



# **Policy Plan 2024-2025**

**PSB Faction XV**

# 1 Colofon

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Policy Plan PSB 2024-2025

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# 2 Index

<b>1 Colofon</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3 Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4 Policy Points</b>	<b>5</b>
4.1 <i>Diversity &amp; Inclusion</i>	5
4.2 <i>Student Oriented Faculty</i>	6
4.3 <i>Visibility &amp; Involvement</i>	7



# 3 Introduction

In front of you lays the policy plan of the Faculty Council PSB for the academic year 2024-2025. The participation of staff and students in the matters of the Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences (BSS) is ensured by the possibility to take place in the Faculty Council. This consists of nine elected members from the staff and nine elected members from the students. PSB is currently the largest student party in the Faculty Council of Behavioural and Social Sciences at the University of Groningen (RUG). PSB has been representing the interests of all students by being allowed to sit on this council since 2010.

Our policy plans build on the vision of previous factions. In addition, the faction tries to innovate based on its own ideas and those of the current batch of students of the Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences.

For the academic year 2024-2025, the PSB will focus on the following policy points:

1. Diversity & Inclusion
2. Student Oriented Faculty
3. Visibility & Involvement

Kind regards,

PSB Faction XV 2024-2025

# 4 Policy points

## 4.1. Diversity & Inclusion

Every student of the BSS faculty, regardless of background, deserves to feel welcome, safe, and valued as they pursue their education. Tangibly fostering inclusivity and awareness of the diverse and dynamic needs of students will be a vital part of our efforts this year. In order to progress with this goal, we will need to listen closely to students to identify the unique challenges they face, and take meaningful action to minimize these challenges as much as possible to support them on their academic journey.

### ***4.1.1. Identifying Challenges***

Through increased participation in the (Diversity and Inclusion initiative of the faculty of Behavioral and Social Sciences) D&I-BSS working group and a commitment to reaching out to minority student associations, such as ACSA, we aim to increase our understanding of a wide range of student perspectives and concerns. By actively seeking out and learning from the lived experiences of students we aim to empower students to shed light on challenges and barriers they experience, as well as areas of potential growth and improvement for the BSS faculty.

### ***4.1.2. Taking Meaningful Action***

While our focus on many specific D&I-related goals will shift throughout the year to match the needs of current students, we have also identified a number of foundational goals to work toward in tandem. First, we will engage faculty entities such as LGBTQIA+ expertise center or the decoloniality reading group for advice and expertise as appropriate to improve our efficacy as representatives and advocates. We will highlight the importance of more accessible and productive general complaint and feedback procedures, as well as a more intuitive and available study provision process for students with disabilities. We will champion accessibility wherever we encounter deficits. We will foster diversity and inclusion within the academic community through the promotion of social and/or educational events pertaining to D&I topics. We will also continue to vocally promote the diversification of the curricula in all BSS programs, and encourage a shift toward more inclusive and socially aware perspectives. Accordingly, PSB hopes to promote more pronounced intrafaculty collaboration and achieve greater accountability on certain faculty-wide issues and thereby reduce virtue signaling.

## **4.2. Student oriented faculty**

This year we want to work on improving the wellbeing of the students of our faculty by improving their education and improving their mental health. We want the students to feel better within our faculty, we want them to feel like our faculty is student-oriented, while also keeping in mind the diligence of the staff of our faculty.

### **4.2.1. Education & Transparency**

This year we would like to further the improvement of the course feedback process. We believe that course feedback is essential and should be further addressed by the faculty council. We see a difference between the importance of course feedback between the different studies in our faculty. We want to compare these differences and try to learn what works and what doesn't work. For example, some teachers promote the course feedback during lecture breaks and go above and beyond to improve their course. We want to discuss the course feedback with the Faculty Council to see what can be done to improve on the one side the percentage of students who fill out the course evaluations and on the other side what teachers do with this information. We also believe that there should be more transparency about what has been done with the course feedback. Over the last few years, this has been a topic at our faculty and we see that the teachers and staff have worked to improve this. However, we still see that within some courses this could be improved. We believe that by improving this process, the education at our faculty will be even better than it is now, and our students will feel like they are being heard by the staff. This could contribute to students feeling more motivated to fill out the evaluation forms.

