



Election Programme 2025-2026



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List of Abbreviations

AL - Active Learning

FB - Faculty Board

FC - Faculty Council

FoA - Faculty of Arts

F10 - The 10th Faction of Letteren Vooruit

F11 - The 11th Faction of Letteren Vooruit

LV - Letteren Vooruit

PC - Programme Committee

RUG - Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (University of Groningen)

SSC - Student Service Centrum

SVO - Studie Verenigingen Overleg (Study Associations Meeting)

UC - University Council

Foreword

Dear students,

I am proud to present the Election Programme of the Eleventh Faction of Letteren Vooruit to you. For a decade now, Letteren Vooruit has represented the interests and values of Faculty of Arts students with great passion and success. This year's election programme builds upon the hard work of our predecessors, while including fresh ideas and solutions that apply to the challenges and opportunities of today.

This year, I am honoured to work with a motivated and driven group of students, with their own strengths and ideas. This faction is extremely excited to represent their fellow students, and wants to make genuine positive change within our Faculty. Each faction member brings their own skills, unique perspectives, and personalities to the table, which will help us towards our common goal. I am more than confident that we will make a meaningful impact this year, and work effectively to represent the interest of all Faculty of Arts students.

In this programme, we have outlined the areas we believe need attention. We want to improve and protect the quality of our education, especially in light of the budget cuts imposed by the Dutch government. Student well-being remains a priority for us, and we believe that support resources should be more visible. We also value an improvement of the mentor programme, ensuring clearer information for new students, and more communication through platforms that students actually use. Furthermore, we will keep pushing for greater transparency from the Faculty Board, improving student participation in decision-making, and creating a more inclusive and international faculty—one where accessibility, language, sustainability, and diversity are taken seriously.

We believe that by working together with students, staff, and the Faculty Board, we can create a faculty where everyone feels at home, and where progress is made through practical solutions and open dialogue. With your support, and your vote, Letteren Vooruit will keep pushing for real, student-driven change.

Sincerely,

Teun Mekenkamp

Faction Chair, Letteren Vooruit '25-'26

In Short

In this short overview of our programme, you will find our main points, values, and ideas for the academic year 2025-2026. These points will be elaborated upon in their respective sections.

Quality of Education

Ensuring the quality of education at the Faculty of Arts is one of Letteren Vooruit's main priorities. Because the educational reforms pose challenges to this, we remain constructive and critical of the current plans and advocate for student involvement and implementation of feedback wherever possible. We will also remain involved in the improvement of our education through implementation of Active Learning (AL) in courses across the faculty and distribute workload across programmes and courses more evenly to enhance the learning experience. To facilitate this, LV appreciates the faculty's extensive network of Programme Committees and Cluster Assessors who ensure collaboration and incorporate direct student feedback. LV will continue to work together with these institutions to remain in contact with the student body. In addition, we will keep facilitating initiatives to provide more information for Programme Committee tasks, for example offering support on the conduction of panel evaluations.

Communication & Transparency

Students deserve clear and accessible communication from the Faculty Board about important updates, but right now, communication is scattered and information is often hard to find. That is why LV advocates for a more consistent use of Brightspace, through which all important information will be shared with students. This includes, but is not limited to, updates, decisions, and policies, which should be clearly explained. We ourselves also want to continue taking an active role in communicating faculty affairs to the student body. Additionally, while much progress has already been made in breaking down the language barrier, such as offering minutes of FC meetings in both Dutch and English, the "Wet Internationalisering en Balans" threatens this duality. LV stands firmly for protecting bilingual communication in and out of the classroom. All students, Dutch and International, deserve equal access to important information and the ability to partake in decision-making. Real transparency means real participation.

Student Well-Being & Visibility

LV is committed to fostering student well-being through a multi-faceted approach. This includes continuing efforts to improve the accessibility and visibility of support services, ensuring students can easily find the help they need. By analysing the root causes of mental distress among RUG students, LV aims to develop targeted and effective support measures. Recognising the importance of a strong start, we also advocate for comprehensive support tailored to both Bachelor's and Master's first-year students, through the mentor programme for example. Additionally, increasing the visibility of student contributions is a key priority, with the goal of giving students the recognition they deserve and inspiring further engagement across the faculty and university.

