Student Council and WUR Council, and together with the Executive Board and the municipality, VeSte is working on several topics to represent the active students of WUR. VeSte interacts with stakeholders at university level, city level, and on national level to voice our opinion.

WUR

Quality Agreements

As a result of the implementation of the student loan system, Dutch universities received funding from the government to invest in improving the quality of education. The use of this funding by WUR is defined by the Quality Agreements.

From the academic year 2023-24, the loan system, study grants have been implemented again leading to alteration of the Quality agreements. They will now be structurally funded from the Dutch government. Additionally, from the year 2024, the current quality agreements will expire, and this will provide an opportunity for an evaluation of the current allocation of money. During this evaluation, VeSte will actively ensure that allocated funds are directed not only towards future projects but also benefit current students directly improving their educational experience. Additionally, VeSte will participate in the redivision of resources to ensure sufficient money is available for student-led initiatives and events supporting those who wish to organise activities within the university. For example, the WUR Student Challenges and the KickStart Fund.

BYOD

Recently, WUR implemented the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy. This means that all students are required to bring their own laptop for education, self-study, and exams. Since the implementation, many problems have been encountered and most of them, fortunately, have also been solved. VeSte wants to ensure students experience as little problems as possible regarding this policy. The faction wants to achieve this by ensuring students are aware of the risks of working on a laptop (e.g., CANS), that software availability is not an issue, and that the responsibility of the costs is clearly communicated beforehand. Additionally, IT-help and CANS prevention equipment should be accessible for all students. Therefore, VeSte strives for equal discount and accessibility of CANS prevention equipment, regardless of left-handed or right handedness. Additionally, VeSte is looking into creating more ergonomic workplaces on campus. VeSte is monitoring and evaluating the status of Bring Your Own Device by consulting students and discussing options to improve this policy with the product owner of Bring Your Own Device.

As a result of the BYOD, we experience some new problems, for example the examinations. We will keep monitoring if this brings any structural problems. Next to the exams we also experience problems with the Walk-along days, VeSte in the upcoming year will look for possible solutions to solve this problem.

Lecture recordings

VeSte advocates for the provision of lecture recordings as an integral part of academic courses. By making these recordings compulsory and easily accessible, students have the advantage of revisiting their lectures, which may aid them in comprehension and review of complex concepts. This creates an inclusive and supporting learning environment.

Model Answer paper

VeSte firmly believes that providing model question papers offers invaluable support to students in their exam preparation. By gaining access to these, students have an insight into the expected formal and content of the exams, enabling them to better prepare for the evaluation criteria. Model Exam papers offer a fair assessment process and allow the students to excel by giving them clear guideline for their expectations of the exam. This ensures a more transparent and supportive examination system for all students.

First year's landing time

New students that come to Wageningen often find it challenging and time-consuming to adjust to life in the city and at WUR. VeSte places high importance for new students to be fully integrated into Wageningen and mainly the university itself. We aim to help these new students and are currently working on a project to help first year Bachelor students to experience an efficient landing time at WUR. This concerns the understanding of facilities and programs that WUR students are expected to work with. This project will help students get acquainted with the digital learning environment of the university. With the International classroom identity of Wageningen University, it is important that students are taught how to interact with their peers in an intercultural group setting.

Wellbeing

Over the past years, where students have been obliged to work from home, the loan system, pressure to finish your programme nominally, wellbeing has become more important than ever before. Student wellbeing here includes mental and physical wellbeing along with creating awareness among students on this topic.

VeSte believes mental wellbeing is a concern that the university also bears some responsibility for. It could be accomplished by maintaining a manageable workload for students which in turn does not cause unnecessary stress and ensures room for *Personal development* and *Active Student Life*. To do so, VeSte is involved in the policy making for wellbeing facilities and having minimum lectures extending beyond regular hours.

According to VeSte, Mental wellbeing goes hand-in hand with physical wellbeing. Physical exercise reduced stress and gives the opportunity for social interactions, which in turn is good for the wellbeing of the student. Hence, VeSte is involved in the maintenance of good exercise facilities on campus, along with ensuring that students get the opportunity to exercise before they can attend lectures by extending the Bongerd opening hours. Physical wellbeing also includes RSI/CANS prevention. VeSte draws attention to this topic, by actively encouraging students to take breaks more often and providing ergonomic workplaces on campus.

