

October 25, 2023

# VOS XXIV POLICY PLAN

STUDY ASSOCIATION FOR LINGUISTICS AND SIGN LANGUAGE  
LINGUISTICS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

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## 1. PREFACE

VOS is the study association for students of the Bachelor and Master programs in and related to Linguistics and Sign Language Linguistics at the University of Amsterdam. The association was established on December 2nd, 1999, and aims to provide social and academic enrichment for its members during their studies. All students pursuing linguistics are welcome to become members.

As a member of the association, students can expect the organization of both social and academic activities on their behalf to further connect them with the field of linguistics and to create a safe, welcoming community within the university. Members have several privileges afforded to them. This includes not only discounts on books at the Atheneum, but also the right to vote on the year's policy plan, budget, and realization of the budget/annual financial report, and any motions put forth by the board or members presented at the General Assemblies. During the year, the members can also participate and share their thoughts on different VOS events by participating in different committees, if they are interested in creating a difference. At the beginning of the year, members also have the final say on electing a new board, a supervisory board (KasCo) and Trust People.

The board of VOS manages the association and facilitates the organization of events and opportunities for members. Thus, it is their responsibility to update the members on activities, lectures, and other events or opportunities hosted by the association and/or related to the field of Linguistics and Sign Language Linguistics. It is the board's duty to serve the members of the association, ensuring VOS is acting in their best interest and organizing events that benefit them. This includes ensuring student safety by creating safe environments for events, as well as by promoting an inclusive culture within the association itself and notifying members of resources available to them within the university. As a part of this, it is also important that the board remains honest and transparent with its members, thus allowing them to make informed votes at General Assemblies and making members more aware of the rights afforded to them and any changes that take place within the internal structure of the association.

This policy plan outlines the goals, plans and role of the twenty-fourth board during the 2023-2024 academic year. It was written by the twenty-fourth Chair of VOS, Lim Freya S.T, the secretary, Manya Walavalkar, and the treasurer, Joe Wellington.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

### 2.1 For the People, By the People

The Board of VOS XXIV continues to emphasize and encourage the influence of its members and wants them to play a larger part in how the association runs. This way, VOS can truly represent its members and their best interests, as well as make the association more enjoyable overall. As managers of the association, the board aims to be a centralized means by which the ideas and needs of VOS members can be elevated and carried out. We will strive to give as many opportunities as possible for members to express their ideas by opening the lines of communication between the board and members. We aim to do this by being present and aware at events and encouraging more informal contact through social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Instagram.

In addition, members can email or message VOS directly at any time. It is our duty to create a space in which members are comfortable expressing suggestions and criticisms, and that the board is open to adopting both when brought to their attention even when new ideas or suggestions challenge the current systems of the association or the board's perceptions thereof. We would like to do this by making an anonymous form available to members at all times, where they can drop any thoughts or opinions that they feel could better how things are being carried out. We want to allow our members to help the association evolve so that it is working at its full potential and is enjoyable and beneficial for all members. Ultimately, we believe that the board should be held accountable to their members at all times.

### 2.2 Goals

As of October 5th, we have a total of 89, members. We aim to both retain our current members and attract new members. We want students to recognise the importance of the university experience beyond academics. Therefore, we aim to provide them with an environment where they can grow as a person and make memories they will cherish later. We hope this will create a more enriching experience as part of VOS.

The association was feeling the effects of decreased turnout in the past, as engagement was significantly low. We aim to increase regular engagement by up to 40% of what is currently being experienced to ensure members of a lively environment which they can continue to associate with our events. Members are always encouraged to bring forth ideas to enhance the association and can do so by joining a committee of interest if they are strongly dedicated to attaining change (Refer to section 5 for more information).

To improve the function of the board, we took part in the Board Day hosted by the student union, ASVA, in which they offered a number of seminars and training sessions. We plan to implement these practices into our board term in a very visible manner throughout the year and to reach out for additional training from the ASVA academy as deemed necessary.

