

Strategic Plan 2016 - 2019

In front of you lies the Strategic Plan of the Student Union of 2016 – 2019. In this plan the direction and the position of the organization are determined for the upcoming years. The plan has been developed using the input coming from students, board members, SU’s ex board members, the Executive Board (EB), employees of the University of Twente (UT), the Advisory Board, and the Supervisory Board.

Academic Development	The evolvement of a student during its study programme, mainly in the fields of programme exceeding skills.
(Student) Activism	Activism contains all sorts of getting actively involved in extra-curricular activities at the UT. One can think of taking part in committee and/or boards, but also becoming entrepreneur is a form of activism. Just becoming member of an association is not part of being active.
Bastille	The student building on campus, under the responsibility of the SU.
Campus	The Campus is the living and working environment of a part of the students and employees of the UT.
SU-UT Agreement	The agreement between the SU and the UT, in which all responsibilities of the SU are described.
Umbrella organization	An umbrella organization of all Union participants in a specific sector..
Employee	A person who works at the UT. This also includes PhD students.
Student	A person who is enrolled at the UT.
Union boulevard	Street on campus where the Bastille is located at.
Union participant	A student organization that is recognized by the SU.
Union building	Building for which the SU is policy responsible. This includes the Bastille, the Pakkerij, and the University Water Sports Complex.
Welfare	The degree to which the basic needs are fulfilled. This is the basis for people to become independent.

The Student Union

10 The SU is an independent organization by and for students at the UT. The SU actively shapes the student life, as it got mandated several policy responsibilities by the Executive Board. Important policy responsibilities from the SU-UT Agreement¹ are Sports & Culture, living area of students, student entrepreneurship, the Union buildings, and the introduction period: the Kick-In. The Student Union uses these responsibilities and its position to achieve their mission: *“To advance the academic development and welfare of the students of the University of Twente.”*

20 The SU sticks to the philosophy of students working on their academic development through activism. Students who are active namely learn to show initiative and to solve problems. Furthermore they learn to deal with big responsibilities. Many students are active, and by doing so they are involved in the student life around it. In order to increase the academic development in a more efficient manner, it is required that students get space to relax, i.e.: the balance between effort and relaxation is key when gaining new skills. Through activism the employability of students increases: active students of the UT have a great added value when they enter the labour market and in society as well. From the beginning of their student time on students learn to actively participate in the community, and to work on their personal development.

¹ The current SU-UT Agreement can be found via: <http://www.studentunion.utwente.nl/over-su/organisatie/overeenkomst-su-ut.html>.

The SU combines most forms of student activism, and it oversees more than 120 Union participants of the university. Hence, together with the Union participants, it is a first contact for several matters, and it plays a central part in the student life.

Developments 2016 - 2019

30 To concretize this philosophy, it is important to analyse the current and future (social) developments. These developments can take place on both big and small scale. On a big scale one can identify social trends that the UT community and the SU in particular need to anticipate in order to keep the transformation from student to a socially engaged professional possible, and to strengthen this.

Individualization as a fashion becomes more and more visible in society. People tend to be more self-centred, and it becomes harder to get their loyalty. Yet, for the student's academic development it is important that they come together, and that they learn from each other. The UT has a broad offer of student organizations, and by encouraging students to integrate with each other, the opportunity of offering some counterweight for individualization rises for both the UT and the SU, ultimately resulting in the realization of an ideal environment for academic development. Other important societal fashions are internationalization and digitalization. Through these developments the world gets more and more globalized, and more people get in touch more often with other people from all over the world.

40 On a smaller scale one can also recognize practical developments. Studying fast is increasingly more appreciated by 'Political the Hague'. Developments like the introduction of the 'student loaning system' in September 2015 result from this. Students feel that the pressure of studying at a higher pace increases. The financial pressure for universities to participate in this development also increases. Furthermore, one can recognize developments like the introduction of Twente Educational Model at the UT in 2013, and the transitioning mind set with respect to curricular and extra-curricular activities. More attempts are made to incorporate extra-curricular skills in the study programme, with the board minor as example. Based on these developments, the SU concretizes its added value in several fields. The ambitions for the upcoming four year are described below.