The feeling of social safety is essential for mental wellbeing of students. At the end of 2023, a report called "Monitor Mentale Gezondheid en Middelengebruik van Studenten" had been published which shows that many students in higher education institutions experience mental issues such as loneliness, exhaustion, stress, or depression. This result is very shocking, as a result VeSte decided to place urgent focus on this topic. Two years ago, VeSte initiated the social road map of WUR, a map that show easily where students can find help within the organisation. In usual cases, students start looking for help when it is too late as they do not recognise their complaints as real as symptom. 'Prevention is better than cure' and therefore along with better communication, VeSte focuses on informing student better about preventing mental issues. Further, social safety discussions within the organisation such as (verbal and physical) sexual harassment, has been drawing increasing attention these past years. Hence, VeSte will always strive to improve accessibility and visibility of student support facilities.

Facilities

Facilities have always been a crucial topic when it comes to enhancing the student experience. They serve as a catalyst maximizing potential both for students and the University in general. The Facilities & Organisation committee of the Student Council is the responsible for working on them and to establish improvements. Last year there were more study places established. Increasing the number of study places at campus, especially during peak moments, is something VeSte wishes to investigate. Monitoring ongoing initiatives, such as the non-food vending machines, microwaves in all education buildings, and the newly established coffee machines, also has the attention this year. Further improving these existing facilities have a lot of potential. VeSte is also looking into the possibility of having Standing desks to be available for all students. This year, with a new caterer operating on campus, a multidisciplinary evaluation will be carried out this year. This evaluation focuses on the progress of set goals during the tender phase. These goals are about various aspects like the quality of the food, its origin and other considerations such as freedom of choice for the customer. In addition to these, new developments have arisen, notably the mandatory costs associated with disposable meal packaging, and an ambition to transition to returnable meal packaging.

Menstrual poverty emerged as a topic brought forward by VeSte last year. We are dedicated to establish a facility to address this topic. We aim to take this project forward by ensuring provision of free menstrual products on campus.

Education and Examination Regulations

The Student Council has formal rights on the Education and Examination Regulations (EER), which are handled by the Student Charter committee. It is essential that the WU Student Charter enables all three VeSte pillars to flourish. SC should always think from the perspective of the student when reviewing documents. Policy changes should, therefore, be beneficial for the students. Every year members of VeSte are working on further improving the EER. This is the most important document regarding the educational rights and duties of students. The document is quite extensive and for some students hard to understand. Therefore, VeSte wishes to make the EER more understandable and make students more aware of their rights they have regarding education. VeSte wants to achieve this by making a summarized EER version on Brightspace which is clear and understandable for every student.

Branding WUR

Strongly connected to the upcoming new strategic plan of the WUR is the branding. VeSte believes that it is crucial to have an overall branding strategy to design an image of WUR in which all studies feel represented. Therefore, the branding is a special point of interest. Wageningen University has a lot to offer. With five different Science Groups, twenty bachelor programmes and forty-five master programmes, Wageningen University is a multi-disciplinary university aiming to explore the potential of nature to improve the quality of life. With the upcoming new strategic plan, the branding will be an important topic. An interesting aspect about branding is the difference between the image of the WUR in the Netherlands, and outside of the Netherlands. It will be a challenge to align a general branding strategy with these differences in perception.

Sustainability

Wageningen University strives itself on being the one of the most sustainable universities in the world. WUR is involved with sustainability in terms of educational programmes and content of courses, the research conducted at WUR as well as the facilities and infrastructure. Consequently, VeSte also shares this goal.

In previous years, VeSte worked on sustainability through its initiatives for example, the setup of the Green Office, Sustainability Fund, and the Sustainable Travel fund. The Green Office is now fully grown into a separate independent student organisation; the sustainability fund is running as a three-year pilot, to stimulate students to organize sustainable events and to create more awareness among all the student organizations connected to WUR. With the travel fund, students can get reimbursed for their study related travel costs when travelling sustainably.

This year, VeSte wishes to continue our work on sustainability. This includes monitoring existing projects as well as initiating new ways of making WUR sustainable. Currently we are working on a sustainable travel policy for courses. This will ensure that study related travel is made as sustainable as possible.

Flatpubs

The coming year, preserving Wageningen Student Life has the special attention of the Student Council in general, and VeSte in particular. With the possibility of closure of the famous 'flat pubs', the continuity of Wageningen Student Life is in danger. A lot of small to medium sized associations are heavily dependent on the flatpubs to organise a variety of events. VeSte hopes to engage in constructive discussions with stakeholders in the University and municipality for facilitating alternatives to preserve student life in the event of flat pub closure. Emphasising the need of these facilities, and the added value they have for Wageningen Student Life have a high priority.

