

# ANNUAL PLAN 2022

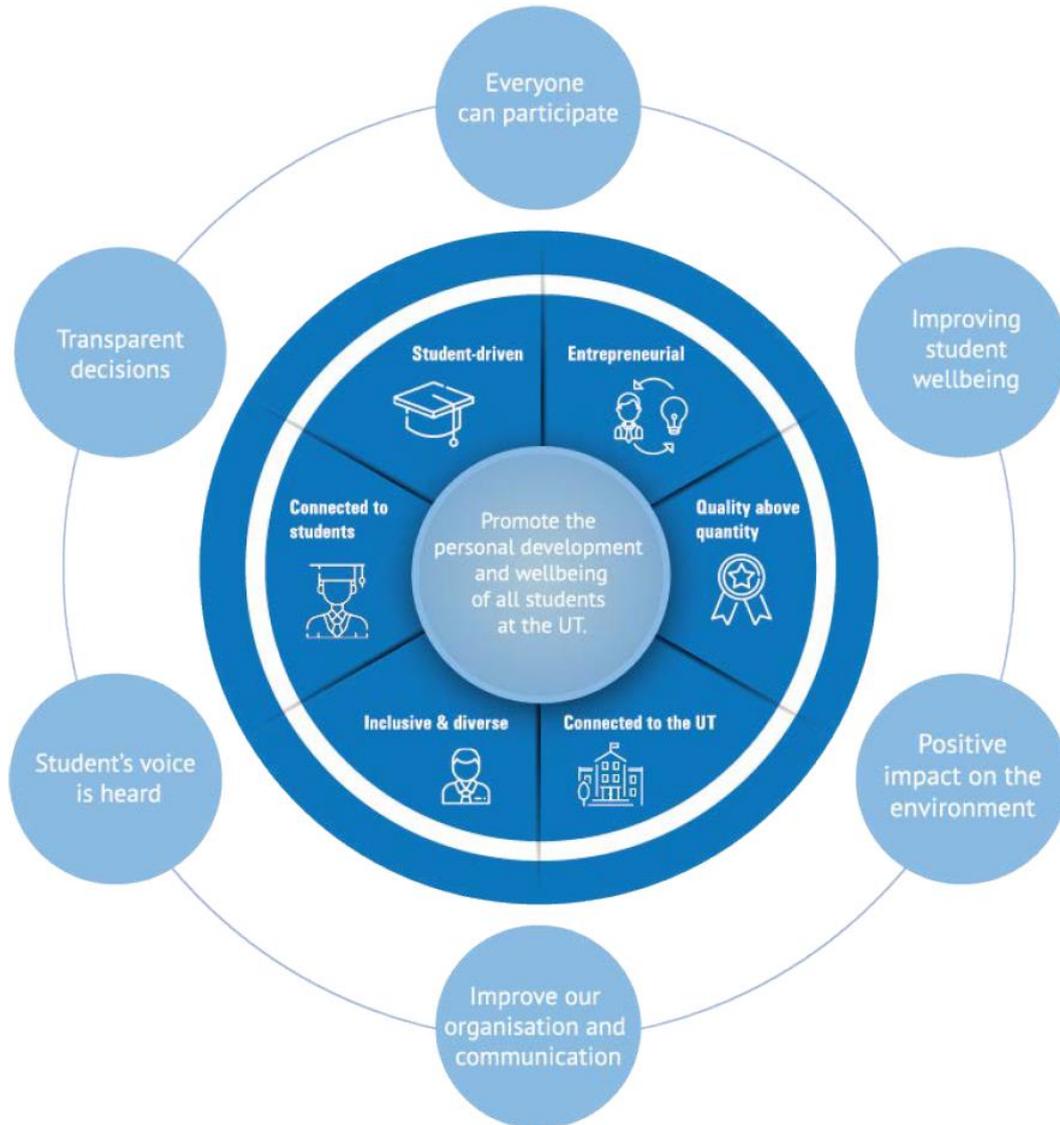
## INTRODUCTION

In 2020 the Student Union drafted a new long-term strategy for 2020-2023. This strategy forms the basis for our Annual Plan. This annual plan is largely an operationalisation of the strategy but also contains additional aims and goals. Based on our new strategy, input from many stakeholders and our own experiences as Student Union, we have created the Annual Plan of 2022. This plan sets the goals for the upcoming year.