50 **1. The SU encourages student to integrate, in order to realize a huge community feeling at the UT.** In this way a community is created at the UT where students really come together, forming an exception to the general individualization and digitalization of society. A culture in which everyone knows everyone will emerge, to which the SU contributes by facilitating and supporting Union participants, in order to sustain and strengthen these Union participants. Furthermore the SU stimulates all students to take part in these organizations. There are many student organizations, and all of them operate autonomously. These organizations are the core of the community feeling at the UT, as students with the same – or different – interests meet here.

60 The SU furthermore encourages all students to integrate also outside the Union participants. As society becomes more international, more people, cultures, and interests will cross. To realize a community feeling within this fashion, a turning point in culture is essential, resulting in integrating national and international students. This enhances the warm welcome international students at the UT get, such that everyone already from the beginning feels a part of the community.

Finally the SU not only takes care of students coming closer, but also for students and employees being more able of finding each other. This generate mutual understanding, and it keeps them in touch. This close contact is important for the community.

2. The SU offers each student room to develop his/herself. Student activism is one of the ways in which students can work on their development. Besides the fact that student organizations are important for the community feeling, they also function as breeding place for socially involved professionals. Within student organizations students get the opportunity to develop, relax, and to meet new people, both on personal and formal occasion. All of this takes place in a social, personal context in which cooperation is key. Competences like being a board member, organizing, working together, and taking responsibility, are developed here. It is exactly this active student life that ensure that students can apply the skills they've learned during their programme, in practice, and that they carry responsibility for doing so. The SU supports student organizations in as much as possible ways, in order to let students develop themselves. The student life at the UT is effectively shaped by students, and for students. All student organizations and umbrella organizations play a big role in this. The SU tries to strengthen this form of student activism, by advising and stimulating the Union participants. Next, the SU encourages students to start their own business. This entrepreneurial mind set also helps students in gaining competences like professionalism, hence this also is a way of developing yourself.

Having a place to be transformed into a socially involved professional is essential. Due to the developments set by the national politics, students are more and more triggered to finish their studies faster. The SU provides the Union participants with the required information about these developments, and it represents their interests by searching for partnerships with student organizations from other universities, in order to generate a more sound voice. In order to work on these policy boundaries set by 'the Hague', the Executive Board often asks the SU for advice. The SU on the other hand works closely together with the student fractions in the University Council, and it will always represent the interests of the Union participants, in order to give each student room to develop his/herself. Furthermore the SU takes care that students have enough opportunities for participation, in case major developments are planned at the UT, and it will maximize student participation in general. By doing so, the SU is really able to strengthen student activism, even within the changing context. And so, the UT stays the entrepreneurial university.

A development that goes along with raising the study pace is that students spend their time at the UT in a more aware way. To make students aware of the added value of being active in the UT's student life, the SU provides insights about this student life and its added value. Through this, students are able to make decisions about how to spend their student time optimally, and they will see that student activism at its finest is a way to make yourself unique.

Since more and more cultures arrive at the UT, the SU is aware of the opportunity that arises for all students to learn something from this. Listening to, working together with, or relaxing with students from distinct nationalities gives a new dimension to academic development of a student. This importance of intercultural academic development increases in this globalizing society. Furthermore, international students get optimally introduced to the Dutch culture.

3. All students look back on a great student time, and though among others this they are proud of Twente's student life. The student's welfare is requirement for its development. Relaxation contributes to this welfare. The SU makes sure that students can relax in many different ways through participating the Union participants' sectors. In this way as much students and employees as possible participate in the sectors of sports and culture. Furthermore, the SU ensures relaxation by facilitating and organizing events that are open to everyone from the UT (student) community.

110 Students spend a lot of their time on the campus of the UT and in the city centre of Enschede. The campus has a unique symbolic value that looks refreshing and internationally. Its vividness is characterized by activities organized by students and student organizations. The SU puts an effort in deploying the campus for student initiatives. The SU deploys in particular the Bastille and the Union boulevard for the benefits of the (active) students in Enschede. Furthermore the SU is involved in student housing on campus.

