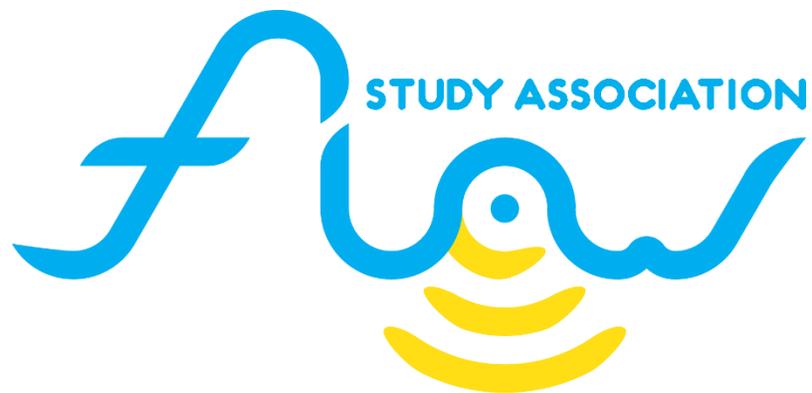


Policy plan

Association year 2021-2022



Milan Baars – Chair

Puck Outshoorn – Secretary

Jennifer Steenkamp – Treasurer

Rosa van der Vleuten – Internal Affairs & Vice-chair

Lynn Willems – External Affairs

Preface

Dear Flow members, dear interested parties,

Over the past three months we have worked incredibly hard to develop this policy plan. After various brainstorms, meetings, and feedback sessions, we have arrived at a plan that we are proud of and fully back.

Throughout the process, we never lost sight of Flow's three pillars: educational, professional, and social. Keeping these in mind, we began to shape this policy plan based on our own experiences and the pre-existing knowledge of previous Daily Boards. In our opinion, the end result is a relevant and well thought out policy plan, with the goal of moving Flow forward towards an even better association.

After a difficult and uncertain time, we are looking forward to the upcoming academic year with the utmost confidence. We are very motivated to achieve the goals we have set for ourselves and can't wait to get started. Therefore, we are hoping for your trust and support to ensure a wonderful year together.

On behalf of the 2021-2022 Candidate Board,

Milan Baars
Candidate Chair

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1. Introduction

Study Association Flow is the study association for students of the programs Communication and Information Sciences, Cognitive Science and Artificial Intelligence and the (pre-)master program Data Science and Society at Tilburg University. The association aims to promote the interests, in the broadest sense of the word, of students at Tilburg University who are enrolled in these studies. This is done every year on the basis of three pillars: Educational, Professional and Social.

The Education pillar includes everything concerning study assistance. This includes the sale of textbooks and summaries, educational activities, tutoring, help with studying, help with choosing a minor or master program, study spaces during exam periods, etc.

The Professional pillar includes everything around job market orientation. This includes workshops, company visits, the annual Study Trip, career events, etc. Moreover, this also includes the professionalism of the association itself; i.e. the image that Study Association Flow projects to the outside world, the relationships with partners and sponsors, the ties with teachers and employees of the university, and the contact with sibling associations.

The Social pillar includes all social activities, informal activities and such that are organized, but here, the bond with members also factors in. This includes maintaining the relationships with current members, donors and alumni. It also has to do with attracting new members, such as pre-master and master students and international students. Here, transparency and accessibility are essential.

1.1 Flow's mission

Study Association Flow helps students of Communication and Information Sciences, Cognitive Science and Artificial Intelligence & (pre-)master students of Data Science and Society at Tilburg University on an educational, professional and social level.

1.2 Flow's vision

Study Association Flow wants to help students get in touch with each other, the city of Tilburg, the university, and the job market, so that Flow-graduates can find a good position on the job market, with sufficient academic and social skills. Study Association Flow tries to do this by offering support in different ways on the various aspects of the studies Communication and Information Sciences, Cognitive Science and Artificial Intelligence & Data Science and Society.

2. Education

2.1 Support exam period

The 2021-2022 Candidate Board expects to see a more accessible campus and more offline lectures and classes in the upcoming year. The Candidate Board wants to offer extra support during the exam periods for (new) students to help them with the transition from an online to an offline or hybrid form of education. In addition, the Candidate Board wants to stimulate the already existing tutoring platform, which will be preserved in its current shape.

To achieve this, the Candidate Board will organize a 'Mix & Match' during the exam periods in December and June. At a Mix & Match session, one student will function as the instructor, who will explain the material to a small group of fellow students. For this session, the instructor will receive financial compensation from Flow. The registrations for the Mix & Match sessions will open on the website prior to the exam periods, where you can indicate if you would prefer to act as an instructor or be instructed and which course(s) it concerns.