Strategic plan

Every four years, Wageningen University & Research writes a strategic plan to elaborate its vision and ambitions for the upcoming years. The strategic plan first identifies key issues that humanity, nature, and our planet face. Then, WUR determines how it aims to support finding answers to these issues. This year, the strategic plan for 2025 until 2028 will be drafted and members of VeSte, on behalf of the Student Staff Council, will be involved in the process as representatives of the students of WUR. A key aspect these members will strive for is the involvement and opinions of students.

Wageningen

VeSte is committed to bridging Wageningen University with the municipality of Wageningen. Beyond the campus, student life thrives in the city underscoring the need to keep a strong bond with the Municipality. We also prioritise strong connections with the Wageningse Kamer van Verenigingen (W.K.v.V) (EN: Wageningen Chamber of Associations) who represent numerous active students in student associations. Acknowledging that student life transcend campus, we feel it is important to nurture these relationships with the city.

Night Life

The lively atmosphere in Wageningen plays a crucial role in attracting students to both the city and Wageningen University & Research, and we actively support this aspect as it contributes to *Active Student Life*. This helps facilitate social interactions of students enabling a much better living in the city. This is inline with our effort to search for alternatives to common meeting places for students, for instance the flatpubs.

Student Civil Servant

To fully support the active student life a bridge between the municipality and the students is needed. VeSte initiated this via the creation of a Student Civil Servant, which is a WUR student working part-time at the municipality. This initiative gives a voice for students at the municipality, streamlines communication with the municipality, fostering more efficient collaboration.

In 2022, VeSte initiated the Student Civil Servant which is a Wageningen University student who works at the municipality for eight hours a week. This initiative gives a voice for students at the municipality, streamlines communication with the municipality and fosters an efficient collaboration.

The student civil servant can identify the needs of students in Wageningen and pinpoint areas for improvement in the relationship between the university and the municipality. The student civil servant can participate in meetings with the W.K.v.V, sports associations, cultural associations and so on, and is thereby able to foster connections between these stakeholders. Facilitating direct communication with city officials like the Alderman and the Mayor, enables quicker implementation of actions. This student role in the municipality offers additional value by enhancing ties between student associations and the local government. The student civil servant plays a crucial role in gathering information, relaying it to relevant organizations like WUR, and providing advice to the municipality on issues such as events, housing, and facilities.

City centre redesigning

In addition, to enhance our understanding of the city centre, we maintain close ties with the W.K.v.V and actively participate in the 'Begeleidingsgroep Binnenstad' meetings. In these meetings possible changes in the design of the city centre are discussed. By participating in these meetings, VeSte is informed about changes in the city centre, which is where many active students' lives take place. We also represent the active student here, and thereby represent the perspective of Wageningen students. It is therefore of added value to have a VeSte member present and involved in the meetings of 'Begeleidingsgroep Binnenstad'.

Project Beter Bereikbaar Wageningen

The province of Gelderland is designing and initiating the 'Beter Bereikbaar Wageningen' project. The goal of the project is to increase the accessibility of, among others, the WUR. To reach this goal, the infrastructure around the campus of WUR will be redesigned to increase the flow of traffic. On behalf of the Student Council, three VeSte members have direct contact with those in-charge of the project. It is our responsibility to represent the interests of the students and communicate the students' preferences to the project managers.

Student Housing

In recent years, the Netherlands has experienced a progressively tight housing market which significantly affected students. This can also be observed in Wageningen where the duration for securing accommodation is steadily increasing. Although the government has extensive plans on more housing projects, yet the waiting times still persist without improvement.

VeSte is involved in the Huizen Commissie (HuCo) (EN: Housing Committee) which conducted surveys among students about their experiences regarding finding a house in Wageningen. These findings will be relayed to the policy makers in Den Haag.

Next to that we have aligned with our sister organization in Delft by supporting a joint letter concerning the future housing landscape. We would like to emphasize to the government to reconsider the rental subsidy regulations. Presently, construction firms prioritize building studios enabling them to maximize their rent, however from an effective land usage point of view it would be more efficient to construct corridors with communal spaces. This approach not only optimizes land use, but also improves students' mental wellbeing. A recent study revealed that 64% of students experience loneliness with the housing situation a prominent factor. Living arrangements that foster communal living have proven effective in alleviating loneliness and reducing depressive symptoms. Therefore, we are exploring avenues to further amplify this message.

The Netherlands

This Section covers the national developments with respect to students and how VeSte aims to influence them. Currently there are four topics that we deem relevant for the Wageningen University, and we will describe how we see the stance of the university regarding those topics.

BSA:

Prior to the cabinet's downfall, a proposal surfaced regarding the readjustment of the current BSA (Binding Study Advise). Under this proposal, universities would be granted autonomy to determine the maximum number of credits for the BSA in the first year, removing the previous cap. There is now a new proposal outlining a two-year BSA structure: a maximum of 30 ECTS in the first year and the full 60 ECTS in the subsequent year.