To increase engagement and improve our member's overall experience, we want to sustain an improved line of communication. We aim to continue the last board's practice of an

organised newsletter and social media posting schedule. In addition, we will also proceed to notify members of every activity at least one week in advance, and earlier if organisation and time constraints permit. To top it off, we will strive to respond to emails as soon as possible, ideally within a week, including initial responses that request more time for a detailed response.

Throughout the year, VOS commits itself to holding events that benefit its members and the linguistic community at large. We host events that will broaden knowledge related to the field of linguistics but also provide a way to connect and meet fellow members, linguists, and students in an inclusive space. We aspire to hold a wide variety of activities to accommodate the diverse interests of members. From an academic perspective, this includes hosting a number of lectures or activities oriented around a variety of disciplines within linguistics, especially those not represented in the course programs at the University of Amsterdam (henceforth, UvA). Socially, we want to create a better balance of events. Historically, the association has focused heavily on events surrounding bars, partying and alcohol. While we will continue to host similar events, namely our fortnightly borrels, we want to ensure that students who do not like these environments or who may not be 18 yet have ample opportunity to still participate in the association and feel like a priority. We aim to keep our event frequency more consistent, having at least one every week, based on what is possible according to class schedules and budget.

Additionally, our goal is to ensure that students are not just enjoying their time as VOS members but are also being sufficiently supported and kept safe. We plan to achieve this by facilitating open lines of communication as outlined in Section 2.1, materialising our social safety policy, as well as by implementing appropriate health (see Section 7) and safety guidelines at all of our events. Furthermore, we will ensure that all board members are knowledgeable about the resources available to students who may be coping with sexual assault, harassment, or mental health struggles, and make these readily available on our website. Lastly, there is a new social safety policy created, (courtesy of the old board) that we will also be implementing once it is voted on by the members. For more information about our social safety plans and policies please refer to Section 6.

### 2.3 Collaboration

We believe that working together with other associations is a great way for our members to connect with people outside of VOS and their individual degree programs. In collaborating, we want our members to experience all that linguistics has to offer and to have opportunities to be introduced to new perspectives and academic fields. In the past, VOS has collaborated often with study associations across the Netherlands from other language-based programs and related studies. The overlaps in interests make them ideal partners for both large and small events such as Langu Day and Linguistics Career Day. More information about some of the events mentioned here can be found in Section 4 of this policy plan.

In recent years, we have collaborated often with Helios, the association for Dutch Studies, SCIO, the association for Cognition, Language and Communication, and Etcetera, the association for English Language and Culture. We aim to continue to nurture these

relationships and want to be proactive in reaching out to our fellow associations within the Faculty of Humanities to collaborate. Additionally, we will help organize and participate in events that serve all the associations within the faculty. Through our overarching association, ALPHA, the Faculty of Humanities at UvA strives to maintain connections between study associations and encourages collaborations. ALPHA provides funds for the activities of its member associations and often organizes large events in cooperation with its member associations, such as the New Year Gala.

Alongside cooperating with other study associations, VOS will also continue to work and collaborate with KAT Blad, the student magazine for linguistics at the UvA. Alongside their normal content, the magazine has also published a number of blogs and articles about VOS and our travels. As it has done in the past year, VOS aims to keep advertising writer calls and promoting the publishing of the magazine, as well as plan a number of events in collaboration with the magazine to benefit all linguistics students, members and non-members of VOS. VOS is also represented by our Chair in the Alumni circle of linguistics at UvA. The Alumni circle is invested in maintaining a tight knit community of linguists, even after graduation. They organize multiple events throughout the year, on occasion with the help of VOS. Their events — usually lectures or other linguistics-related activities — can be very interesting for VOS members and we will continue to promote them. After the success of the Linguistics Walk last year, we hope to be able to put together more combined events in association with the Alumni circle. Moreover, VOS has been asked to promote the ACLC's (Amsterdam Centre for Language and Communication) guest seminars, which we are happy to do.

