

PARTY MANIFESTO

1.0

During a policy weekend held in March 2015 the party members decided to create a separate document to support the NovUM vision. While the latter contains information about how we picture the perfect university, this party manifesto serves as an action plan for NovUM. It provides our student representatives with concrete goals that should be achieved in order to improve Maastricht University (UM). The structure of the manifesto is based on the four pillars of our vision. However, we changed the categories slightly to make them more applicable:

Education
Democracy
Integration
Sustainability

If you wish to learn more about the ideas behind the goals presented in this document, please consult our party vision.

Maastricht, March 2015
Board of NovUM

I EDUCATION

“Leenstelsel”

Due to the abolition of study loans by the Dutch government, universities in the Netherlands will receive considerably more funding in the future. The money previously distributed among students is now shifted to finance the educational institutions. NovUM wants to ensure that the additional funding is used exclusively to improve education at UM. Thereby, students can still benefit from the money which would have otherwise helped them finance their studies.

Norm hours

The norm hours staff are granted per course should be re-adjusted according to faculty-specific needs. NovUM wishes to engage in a dialogue with staff to ensure that their expectations are met and their situation is improved.

Employability

NovUM lobbies for employability to become the third pillar of UM. Next to PBL and internationalisation, the current two pillars, we feel that employability within and after the University is a point of central interest to students. Therefore, we would like to see the issue promoted and addressed more prominently.

Lecture recordings

NovUM believes that lectures should be recorded and made available online to students. This can improve the quality of individual study and exam preparations. Therefore, our student representatives will push for faculty-specific policies regarding this issue.

Excellence programmes

Excellence programmes offered by all faculties are a possibility for students to deepen their academic knowledge. NovUM values this opportunity highly and wishes to secure the existence of all excellence programmes at UM regardless of changes in their funding.

Internships

Since NovUM supports the promotion of employability at UM, we also stress the importance of the availability and promotion of internships. Thus, our student representatives will lobby for a better communication of career opportunities to students by the University.

Transparency and feedback

To ensure a transparent grading process, students should be able to receive detailed and well-reasoned feedback from their tutors. NovUM will ensure relevant steps are taken to create a serviceable feedback system at all faculties.

Extracurricular activities

Extracurricular activities can support students' personal development and contribute to their academic knowledge. NovUM therefore pushes for more acceptance of study-related activities which can cause absence from tutorials and other educational events. These should not influence students' records negatively.

II DEMOCRACY

Transparency

Access to information is essential in democratic representation systems. Therefore, student representatives should be able to access all documents the executive board bases its decisions on. NovUM lobbies for a no-secret-documents policy in all councils.

Student Assessor

NovUM strongly favours the introduction of the position of a Student Assessor in the University Council of UM. This person would have access to all information of the executive board and would attend all board meetings. They could inform the student representatives in the Council about current developments. Further, the voice of the student body would be more prominent at the University level.

Open council debates

To increase student participation in university politics, NovUM wishes to introduce open council debates initiated by the student representatives of the respective councils. These events would be an opportunity to collect ideas and wishes for changes concerning a certain topic which is being debated. Simultaneously, students could actively participate in and greatly influence the decision-making process. They would then be informed about the outcome reached in council negotiations.

Right of consent

NovUM wants to increase the scope of the right of consent for student representatives in the council. Issues which are currently covered by the right to advice should become available to be vetoed by the student body to prevent decisions being taken against the will of the students.

Elections

Essential for student representation are the elections in May. NovUM proposes to introduce voting booths at all stands to guarantee free, fair and secret elections. Further, measures should be taken to promote the event more effectively, thereby raising awareness and turnout.

Workshops for council members

To ensure that student and staff representatives can take informed decisions, NovUM wishes to introduce workshops for members of all councils on relevant matter such as budget reading.

Committees in councils

Committees enable council members to discuss matters thoroughly and to negotiate important details in a professional setting. NovUM therefore wants to introduce

committee structures at the faculty level. Thereby, issues could be elaborated on and different opinions could be considered more seriously before finding a suitable outcome.

Communication and promotion

Students should be able to have easy access to information concerning activities offered to them within the framework of the University. NovUM asks UM to promote associations and organisations more effectively and to collect all relevant information in an easily accessible format.

III INTEGRATION

Internationalisation

Since internationalisation is the second pillar of UM, this aspect should be stressed when applications for the *stimuleringsfonds* are considered. Organisations subsidised by the University should actively contribute to a more international atmosphere in Maastricht.

Language courses

NovUM would like to stress the importance of language courses for the educational profile of university students. Next to the free Dutch courses offered to incoming students, we strongly encourage the University to incorporate more opportunities for language courses in the programmes offered at UM. These courses should remain affordable for students.

Financial matters

NovUM believes there should be no financial barriers to access the University. Therefore, UM should lobby at a national level for tuition fees to be reduced. Further, a waiver system should be introduced and the scholarship programmes extended so that more students can benefit from an affordable higher education. NovUM considers it important to promote these funding possibilities broadly and to communicate student eligibility clearly.

Intra- and inter-faculty integration

NovUM supports integration both within and in between faculties. Meeting students from different programmes can enrich student life and lead to interesting connections and friendships. NovUM favours especially the integration between the Inner City and Randwyck campuses by means of joint courses and activities.

Physical barriers

Everyone should be able to access any UM building regardless of their physical abilities. Therefore, NovUM promotes the removal of all physical barriers in the University buildings to ensure that education is accessible for everyone.

IV SUSTAINABILITY

Make UM #1 in the Netherlands

Now on fourth place in the ranking of sustainable universities in the Netherlands, UM once was number one. NovUM believes that the University can return to this spot by improving its operations management and increase the cooperation with the Green Office.

Green Office

The Green Office will be supported by NovUM in its efforts to create a more sustainable university. This cooperation should be extended to include joint events which inform students about the idea of sustainability as well as current projects at UM in this regard.

Minor in Sustainable Management

NovUM supports the introduction of a sustainability-related minor at the School of Business and Economics (SBE). This programme should be open to students from other faculties as well. If the SBE pilot is successful, the concept could be adopted in different programmes to ensure that UM graduates are aware of sustainability issues.

Paper-free transmission

To support sustainability and a responsible treatment of resources at UM, NovUM wishes to introduce a paper-free transmission of all educational material including course deliverables.

Waste separation

NovUM wants to improve the waste separation system at UM by introducing effective separation bins in all University buildings.

Second-hand books

To make education more sustainable and affordable, NovUM proposes to promote second-hand book sells more prominently. Thereby, less books will be used and students will be informed about alternative possibilities to access their study material.