



Democratic Students Party
The Hague

Manifesto 2021-2022



DSP Election Manifesto 2021-22

The Democratic Students Party - The Hague was founded in 2018 by Campus The Hague students who noticed that the unique concerns of the international student body were not being addressed. Within two months of our foundation, the DSP was a recognized party and gained votes from students across Leiden University who shared our concerns. The first non-Dutch speaking representative, Viktor Blichfeld, was elected to the University Council in 2018. In subsequent years, the DSP has been re-elected to the University Council and has also secured seats on the Humanities Faculty Council and the Social and Behavioural Sciences Faculty Council.

Since our foundation, the DSP has been working tirelessly to represent the student community who call Campus The Hague their home, as well as the larger international student body of Leiden University. As the student party with the first and only international representatives on the University and Faculty Councils, the DSP has the unique opportunity and capability to represent the international segment of Leiden University. Moreover, while we continue to advocate for Campus the Hague and internationalization, we have expanded our focus to ensure a university environment that is inclusive and sustainable for all students. With that in mind, we are excited to introduce our 2021-22 election manifesto with six focus points: internationalisation, Campus the Hague, inclusivity, mental health sustainability and financial fairness.



Table of content

Internationalisation	4
• Creation of an International Student (Support) Centre	4
• Equal Provision of Information in Dutch and English	4
• Guaranteed Translation Facilities in 'Medezeggenschap'/ University Democracy	4
Campus the Hague	5
• Working towards affordable transport between Leiden and The Hague	5
• Sustainable growth of Campus the Hague	5
• Study spaces	5
Inclusivity	6
• Implementation of Anti-Discrimination Measures and More Inclusive Curricula	6
• Greater Inclusion of Students in 'Medezeggenschap'/ University Democracy	6
Mental Health	6
• More Student Psychologists	7
• Flexible Education	7
• Continued Student Support in the Post-Corona Transition	7
Sustainability	8
• Composting within Leiden University	8
• Sustainability within the building	8
• Creation of a LU sustainable donation space	8
• Increased educational focus on sustainability/climate policy	8
Financial Fairness	9
• Advocate for the use of older versions of literature and the material available in the e-library	9
• Identify the constraints that influence the financial choices made by students	9
• Working towards affordable transport between Leiden and The Hague	9



Internationalisation

Leiden University is an increasingly international university, as evident when walking around Campus the Hague. However, the international student segment of Leiden University is not always supported in a timely and sufficient manner. We face issues with regards to housing, health care and contact with Dutch institutions. Information provided by the university can be limited or hard to find, making it difficult for international students to find their way in Dutch student life. Here are our goals to improve the international student experience:

- Creation of an International Student (Support) Centre
 - There are currently no provisions at Leiden University that specifically aim at providing support to international students. These facilities are dispersed through the university which often leads to confusion and inefficiency. The DSP wants to establish an international support centre for centralised assistance and guidance for issues such as housing, insurance, internship regulations, etc. While this may sound like a big undertaking, it is important to note that such an office already exists for international staff members, the “Service Centre International Staff.” As international students face many of the same issues, we want these facilities to be expanded to be easily accessible for international students.
- Equal Provision of Information in Dutch and English
 - As international students are full and equal members of the LU student body, they should have access to the same information as Dutch students. We therefore urge for an equal provision of information in Dutch and English, including but not limited to annual reports, newsletters, election materials, and the minutes of the co-participation bodies in university democracy. Furthermore, all university events, such as the Dies and the opening of the academic year, should be conducted in a bilingual manner so that any Leiden University student can participate.
- Guaranteed Translation Facilities in ‘Medezeggenschap’/ University Democracy
 - In 2018, the DSP had the first ever non-Dutch speaking council member elected to the University Council. Problems quickly rose however, as our council member did not speak Dutch, the administrative language of the university. While our representative was eventually assigned a ‘language buddy’, many of our international councillors have faced similar issues that hinder participation in the University and Faculty Councils. Therefore, one of the main plans of the DSP is to institutionalize a language policy for all co-participation bodies to guarantee inclusion for all future international representatives, regardless of party affiliation. This language policy would include an internship with credits in association with



the MA in Linguistics: Translation. An internship will ensure that a trained personnel provides translation not only during meetings but can also translate documents. It is important that this policy is applicable to all councils, for both student and staff representatives. This will ensure equal participation and an inclusive university democracy.