Internationalisation & Inclusivity

LV recognises the value of international students and their vastly varying perspectives within the classrooms, at associations and during lunchtime conversations in the canteens. We aim to break down existing language barriers by promoting the visibility of academic language courses offered by the Language Centre and Student Service Centre (SSC). We want to make sure all students feel free to express themselves and feel included in the process of learning and decision making. For us, this decision-making process also very much relates to accessibility. All buildings used by the Faculty of Arts should be accessible to all students and staff, which is something students should be included in when creating measures on this front.

The Future of Arts

To best prepare our faculty for the future, LV places great emphasis on initiatives that enhance long-term wellbeing. One of these areas is sustainability, which is of high importance to LV: we will continue promoting the Green Office Embassy at the Faculty of Arts and consider students' voices throughout the entire process of "greening" our faculty. We will also remain involved in the plans for the Harmony Complex renovations wherever possible. To innovate teaching and learning methods, LV also aims to bring the topic of increased artificial intelligence usage within universities to the Faculty Council to assess its challenges but also make use of the opportunities it can bring, like benefits for students with learning disabilities.

Quality of Education



Quality of Education

Educational Reforms

In recent years, Letteren Vooruit has represented the student perspective regarding the educational reforms at the FoA that follow from nationwide budget cuts, declining student numbers and the resulting budget issues. The full effects of these cuts are still unsure, but we will take student feedback into consideration wherever possible and aim for a constructive and critical eye together with the staff regarding the plans of the Faculty Board (FB). Furthermore, we will advocate for more transparency in this process from the FB and the Faculty's student assessor, as outlined in our Communication and Transparency pillar.

Regarding faculty-wide courses, LV has advocated for student involvement during its development stages. In the current form, they will take away options for specialisation and we are skeptical if they will properly align with all programmes. We will continue to monitor and give feedback on the content of these courses to ensure that they will not diminish the quality of education within our Faculty.

Last year, F10 has expressed its concerns regarding the reduction from 12 to 8 testing moments, and we will continue to raise awareness around the implications of this change. We are especially concerned about its effects on the binding study advice in the first year if there will be more 10 ECTS courses, so we will continue to express these issues to the Faculty Board.

Student Participation

Student feedback and participation is essential for preserving the quality of education. One crucial component to gather student feedback is the standard course evaluations. Reviewing the results of these evaluations provides Programme Committees (PCs) with student input to improve and maintain the quality of education at the FoA. Getting as many students as possible to fill out these evaluations is therefore of great importance. Thus, we aim to continue increasing the visibility and awareness of these evaluation forms in collaboration with the PC's by strongly encouraging professors to address the evaluations during the last class of their course and give students the time to fill them in.

With the open comment section still being removed from the standard course evaluation, it is of vital importance to keep finding ways to receive and implement feedback from students. LV will continue to advocate for bringing back a way through which students can provide constructive feedback (anonymously) without staff members receiving unconstructive negative comments. In the meantime, we will also encourage PCs to make use of the panel evaluations to collect more elaborate direct feedback from students.

Active Learning

LV views Active Learning (AL) as a directive to improve the learning experience at the FoA, but its implementation is often vague and not clear to students yet. Additionally, it can sometimes cause more stress and increased workload for both students and staff. Therefore, we aim for a collaborative approach across the FoA together with the Institute of Education, Cluster Assessors and PCs to work towards a policy to make courses more interactive and participatory. This especially applies to faculty-wide courses, in which we are disappointed that AL does not seem to be incorporated into the first-year courses, since they will largely be lecture-based. There are plans to incorporate AL into the second-year faculty-wide courses, which will have a project-based approach, but since these propositions are still in development, we will continue to stress the importance of active learning methods, other than lectures, for these courses.

In addition to an improved faculty-wide AL policy, we also want to highlight the diversity of our programmes that call for different implementations of AL. While programmes and PCs are responsible to determine the best implementation for specific courses, sharing experiences and best practices in this collaboration will be of help to everyone and enrich the AL experience.

