



LONG-TERM PLAN
2023-2026

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PREFACE

Dear reader,

This is the Long-Term Plan for 2023 – 2026 of the Vereniging voor Studenten Psychologie en Pedagogiek aan de Vrije Universiteit (VSPVU). With this Long-Term Plan a guideline is drawn up for the upcoming three years. This ensures an association that keeps developing. In addition, this Long-Term Plan provides guidance and stability in the Policy Plans of the upcoming Boards.

This plan has been implemented through evaluations of the previous Long-Term Plan and by ideas that have emerged during a meeting where at least one delegate from the 74th Board, 75th Board and 76rd Board was present. Feedback of 77th Candidacy Board has also been received and implemented when finalizing this plan. This Long-Term Plan will outline a profile of the association and objectives for the upcoming years. In addition, ideas will be put forward so that these key points can be realized.

With kind regards,

THE 76TH BOARD OF THE VSPVU

Chairman

Žygimantas Pupelis

Secretary

Sonia Erbé Gómez

Treasurer

Lotta Heijnen

Commissioner Communications and Media

Anaïs van Schalen

INTRODUCTION

The VSPVU was founded in 1947 and is a continuation of the Vereniging Studenten Psychologie aan de Vrije Universiteit and the Vereniging voor Pedagogische Wetenschappen, called 'Hilaritas'. This merger was mainly from a practical point of view, because the two associations were located under one faculty. The association started as a study-oriented association, but now it also organizes a variety of other activities.

Through this fourth Long-Term Plan we strive for steady progress within the association. This Long-Term Plan should be used as a guideline for the upcoming years and will give the upcoming Boards more guidance for their Policy Plan. The attachment to this Long-Term Plan contains specific ideas that will make it possible to achieve the goals for the upcoming years.

This Long-Term Plan, together with the Policy Plan, will be evaluated at the end of every academic year during the General Meeting.

CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS



LONG-TERM PLAN

Below you can find the goals of which the Long-Term Plan has been established.

MEMBERSHIP

Ensuring that VSPVU attracts new members is crucial. We have observed a recent trend indicating that VSPVU membership is not as advantageous for new members as it used to be. Currently, being a VSPVU member grants discounts on books, summaries, and activities provided by VSPVU. The book discount used to be one of the main incentives for joining. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most study materials have shifted to online platforms, and students have become accustomed to this change. Consequently, there has been a noticeable decline in both physical and digital book sales, even after the pandemic. Therefore, it is necessary to explore new approaches or incentives to increase the number of new members in VSPVU.

COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA

At present, VSPVU utilises four channels for promoting its events: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Canvas. The association currently employs LinkedIn and Canvas to showcase the professional aspects of the organisation, while Instagram and Facebook are primarily used for more casual and informal posts. When we analyse our engagement levels, we find that Instagram stands out as the leading social media platform, while Facebook has experienced a decline in popularity. Therefore, it is advisable to consider revising our social media platforms to better align with the preferences of our target audience. Presently, the Committee Promotion Coordinator is responsible for creating and sending promotional posters to the Commissioner of Education and Media for review and feedback. Over time, it has become apparent that the feedback received for each promotional poster is often quite similar. This process of creation, feedback, and subsequent incorporation of feedback proves to be time-consuming for both parties involved. Thus, it would be valuable to re-think this process.

SOCIAL SAFETY

Our main focus is to prioritise the safety of its members. In the past, when members encountered any safety or security concerns, they were expected to seek assistance from the Board. However, in some cases it could happen that a member would not feel safe or would not be understood by reaching out to the board. Currently, there is no specific document that guides members and board members on the process of reporting and handling such incidents. Therefore, we strongly believe that implementing a document is necessary to provide clear instructions on how to handle these situations and identify the appropriate individuals to contact in such cases.

FACULTY

In recent years, there has been a decline in the enthusiasm for taking on board member roles, resulting in fewer individuals stepping up to become board members and leaving some positions vacant. Consequently, the workload that was originally intended to be divided among six people has been spread out among only four or sometimes just three board members. This has led to a reduction in communication and the level of engagement between VSPVU and faculty events. It is imperative to re-establish this connection and infuse more proactive efforts into collaborating with the faculty to organize their events. This will help rejuvenate the involvement of VSPVU and ensure a more robust presence and participation in faculty-related activities.