The tutoring platform will be preserved in its current form, besides the new Mix & Match sessions. The first distinguishing element of the Mix & Match will be the group setting. Secondly, the sessions will be one-off, which differs from the commitment of the tutoring platform. Finally, the Daily Board will arrange these meetings, so instructors are less burdened. When students feel the need for more intensive and individual educational support, they can make use of the tutoring platform.

The sessions can be held in the spaces on campus that are reserved by the Daily Board during the exam periods every year. After the sessions, the Daily Board will contact the instructor to evaluate their session(s). In addition, the instructor will be asked to join Flow's tutoring-platform as a tutor. With this, the Candidate Board hopes tutors and students will be more open to join and use the tutoring platform.

2.2 Representation CIS, CSAI & DSS

The three different studies that are part of Flow are unequally represented in both the association as a whole as the 2021-2022 Candidate Board, which contains exclusively CIS students. In addition, a lack of knowledge about the contents of the different study programs could occur, with the programs varying greatly. In the upcoming year, the Candidate Board wants to start up three focus groups, one for every program, to provide us with up-to-date information. This will assist in offering the right educational support and organizing relevant activities for the different studies.

Registrations will open at the start of the first semester and will be promoted through the website, social media and Canvas. The registrations will be open during the whole year, until the maximum of six participants is reached. The Candidate Board wants to stimulate students to join these focus groups by emphasizing the direct influence they will have on what Flow can mean for their study program.

Leading the meetings and processing the input from the focus groups will become a new board portfolio, taken up by one member of the Daily Board. Meetings will be held monthly and will be structured on the basis of the three pillars; educational, professional and social. The focus will be on the educational aspect. All the new gained insights will be applied as much as possible to offer effective and relevant educational and professional support.

3. Professional

3.1 Offering soft skill courses

In the upcoming year, the 2021-2022 Candidate Board wants to focus on expanding the selection of soft skill courses with more basic professional skills. These include courses such as speaking in front of a group or maintaining business contact.

The Candidate Board wants to offer the courses with the help of external parties, to ensure the quality of the courses. When looking for external parties that could offer soft skill courses, the first step will be to look at Flow's alumni and partners. A course may consist of several sessions, in order to go into more detail about the content. However, these sessions can also be attended individually. Courses that consist of multiple sessions will be held by the same party, to ensure the coherence of these sessions.

The Candidate Board wants to try to have these courses take place offline as much as possible, as this is expected to be beneficial for the interactivity during the courses. Should this not be feasible, the activity may also take place online. To better promote the courses, the Candidate Board wants to post information about these activities on the general Canvas pages of CIS, CSAI and DSS, in addition to the usual promotion on the website and social media.

3.2 Alumni Talks

In order to assist students in their career orientation, the 2021-2022 Candidate Board wants to organize an interactive session where Flow alumni will come and talk about their professional careers. One session will be organized for CIS, CSAI and DSS, where the Candidate Board wants to ensure a broad spectrum of alumni experiences. For this purpose, the Candidate Board wants to work with the Career Service Officer, in order to create a wider reach among alumni. In a situation where there is enough interest from both the alumni and the students of the various studies, the option of organizing three separate sessions will be explored.

This session will take place in the form of "speed dates" in groups: each alumnus/alumna will be provided their own table where a number of participants can join each round. This session will take place in the first semester and will be relevant to students from all three studies. After evaluating the activity in the first semester, a comparable activity will be held in the second semester. Since many of the alumni work full time, whether the session takes place online or offline will be decided in consultation with the alumni (and with an eye on the COVID-19 measures).

4. Social

4.1 Increasing openness association

4.1.1 Addition of Accessibility Officer

In order to make Flow and its activities a pleasant, safe environment for everyone, the 2021-2022 Candidate Board will add the role of Accessibility Officer as a board portfolio. This means that one Daily Board member will hold this role in addition to their primary function. The Accessibility Officer will guard the openness of the association to those who may struggle with certain aspects of activities. This may include, but is not limited to, people with depressive symptoms, anxiety issues, autism or ADHD. This is a small modification to the association, but can make a big difference to the experience of individual members.

Firstly, the Candidate Board will compile a list of contact information of individuals and organizations that can provide appropriate help for members who indicate a need for such assistance. The contents of this list will be compiled in collaboration with student psychologists and will also include contact information of student psychologists and other points of contact within the university. This list will be made publicly available on a separate page on the website dedicated to the Accessibility Officer, where more information about the position itself can also be found.

