



Policy Plan Gerardus van der Leeuw

2022-2023

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## **1. Introduction**

Dear reader, dear Lion,

We are very happy that you have our policy plan open in front of you. This is the first independent policy plan that Gerardus van der Leeuw has ever had. The policy plan discusses the plans and goals of the Gerardus van der Leeuw board for the upcoming year.

With a loving roar,  
The Gerardus board of 2022-2023

## **2. Corona**

The pandemic has been going on for quite some time now, and even though it has been a much less dominant part of daily life in the past months, it might not disappear completely soon. Sadly, this has a big influence on our activities as an association. Planned activities, parties or just chatting in the faculty hall is difficult during a (partial) lockdown, which of course also has a big influence on the mental health of everyone. Mental health is further discussed in this policy paper.

The main focus of the association is to continue all activities if they are allowed and can be carried out safely. We will follow all the rules of the government and the university regarding fun and educational activities. If activities are unable to continue due to corona measures, we will provide online alternatives where possible. We might decide on not organizing activities which require active participation but might opt for 'easier' activities, e.g., movie nights.

## **3. Employability**

Employability is a mandatory part of the activities that the board of Gerardus organizes. The faculty pays the board of Gerardus to do this, which makes it a crucial source of income for the association. The goal of Employability is to inform and prepare the students for the labor market.

In the past, Gerardus board members have struggled with employability workshops, as attendance was usually low and the workshops did not seem effective enough or a good match with our students. In the upcoming year we want to rethink and restructure Employability. The board of Gerardus and the student assessor will work together in experimenting with different ways for students to acquire appropriate employability skills. Input from students will be highly encouraged on this matter.

#### **4. Newsletter**

The current newsletter is still sent via the old platform Nestor. From December, however, the newsletter will have to be sent via the current platform Brightspace. It is still unclear how this will work, so it is up to the board to find this out as soon as possible.

The board aims to send a bi-yearly newsletter to the Alumni, to keep them involved in the faculty's activities.

#### **5. Annual Contribution**

The board aims to set up a direct debit for annual contributions, to relieve the next board of this task. Moreover, a direct debit will be more manageable for the treasurers, who are the ones figuring out its workings in consultation with the bank and with the help of former treasurers.

#### **6. Confidential advisor training**

During the year, a clear policy regarding the confidential advisors will be created . The confidential advisors will write a policy proposal. This proposal will be checked with the advisory board and board of Gerardus.

#### **7. Internationalization**

As every year, the board aims to help international students feel welcome and at home in the association. The board has several methods to contribute to this goal:

- All Gerardus activities will be promoted and held in English, unless only Dutch students are present. The board will, in case an activity cannot be held in English, communicate this clearly to the students (especially the internationals).
- The board will organize an international student event at least once per year, preferably close to the start of the year. The idea behind this is for the international students of our faculty to get to know each other, and particularly for first year internationals to meet both the board as well as international students in upper years, who have more experience in the city and the faculty.
- To help students interested in a Dutch course, the board will post a link on the Gerardus website to the courses paid by the University.
- The board, in consultation with the Student Assessor, will also look into the buddy program that is usually facilitated to help international students that are new to the city and the faculty. The board will ask upper year international students to pair with new international students to help them feel welcome at Gerardus activities. Should there be no international students willing to help, it is up to the board to remain as internationally oriented as possible.

- The board will make sure the legal statutes (that are currently only available in Dutch) are translated into English.

## **8. Sustainability**

Gerardus wants to be as sustainable as it can be. The goal that is linked to this ambition is related to the Green Office of the RUG. We have several goals which are listed below.

- Gerardus would like to achieve the bronze sustainability label issued by the Green Office.
- As part of this, the board will provide only vegetarian and vegan food at activities.
- The board will not allow air travel this year.

## **9. Student wellbeing & mental health**

The wellbeing of students is a prime topic in the university in general, and in our faculty as well. Gerardus finds student wellbeing important, and aims to contribute to student's mental and physical health in whatever ways we can.

- In general, Gerardus values faculty community and social events. Organizing social events that are open to all faculty students (and staff) will help foster a welcoming atmosphere and social connection, which contributes to student wellbeing. The board also aims to create an open and accepting community, where students feel safe to discuss issues such as stress, work pressure, and mental health with each other and can help each other. To achieve this, Gerardus works together with the faculty's active student platform (SAM) as well as its committees to organize events specifically focused on mental health and wellbeing. Examples are events aimed at minimizing stress, such as mindfulness or yoga evenings, and events aimed at discussing mental health, such as SAM's forums, where students come together and can give input on e.g. what the study association or the faculty can do to improve mental health.
- To help students minimize stress and maximize wellbeing, Gerardus and its committees will also organize events aimed at physical health and relaxation. These events are not specifically focused on discussing mental health or offering tools to increase mental health, but instead focus on physical activities such as walking or working out. Physical health is an important part of wellbeing, and for many students it can be helpful to focus on physical activities to stop overthinking and instead concentrate on something else.
- The board will also aim to raise more awareness regarding mental health by informing students about the options there are. This can be achieved by providing students with

presentations about the university's resources, or (as it has been done in the past) working with the study advisor to inform students about the warning signs of burnout. The board will continue to work on this topic and hope to contribute to and improve the students' wellbeing through Gerardus events and activities.

Gerardus van der Leeuw has the following goals in the area of mental health:

1. Working together with e.g. the mentors and SAM once a year to map out student wellbeing, note challenges that students are facing that year, and together think of solutions to cater to these specific challenges.
2. Accommodating the Fitcie in organizing activities that are specifically aimed at de-stressing students.

## **10. Diversity and inclusion**

Awareness about inclusion and diversity is becoming increasingly important in our pluralist society. As a study association, Gerardus wants to recognize these developments and make sure the board stays posted on this subject. In this respect, the board wants to do its best at creating an environment in which everyone feels safe and welcome, regardless of background in gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religious affiliation, etc.

- To prevent the study association from leaning towards an activist organization, neutrality is very important. In practice, this means that the board itself will not organize political or activist activities, but the board may provide information on such activities organized by third parties, using for example the social media platforms. It will also include making posts about important days in a year, such as holidays (of several religions) and national remembrance days. Students and staff are encouraged to provide their own input for this purpose. This way, a study association such as Gerardus can still raise awareness among its members.
- To make everyone feel included the board will make sure all written documents and emails to the members are gender neutral.

## **11. Gerardus boardroom**

The Gerardus board of 2021/2022 has arranged a special board room for all future boards of the association.

As the current boardroom is new in use, the board will further write and finalize the initial proposal/manual for the room in which the rules and expectations regarding the room become

clear. For instance, what is in the room by default, who is allowed in the room, and rules regarding sustainability. Every block the board will choose a day on which the committees are free to use the room. By filling in a 'book me' sign-up, committees can pick a time-slot, enabling them to do their meetings there. The board hopes to present all of the plans and rules for the boardroom in the GMA at the end of the year.

## **12. General member assembly (GMA)**

It is a goal of the board to make the general member assembly attractive and interesting for all members of Gerardus van der Leeuw, since GMA's are a crucial part of the functioning of an association. For every GMA, the board will provide either an optional dinner at a small cost, or another fun component (such as a borrel afterwards), which will hopefully lead to higher attendance.