In 2020, the COVID-19 virus reached the Netherlands, affecting its population and the Student Union. It affected the wellbeing of students, and additionally, while working from home, it was harder for students to develop themselves personally. In 2021, we saw the mid-term consequences of the COVID-19 virus, which impacted the student community and its activism in multiple aspects and levels. This resulted in the creation of new facilities and opportunities that supported our organisation and the student organisations in (re)connecting the close student community.

As Student Union, we consider that it is possible the COVID-19 virus is not past time in 2022 yet. We notice that multiple short- and long-term effects impact the student community and its activism environment on a large scale. For this annual plan, it is therefore essential to have the right priorities. This helps us in having clear goals and also creates space for dealing with the COVID-19 virus. Where we want to promote the personal development and wellbeing of students, next to that, it also creates space to investigate new opportunities which are a result of the pandemic. In 2021, we have seen that our organisation must act quickly in changing situations, which is only possible if we have the space and flexibility built into our organisation to do so. Furthermore, it is valuable to be aware of the steps made and reflect and use the good practices in future situations, which helps us continuously improve our organisation.

Our mission, values and strategy are introduced on the following pages, followed by our main aims for the year, each with its own goals and indicators. Lastly, *Appendix A* provides context on our current organisational structure.



# OUR MISSION, VALUES AND STRATEGY

As Student Union, we have the following mission:

**Everything we do is done for our fellow students - to empower them to achieve More than a Degree.**

This mission forms the basis of everything we do as Student Union and is surrounded by our core values:

- **Student-driven:** Students fuel our organisation and are the main part of our organisation;
- **Entrepreneurial:** We are constantly looking for new opportunities and set up or stimulate new initiatives that support our mission;
- **Quality above quantity:** We aim to deliver high-quality products and services;
- **Connected to students:** We involve students and student organisations in our mission and are easy to approach;
- **Inclusive & diverse:** We stand for a diverse organisation and student life in which each and every one, without any exemption, can participate;
- **Connected to the UT:** We cooperate with the UT whenever we can to fulfil our mission and reach our goals.

Our strategy supplies our mission and core values with the following five main aims for the coming years:

1. **Everyone can participate in student life:** All students can find a part of student life that is attractive and accessible to them, and we help student organisations to provide this;
2. **We aid in improving student wellbeing:** We help students to stay healthy, both on a mental as on a physical level;
3. **Students are stimulated to develop themselves:** Both on a personal as on a professional level, it is possible and attractive for students to develop themselves;
4. **The voice of students is heard:** We make sure that the interests of students are defended both inside and outside our organisation;
5. **We improve our organisation and communication:** We become more transparent and clear on our organisation and in our communication;
6. **We have a positive impact on the environment:** We use our position and means to promote environmental sustainability and become more sustainable ourselves;

These aims form the framework for all goals and indicators of this year's annual plan.

## 1. STUDENTS CAN DEVELOP THEIR PERSONAL COMPETENCIES NEXT TO THEIR STUDIES

## The focus on ways to achieve More Than A Degree is broadened

The need for new ways to achieve more than a degree increases. Students can become active by joining a student organisation and participating in activism activities and choose to become active by creating their opportunities and. They can, for example, start their own student organisation or become an entrepreneur. Moreover, due to the financial system and national policy, students experience an increased pressure to finish their study programme as quickly as possible. At the same time, students need to distinguish themselves to stand out for (future) employers by, for example, being more experienced in global and societal problems. In addition, the student population is growing more than ever. In combination with global/national developments, these switches focus on other ways of becoming active. Students feel more and more involved and engaged in global and societal challenges. These challenges can be used as a starting point for innovation and development by using, e.g. challenge-based learning. Moreover, students create more opportunities to develop themselves by organising initiatives to become individually active, often without being a member of an association. They have the autonomy and feel the responsibility to constantly look for new opportunities and initiatives, creating an entrepreneurial culture. This is also incorporated in the vision Innovation drafted in 2021.