The city centre of Enschede is mainly characterised by the student associations and their activities. Thanks to a good cooperation with the municipality, activities and initiatives are realized. Together with these Union participants the SU creates a symbiosis between the city centre and the campus, such that Enschede is being well-rated as student city.

120 Through these developments, and since students of the UT shape their student life themselves, students will become ambassadors for Twente's student life. The SU recognizes the importance of these alumni of the UT and the student life at the UT. Both aspects contribute to the image of the UT and to Enschede as student city.

4. In order to reach these goals, each student is familiar with the SU. The SU is an organization run by students, for the benefits of students. To make its policy responsibilities and goals align with the wishes of students, it is important that all students are involved in the SU. Therefore the SU has clear communication towards all students, and it organizes many different (discussion) meetings for students to raise their voice and share their desires and demands. There is accessible, personal contact with board members of the SU for both national and international students, through which also input for the UT policy can be given via the SU. The SU board members are known for the personal ambitions they bring when they enter the organization. This increases the support of the SU and its policy within the student community.

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Student organizations have a big part in the information provision to students on the one hand, and to the SU on the other hand. The SU is well-informed about the many developments at and around the UT, and keeps the student organizations and umbrella organizations up-to-date. Hereby the SU facilitates organizations in their information provision.

The organization of the SU is flexible and is shaped by students, supported by a professional organization. In order to take into account the input from the UT community, and to utilize this, the organization of the SU is strengthened.

140 Finally, the SU uses its contact with companies for the benefits of active, studying Enschede. By doing so, it mostly supports Union participants in their contact with companies.

Ambitions Student Union

This vision will be concretized below through ambitions. Based on these ambitions the annual are drafted. In these annual plans the intended ambitions are quantified into goals, which are further translated to actions. Per ambition there is a reference to the visions of the SU for each portfolio².

1. The UT has a close community, and it brings students together.
 - a. The SU supports the diversity in offer of the Union participants.
 - b. The SU encourages students in integrating with each other.
 - 150 c. The SU has an initiating part in integration between national and international students.
 - d. The stimulates the integration between students and employees of the UT.
2. There is enough room for development for students at the UT.
 - a. As many as possible students of the UT are actively involved in the student life.
 - b. The SU facilitates, advises, stimulates, and represents the interests of all Union participants.
 - c. The SU encourages students to start their own company.
 - d. The SU shapes the active student life within the educational environment, and works closely together on this with the Union participants, the umbrella organizations, the University council, and the UT.
 - 160 e. The SU supports students in making well-considered decisions throughout their student time.
 - f. As many as possible students are developed in a intercultural way.
3. All students look back on a great student time.
 - a. As many as possible students participate in the sectors Sports and Culture.
 - b. The SU organizes and facilitates events that are open to everyone from the UT community.
 - c. The SU deploys the Bastille and the Union boulevard for promotion of activism.
 - d. The SU contributes, together with the student associations, to the image of Enschede as student city, by strengthening both the city centre and the campus.
 - 170 e. The SU puts an effort in transforming students into proud ambassadors for Twente's student life.
4. Each student knows the Student Union
 - a. All of the Union participants know when they should contact the SU.
 - b. The SU facilitates the student organizations and umbrellas in their information provision towards students.
 - c. The organization of the SU is further enforced.
 - d. The Student Union plays a supportive role in the contact between Union participants and companies.

180 Link with Vision 2020

The objectives coming from this Strategic Plan of the SU cover the UT's goals that are described in Vision 2020³. The UT focusses on combining disciplines, such that students in an early stage learn to combine

² The vision of the SU can be found via: <http://www.studentunion.utwente.nl/over-su/organisatie/visie.html>.

³ Vision 2020 can be found via: <http://www.utwente.nl/vision2020/>

different kinds of knowledge and to come up with practical solutions. Next, the SU facilitates and supports an ideal environment where students can put this into practice, making them gain essential competences that result from these practices. This results in UT's students who have an added value in society. The UT positions itself as 'the Entrepreneurial University', and this environment – which specifically is full of student activities and initiatives – contribute to this.

As the institution becomes fully internationalized, students get in touch with other cultures more often. The SU takes care for an optimal integration between cultures, creating a close community, and making students of the UT develop themselves into global citizens.

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