Campus the Hague

The issues faced by students in Campus the Hague will always remain a core part of the DSP agenda. As a party that originated in and is primarily composed of students from Campus the Hague, we are uniquely situated to advocate for this wonderfully diverse segment of Leiden University. Here is our vision for Campus The Hague over the next year and beyond:

- Working towards affordable transport between Leiden and The Hague
 - We believe that the figurative distance between these two integral cities in Leiden University should be as small as possible. While for Dutch and working EU students, free travel is a viable option, international students have to pay full fares if their academics are based in both cities. This reduces the selection of electives, minors and services that international students can engage with, and limits their scope as students at Leiden University. We want to start a narrative within the university to find a solution to this. This could be by way of subsidised train costs, a university-funded reimbursement scheme, or establishing a university-run bus system between The Hague and Leiden.
- Sustainable growth of Campus the Hague
 - During the last academic year, Leiden University has been formulating a Campus the Hague Strategic (Growth) Plan. While the DSP welcomes the idea of greater services and courses at Campus The Hague, we firmly believe that any growth in students must be matched by a growth in facilities. Campus the Hague is already vastly over capacity and must be expanded to include more academic spaces and housing plans in The Hague to accommodate student needs. In light of this, we will hold the Executive Board of the University accountable to the plan they have created - ensuring that no further programmes are started in The Hague until more study areas, common places, meeting rooms and housing are made available.
- Study spaces
 - As previously mentioned, the student body and its needs far exceed the available facilities in Campus the Hague. To counter this, we intend to advocate for the creation of new study spaces, weekend openings of Stichthage and Schouwburgstraat, a possible partnership with the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, and consult on what system would be best to ensure that study spaces are used appropriately.



Inclusivity

The DSP stands for inclusivity, and as the student party representing international students, we recognize that everyone has a voice, and a right to be heard. Our representatives in the respective councils have been at work on different ways in which we can improve inclusivity within the different faculties and the student body. However, we recognize that not everyone's voice is treated the same, and our objective for the upcoming year is to continue with our current momentum to facilitate concrete and public measures to change this. We hope that the trust placed in us so far in our commitment to inclusivity is continued in the future as we strive to implement the following measures to ensure everyone's voice is heard and respected.

- Implementation of Anti-Discrimination Measures and More Inclusive Curricula
 - Our aim is to facilitate measures within the university to make Leiden University more inclusive for minorities, LGBT+ students, and those with disabilities. We hope to reach this goal by monitoring the Diversity and Inclusion Workplan and ensuring that everyone's voice is heard throughout the process. Furthermore, the DSP aims to promote an inclusive curriculum at the university in an effort to diversify and include a wider range of perspectives in academia, including but not limited to literature from LGBTQ+ and BIPOC individuals.
- Greater Inclusion of Students in 'Medezeggenschap'/ University Democracy
 - The current format through which students engage with co-participation bodies at Leiden University is limited and there is an acute need for more transparency. We hope to achieve this transparency by advocating for information sessions and seminars where students can learn more about the responsibilities and roles of the co-participation bodies at the university, but also can voice their opinions and concerns. Furthermore, the DSP aims to increase the reach of 'marginalized' voices in student sounding boards and think tanks by advocating that these bodies should seek to include different minorities to ensure their representation in the University.

Mental Health

Student Mental Health has always been a key issue that the DSP has been a vocal advocate for, and the past year has shown us how crucial it is to the wellbeing of students. The ongoing pandemic and ever-present social distancing rules and restrictions have impacted us all, in one shape or another. Whether it's been the inability to attend lectures, visit and see family, hanging out with friends or online lectures, students in the past year have experienced an unprecedented



amount of uncertainty, emotional stress and academic pressure. At the DSP, we believe that mental health is paramount to wellbeing and going forward as we continue to live with the virus, that increased support from the university and implementation of policies are necessary for the welfare of the student body. What does our commitment to mental health mean for students?

- More Student Psychologists
 - We seek to increase the number of student psychologists as the current support system is unable to cater to the increasing needs in the student body. Students stay on waiting lists for upto two months and are unable to get appointments due to the dearth of services at the university. This serves as a significant obstacle to students seeking help and may also impact their education. We also recognize the work of the student psychologists in the past year and appreciate their efforts and cannot stress enough their importance. Consequently, the DSP would also like to hire more student psychologists to alleviate some of the pressure they're facing and improve the mental health services for students.