In 2021, we already started with creating an overview of ways to achieve more than a degree. In addition, we want to build on these developments and focus specifically on the stimulation and added value of individual activism because we noticed that due to the above-mentioned developments, we do not support all possibilities to achieve More Than A Degree anymore. Moreover, we want to nourish the existing entrepreneurial culture and stimulate more students to develop an entrepreneurial mindset, contributing to our mission.

**Goal:** We stimulate students more to become active individually by

- Informing students about (the added value of) challenge-based learning and an entrepreneurial mindset within activism;

Indicators:

- Information about (the added value of) challenge-based learning and an entrepreneurial mindset within activism is publicly accessible for all students by, e.g. a roadmap or informative sessions;
- An overview of all ways to become individually active is created, promoted and publicly accessible.

## **Increase the focus on soft skill development**

National developments have led to an increase in study pressure. At the same time, the pressure on students to develop competencies in and next to their studies is increasing. Many big employers are increasingly looking for students with broad competencies and soft skills as having an academic education alone is no longer sufficient. Moreover, the labour market is a fast-changing market and (future) employees need to be able and competent to adapt to these changes. Soft skills are personality traits, behaviours and interpersonal skills representing the ability to work effectively and harmoniously, which employers look for. Soft skills are harder to learn in a traditional classroom, unlike hard skills, which refer to a person's (academic) knowledge. Soft skills are also more challenging to measure and evaluate. As soft skills are mostly learned next to the study, students are responsible for developing these soft skills as part of their personal development.

We do already facilitate this soft skill development within our More Than A Degree - program with, e.g. Kroegcolleges and the YER Development Track. However, these are new initiatives, and due to COVID-19, the start was delayed multiple times. Therefore, not a lot of students know or make use of these facilities. We also offer board workshops for full-time and part-time boards and committees given by professional agencies or student trainers. However, student trainers are trained for only one type of workshop. The Student Union wants to help students develop these soft skills by improving the quality of these workshops and increasing awareness about soft skill development to stimulate students to achieve more than a degree.

**Goal:** Increase the focus on soft skills development for students by:

- Increasing awareness of existing facilities for developing soft skills;
- Extending the offer of workshops from student trainers for part-time boards and committees.

Indicators:

- At least 8 student organisations organised a Kroegcollege;
- The Kroegcollege and YER Development Track are evaluated and are at least rated with an average number of 7 out of 10;
- The offer of workshops for part-time board and committees is extended to 3 different workshops.

## **Students receive recognition and appreciation for extracurricular activities**

To lower the threshold to become active and increase the added value of being active, students should feel appreciated for extracurricular activities. Receiving appreciation and recognition for extracurricular activities increases the added value of achieving more than a degree and can prove the value of extracurricular activities to future employers. These students can help to promote the More Than A Degree program and become an ambassador of student activities.

We already recognise students for their full-time or part-time board year with, e.g. the activism recognitions and the board minor. Since last year, students can also receive a digital certificate, an Edubadge. However, this recognition is restricted to students who have done a board year. We believe that also smaller activism should be appreciated and recognised. Moreover, an Edubadge should not be limited to activism but also other activities that contribute to students' personal development, such as a workshop.

**Goal:** Students receive recognition and appreciation for extracurricular activities by

- Expanding the use of Edubadges;
- Making precise what the requirements are for receiving recognition;
- Increasing appreciation for active students.

Indicators:

- An overview of the requirements for receiving an Edubadge as recognition for extracurricular activities has been made;
- Big committees – over 8 hours per week on average per person – will receive recognition for their activism;
- An initiative to appreciate active students will be launched.

### **Improve and upgrade the Union locations**

The Student Union has quite a say in the accommodation facilities of the university. By improving the Union locations, students can have better opportunities to improve their personal competencies. Besides managing and renovating the Union Buildings, the Student Union also plays a role in the Long Term Strategic Housing (LTSH) plan. The LTSH plan of the UT is about the accommodation plans in the coming years. There are two ongoing projects the Student Union would like focus on:

LTSH plans for a new Multifunctional Dance Hall exist. They are currently in a lower prioritisation on the LTSH agenda, but it is nevertheless essential that these plans are eventually implemented. The role the Student Union plays in this is continuously making sure these points remain on the agenda in the LTSH meetings and making sure that the prioritisation is improved so that the plans can be realised in the current LTSH term.