GENERAL MEETINGS

Over the past years, we've observed a consistent decline in the attendance of VSPVU members at our General Meetings. Presently, only the current chairs are obligated to attend these meetings. This drop in attendance can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, the General Meetings have a duration of three to four hours, which has discouraged members from participating. Secondly, there is a lack of sufficient incentives for regular members to join these gatherings. Although the Board currently offers dinner before the meetings and a beverage after the voting, these provisions have not proven effective in boosting attendance rates. To address this issue, past Boards attempted to enhance attendance by incentivizing committees to come to General Meetings, awarding extra points in the Battle of The Committees competition. While this approach initially led to higher attendance at the start of the year, it was noticeable that interest waned as the year progressed. Therefore, it is recommended to reconsider our strategies for increasing General Meeting attendance.

COMMITTEES

Currently, each Board Member is responsible for overseeing two to four committees, depending on their role. According to our Internal Regulations, Board Members are required to attend committee meetings. However, these meetings often take place during dinner hours, which limits the time available for Board Members to work on organizing new events, fostering relationships with other associations, strengthening connections with the faculty, or pursuing personal activities. Therefore, it's crucial to reconsider and assess the necessity of Board members' mandatory presence at all committee meetings. This reevaluation could enhance Board members' satisfaction, boost their motivation to join the Board, and provide them with more flexibility to manage their responsibilities effectively.

EPILOGUE

Through this Long-Term Plan, our intention is to offer direction to the upcoming Boards. The objectives outlined in this plan are set to be accomplished within a span of three years. It holds significance that every Board keeps the Long-Term Plan in mind while formulating a Policy Plan and executing their policies. Our anticipation with this Long-Term Plan is to uphold the VSPVU's identity as a sociable, professional, and forward-thinking association.

ATTACHMENT

In this attachment you will find concrete ideas for achieving the goals per aspect.

MEMBERSHIP

Every year, it is crucial to attract as many new VSPVU members as possible. Since the implementation of numerus fixus, VSPVU has experienced a decrease in the number of individuals joining the association each year. This has led the Board to annually reduce their new member goals in their policy plans. Currently, VSPVU membership itself does not hold sufficient appeal for new students. The most significant selling point at present is the discount on books. Since the COVID-19 pandemic shifted a substantial portion of study materials online, book sales have declined. To address this issue, certain adjustments should be made to the VSPVU membership. One of the proposed solutions is to integrate VSPVU membership with the ticket for the intro week. This would lead to close collaboration between VSPVU and the introduction Board in the creation of the intro week itself. Additionally, VSPVU could offer some activities during the intro week free of charge, such as waiving the entry fee for the introduction opening party. Another option involves revisiting the incentives for becoming a VSPVU member, such as offering larger discounts on event tickets. This could be accomplished by raising the prices for non-members attending VSPVU events.

COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA

Currently, VSPVU employs four different channels to promote its events: LinkedIn, Canvas, Facebook, and Instagram. Analysing the engagement rates reveals that Facebook receives the least engagement. This social media channel could be removed, and the addition of another social media platform would be beneficial. Currently, TikTok is experiencing rapid growth in popularity. It is highly recommended for VSPVU to begin utilizing it.

At present, committee promotion coordinators are responsible for creating posters and other promotional materials for their events. Once a promotion coordinator has designed a poster, it is sent to the Commissioner of Communication and Media for review to ensure it aligns with the VSPVU house style. The Commissioner of Communication and Media provides feedback and returns it to the promotion coordinators for incorporation. This process is typically time-consuming.

Given that the feedback provided to every promotion coordinator is quite similar, it is highly advisable to reconsider the process and the role of promotion coordinators. This could be achieved by having promotion coordinators send their poster concepts directly to the Commissioner of Communication and Media. This individual would then create the poster for the committee's event, eliminating the need for the feedback loop. This approach would save a substantial amount of time for the Board Members while also allowing promotion coordinators to reallocate their time. They could concentrate on crafting more engaging promotions, including videos. These videos could be shared on both Instagram and TikTok. This approach would generate more captivating content for the association, while also offering more comprehensive information about the events.