### **4.2.2. Mental Health**

Mental health significantly impacts students' overall well-being and academic success. High levels of stress, anxiety, or depression can hinder their ability to concentrate, learn effectively, and engage in social activities. Therefore, we feel like mental health is a really important topic. Mental health has been an important topic within our university for the last years and we feel like the Faculty has improved a lot. For example, the faculty offers different workshops and resources for students regarding mental health. However, according to the 'Monitor Mentale gezondheid en Middelengebruik Studenten hoger onderwijs 2023' from the RIVM, a considerable amount of students still struggle with their mental health. Therefore, we want to make more improvements and keep working on this topic.

Firstly, we will add an additional member of our party to the Mental Health Working Group of our faculty. This way, mental health will be a regular topic for us. We already had one member in the working group, who worked with the working group to organize “Tea with a stranger” and make an infographic about where students can go with their problems. Furthermore, we want to improve the way students are being informed about the available resources further and we want to make sure that these resources are available for every student, for example by making sure all the resources are available in English as well as in Dutch. By working together with the Faculty Council and the Mental Health Working Group we hope that we can play a role in improving the way the faculty handles the Mental Health of our students.

## **4.3. Visibility & Involvement**

The faculty council is an important organ through which students can voice their opinions. We aim to make the faculty council more visible to students and voice their ideas more in decision making.

### ***4.3.1. Visibility & awareness***

We want to achieve more visibility of the faculty council through higher activity on our social media profiles. A focus would be Instagram since this is what most students actively use. Regularly, brief updates of the most important discussed points will be posted on our feed and our story. Content regarding the faculty council will be agreed on with the staff faction and posted in close collaboration with the other members of the faculty council. We want to use Instagram stories as a way to regularly engage with students by encouraging them to share points they would like us to discuss in upcoming meetings. There will be anonymous options in addition to contacting us through the account. Generally, we want to increase transparency through social media by giving students insights into our work. We also want to advertise our walk-in hours more on social media, hoping to increase engagement. Another important tool is LinkedIn. We want to increase our activity thereby posting a regular newsletter, as well as other important information. The newsletter will include updates on the policy and important topics like diversity and inclusion and education. By showing the progress made so far we can give the students a better impression of what matters the faction of PSB is working on. Moreover, we want to increase our connections on LinkedIn, especially with students and staff of our faculty.

### **4.3.2. Involvement**

This year we will work on involving the students of the faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences more in the faculty council and PSB. Since our motto is: *Your voice in the Faculty Council*, involvement is a cardinal topic for us this year. To represent the students of the faculty better, we want to work on new ways to reach our students, along with improving the ways we are reaching our students at this moment. For the last few years, PSB had Walk-In Hours where students could approach members of PSB to voice their ideas and opinions on what is going on in the faculty. These Walk-in Hours are a good step in the right direction of giving the students of the faculty a voice in the faculty council. This year we want to improve the engagement of the Walk In Hours by actively announcing them in the newsletter and on our social media. Additionally, we want to introduce ourselves at the beginning of the academic year and make the students more familiar with our faction, the faculty council and PSB in general.

Furthermore, we want to introduce a form in which students can anonymously voice their ideas, opinions, issues, or struggles regarding things that are happening within the faculty. With a QR-code for this form, we will spread this form on posters hanging in the faculty and we will promote this form on our social media and our website. Discussing the ideas from this form will be a weekly point on our agenda. We believe that it is extremely important to have input from all the students of the faculty. We hope that by working on the Walk-In Hours and the Idea Form, we can make it easier for students to reach out to us. We believe that this will eventually lead to representing our students more accurately.

Next to us being more involved with the students, we want to find ways we can make the students of the faculty more involved with PSB. Through social media and the newsletter, we want to be more transparent about what topics we are working on. We will regularly post topics we are discussing within the Faculty Council on social media and will elaborate on this in our monthly newsletter, which we will spread through social media. We hope that this way the students will have a better understanding of what keeps PSB and the Faculty Council busy. Moreover, we will keep our students informed on how we are working on our policy. By working on these concrete steps, we hope to involve our students better in the Faculty Council and in PSB. This too will be achieved through the use of a newsletter, which will be circulated through our LinkedIn page. This is a social media account that PSB has not yet used to the best of its ability and could be a great way to reach more students within the BSS Faculty, both through the newsletter and as a place to speak on progress and current goings on at the Faculty.