Furthermore, the Atrium in the Bastille is a beautiful facility that could be used as a host venue for various activities, like parties, lectures, interviews and presentations. After the potential rejuvenation of social activities at the university post-COVID-19, it is crucial that a use-case for the Atrium is thought out and implemented.

Next to these two projects, two renovations are planned where the Student Union would like to pay extra attention to this year:

In 2022, the light renovation for the WaterSportsComplex is planned. The Student Union needs to coordinate the communication between the different stakeholders (CBE, CFM-sport, CFM, Student Union) and hold an overview of the created plans to carry out the renovations effectively.

The Student Union is also working on realising one of their real estate renovation projects: the Esports Lounge in the Stek. It is important that this project retains enough attention from the Student Union and that the working group, employees, and associations receive enough coordination to ensure this project becomes a success.

**Goal:** Improve and upgrade the UnionLocations

Indicators:

- A plan and user-case for the Atrium is made;
- The Esports lounge in the Stek in the Bastille is realised;
- The renovation of the WaterSportComplex is realised, and plans are delivered.

### **Improve the profitability and functionality of the UnionShop**

At the UnionShop, the Student Union makes sure that certain products for students that can contribute to their personal competencies can be attained for a fair price. For the past years, the finances of the UnionShop were not satisfactory. Therefore, in 2021 the Student Union worked together with the BMS faculty to facilitate a bachelor thesis assignment for the UnionShop. The recommendations that will follow from this report in 2022 would likely improve the revenue and functionality of the UnionShop. Therefore, these recommendations must be implemented in 2022.

**Goal:** Improve profitability and functionality of the UnionShop

Indicators:

- Gross revenue increases by more than 10%.

### **Increase the visibility of (Performing) Arts**

In the participation sessions with all sectors, it became clear that not all students are aware of the facilities that both the University of Twente and Student Union have to offer. It has already been taken up in the strategy of the communication portfolio for the coming three years that the Student Union would like to focus on students knowing the Student Union and what the Student Union stands for. Specifically, we would like to have all students understand what we offer and active students see how the Student Union can support them.

The (performing) arts facilities specifically are not that well known to students, which has been noticed during the participation sessions with stakeholders, just as during the open days (many questions from new students about (performing) arts). The Vrijhof is the (performing) arts centre of the UT, but it has been noticed that the (performing) arts facilities inside remain unknown to a large part of the UT community. By 2022 more focus will be put on the visibility of the whole (performing) arts sector, including the associations and the offer in courses, performances and exhibitions. The (performing) arts sector contributes with its offer to the personal development, academic development and mental and physical wellbeing of students. In 2021 several things have happened within the (performing) arts sector, such as the discontinuation of the head of the department of Culture&Events. There is also research going on from Hiemstra & de Vries about the embedding of Culture&Events in the organisation, another research from Draaijer & Partners on the accommodation and a third research from the student working group on the entire sector of performing arts and how to maintain a resilient sector. These researches will provide interesting information for the sector, which should be handled accordingly. These outcomes are not yet clear at the moment, but it has already been shown that there is much to gain in the visibility of the whole sector over the past years. This contributes to a healthy and maintainable sector.

When visibility is gained, students who are interested but did not know before about the entire (performing) arts offer they can take part in at the UT are now more likely to participate. This participation contributes to their development and wellbeing.

**Goal:** The (performing) arts offer at the UT and its facilities are known to students.

Indicators:

- The types of promotional activities of the past four years are evaluated. As a result, it should become clear which promotional activities have been executed before and which have gained the most visibility for the (performing) arts sector.
- The publicity of the (performing) arts offer is stimulated. At least one news item from the cultural sector is posted every quartile on social media of the Student Union.
- At least two initiatives are realised where student(boards) are extensively involved in promoting and disseminating (performing) arts for the UT community.

## 2. WELLBEING

The wellbeing of students is paramount and has been given more and more attention in the past year. With wellbeing, we are especially focussing on the prevention of mental illnesses such as depression or burn-out and problems regarding eating, drugs or alcohol. In addition, we want to contribute to the prevention of sexual harassment or discrimination experiences. Furthermore, in case a student's wellbeing is in danger due to one of the aforementioned problems/experiences, we want to create awareness about finding the right persons/tools to help the student with these problems/experiences.