SOCIAL SAFETY

Currently, the association does not have a detailed document that lays out the guidelines VSPVU members should follow at events. This can be solved by creating a "social safety document" that sets out clear rules and standards for how members should behave. In the current scenario, when issues arise, members typically resort to contacting Board Members for resolution. However, situations may arise where Board Members are involved, or members might feel uncomfortable approaching the Board. It is really important to create a document focused on social safety. This document should clearly explain how members should interact with each other, lay out a step-by-step way to report any problems, make sure that reporting is easy for everyone, and promise that the identities of those involved will be kept private.

In this document, It is important to explain what might happen if someone does not follow the rules. This explanation helps VSPVU members know what consequences they could face. At the same time, it gives the Board a basis for making the right decisions. To make sure the decisions are fair, it is a good idea to have an External Confidant who can provide an unbiased opinion and can be reached out to report a situation.

Once this document is made, it is suggested to keep updating and improving it regularly. This way, the document will stay in sync with changes of times and stay useful over time.

FACULTY

Due to incomplete Board formations, there has been a decline in engagement and interaction with the faculty. Consequently, VSPVU's involvement in organizing and supporting events has decreased. Often, it's the faculty who reach out, asking for VSPVU's assistance with events. Depending on the workload during that period, VSPVU makes an effort to help as much as possible. It is advisable to reverse this dynamic by actively proposing more events that VSPVU can undertake for the faculty.

Presently, many tutors, professors, and teachers have limited awareness of VSPVU. To strengthen and nurture this connection, it is recommended to arrange a Teachers Borrel. This event would enhance VSPVU's visibility within the faculty and provide its members with a chance to establish closer ties with educators.

Moreover, Master's students and Ph.D. candidates within VSPVU's community are currently not receiving sufficient attention. These students, arriving from various universities, often lack familiarity with the association. Expanding VSPVU's presence in this area and organizing events for these students to meet and interact could be advantageous. This expansion would help VSPVU reach students across all levels of study.

GENERAL MEETINGS

It is really important to get as many VSPVU members as possible to attend General Meetings. By making these meetings more inviting and engaging, future Boards can gather more valuable input from their members. Right now, General Meetings are often seen as too long and dull, which makes people less excited about them. To change this perception and improve the event, some adjustments are recommended.

One idea is to make the meetings shorter. Instead of reading the entire policy plan, only new updates or insights for each plan point could be provided. Currently, VSPVU offers dinner before the meetings, but this doesn't seem to be effective. It might be better to use the General Meeting budget to provide the VSPVU community with more drinks and snacks throughout the meeting. If the General Meeting were shorter, another option could be having a social outing to a nearby bar after the meeting. For example, providing the first round for free. Of course, this would require reallocating more budget for General Meetings.

Another suggestion involves changing the mandatory attendance requirement. Many committee members do not know much about what's happening within VSPVU, and this has led to negative views about General Meetings. To address this, it could be considered making it mandatory for committee members to attend these meetings, with the number of members required from each committee varying.

Changes that are made need to be closely monitored every year, gathering feedback from VSPVU members to ensure they are positively impacting the association.

COMMITTEES

Currently Internal Regulations state that it is mandatory for Board members to attend committee meetings. However, the number of committees that each Board Member is responsible for can vary, leading to them spending anywhere from two to four evenings attending these meetings. At the start of the year, being present is valuable for observing how new chairs are managing their committees. However, this importance diminishes over time as the chairs become more experienced in their roles.

A recommendation is to remove this requirement from the Internal Regulations. This change could provide multiple benefits. Firstly, Board Members would have the opportunity to concentrate more on creating additional events, strengthening ties with different Boards at VU, and devoting more attention and involvement to faculty-organized events. Secondly, committee chairs would gain more flexibility in shaping their committees and deciding the kind of events they'd like to organize. Thirdly, Board Members would have the freedom to allocate their time according to their preferences, potentially generating more interest in becoming a Board Member, as it would allow them to develop themselves beyond VPSVU.

Naturally, at the beginning of the year, it is important to closely monitor the committees to ensure a stable foundation for the rest of the year. As time progresses, the Board can engage in discussions to determine which committees require continued oversight.