In addition, the Candidate Board intends to offer personalized support to people who express a need for it. Members can notify the Daily Board if they have experienced or expect to experience any aspect of an activity as disruptive. Because all members of the Daily Board are already confidential counselors, they can all be contacted. The Candidate Board also wants to offer the option of anonymous contact through the chat function on the website. Rules will be drawn up around this contact to ensure the privacy of the person concerned. A personal solution will then be considered. Should adjustments be made to an activity, these will never detract from the experience for others.

Furthermore, when registering for an activity, any potentially disturbing aspects will be mentioned on the website. For example, the use of a stroboscope or the discussion of potentially sensitive topics. The Candidate Board will actively gauge the needs concerning the accessibility of activities by sending out anonymous surveys at the beginning of each semester.

To bring attention to the Accessibility Officer, a post will be made on all social media channels at the beginning of both semesters explaining the new position and what members can get in contact for. In the run-up to larger activities, such as the Study Trip and the Association Weekend, a reminder will go out through the social media channels.

4.1.2 Active Members Day

Flow offers its members several services to support them during their time as students. Awareness of all aspects of the association relies heavily on transfer of knowledge from older members in passing. In order to make new members aware of all the possibilities Flow offers from the beginning of their Flow career, the 2021-2022 Candidate Board wants to organize an Active Members Day in the next academic year. This Active Members Day will replace the Active Members Evening.

All active members are invited to this day, which will take place in the afternoon and evening. There will be a presentation on the facilities and customs of Flow for freshmen and any other interested individuals. During the Active Members Day, there will also be time for committees to hold their first meeting. This is a good way for the committee to get to know each other directly and start their collaboration right away. In addition to getting to know one's own committee, the Candidate Board also considers it important to get to know members of other committees. Therefore, there will also be time for general introductory games. The day will be closed with a drink.

4.1.3 More diversity in drinks

In consultation with the 2020-2021 Daily Board, this item was carried over into the current policy plan. Despite the fact that this policy point was already included in the policy plan last year, the 2021-2022 Candidate Board feels this is still an important point to work on.

The Candidate Board wants to bring more variety in the types of drinks that are organized, without losing the Flow spirit. This way, several personal preferences can be taken into account. To lower the threshold for members to attend a drink, the Candidate Board plans to make a distinction between drinks and low-key drinks. Drinks are dress-up theme parties that take place from 21:30 to 04:00. Two of these monthly drinks will have a more low-key dress-up theme. These will be the low-key drinks. This way, VHZ can be decorated and there is the possibility to dress up. For drinks with a low-key theme, no dress-up points will be awarded. Attendance points will still be awarded. One of these drinks with a low-key theme will be the first drink of the year. In doing so, the Candidate Board hopes to attract more people at the beginning of the year. The usual Catching Up Drink after the Christmas break (the New Year's Drink) will be organized in its current form by the Daily Board. The monthly drinks will continue to be organized by the IFAC.

4.2 Reform committee structure

Being a commissioner can be perceived as quite a large workload when combined with

studying. In order to reduce the pressure, the 2021-2022 Candidate Board wants to create more positions within the committees, in addition to the position of secretary. This reduces the workload for the commissioner, as delegating tasks is not only encouraged but also normalized. In addition, it increases the involvement of committee members. This is not relevant to every committee; the advice committees are not included in this reform, and because of the structure of the Alumni Committee, it is also redundant here.

During the first committee meeting, all new internal positions will be explained and distributed in consultation between the commissioner, the board buddy and the committee members. The Candidate Board will monitor this new situation throughout the year. Certain positions, such as the External Affairs position, may occur multiple times within a committee. This depends on the purpose of the committee and the number of committee members. Some people join a particular committee with the idea that it will be low-pressure. The Candidate Board wants to preserve this possibility. However, these people can be given a more informal title to still encourage involvement..

The Candidate Board would like to preserve the option to change positions during the year, so as not to force members into one aspect of a committee's (learning) experience. This can be done after consultation between the commissioner and the committee members. However, in the case of the Treasurer position, efforts will be made to keep the same person throughout the year as much as possible. Also, the Treasurer from the Daily Board will always take up the position of Treasurer in committees of which they are the board buddy. Furthermore, switching functions is not feasible for every committee (e.g. the External Affairs position in the Career Committee where it would be better to have a fixed contact for a specific company). Members will be informed about which functions this applies in advance. For the more flexible positions, roles can be switched when the workload in a committee allows for it.

5. Conclusion

If you have any questions or comments in response to this policy plan, please contact the Daily Board of Study Association Flow by emailing board@svflow.nl or by visiting the Flow Office (E204).