



*Facultaire*  
**Studentenraad**

GEESTESWETENSCHAPPEN

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Bijlage(n)	0		
Betreft	Unsolicited advice Faculty Sustainability Officer		

Dear Dean, Dear Fred,

The FSR-FGw writes this unsolicited advice with the hope to continue the discussion regarding our faculty's need for a Sustainability Officer. We previously mentioned steps to improve the faculty's commitment with the environment at the level of meat free canteen options, non-dairy products, reusable cups, and waste management. These measures are being implemented in the light of our newly co-signed Green Commitment with the UvA Green Office, and signal both the need and desire for a more robust sustainability strategy lead by the FGw. We thank the Facility Service team and Gerard for their diligence in these issues.

To this end, the FSR-FGw thinks that the position of a Sustainability Officer at a faculty level is feasible and should be implemented in accordance with Articles 2, 3, 8 and 10 of the Green Commitment. The Sustainability Officer must work closely with the Faculty Facility Office and the Green Office for matters of planning and implementation of projects aimed at reducing the University's carbon footprint per capita (and infrastructurally). This work involves several activities that need a specialized position or office within the faculty whose mandate would be to coordinate and liaison between students, faculty, staff, the administration, and partners external to the UvA. The following paragraphs suggest concrete steps for the Faculty Sustainability Officer/Office (FSO). After going over these pointers the FSR-fGW thinks that the necessity of an FSO should be clear of any doubts on the board's side.

#### **What does a Sustainability Officer do?**

Currently the UvA lags behind the top universities in the world for leadership in sustainability. I have gathered examples from top universities in North America, but I will focus on Dartmouth since their Sustainability office seems very much consolidated and award winning. They operate at a central level, but we believe that some of these ideas can be implemented at a smaller scale in the faculty. Moreover, this would put the FGw as a leading example in the University for some of these



ideas could then be implemented at a central level: we could base our FSO figure in the Dartmouth's Sustainability Office's program **Sustainability Corps**:

*"The Sustainability Corps has two main objectives. First, support research and data analysis projects that move Dartmouth towards its sustainability commitments. Second, help report Dartmouth's sustainability-related performance to internal and external audiences."*<sup>1</sup>

For FGw, this would mean that we report at the level of our faculty stats like waste footprint, co2 footprint, contracts with sustainable providers, innovations originated in the Humanities to tackle environmental issues, events that we initiate and host, lectures, etc. The internal reporting would function to help reimagine our faculty based on the material and intellectual envelope of sustainability. If the FGw does not have the means to report some of these issues, a job for the office/officer would be to organize that these reports are made in the faculty by external companies like UvA born IVAM<sup>2</sup>. Secondly, these reports would be provided to the central Green Office bi-annually. In regard to events, education and innovation, the officers would work closely with students and teachers from courses like the two new electives offered in 2020-21: Introduction to Environmental Humanities and How to Live in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Equipped with a Humanities Degree<sup>3</sup>. The FSR-FGw has talked with teachers of these courses and they support and are willing to be involved in this dynamic. The FSR-FGw thinks that Humanities has a vital role on the future's sustainability for many reasons that the FSR-FGw is willing to address in supplementary conversations if necessary.

Furthermore, according to Dartmouth's Sustainability Office the Corps develop the following skills: *"Over the course of the year, Sustainability Corps Interns will"*:

- Develop their professionally-relevant skills in data management, analysis, and reporting; project management, teamwork, and collaboration; and creative thinking, problem solving, planning, and organization.
- Advance their knowledge and understanding of climate change, sustainability, and institutional operations.
- Develop their leadership aptitude, persuasion and negotiating abilities, and change-making capabilities."<sup>4</sup>

The FSR-FGw believes that the FSO position/office will be a very attractive project to work on for students, faculty, and staff. The FSR-FGw believes that the position should be open for students, teacher, and staff in the faculty interested on working on said project. Perhaps to the end of structuring the work hours and positions we could look at the Faculty

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sustainability.dartmouth.edu/sustainabilitycorps>

<sup>2</sup> Environmental research and consultancy firm IVAM evolved out of the Universiteit van Amsterdam. Since 1993, it has been an independent part of UvA Holding BV. Its 40 specialists and consultants provide research, consultancy and training aimed at the implementation of sustainable solutions in business and society. IVAM is actively involved in the design and implementation of leading and trendsetting projects in the fields of quality of life, energy, sustainable building, chain management and cleaner production. The IVAM released a Carbon footprint report of UvA and HvA in 2015. To my knowledge this hasn't happened again. <https://www.environmental-expert.com/companies/ivam-research-and-consultancy-on-sustainability-6723>

<sup>3</sup> This course focuses on its first part in how major cultural events are intertwined with ecology and sustainability as well as ecology's link with decolonization.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.sustainability.dartmouth.edu/sustainabilitycorps>

Diversity Office's work hours and structure. Moreover, the university ought to provide the FSO with the resources and the funding to have a space to do these activities, and to realize each of them. In regard to a salary being paid part of the force could be voluntary based and the most work intensive positions should be compensated.

#### **Possible priorities of the FSO:**

- Create a sustainable Energy commitment for the FGw facilities. Work on energy at Dartmouth could be a guide.<sup>5</sup>
- Make a bi-annual policy document/report on sustainability
- Turn the roof at PCH into a community garden (as was Aldo van Eyck and Theo Bosch's original plan for their building).<sup>6</sup>
- Integration with the upcoming sustainable economy plan of the city of Amsterdam: doughnut economics<sup>7</sup> which revolves of establishing a basic set of needs that need to be guaranteed as a city, in our case as a faculty. HvA is involved why not UvA's FGw?
- Work on lecture events for all UvA students to educate about the role of humanities in environmental issues.

The FGw has the opportunity to distinguish itself from other faculties who have not to date taken a leadership role in sustainability at UvA. The UvA Green Office is a great example of how appealing this initiative can be for students looking for professional and leadership training, but it does not include faculty at the organizational level, and therefore lacks the durability that would come with our proposed FSO. Students at the UvA expect the very best intellectual and professional training, especially as the job market gets more competitive, creative, and innovative every year. Investing in an FSO will mean that the FGw not only helps the UvA distinguish itself from other universities in the Netherlands, but also increases much needed opportunities for students in the Humanities to engage in meaningful, interdisciplinary research and practice before entering a job market that will *de facto* require experience in institutional sustainability, both in the public and private sector.

Lastly, the FSR-FGw hopes that this exposition is sufficient for the board to consider our proposal to proceed with its implementation as soon as possible. The FSR-FGw is willing to commit with this project with a task force in the next school year (2020-2021). The FSR-FGw really think that this is a great opportunity for the FGw to promote the environmental work of the University of Amsterdam and its commitment to sustainability. It is at the heart of proposal that the FSR-FGw feels that UvA must lead Amsterdam into a sustainable future.

Hoping to have informed you sufficiently.

Met vriendelijke groet,  
Namens de FSR FGw,

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.sustainability.dartmouth.edu/energy>

<sup>6</sup> Francis Strauven, *Aldo van Eyck* (Amsterdam: Architectura & Natura): 568. We are also aware that the PCH building might be sold in the upcoming years. But the FSR-FGw wants to keep this here because the FGw needs a community garden and it needs to be more accessible to students (close to the faculty). Perhaps in the new university quarter this is a possibility.

<sup>7</sup> <https://amsterdamdonutcoalitie.nl/>



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