- Flexible Education
 - The need for flexibility is a consideration the DSP is intent on addressing in the upcoming year. We hope to facilitate students who have mental health issues that impact their education, and those who have internships, part-time jobs, or other commitments, alongside their studies. We propose that the continued use of recorded lectures may serve as an opportunity for students to develop outside of the university and are able to balance these responsibilities without a toll on their mental health. We also want to articulate that these recordings should be conducted in a manner that respects and protects the intellectual property of Professors and prevents their use in a disrespectful manner.

- Continued Student Support in the Post-Corona Transition
 - As we slowly transition back to physical education, the DSP is intent on maintaining the focus on mental health and student well-being. Specifically, the DSP aims to continue to advocate for an early warning system, where instructors and staff are aware of available facilities and can direct students to channels of support when evidently required. The aim is not to place the onus on staff, but rather involve them within a mental health support system that can act early on signs and help students. Furthermore, as social distancing and restrictive measures are eased, the DSP strongly advocates for networking events for students as a means to help transition students towards a more engaging university experience and to help restore social connections and ties to the university.



Sustainability

Sustainability and the environment have enormous consequences in terms of the quality of life, our ecosystems, and the resources we give to future generations. The DSP is strongly committed to sustainability and we argue for the university to pay greater attention to this issue in education and infrastructure. Below you will find our ideas for a greener Leiden University:

- Composting within Leiden University
 - The university currently collects its organic/food waste which is subsequently converted into biogas or compost. The DSP encourages the university to extend these facilities to students i.e. students would be able to bring their compost to the university/a collection point to be processed alongside the university organic waste. This would save a significant amount of food scraps from going to landfills as students are often not able to compost themselves in apartments/ temporary spaces

- Sustainability within the building
 - The faculties and institutes should reduce the use of single use paper and plastic for events and in general consumption and use more sustainable alternatives such as wooden compostable cutlery and digital flyers whenever possible
 - As the costs are relatively similar, the DSP encourages the university to use recycled paper for all university printers and have accessible paper recycling bins beside them

- Creation of a LU sustainable donation space
 - A possibility identified in the 2019 Sustainability Report, the DSP suggests that the university create a 'LU marketplace' where furniture and equipment that is about to be discarded can be shown online and donated to students and student associations on a first come first serve basis. Not only does this increase the longevity of these materials, but it potentially saves the student community significant amounts of money that can be better utilised elsewhere.

- Increased educational focus on sustainability/climate policy
 - The DSP strongly commits to pushing for an increased educational focus on sustainability. Students have, in DSP and official university surveys, indicated a growing interest in this subject and its implications. We not only want more electives and minors, but also for sustainability and the environment to be better included in the existing curricula for bachelors and masters programs, particularly



in faculties such as FGGA, FSW and FGW. Moreover, we encourage the university to increase the funding for sustainability-related research.

Financial Fairness

The financial constraints experienced by students can significantly affect the opportunities students receive and the overall university experience. We aim to enter into dialogue with Leiden University to discuss and investigate the most viable options to reduce the impact of financial inequality within the university.

- Advocate for the use of older versions of literature and the material available in the e-library
 - Professors tend to prescribe newer versions of the course study materials when available. Most often, these newer versions contain minimal adjustments in comparison to older versions. However, the consequence is that most students are forced to buy more expensive books and that older versions can't be sold anymore. Therefore, this tendency to prescribe newer versions could lead to a higher burden on students with limited financial means and as a side effect place limits on the sustainable use of books as well. The DSP wants to decrease this tendency and encourages professors to assign the freely available literature from the Leiden University Catalogue when possible.
- Identify the constraints that influence the financial choices made by students
 - Reports have shown that due to the 'studieleenstelsel' (study loan system), Dutch students do not experience more constraints regarding their choice to go to university. However, the (financial) choices made during their study programs are affected. Dutch and international students alike may not fully utilise the opportunities in university due to financial constraints. To illustrate, students choose not to go on exchange abroad or do a minor in another city. These choices are then even more affected by the implications of the pandemic. The DSP is in favor of university-wide research on the financial constraints experienced by students during their study program and to what extent the university has influence over it. The results should be debated and appropriate measures should be taken if possible.
- Working towards affordable transport between Leiden and The Hague
 - This has also been included under our 'Campus the Hague' section but we want to reiterate our commitment towards this issue as transport costs can have limiting consequences and leave students unable to take advantage of the network of Dutch universities