Outside of UvA, VOS collaborates with a number of associations representing the linguistics programs offered by universities throughout the Netherlands, namely: T.W.I.S.T. from Leiden, Babel from Utrecht, and InTenS from Nijmegen. Together with these associations, VOS partakes in, among other events, the yearly Linguistics Career Day and LANGU day. It is our hope that this year we can have more contact between the associations and host more events with them so we can better connect our members to a broader linguistic community.

On top of events, VOS may collaborate with business or associations that we feel serve our members. Currently we work with Athenaeum Boekhandel to provide textbooks at a discounted price. We also plan to have more contact with the student union, ASVA, as they provide several services and resources, we feel our members may benefit from such as bike sales, legal aid, and housing advice.

### 3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOARD MEMBERS

In order to achieve the aforementioned goals, each member of the board will take upon themselves a number of tasks and responsibilities in order to ensure that our members' needs are met. These will be detailed in this chapter. The duties outlined here for the board as a whole and for the individual roles are not exhaustive and tasks may be shared or delegated to other board members as deemed necessary.

The 2023 - 2024 VOS board consists of the following members:

CHAIR – Lim Freya S.T

SECRETARY – Manya Walavalkar

TREASURER – Joe Wellington

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER – Selin Stefanova

EXTERNAL RELATIONS OFFICER – Aysha Hermans

#### 3.1 Communal Tasks

All VOS XXIV board members have the following collective tasks and responsibilities:

- Representing the association
- Being open to new ideas and/or changes from members or other persons involved
- Being available to answer any questions
- Being informed about and upholding the association's statutes
- Making the policy plan for the year
- Managing the VOS archive and keeping scripts up to date
- Ultimate responsibility for the committees, including setting them up and deciding who will chair them
- Presenting and evaluating the progress and goals of the board and committees at General Assemblies
- Organizing VOS/Board related activities and services
- Being present, as often as possible, at all the events organized by VOS
- Promotion of VOS activities and services
- Maintaining a relationship with the linguistics department
- Recruiting board members for the year 2024 - 2025
- Making the board transfer as smooth as possible and setting the next board up for success

#### 3.2 Responsibilities of the Chair

The Chair is the head of the board and is charged with keeping an overview of the entire association, ensuring the association runs smoothly. They need to remain consistently informed of the goings on within the association to best serve their fellow board members, the interests of members, and the association at large. The Chair plays a facilitating and supervisory role for the rest of the board, ensuring that their fellow board members are aware of their responsibilities and have everything they need to carry these out.

Within the board, the Chair also presides overboard meetings and delegates the weekly tasks to their fellow board members. It is their duty to ensure these tasks are done in a timely manner and to be a point of aid and support should the need arise. The Chair will touch base with the Treasurer regularly to have a firm understanding of the association's financial state. They should also review all scripts and whitebooks, updating them and creating new documents as required. The chair also decides who will write the policy plan. At the start of the year, the chair will sign out the old board at the Chamber of Commerce (KvK) and sign in the new board. Once a candidate board has been selected at the end of the year, the Chair must ensure the new board is properly informed, trained, and confident in their new roles.

The Chair represents VOS in a number of capacities. General Assemblies are led by them, during which the chair must present the relevant documents and motions to members. They are also VOS' delegate to the board of the Alumni circle and must attend all relevant ALPHA meetings. The Chair is also in contact with Athenaeum Boekhandel and organizes the textbook list before each semester.

This year, the Chair is also involved in the Activities Committee and the Study Trip Committee.

In the absence of any roles, the Chair will take on the responsibility.

### 3.3 Responsibilities of the Secretary

The Secretary aids in the maintenance of an organised and efficient board. As the head of communication, they monitor the VOS email account, ensuring the inbox is up to date and in order. It is their duty to respond to messages promptly or to notify the appropriate board member needed to respond when necessary. Other board members should be regularly informed about incoming messages regarding events, invitations, important matters, etc. by the Secretary.

The Secretary is responsible for taking minutes during board meetings and general assemblies and making these available to fellow board members and other members of the association respectively. They should also ensure the VOS calendar is up to date and accurate.