Workload Distribution

At Letteren Vooruit, we place great importance on fair workload distribution. Currently, there is a discrepancy in workload between courses within the same programme, as well as between different programmes. We will advocate for a more balanced division of assignments and assessments, taking into account the amount of work that is appropriate per ECTS. Besides regular courses, the discrepancy in BA thesis standards across different programmes in the FoA is also one of our concerns. These thesis standards should demand a more similar amount of workload across all BA

programmes. By directly collaborating with multiple students from various FoA programmes and working together with the PCs and the student assessor, we can ensure that Letteren Vooruit is informed about the experiences and needs of students. This approach enhances our awareness of student needs and makes students feel more included in the decision-making process.

Our goal is to ensure that every student has a manageable workload, creating a supportive and enriching academic environment. By addressing inconsistencies between courses and theses, we are dedicated to enhancing student well-being and promoting holistic growth. Let's work together to build a future where education is empowering, not overwhelming.

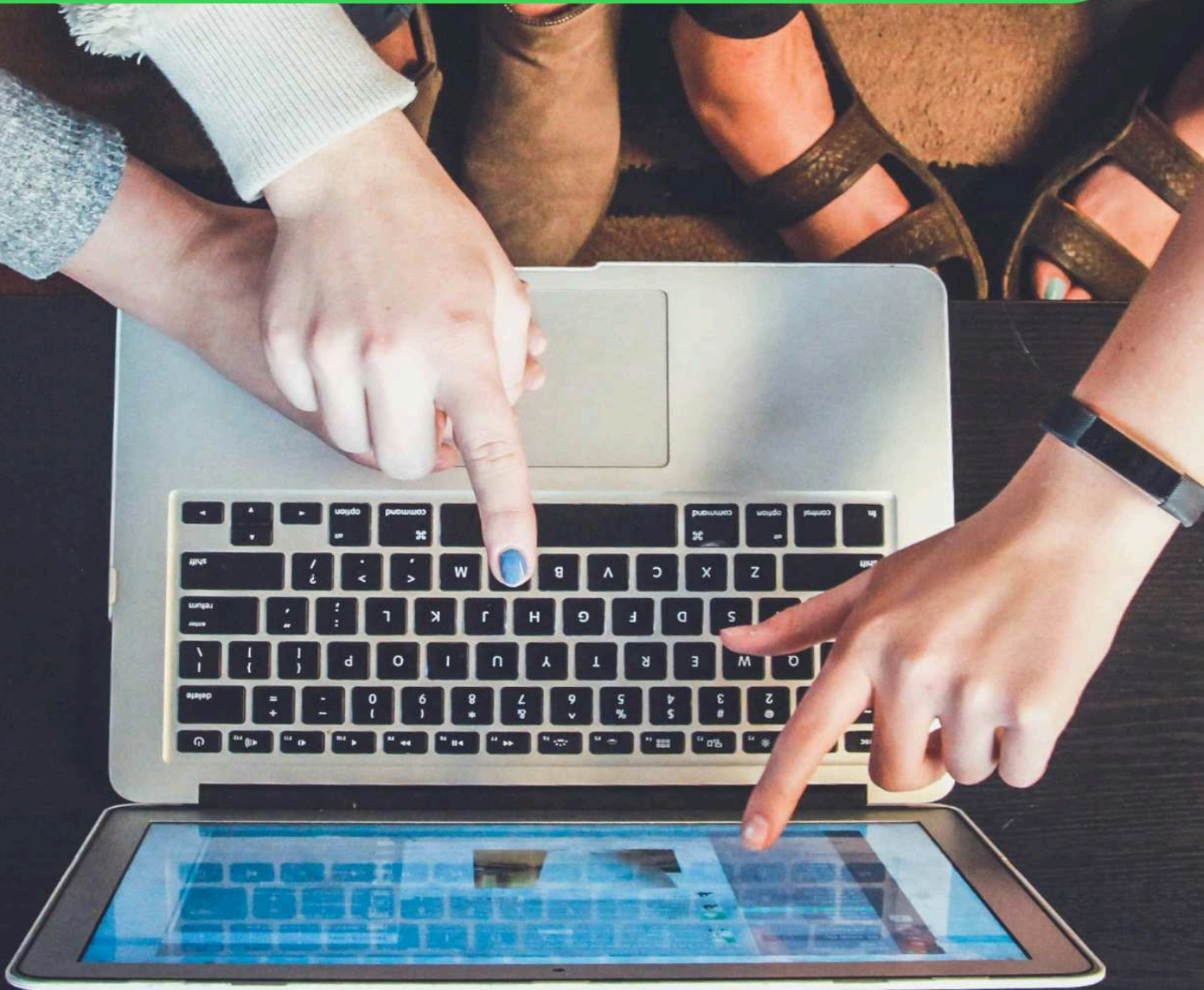
Programme Committees

Programme Committees (PCs) are responsible for assuring the quality of our education within the Faculty. LV will work with PCs to address faculty-wide themes, such as employability, workload distribution and the educational reforms. In the previous year a shared Brightspace course was developed for all PC members, providing them with general training documents. There still needs to be a lot of improvement in regards to informing students and staff members about their tasks as PC members. It is vital that PCs function as they are intended, since they ensure the quality of our education.

A task that not all PC members are aware of is the conduction of panel evaluations. Panel evaluations are a highly effective way to collect direct feedback from students about specific courses. With the disappearance of the open questions in the standard course evaluation questionnaires, these evaluation moments are more important than ever. We want to highly encourage PCs to systematically conduct more panel evaluations. As of now, the training for these evaluations is lacking and not always quickly accessible. We would therefore want to advocate for the Faculty Board to place more importance on improving the process of conducting panel evaluations, with the help of the Institute of Education and the Arts Committee of Assessors, both of whom can provide training for PC student members. An idea would be to have set dates for shared panel evaluations training for all PCs at the start and throughout the year.

To increase the visibility of PCs and make students more aware of their function, we will encourage the implementation of the inclusion of an informational text about PCs at the end of each course syllabus. Some programmes, like the BA English Language and Culture, are already setting a good example, and we aim to encourage more PCs to adopt this practice.

Communication & Transparency



Communication & Transparency

Clear Communication and Transparency from the Faculty Board

