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SRVU STUDENTENBOND

MANIFESTO 2021-2022

The SRVU is available to assist students to the best of its abilities if and when they need legal advice. SRVU speaks up for the interests and rights of all VU students. We do this through activism, like the #NietMijnSchuld campaign to end student debt, or through lobbying on all levels of government. SRVU stands up for the quality, accessibility, diversity, and inclusivity of our university.

As of the beginning of the 20-21 academic year, the SRVU has been advocating for more physical (on-campus) education. We observed the students having to face several challenges, such as different forms of education, less to no presence on campus, mainly proctoring examinations, and financial problems. In other words, students dealt with more self-study than actually being taught.

For this coming academic year, we have decided upon the following main points to focus on for the benefit of all VU- students. And hopefully, be an example to the rest of the universities in the Netherlands.

Financial burden of students should be reduced

At the SRVU, we believe that the financial burden of students should be reduced. By doing this, students will be able to focus better on their studies and achieve better results. Especially now, considering the unusual times we are going through. Students should not be burdened with more stress and pressure. There should be more consideration for the students who have to work tirelessly to finance their study and daily life.

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More Flexibility

Live lectures should be recorded to enhance flexibility as well as allow students residing in different time zones access to the material. Students should be given the possibility to plan their work and study time earlier. For instance, one can accomplish this by having the schedules and syllabi uploaded earlier to Canvas. It must also be taken into account that not all students have the privilege to go completely digital.

Transparency and Examination: Better communication between faculties

The university should no longer make use of the proctoring system since privacy and data protection can not be 100% guaranteed. Also, fraud is still very much possible, even with the use of proctoring. SRVU believes that the university must develop and look into alternatives such as essays/projects/assignments, take-home exams, or ones with open-ended questions.

Among the multiple faculties, different types of education methods and examinations are developed and applied. That is why the SRVU thinks it's crucial to have better communication between the different faculties. Including communication between staff and students and including collaborations between students from the various faculties.

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Improving student well-being

The VU is known for its diversity and inclusivity. However, we believe and know from listening to students' experiences that diversity and inclusivity at the VU could - and should - be improved.

There must be more help and support for students concerning several aspects, especially for students with ('invisible') disabilities. The help and support some students need are more silent study spaces and low impulse locations without distracting stimuli. By improving the number and accessibility of psychologists at the VU, more support regarding student well-being can be made available. Moreover, the VU should ensure that all facilities are easily accessible for those with physical ('visible') disabilities, including but not limited to those in wheelchairs or on crutches.

We believe that diversity and inclusivity also mean being inclusive for those in society that are more vulnerable but from whom we all could learn a lot. Therefore we should strive for more inclusivity for refugees and undocumented students.

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International students and first-generation students

The VU houses a significant number of international students, not all of whom have much knowledge about the Dutch education system. The SRVU believes that the university should provide more information and guidance about the Dutch education system. For instance, information about examination methods, and other non-universal education specifics.

Besides, the university should provide first-generation students and international students with improved and more clearly advertised help and support. The VU must take notice of the already existing demand for easily accessible information on where students can go with their problems, including but not limited to legal help, psychological help, and general struggles with studying.

Sustainability

The SRVU believes sustainability is an important subject that can benefit every single student at the VU. Looking into solutions for waste reduction, providing workshops to students as well as making it possible to make conscious choices - by increasing the number of vegan and packaging-free products in the cafeteria/SPAR are all important parts of this, but also making the VU greener itself - by introducing more green areas and utilizing the resources in a better way. We aim to work towards a more sustainable VU by tightly cooperating with the Green Office as well as the SLH to ensure the UN goals are indeed being worked on.

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Student awareness and engagement

Students should be taught about their rights, entitled to transparency in all the aspects regarding their degree as well as encouraged to care about the quality of the university experience they receive. Providing students with more guidance as to where to look for solutions to their struggles instead of choosing to suffer through them is something the SRVU wants to work on in the coming year.

Another important aspect is increasing the engagement of students. The SRVU believes it is important for students to understand why they should be active and raise their voices to the university when needed as well as ensure students that they are indeed being heard by being more interactive in the feedback loop between students and the university council.