This year, the secretary will be part of the Academics & Career Committee.

### 3.4 Responsibilities of the Treasurer

The Treasurer oversees all the money that comes in and out of VOS. They must monitor the VOS bank account and keep a detailed account of everything, giving an explanation as to why money has been made or spent. They are also in charge of making sure the rest of the board and all committees are aware of the current financial state, and that they stick to their individual budgets. As such, all spending must be approved by them.



At the beginning of the academic year, the Treasurer makes a budget and presents it at the General Assembly. At the end of the year during the final General Assembly, the Treasurer will present the original budget and compare it to a final realisation and annual financial report. Before each General Assembly the Treasurer must send any budget related documents to the supervisory board (KasCo) for approval and meet with them before they can be presented.

The Treasurer is also tasked with staying up to date on the subsidies available to the association and their deadlines. If the association wishes to utilize one of these subsidies, the Treasurer will be the one to apply for it. As a result, the Treasurer must accompany the Chair to all ALPHA meetings.

This year the Treasurer will be on the Study Trip Committee to supervise travel expenses and ensure the trips remain within their allotted budget.

### 3.5 Responsibilities of the Communications Officer

The Communications Officer is the face of VOS to its membership. They must maintain the social media profiles of the association and endeavour to increase the association's reach amongst students of linguistics programs. They are also responsible for the maintenance and updating of the association website.

Through fortnightly newsletters, and other emails, the Communications Officer must inform the members about upcoming VOS events, updates within the association, resources, and external events that may be of interest to members.

This year the Communications Officer will be a part of the Activity Committee.

### 3.6 Responsibilities of the External Relations Manager

The External Relations Manager is the face of VOS to external partners. They will be the board member involved in negotiation and building relationships with the University department, businesses, the media and other associations. The External Relations Manager is expected to look out for potential collaborations and potential external funding opportunities.

Through regular communication with the board, the External Relations manager will ensure that all board members are aware and up to date with the external relationships of the association.

This year the External Relations manager will be a part of the Academics & Career Committee.

## 4. EVENTS

Throughout the year, VOS commits to holding events to benefit its members and the linguistic community. These include events that will broaden knowledge related to the field of linguistics and offer a way to connect and meet fellow members in an inclusive space. Many of the events we hope to host this year are outlined below.

### 4.1 General Assemblies

Each year the board will host at least one General Assembly. During this GA, the current board will reflect on the achievement of the board's goals and policies and share the realisation of the budget alongside the annual financial report. The candidate board will present their budget, policy plan, and goals for the year and to be voted in as the next board of VOS. Other General Assemblies may be called throughout the year for a variety of reasons, and we plan to have at least one additional one mid-year to give an update on the association's (financial) situation. These summaries of the primary goals of the assemblies outlined above are not exhaustive and members are entitled to a minimum two-week notice that includes a full agenda before any General Assembly is convened. Any additional documents pertinent to the assembly will be sent to members no later than one week before.

All members are welcome to join General Assemblies and are entitled to the right to vote on and approve, among other things, the budget, its realisation, the policy plan, and any other motions put forth by the board or by other members. If a member wishes to vote but is unable to attend the General Assembly, they can contact the Secretary before the event and authorise another member to vote on their behalf.

### 4.2 Social Events

VOS strives to create a sense of community among its members, and works towards this goal by planning, organising, and executing social VOS activities, excursions, and small parties. As an association, we want to provide a variety of events that we hope will account for the diverse interests of our members - with a particular focus this year on creating spaces that do not involve alcohol for our members who may not drink or like bar environments. In addition, we hope to be able to show members the wonders of the Netherlands outside of Amsterdam by organising some activities across the country.

Like many other study associations, VOS has a long tradition of hosting regular borrels where members can meet, get to know each other, and most importantly have fun! This regular contact helps solidify the community within VOS and provides an opportunity for budding linguists of all levels to share ideas and make connections. We will continue this tradition and plan to host a borrel every other week.