Over the past year, Letteren Vooruit has taken important steps toward improving communication between the Faculty Board and the student body. These efforts have helped bring more visibility around the decisions made at the faculty level. However, the FB still frequently falls short in clearly communicating important decisions to students, resulting in a lack of transparency which deprives the student body of the opportunity to participate in the process of decision-making regarding affairs that affect them.

Important updates are still spread around multiple channels—often buried in websites, Brightspace announcements, emails, or the UKrant—making it difficult for students to stay engaged and informed with the important ongoing discussions. This year we want to build on the progress already made, by pushing for a structural change in how information is shared with students.

We believe that the faculty should offer a single, clear, easily accessible point of reference where students can follow relevant updates, decisions, and ongoing debates—without having to rely on insider information or third-party newspapers. Furthermore, we encourage the faculty to share more frequent updates on social media, ensuring that more students are informed about important developments.

Accessibility to Information for Students

The majority of students are unsure what the FB and FC even are, let alone what their specific rights and duties include. Furthermore, it can be difficult to find information that is important for students overall, as the RUG website is a confusing and hard-to-navigate maze, and information often gets buried in different locations and platforms. That is why LV advocates that all information will be centralised on Brightspace to make it more accessible. Here, students should be able to easily find relevant information about, for example, what the FB and FC are, past decisions made by the FB, and other university policies and guidelines students should adhere to.

This ties in with guidelines regarding AI, as it is often unclear what is and is not allowed regarding the use of AI in specific courses. Guidelines from the university do exist, but are fragmented and sometimes contradictory; there can be additional guidelines for

specific programmes and courses, making the overall image confusing. Accessible, clear, and unambiguous communication from the Faculty can help take away student anxieties surrounding the use of AI and help towards a future where its positive qualities can be utilised, without hindering the personal learning process of students.

Communication to the Student Body

LV itself also takes an active role in communicating faculty affairs to the student body. Social media is an important asset for this, as maintaining a strong and active online presence ensures that students stay informed about important faculty updates, available support services, and upcoming events. Moreover, we want to improve the visibility of the PCs, Cluster Boards, and the Faculty Council, and especially their respective student representatives, to increase student participation. Additionally, we want to continue to advocate for the permission to start a blog, even though the FB blocked this initiative last year, where we can update and inform the student community on a regular basis about decisions being made within the Faculty. All together, LV will do its part by keeping the student body informed via Instagram, our website, a (potential) blog, and by organising office hours.