### **Transfer knowledge about wellbeing among associations, entities and students**

The Student Union participates in the Student Wellbeing Implementation Program (SWIP). Within this program we collaborate with the UT and address all wellbeing related topics. We focus on the student-for-student tasks and plans.

In 2021 our focus has been on the establishment of training for associations to create more awareness for mental illnesses or bad experiences among members of associations. For 2022, next to improving these training sessions, our focus will be on enabling associations to share and gain as much knowledge as possible on wellbeing. In that way, they can learn from each other's experiences and improve the wellbeing of their members. In addition, we would like to improve the knowledge about wellbeing among all UT students. During participation sessions organised by UIF, students indicated that much information about finding the proper persons when encountering a mental illness or bad experience is not easily findable.

Furthermore, we are also involved within the Shaping Expert Group (SEG) Inclusion. Within this group we strive to make all students feel at home or have a sense of belonging at the University of Twente.

**Goal:** Improving the knowledge about wellbeing and offered help among students by:

- Creating a platform for discussion (e.g. a gathering) for wellbeing initiatives for associations and entities;
- Increasing awareness about wellbeing information among students.

Indicators:

- Organise at least once in the ten weeks a gathering to share wellbeing initiatives among associations or entities (e.g. OS, study associations, U-council parties);
  - At least 30 associations have made use of one of our offered services on creating awareness about wellbeing among students (e.g. taken part in our Look After Your Friend training);
  - At least 30 associations have confidential advisors with the right knowledge about what to do with, e.g. sexual harassment or discrimination;
- Organise a marketing campaign about a wellbeing topic (e.g. sexual consent, loneliness).

### **Diversity is the mix, and inclusion is making the mix work.**

The University's population has become very diverse in the past years. With more students with different backgrounds and conditions joining the UT every year, a great diversity is noticeable within the UT community. A lot of students stick together in their own 'social bubble'. With having more and more diversity within the student community, we want to contribute to the integration of these diverse groups.

Furthermore, some students are not interacting with an association due to cultural differences or a difference in knowledge. We want to encourage all students to become an active student and show the benefits when becoming active. Besides, added to the individual value, this will again affect the overall integration with students from different backgrounds.

**Goal:** Promote the integration of UT students with a diverse background by:

- Stimulating international associations and other associations to organise events together;
- Extending and improving the introduction period for particular groups to make sure these groups are welcomed and included well (e.g. pre Kick-In activity for international students so they can come along with the Dutch students during the Kick-In);
- Promoting the benefits of becoming active, specifically for international students.

Indicators:

- At least two events are organised between mainly international and mainly Dutch student associations;
- A plan will be made and preferably executed to reach and mention the benefits of becoming active to international students;
- During and before the Kick-In, there is an increase of activities focused on special focus groups (e.g. disabled, international students).

## **3. SUSTAINABILITY**

As the Student Union, we think it is vital to remain involved in important topics, including sustainability. Now more than ever, our society needs sustainable, decisive action to protect our planet

and its inhabitants. The University of Twente wants to contribute to this, and we as Student Union play a significant role in the network of all students (13.000). Therefore, ecological, social and economic sustainability is the basis of all the education, research, innovations, and organisation at the UT. A sustainable organisation is also one of the goals of Shaping 2030. We want to propagate this to our network and, in this way, encourage people to be more aware of sustainability. The 2021 annual plan also included a number of sustainability goals. Sustainability remains so important that we have decided to include it again in the 2022 annual plan with the goals as described below.

As Student Union, we do not want to lag behind in developing a better planet, and therefore we want to align our goals to the overarching climate goals. We think it is important that students are aware of what is going on with regard to sustainability and that they know what is possible. Only when we work together, we can achieve the goals we set for climate change. The Green Hub is the central point where all knowledge and initiatives related to sustainability within the university converge and reinforce each other. They mainly are facilitating students and employees at the UT who want to do something regarding sustainability. We want to focus on advising associations and students on where they can go with problems or issues regarding sustainability. In addition, we are mainly concerned with stimulating students and associations to be more aware of sustainability. Initiatives such as the Eco Challenge – a sustainability battle between student houses – and the sustainability symposium of the UT are good examples of this. We, as Student Union, think it is important to take the lead in helping students find relevant organisations and people regarding sustainability and ensure that there are enough facilities for students who want to engage in sustainability. In addition, together with relevant parties, we want to offer associations tools to become more sustainable and be more aware of this topic.