This year we will host and collaborate on several larger parties. Towards the beginning of the second semester, we plan to collaborate with ALPHA on their annual New Year's Gala for Humanities as well.

Besides these events, the Activity Committee (see Section 5.3) organises a few miscellaneous activities. In the past, these included movie nights, pub quizzes, day trips to cities around the country, museum visits, ice skating, and trips to theme parks to name a few. This year, we will also organise the monthly game nights to provide a regular, non-bar-related event for members.

At all VOS events where consumption of alcohol is expected, at least one VOS XIV board member will be designated as the board's sober person and will be expected to remain totally sober until the event has concluded.

### 4.3 Academic Events

As a study association, we want to aid our members in their studies where possible and provide opportunities to expand their knowledge of linguistics. Before each exam week, we will provide a study space for members to get work done in a productive and collaborative environment. Additionally, we hope to plan exam de-stress events during the exam weeks where students can either finish their work for the week or take part in a calm activity to help ease their minds before the next block.

Language Cafés, in which a student gives a presentation about a language they know or are learning, have become a cornerstone of the association. These presentations allow members to learn about each other's linguistic backgrounds and give insight into a variety of the world's languages, many of which are not touched upon in classes. We believe this form of membership participation is extremely valuable and would like to plan as many language cafés as possible this year.

With the Academics and Career Committee, we have a body through which more academically focused events can be arranged. The committee will be contacting professors throughout the Netherlands to give guest lectures on a wide range of topics within linguistics. A few information nights hosted by this committee are also in the works, namely one on master's programs within UvA and some general information about programs around the world. In addition, the Academics and Career Committee may set up routes for students to receive additional help with their studies, such as offering proofreading services, and organising more general career-oriented events, i.e. CV workshops.

### 4.4 Tweekend

TWeekend is VOS' annual trip meant as an introduction for first year students to get to know each other and other members. The weekend is a bonding experience for linguistics students, full of games and activities, and explores a part of the Netherlands that might not otherwise be visited by the membership. This trip will be planned by the VOS board directly.

#### 4.5 Study Trip

Every year, VOS' Study Trip Committee organises a study trip abroad. This trip aims to explore a new country and its culture, and use the occasion to find unique linguistic opportunities. This may include going to a conference related to (sign language) linguistics or visiting the city's university and planning an activity with their language(s) or linguistics department, as has been done in previous years. We anticipate our study trip will take place during the spring break of May 2024. The trip will be filled with academic enrichment and good times to be had. In the past we have gone to Belgium, Sweden, Italy, Germany and even Brazil!

#### 4.6 Linguistics Career Day & LANGU Day

These events are planned and hosted in association with all of the linguistics study associations throughout the Netherlands: T.W.I.S.T. (Leiden), TW!ST (Groningen), Babel (Utrecht), and InTenS (Nijmegen). We look forward to this yearly collaboration and are excited to introduce our members to linguists across the country.

LANGU Day is typically a social event in which students from these associations can meet and get to know each other through fun social activities. Linguistic Career Day, on the other hand, is more academically focused and is made to show students in the linguistics department what it is like after graduation in the real world. This usually includes guest speakers from each participating university, career-related workshops and other study-related activities.

VOS's role in preparation for the career and LANGU day will be assigned during the first meetings with the other representatives. The VOS board representative this year will be our Secretary, Manya Walavalkar.

## 5. COMMITTEES

### 5.1 General Information

VOS forms a number of committees each year to encourage higher levels of member participation within the association as they are able to directly affect the activities of the association. This year our committees are Academics and Career, Activity, and Study Trip.

The board of a committee is structured in the same way as the general board; it must contain a Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. This year two board members will be part of each committee, with one taking on treasurer duties, in order to establish a good line of communication between the board and committee, and to make sure the committee is aware of its financial status. Other members will have the opportunity to be chair, co-chair or general committee members, and each committee may assign additional specific roles should they choose to do so (i.e. acquisition).

