**MANIFESTO**

Dear FASoS students,

We, GUILHERME FEISTAUER and CAITLING REED are running for Faculty Council at FASoS. As representatives of DOPE, we are proud to be part of Maastricht’s most influential student party and to be able to make meaningful changes to improve your life as a student at UM. We believe that it is very important that we unite and organise to make our voices heard: and this is why we would love to represent you at our faculty this year.

Voting for us means voting for a robust political programme. So, below are some of the policies that we will continue to fight for at FASoS — with one top priority: MORE POWER TO STUDENTS.

**TOP PRIOTITY: MORE POWER TO STUDENTS**

Despite current circumstances, this year you will still have an opportunity to vote for Faculty Council members. Chances are however that you either don’t know what they actually do, or what kind of changes they have been responsible for at our faculty in the past. We at DOPE think this lack of clarity is not your fault. After all, what’s the difference between the ‘Student Representatives’, ‘So FASoS’ and these ‘Student Faculty Council’ members? We want them to work as one, to have more powers — and to become more engaging, democratic and transparent for students in the process.

OUR TOP PRIORITY IS TO WORK CLOSELY TOGETHER WITH THE NEW DEAN TO LAUNCH AN INCLUSIVE CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF STUDENT POLITICS AT FASOS.

It’s deeply ironic how our faculty is both a place which educates so many experts and critical thinkers on topics like democracy, and yet one which still manages to fall short of ‘leading by example’, of ‘learning by doing’. We don’t want students to just critically research social structures of governance around us today: we want them to have an opportunity to change them — to become engaged in the decisions that affect their daily lives as students, and to create a legacy of meaningful change for a more inclusive, sustainable future.

**A FAIRER DEAL FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF: A MORE TRANSPARENT AND ENGAGING FACULTY**

We will work hard to make sure there’s tangible progress on our top priority within our first hundred days. But that’s not the end: our robust political programme covers a range of different policies which we will continue to represent students on to deliver progress.

*MORE INCLUSIVE ACCESS TO BUILDINGS AND SERVICES*

Lack of commitment and investment from the Faculty Administration currently deprives some students with disabilities from easily accessing the education and services they deserve like all others. We find this unacceptable. The same holds true for the vital psychological support that many students still have far too many difficulties accessing when they need it most. We want FASoS to set a clear commitment, in which progress and student satisfaction levels are to be reported every semester until significant improvements have been made to infrastructure accessibility and the availability of walk-in psychological support.

*AUTOMATIC REGISTRATION PROCESS*

The current ‘Period Registration Process’ is Kafkaesque. We find it completely absurd that the registration process for compulsory courses is not automatic-by-default — and that students are not given the opportunity to change and sometimes even register latently to courses when this has been the norm in almost every major university for quite some time now. We as your DOPE Faculty Council representatives want to set a deadline for the university to register this change. We demand the faculty’s administration to report every semester on student satisfaction levels and the number of student self-identified cases where administrative decisions have led to the unfair elongation of their degree programmes; and we demand that students who have been identified as suffering this unfair treatment be exempt from paying tuition fees. We believe that removing what ultimately acts as a financial incentive against change will help us deliver a fairer registration process.

*RECORDED LECTURES*

Current circumstances under COVID-19 will undoubtedly provide the faculty with many lessons learned to be reviewed. We want to make sure that moving to the ‘next normal’ means moving towards a student-vote on a more inclusive digitalisation policy: and we think that recording lectures and making them available online as an essential resource for revision and as a means to make access more inclusive for those who are not able to attend needs to be a key part of this process. We want to work pragmatically with staff and administrators to revisit ‘cost’ and ‘privacy’ concerns under these changed circumstances. As we have seen: if there is a will, there is a way.