### **Facilitate, stimulate and advise students and organisations on sustainability-related student initiatives and making associations more sustainable.**

**Goal:** Being reachable for students and associations to ask questions/issues on how to work/live more sustainably and lowering the threshold for students and associations to become more sustainable by:

- Providing information and a possibility to ask questions/issues;
- Work together with parties who are involved in sustainability, like Green Hub;
- Creating an overview of all organisations that deal with sustainability and what you can contact them for;
- Support associations financially in making their activities and way of working more sustainable;
- Offer easy and straightforward solutions to live more sustainably;
- Make students and associations aware of sustainability.
- The Student Union is involved in challenges/events regarding sustainability.

Indicators:

- A web page has been created on our website, with information about sustainability;
- The overview of all organisations that deal with sustainability can be found on our website;
- The Student Union supported minimal two events/challenges regarding sustainability.
- At the end of the year, there will be a stable fund to which students and student associations can apply for grants for sustainable initiatives.

- At least once a month, a sustainable initiative or idea will be promoted via our socials;
- Create a page on the website with information about sustainability within your organisation or life;
- Current facilities from the Student Union have been analysed and made more sustainable where possible. For example, the requirements of the MTAD Initiative Fund.

## 4. DEALING WITH THE PANDEMIC

During these uncertain times of a pandemic, the Student Union has a supportive role for the student organisations and the UT student population in general. While it is hard to fully predict which factors or themes require extra attention or support to ensure the organisation and its population remain stable during the pandemic. Some themes are already expected to require extra attention for the year 2022.

### **Support in maintaining the continuity of the student organisations**

In 2021, the Student Union has performed research about the financial status of Union-recognised associations. From this, it became clear that COVID has negatively impacted a lot of associations financially. Plans are in place to help these associations by giving out financial aid in coordination with the university. These plans are hopefully implemented before the end of 2021. For 2022, (financial) stability of student organisations remains a top priority. We want to monitor associations' status continuously, and aiding where necessary and where possible is one of the goals. It is good to stipulate that there will always be a fluctuation in, for example, recognised associations or, for instance, the members of an association. This fluctuation is normal, and the goal is deliberately not to prevent this fluctuation.

**Goals:** no decrease in union-recognised organisations due to pandemic influences on financial or membership-level stability.

Indicators:

- No decrease in the number of Union-Recognised organisations as a direct result of financial shortages;
- No decrease in active students as reported by the Activism Monitor;
- No decrease in the number of Union-Recognised organisations as a direct result of lack of members.

### **Stimulate social cohesion between students and with the university**

The first-year students of 2021 have had a different year than the cohorts before them due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During wellbeing scans of this group, a lack of social cohesion among this cohort is noticeable, just as having less connection with the UT. Moreover, it is still uncertain if and what new measurements will come and how it will influence the possibilities on social contact and education due to changing parameters like infection rates, virus mutations, seasonal effects, and vaccination rates.

The consequences of the pandemic on wellbeing and social cohesion will not be solved at once. Even when there will be no restrictions due to COVID-19 anymore, the effects will be visible. Therefore, one of the focus points of 2022 is to stimulate social cohesion between students and the UT, independent of the (non-existent) COVID-19 regulations at that time.

**Goal:** Stimulate social cohesion between students – especially first and second-year students –and with the UT by:

- Encouraging student organisations to organise activities for social cohesion between all students;
- Communicating on possibilities and regulations to organise activities for social gatherings.

