

Student well-being action plan 20-06-2018

Background

One of the ambitions expressed by Fontys concerns maximum and optimal personal development of each individual student. In this context, Fontys attaches great importance to enabling every student to enhance their talent and conduct research and experiments. Designed to help institutions realise this ambition, the Fontys-wide Study Success programme comprises ten themes to help foster students' study success. Student well-being is one of these themes.

Student well-being focuses on a positive and psychological state of well-being in which students can complete their own learning process and be happy with themselves, their relations and experiences during their studies. Students are full of energy, resilient and free from psychological complaints such as stress, anxiety, depression, burnout and addictions (presentation Jolien Dopmeijer, Arnhem, 5 April 2018). If a student is not feeling well for a longer period of time, whatever the reason, this may also have a negative impact on the learning process. Research has shown that the decrease in student well-being is a growing problem in higher education (LsvB, 2017). This is confirmed by signals from staff and students at Fontys. A national action plan has been prepared to draw attention to this issue and take action. Fontys links up with this national action plan (Netwerk Studentenwelzijn, 2018) and places its own emphases, working on the basis of the cure and care principle.

Insights from research

Literature studies and research among focus groups carried out by the LsvB, the Dutch Student Union (2017), as well as a study by Hurst et al (2013), disclose a number of factors that cause tension in students:

- Financial concerns;
- Time pressure (combination of obligations);
- Exam stress;
- Conflict between study and private life;
- Negative life events;
- Pressure to perform (internal-external): Having to perform in various areas all the time (study, extra-curricular programmes, sports, CV building, social);
- Loneliness.

The scientific literature shows that student well-being can be improved by means of:

- A balance of perceived autonomy, relation, and competency (Deci & Ryan (2000), Brooker et al (2017), Naylor et al (2017);
- Social and academic integration (Tinto (2012);
- Enhancing adjustment after the transition to a new environment of higher professional education (stage-environment theory; Eccles et al., 1993);
- Improving the doability of the programme, (the perceived) distribution of the study load, improving the test programme, decreasing the number of tests, clear objectives. (v. Berkel et al (2012);
- Attention to personal development in education (Biesta (2012)).

Brainstorming session

A brainstorming session by Nienke Meijer with students focused on the topic of study pressure (March 2018). During this session, students indicated that the combination of personality (perfectionism and setting the bar high), comparison with those around them (other students and Fear Of Missing Out) and the organisation of education causes study pressure. They stated that they are not inclined to request help until they find they have psychological problems.

During this brainstorming session, students could also present ideas about what Fontys could do to lower their study pressure. The ideas mainly concerned improving the doability of study programmes, improving contacts with staff, and creating options for relaxation at Fontys.

Objective of the action plan

The action plan seeks to increase student well-being at Fontys, focusing on:

1. Increasing awareness about this issue among Fontys staff;
2. Prevention of attrition due to early detection;
3. Increasing the ability to act of Fontys staff in the immediate environment of the students and ensuring that they can make referrals to second-line student guidance within Fontys in the event of serious psychosocial problems;
4. Increasing students' ability to cope and letting them know there is a safety net.
5. Creating an environment within Fontys in which students can relax and which offers a safe study climate;
6. Promoting flexible learning routes in education.

Monitoring of student well-being and objectives of the action plan

In order to determine the effects of the actions and depending on the need for specific or more general insights into student well-being, the following issues will be studied, on the basis of data already present in whole or in part:

- **Service provision:** Trends in terms of the help students request, complaints students have, and the effect of service provision by deans and psychologists at SV.
- **Study pressure:** Analyses of NSE data about the pressure and complaints students experience (possibly in relation to other relevant/interesting data).
- **Adjustment and well-being:** Trends and insights into students' well-being after their transition to higher professional education based on data from the Start Thermometer.

If desired, these insights can be clarified by means of a Power BI tool.

Schedule and execution

The overview below prioritises and describes the above-mentioned actions, stating who is responsible for them.

Objective	Actions	Timeline	Who
<u>Increasing ability to act of lecturers, incl. prevention and signalling</u>	<u>Designing a toolkit for lecturers by developing a professionalisation programme</u> 1) Designing and executing development of professional skills of study career choice coordinators for coaching their colleagues on student well-being 2) Designing and organising workshops on student well-being for lecturers/study career choice advisors	Until 1 January 2019	Programme Study success (student coaching line) together with teams of the Student Facilities department (D&P, B&O and SKA)
<u>Increasing students' ability to cope</u>	<u>Designing a toolkit for students</u> 3) Drawing up a "social map" 4) Designing and organising workshops / activities for students concerning student well-being	Until 1 January 2019	Programme Study success (student coaching line) together with teams of the Student Facilities department (D&P, B&O and SKA)
	5) Studying whether a Ucademy pilot on intrinsic motivation can be rolled out (for and by students)	Autumn 2018	Programme Study success (student coaching line) together with CvM (participation centre) of the

			Student Facilities department
<u>Relaxation in personal environment and safe study climate</u>	6) When (re)urbishing buildings, take the relaxation function of the building into account	Include on an ongoing basis In the re(urbishment) of buildings	Housing & Facilities department
	7) Focus on interventions based on "Fontys Vitaal" (Vital Fontys) project together with the Sports College and the national "Gezond HBO" (healthy higher professional education) initiative for students.		Fontys Vitaal
<u>Increasing awareness</u>	8) Incorporating results of study choice check and start thermometer in study career choice process (<u>see train-the-trainer above</u>)	From academic year 2018 / 2019	
	9) Columns about students' experiences	From academic year 2018 / 2019 / start when social map is launched?	M&C department
	10) Directors put this topic on the agenda of their own institution and consult with student coaches and students (e.g. by means of participation) about what is needed to improve this within the institution.	From academic year 2018 / 2019	Directors
<u>Education</u>	11) Attention to a doable programme and decrease in test pressure (by sharing knowledge and using tools from the study success programme)	From academic year 2018 / 2019	Programme Study success (educational development line) together with institutions
	12) Attention to personal development in education		Programme Study success (educational development line) together with institutions
	13) Attention to more flexible learning routes and different ways of learning and testing		Programme Study success (educational development line) together with institutions

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