The board members involved in the committee will take on a supervisory role, taking on an equal workload to that of each committee member, but allowing the non-board members to voice their ideas and have influence over decisions made within the committee. In this way, we intend to create an equal environment in which the association is led by its members. Under previous boards there has been a tendency for the rate of engagement in committees to fall throughout the year, to combat this, VOS XXIV will be introducing an opportunity for committees to receive new members quarterly.

### 5.2 Academics and Career Committee

The Academics and Career Committee will plan linguistics and career-focused events (as stated in 4.3); such as Language Cafés, guest lectures, study sessions, and career workshops. Some of the goals of this committee are to look at “Life after Linguistics,” and help students prepare for life in graduate school or the workforce, as well as plan fun linguistics and language related events. This committee will meet weekly for brainstorming and planning.

This year, the board members involved in the Academics and Career Committee will be the secretary, Manya Walavalkar and the External Affairs Officer, Aysha Hermans. The treasurer for the Academics and Career Committee for this year is Manya Walavalkar, and the roles of the members will be determined at the first meeting.

### 5.3 Activity Committee

The Activity Committee is responsible for planning, organising, and executing a number of VOS activities and events. Activity Committee members will be encouraged to exercise their creativity and come up with a variety of fun events for our members. The committee will meet weekly. This year, on top of members to be recruited after the GA, the Activity Committee is made up Chair of the board, Lim Freya, and Communications Officer of the board, Selin Stefanova. The treasurer for the Activity Committee for this year is Lim Freya, and the roles of the members will be determined at the first meeting.

## 5.4 Study Trip Committee

The Study Trip Committee organises our primary trip during the year. Their duties include, but are not limited to, creating a budget, planning the event and its activities, and making necessary arrangements. Members will work together to plan the location, activities, finances, accommodation, transportation, and more. Finances will be organised in combination with funds raised by VOS directly as well as ALPHA and other parties after proposing the academic activities on the excursion. The study trip will have a limited attendance, but members of this committee have guaranteed admission, if they choose.

The committee will meet at least once weekly, though this may increase as the trips draw near. This year, the Study Trip Committee will have Lim Freya as a board representative, together with Joe Wellington who will also be the treasurer for the Study Trip Committee. The roles of the members will be determined at the first meeting.

## 6. SOCIAL SAFETY

### 6.1 Social Safety Policy

VOS maintains a zero-tolerance policy on sexual violence, harassment, and discrimination of any sort. We strive to nurture safe environments for all of our members at all of our events. We recognise, however, that this is not enough. We aim to make every attempt to raise awareness and support our members who may experience any of these. Our board will all receive training through Our Bodies, Our Voice to learn how we as student leaders can best create an inclusive, safe culture within our association and act as trusted points-of-contact for any member who needs it. In addition, we hope to organize a workshop open to all members regarding specific social safety issues in order to ensure members help to create the inclusive and safe culture we desire VOS to embody.

In the last academic year, a formal procedure was created to outline how different situations will be dealt with by the association. A precise handling procedure is established to ensure that if unsafe situations occur, students can be confident they are being handled appropriately. This document includes relevant resources internal and external to the university, and can be accessed on the VOS association website if needed.

### 6.2 Trust Persons

The trust persons are designated points of contact for members who may struggle with an especially difficult experience, and who would like to talk to someone, learn about resources, and be supported as they process the situation. The trust person's role is to offer a listening, non-judgemental ear, provide a comfortable space to help our members with any issues they have, and aid them in getting any support they may need. They will be well-versed in, and always refer members to, any resources available to help them. Any communication with a trust person is absolutely confidential and neither the content of the conversations nor the identity of the person approaching them will be revealed to anyone at any point in time, except in the case of the person having suicidal thoughts, in which case the trust person will put them in contact with a psychologist for their own well-being.

A trust person must also remain aware of the people present in VOS spaces (this includes members, non-member students, and members of the general public), both in public and at the university, and stay alert to presumptuous, persuasive or unusual behavior of the members of that space. They will be available at all times to members, whether in person at events or via the contact information below. Members will be made aware and reminded often of the opportunity to contact the trust persons.