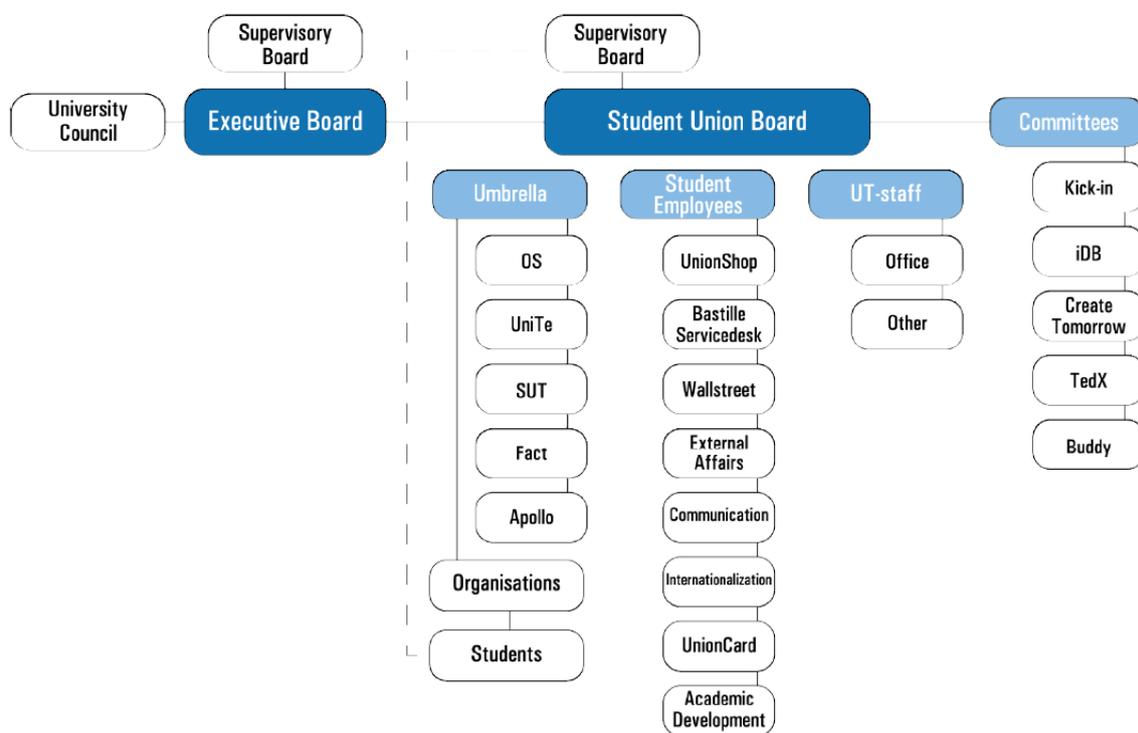
Indicators:

- Intensify the monitoring of the social impact of COVID-19 on students (and student organisations) by implementing at least two measure moments per year;
- Based on the monitor results, define and execute actions to support social cohesion where needed.

# APPENDIX A - OUR ORGANISATION

The Student Union has grown considerably since its establishment in 1999, both in size as in responsibilities. We currently have over 130 affiliated student organisations and over 110 people working for our organisation as an employee or in one of our committees.

The figure below shows our organisational structure and the relation to the UT's executive board. The Student Union is governed by the executive board, supported by student employees, supporting staff from UT service departments and several committees in their daily work.



Furthermore, our organisation consists out of several bodies that are involved in the decision-making and participation process. The supervisory board, consisting of students and non-students, has to approve the executive board's most impactful plans and decisions.

Next to that, we have over 125 affiliated student organisations, the so-called participants. These organisations are united in the Participants Council that appoints, suspends and discharges the members of the supervisory board. These organisations are also divided into six sectors, for which five of them have their own overarching organisation, the so-called umbrellas. These umbrellas, shown in the previous figure, frequently meet with the executive board to discuss and advise on various topics. The figure below visualises the decision-making structure.

**Supervisory Board**

*Meets each 4-6 weeks*

Approves impactful decisions of executive board  
Appoints, suspends and discharges executive board members

**Executive Board**

*Full-time*

Decision-making on behalf of the Student Union  
Leads Organisation

**Umbrella Meeting**

*Meets each 4-8 weeks*

No formal rights  
Discussion and feedback on plans of executive board

**Participants Council Meeting**

*Meets 2-4 times per year*

Appoints, suspends and discharges supervisory board  
Gets informed on large plans and decisions