Language of Communication

Recently, the FB doubled down on Faculty Council meetings being held in Dutch, while they were previously being held mainly in English. The discussions are translated into English with the help of a translator from the Language Centre via a Google Doc. However, this takes quite a long time, and details are often lost in translation. Additionally, recent experiences showed that sometimes entire sections can be missing from the translation document. As a consequence, international students and non-Dutch speaking staff are unable to actively participate in meetings, which limits the representation of international perspectives in the FC. Despite the fact that the official administrative language is Dutch, LV continues to strive for as much bilingualism as possible, both within the council and in communication with the faculty community. Our aim is to make sure everyone can use the language they prefer, also if this is English. When Dutch is required, we will continue LV's efforts towards creating a procedure that allows non-Dutch speakers to have time to review notes between speakers, bringing everyone to the same page.

A close-up photograph of two hands clasped together in a supportive grip. The hand on top is wearing a black ring on the ring finger and a black long-sleeved shirt. The hand on the bottom is wearing a thin gold ring on the ring finger and a light-colored sweater. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white surface.

Student Well-Being & Visibility

Student Well-Being & Visibility

Promotion of Support Resources

LV will continue to actively work on improving the accessibility and visibility of support resources. Especially in times of increasing mental health challenges, it is essential that students know exactly where and how to find help. To achieve this, we are committed to enhancing the clarity, reach, and effectiveness of our support communication strategies. LV encourages faculty to engage in transparent communication and actively collaborate in promoting awareness of support resources, helping to ensure that students can easily access and understand the help available to them. This includes ensuring that information about counseling services, academic accommodations, crisis hotlines, and peer support networks is consistently shared across multiple platforms—such as the university website, social media, email bulletins, and physical signage around campus.

Tailored Support Offers and Mentor Programmes

To develop effective measures that promote student well-being at our faculty, it is crucial to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying causes of mental distress. LV is therefore committed to systematically analysing the main stress factors among Faculty of Arts students. We would therefore like to initiate a faculty-wide survey to gain a more differentiated perspective on the stress factors of different student groups. The goal is to create tailored support services that truly reflect the needs of the student body.

Furthermore, our goal is to continue LV's efforts in improving mentor programmes. The beginning of a new academic journey can be challenging, for both Bachelor's and Master's students, and mentors can be a great first point of contact to help lighten some of the stress and pressure. However, the quality of the mentor programme can differ significantly between programmes, leaving some new students lost and confused. To ensure that nobody gets left out, we strive for a faculty where the mentor programme is adequately implemented in every single department.

The Role of Study Associations

Study associations are an essential part of creating an inclusive and welcoming environment at the Faculty of Arts. By supporting a wide range of study associations, LV helps students find communities where they feel at home. We will do this during the SVO meetings to hear what the study associations have to say, and by improving our own visibility, we hope to improve our relations even further. These associations offer valuable opportunities for social connection, personal growth, and collaboration, which are crucial elements for a positive student experience. Furthermore, good contact with study associations allows us to hear directly from students about their struggles and wishes. By collaborating more intensively, we aim to ensure that students' needs are better heard and represented, and that associations have the backing they need to continue offering spaces where students can grow, connect, and thrive.

Internationalisation & Inclusivity



Internationalisation & Inclusivity

Diversity & Inclusivity

In the Faculty of Arts, diversity is a value of high importance which is embraced by all staff and students. In our opinion, international students can enhance the student experience by creating new perspectives within, but also outside of the classroom. We as LV want to encourage that all genders, races, religions and any other identity values feel welcome and respected. Our goal is that all students should feel free to express themselves and be able to thrive in a supported environment. We aim to continue F10's aspirations to advocate for the removal of exams or deadlines on religious holidays, so that students (and staff) can uphold their beliefs and traditions without damage to their studies (or job responsibilities).

Decolonisation and Inclusivity of Study Materials

This year, we will continue F10's efforts in promoting bias awareness in the study materials. Critical thinking skills are an important part of the Arts programmes and to achieve this, study materials should take different perspectives into account. In order to do this, study materials should take different perspectives into account. We will continue to advocate for the inclusion of non-European-centric perspectives in study material. Both students and staff should be aware of potential biases that occur in study materials. A critical attitude should be thought, and different perspectives should be used, rather than only Eurocentric perspectives.