VeSte is not in favour of this proposal as it does not align with the interests of our constituency. Our concern lies in the potential decrease in student engagement in committees and associations due to a two-year BSA, resulting in limited time for vital extracurricular activities which contribute to *Personal Development* and *Active Student Life*. To influence this matter, we intend to adjust our position within the ISO to effectively lobby against the implementation of a two-year BSA.

Only after the new government is formed, will we see a development in the policy. However, VeSte aims to persistently lobby at political parties and at ISO to make sure our interests are represented.

Internationalisation:

Within the realm of Internationalisation, there have been some notable developments that could significantly influence both WUR and its student community. A nationwide discourse has surfaced, highlighting concerns about housing, the affordability of education, and the continued 'verengelsing' (anglicization) of our universities. Certain political parties and academic institutions propose addressing these concerns by imposing restrictions on the enrolment of international students, particularly those from outside the EER.

The current proposal outlines mandatory Dutch-taught credits for all bachelor programs, alongside a requirement for Dutch integration courses worth a minimum of 5 credits in each bachelor program. Wageningen University along with other Technical Universities are not in favour of this proposal. VeSte stand by the same vision and opposes the mandatory Dutch-taught credits but supports courses focussed on Dutch language and culture. We believe that fostering further integration could enrich the comprehensive academic development of our students.

During a government-led internet consultation, we as student council of Wageningen University articulated our viewpoints through a position paper on the present proposal. Furthermore, we are actively involved in lobbying endeavours aimed at safeguarding the interests of Wageningen students. We advocate for the presence of international classroom at WUR, acknowledging their valuable contribution to enhancing overall educational standards. Concurrently, our aim is to champion more profound integration of international students, fostering their active participation in Dutch society.

Carrying duty:

When it comes to the mental wellbeing of students, we do see an important role of the university. As VeSte we seek to influence this by two approaches. First off, we push for the availability of student psychologists and alternative support in the reactional phase. Secondly, we also see a role of the university to be involved in identifying of stress, loneliness, and other mental health indicators. Educating teachers and employees in recognise these signs could be a preventive measure before they escalate.

VeSte will try to influence this both nationally, by working together with ISO in writing a position paper on the caring duty of universities. But also, on an institutional level by making sure that there is budget allocation in the quality agreements for actualise these goals.










































Institution based decision making:

Regarding decision making, there is a significant challenge that lies in the inclination of the government to have a one-size-fits all approach for all universities and universities of applied sciences. We however believe that this overlooks the unique situation of each institution. For instance, the housing issue in Amsterdam is more urgent than it is Wageningen and hence necessitates different degrees of intervention for the respective universities.

Considering these factors, VeSte along with our sister Student Council parties from other Universities advocates for each universities' autonomy in shaping policies for a certain set of topics like BSA and Internationalisation. To accomplish this, we plan to launch a lobbying campaign through ISO and draft a position paper to support them in their lobbying at the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (NL: Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap)

External affairs & pillars

At the core of VeSte, the organisation strives to uphold its pillars. These pillars serve as a thread through the topics VeSte works on. The pillars are elaborated in the Structural Policy. In the table, an overview of the corresponding VeSte pillars for every chapter can be found.

	Future proof education	Active student life	Personal development
WUR			
Quality Agreements			
BYOD			
Lecture recordings			
Model answer paper			
First year's landing time			
Wellbeing			
Facilities			
EER			
Branding WUR			
Travel Policy/Sustainability			
Flatpubs			
Strategic Plan			
Wageningen			
Nightlife			
Student civil servant			
City center redesigning			
The Netherlands			
BSA			
Internationalization			
Carrying duty universities			
Institution based decision making			

Epilogue

Dear reader,

After reading the VeSte policy 2024, we hope you obtained a clear insight into the goals and ambitions of VeSte for the coming year. Next to maintaining and improving the quality of education at WUR, we want to pay attention to topics related to student wellbeing, integration & inclusion, sustainability, and subjects which are vital for WUR as an organization, like branding and ensuring close contact with the municipality of Wageningen. As 27th faction of VeSte, we are looking forward to tackle challenges that lie ahead of us and to represent all students of WUR.

Lastly, VeSte would like to thank the previous factions and our constituency for giving input, opinions, and support. Lastly, we would like to thank everyone involved in the evaluation of the policy 2024. If you have any questions or comments after reading this policy plan, please feel free to contact us.

Kind regards,
The 27th faction of VeSte

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