*PUT IT TO A STUDENT VOTE: BREAK BETWEEN PERIODS, BETTER RESIT STRUCTURES*

Time for reflection is essential for learning. We understand that the arbitrary structuring of courses following one after another from period to period safeguards the faculty’s short-term financial interests, but it is absolutely not fit-for-purpose when it comes to most students’ learning needs. We strongly believe it poses an unnecessary strain on many students’ mental health, especially for those most vulnerable and struggling to keep up with demand from resits. It’s time for a ‘better normal’. We want to work closely with the faculty’s administration to produce a series of balanced policy recommendations — including continuing the status quo — to be presented to students so they can vote and settle an approach for the next four years.

*MORE, BETTER FACULTY STUDY SPACES*

We congratulate the faculty on its launching of a new, exciting bachelor’s programme (BSc Global Studies). And we will warmly welcome new students to a faculty which desperately needs more and better study places. We demand that a thorough review of the faculty’s facilities to be published to clearly outline (1) how much and how often every single room under management is used for educational and administrative purposes, (2) justifying when closure/discontinuation has been determined for reasons other than maintenance, and (3) propose an action plan to determine a fair ratio of student : study-space with an action plan to achieve this over the ten months.

*MORE DEBATES*

Engaging well in debate is truly an art — and fostering it plays an important role in the creation of positive cultures of research and educational development. This is why we want the faculty’s administration to take the lead by becoming even more organised and systematic: we want to see more hosting of debate sessions (formal and informal), and the launch of a ‘debates skills course’.

*MORE FILM SCREENINGS*

We support making social film screening events more accessible to students to help boost their learning journeys. We demand a cost and impact assessment from the faculty’s administration by the end of the year to inform a Faculty Council decision on a potential model.

*PILOT: FACULTY PODCASTS*

If done well, podcasts can be a great resource for learning: take, for example, BBC4’s ‘In Our Time’ which has covered with great academic rigour many topics that we study here at FASoS. We think learning from its ‘panel format’ could be a great way of ‘breathing and living’ interdisciplinarity here at FASoS — and so, by piloting the format as a way of bringing together experienced researchers to discuss topics from different perspectives, we could create a great source of learning for all. Moreover, we believe this could be an important contribution towards better digitalisation at our faculty. We would therefore like to work closely with the faculty administration to design and launch a pilot with approval from the Faculty Council within the next ten months.

*FACULTY EXHIBITIONS*

So many of our students (and staff) are artists: painters, photographers, musicians, and much more. Though the faculty has tried to make some progress in fostering people’s artistic development, we’re not impressed: much more needs to be done. We would like to see allocated open spaces for ‘Faculty Exhibitions’, and a funded staff-student project to run an exciting program for the coming academic year.

*PBL: EXPERIMENT MORE*

We would like to see more inclusive ‘learning experiments’ to develop student’s engagement with PBL. For example, taking into account different ‘learning types’, what impact does making the ‘seven steps’ visually present for those chairing sessions (e.g. as printed cards) have on its quality? What’s the educational impact of maximising learning groups’ continuity? What difference could courses that allow for more flexibility and room for open discussion (without maybe always assigning literature) have on student’s learning? We would like to see the faculty’s administration work closely with tutors to propose research experiments which students could help conduct.

*FACULTY ALLOTMENT AND RECREATIONAL AREA*

Since the open area close to the faculty’s parking lot is hardly ever used (besides Introduction Days), we would like to see it put to better use: we want the faculty to fund a student-led project to transform it into a ‘green recreational space’ made from recycled materials — with plenty of seats, and a student-managed garden-allotment.

*ANYTHING ELSE?*

These policies have been the product of many conversation with students at the faculty — and beyond! So they are not the end: this is just the beginning. Do you have exciting ideas or questions you’d like to share with us? We’re here to represent you. Feel free to reach out and to contact us at +(31)657284907 or [HOLDER@DOPEMAIL.COM].

We strongly believe our policies will bring meaningful, positive change to students’ lives at FASoS — and that with your support and our experience as Maastricht University’s largest and most influential student party, we can do it together. YOUR VOTE MATTERS: VOTE DOPE, VOTE for **GUILHERME FEISTAUER** and **CAITLIN REED**.