Solving the Language Barrier

In the process of learning, the mastering of the language of instruction is a crucial element. At the Faculty of Arts, these languages are predominantly English and Dutch. Insufficient proficiency of these languages poses a great challenge for both students and staff, mainly with the use of academic English in coursework. The main reason for this is a lack of previous knowledge and instruction. Because of this, we will continue F10's promotion of the importance of introducing classes that would help students gain a better understanding of academic language. We want to increase the visibility of such courses offered by the Language Centre and Student Service Centre (SSC). We will continue encouraging research programmes to include academic writing skills courses (both English and Dutch where appropriate), mainly in the first year. These courses

should be compatible with the workload of the main study and language courses. They could create new opportunities for students to improve their language skills and thereby enhance their performance. On top of that, we will encourage the increase in the availability of the courses in order to give all keen students an opportunity to learn the national language.

Accessibility

For LV, physical accessibility is non-negotiable. Many Faculty of Arts buildings still fail to meet basic standards, with limited or non-existent wheelchair access. In buildings other than the Harmony, wheelchair-accessible toilets are only found on ground floors, making movement through buildings unnecessarily difficult for some students. We will continue to advocate for better accommodations and improvements that suit the diverse needs of students. Everyone deserves equal access to our university buildings, and we are committed to pushing for meaningful change.



The Future of Arts

The Future of Arts

Working with AI

While artificial intelligence poses challenges to educational institutions, LV believes its development cannot be ignored. An important step that has been taken already is that AI checkers for plagiarism and AI grading systems cannot be used by professors, since they often give inaccurate results. While we acknowledge that the faculty is still hesitant to incorporate AI into teaching, despite the RUG's AI policy that allows for general use of AI, these innovative tools can also bring positive opportunities: students with learning disabilities for example can benefit greatly from the benefits that AI brings. AI tools like speech-to-text software or tools to simply explain difficult terms and texts have the potential to enhance their academic performance. To embrace this, more knowledge of AI is necessary to concretely assess its opportunities and challenges. LV has requested mandatory training for faculty staff in the past, and we will continue to build on this, ensuring optimisation of these tools to their full potential and improving AI proficiency. Ultimately, we believe that AI should be seen as a tool that enriches rather than replaces students.

Harmony Complex Renovations

The Faculty of Law moved out of the Harmony Complex and into the Rölling building in 2023. Since then, the vacated spaces that were occupied by Law Faculty staff and students have been awaiting renovations. These plans were originally planned for the academic year 2023-2024, but have been postponed until at least 2033. While this means that we cannot expect immediate changes, LV will remain actively involved in the process by continuing to give feedback on the FB's proposals.

We believe that students must have a voice in shaping the future of our faculty buildings. That is why we plan to be part of any future project groups or consultations about the Harmony Complex renovations. From sustainability to study spaces, your input will guide our work. We will do our best to ensure the new Harmony serves the real needs of students, now and in the future.

Sustainability

On the topic of sustainability, as mentioned above, the planned renovations are still far away. However, this does not mean that we cannot have any influence on the

outcomes. LV wants to consider student's needs and opinions to improve said plans, also considering sustainability measures. On top of that, we will continue promoting the Green Office Embassy at the Faculty of Arts, as well as encouraging the faculty itself to come up with sustainability campaigns and initiatives. We realise that many of these initiatives are university-wide and therefore under the jurisdiction of the University Council. Nevertheless, we will remain in good contact with the UC's student parties to combine efforts. This way, we can make sure to bring university-wide topics regarding sustainability, such as the continuing of F10 efforts to create accessibility to more sustainable milks to our faculty's attention.

Candidates



Teun Mekenkamp, #1
Candidate Chair



Leonie Müller, #2



Lineke Adema, #3



Fenne de Groot, #4
Candidate Secretary



Zeno de Boer, #5
Candidate Treasurer



Ninon Gilhuis, #6
Candidate Public Relations



Isabelle Schoorl, #7



Alana Swinkels, #8



Anna Astakhov, #9