In the year 2023-2024, the trust persons will be Joe Wellington, and Gideon van Wijk. Joe can be reached via phone/WhatsApp (+44 7449577581) or email ([uva.vos.joe@gmail.com](mailto:uva.vos.joe@gmail.com)). Gideon can be reached via phone (WhatsApp: +61 422434487, Signal/SMS/call: +31 651909363) or email ([vos.stustrustperson.gideon@gmail.com](mailto:vos.stustrustperson.gideon@gmail.com)).

The trust persons, and the way they operate, may be updated upon the approval of the aforementioned Social Safety Policy if needed to better fit the new framework.

### 6.3 Mental Health Support

Mental health support is an issue that has become increasingly important to address. The COVID-19 pandemic has made clearer than ever our members' need for additional mental health support. We recognise that a major barrier to this is accessibility. We believe that for our members to succeed, they need an association that will support them and their mental health. To try to solve this, our trust persons and all board members will be well versed in the resources available to students. They will be accessible to members at all times and capable of providing support, advice, and referring them to the correct resources for any additional support. These resources will also be made readily available on the VOS website.



## 7. MISCELLANEOUS

### 7.1 Supervisory Board (KasCo)

The KasCo serves as a supervisory and advisory board to the Board of VOS. We wish to work along them closely to ensure the board is working efficiently and carrying out its goals and policies outlined here. The supervisory board will supervise the accountancy of the Treasurer at multiple points throughout the year- at minimum before each General Assembly in which a budget or realization is presented. They will meet at least once a quarter with the chair individually and the board as a whole.

The supervisory board for the academic year 2023 – 2024 consist of a non-student member, Lauren Flemming, and a student member, Brandy Koenig.

### 7.2 Improvements and focus

The board of VOS XXIII took the initiative to rebrand the association to signal a new post pandemic era and to make many necessary updates to VOS' image and online presence. The Chair of VOS XXIII made a few internal adjustments and improvements, so the inner workings of the associations are updated to match the association's new external image. Many of these improvements did not directly affect members, instead they focused on the creation of clear and effective scripts and whitebooks for the board.

This year, the Chair aims to work with the rest of the VOS XXIV board to focus on the social presence and external affairs of the association. While the previous chair and board has done plenty work to improve internal processes of the board, it is the goal of the current chair to bring the association's presence to its former, pre-pandemic, glory.

The VOS XXIV board will continue the legacy of the VOS XXIII board to increase transparency between the board and its members. This includes making the VOS statutes, our policy plan, and our budget readily available on our website. This ensures the board is kept accountable. In addition, in line with our plans to continue a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment within VOS, we will continue the member code of conduct which students will have to agree to when signing up to become members. In addition, the statutes of the association have not been updated since the association was formed in 1999. The current Chair will continue the efforts of the VOS XXIII Chair, to get in touch with a few previous Chairs to discuss the possibility of amending these to better reflect current traditions and make some general adjustments (i.e., adjusting the currency mentioned from Dutch Guilders to Euros). The current Chair will also work with ASVA, ALPHA, and other associations within the humanities faculty to ensure that the statutes is updated in accordance with the Dutch laws.

Documents affecting the structure of the organisation and its membership will be approved by the membership at a General Assembly.

### 7.3 Extenuating Circumstances

While life in the Netherlands has largely returned to normal since the pandemic, we are not yet certain if this will remain the case. This year, VOS plans to continue as it did before the pandemic. However, should COVID-19 return, or should large-scale pandemics or extenuating circumstances happen, we have plans in place to ensure as smooth a transition as possible in adjusting events and activities to the possible restrictions. In the event of any restrictions, we will strictly follow the guidelines dictated by the Dutch government and the University of Amsterdam. As a board, we reserve the right to immediately cease all in-person events and revert to a fully online schedule if we deem it unsafe to continue and to impose additional guidelines if we feel they are necessary for the health and safety of our members.