

Proposal

Extension minor opportunities



FRONT

FOR THE ACTIVE STUDENT

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Introduction

Tilburg University offers her students a wide range of available studies. These studies do often exist out of a fixed curriculum in which students have the choice to fill in the free part of their curriculum with for example an exchange, minor or internship. A minor is known as the ideal chance for students to develop themselves in a connected or completely different study area within the duration of their studies. In this way, students can acquire skills and knowledge which their regular curriculum does not offer them. By for example taking introducing courses in a different study area, they gain experience in this field and they can start building up a potential further development in this area. Although minors within the Netherlands are for many students already their first choice, the current corona crisis also brings a considerable group of students with it who seek for a minor in the Netherlands as an alternative for their exchange abroad. To offer these students a worthy alternative, Front perceives it even more relevant to extend the existing minor opportunities.

As a student representation party, Front notices that the offer of available minors within the Netherlands for Tilburg University students is mainly situated within the own faculty of students, in contrast to for example students of many universities of applied sciences. Harmony between the faculties lacks in this field, which makes it hard for students to, when they wish to, develop themselves also outside their own study area. Knowledge and skills that can be acquired in this way can be perfectly applicable and relevant in a students' own study area as well. However, the moments in the year at which students can start their minor and the required basic knowledge to start a minor differ per faculty. Furthermore, the current communication about the total range of opportunities has turned out to be vague and unclear for many students.

Front sees the extending character of a minor as a good opportunity for students to develop themselves besides their regular study field. The slogan of Tilburg University, 'Understanding Society', demands in our opinion a more multi disciplinary approach of the minor system. In the current society many disciplines are used together to solve societal problems. By introducing students already in their bachelor's fase to several topics that reach further than their own faculty, they expand their horizon and improve their skills to look for solutions more broadly. This directly fits the Tilburg Education Profile (TEP) in which knowledge, skills and character are key.

To achieve an extension of minor opportunities, Front proposes four ways to extend minors in this initiative proposal. We would like to propose to discover the opportunities to realize these extensions via

a working group. Also, we address problems in this initiative proposal which students face with regard to communication around the minor process. We would like to seek solutions for these problems together with the same working group. Front looks forward to the reaction of the Executive Board on this proposal.

Proposal

Front would like to see that students, except for exchanges, have a more elaborated choice in minors within Tilburg University and the Netherlands. Therefore, Front would like to investigate the following opportunities together with those involved in this topic:

Doing a (fixed) minor at other faculties than the faculty at which the student is registered.

Currently it is hard or impossible for students to follow an introductory minor at another faculty. Although most faculties like TiSEM, TLS and TSB do possess several fixed minors in which for example theory is deepened or a new theme within the study area is discussed, these minors are mostly accessible for students from their own faculty. In Front's vision, fixed minors like this - if needed with adjustments like the development of more introductory minors - are of great value for students from other faculties. Therefore, dependent on the existing offer per faculty, the development of new introductory minors might thus be important. A psychology student with interest in law would in this way be able to follow a minor at TLS and in this way acquire a new scope of knowledge and skills, just at Tilburg University.

Doing a minor in which multiple disciplines are combined, offered by a student's own faculty.

Secondly, faculties can offer their own students broadening minors as well by cooperating with other faculties. This makes it possible for students to develop broadening skills and knowledge within their own faculty. Because all courses of the minor will be part of the same faculty, they will have a good fit with a student's curriculum and schedules.

Doing a university-broad minor with open access for every student.

By offering university broad minors from a central position which are open for every student, students can look for solutions to complex societal problems like climate change together with students from other faculties. In this way, knowledge from multiple study disciplines can be combined effectively and students can learn knowledge and skills from each other. By taking this multidisciplinary view, they are even introduced to multiple instead of one new study area.

Doing a minor at another university in the Netherlands.

Every university in the Netherlands offers high quality studies which can be a great addition for studies on top of their study at Tilburg University.

Therefore, Front would also like to look into chances for students to have access to a wide range of minors at Dutch universities in an easy and accessible way.

Improvement of communication of minor (opportunities)

Apart from the chances and opportunities Front sees to enlarge the choice of minors for Tilburg University students, we also see potential improvement in the communication of these possibilities and of the minor application process. Often heard complaints from students across the faculties are 'I am not able to find clearly which minors I am able to follow and which choices I have' and 'the progress in my application is unclear to me'. To solve the first problem, Front proposes to offer an overview of options per faculty - for example on the university website - in which the available minor opportunities at a student's own faculty, on other faculties and outside of Tilburg University are displayed.

With regard to the second complaint, from which it becomes clear that some processes around the minor application approvals are not completely transparent, Front would like to see deadlines for approvals by the exam committees per faculty and per minor application period. Furthermore, students face the problem that they do not get priority for the approval of a change in courses when their minor already started. Such a change is for example necessary when an institution suddenly has a lack of available spaces in a course, or when a course appears to have different entry conditions than expected. Students are in such situations in need of a fast reaction of the exam committee, because they do otherwise not know which course they can start with and can thus fall behind. Because of these complaints Front wants to start a discussion in the faculty councils about this and plead for an improvement in communication about the state of affairs and progress in application to students.

Introduction working group extension minor opportunities

To elaborate the opportunities of offering fixed minors within and outside borders of faculties, at an university broad level and at other universities in the Netherlands, Front considers the rise of a new working group as an effective working method. We obviously would like to participate actively in this working group ourselves, but we also think the involvement of personnel from as well faculties, as from more central layers of the organization, is very important for this working

group. In this way, existing knowledge from different perspectives can be shared when discussing the possibilities. We of course understand that in times of corona the possibilities to attend physical lectures on both our and other universities are very limited. Nevertheless, Front thinks an early start of brainstorming about the elaboration of the opportunities is needed to reach an extension of the minor offer.

Conclusion

By means of this initiative, Front would like to realize a start in the investigation of extension opportunities in the minor offer. Also, often heard problems from students are addressed in this initiative (which often have to do with communication), for which Front would like to see solutions. By means of a working group, a start can be made in the exploration of options in which Front would like to participate actively. The goal of this initiative is expanding the chances students have to develop themselves with a minor as well inside as outside their study field, which will be beneficial for the position of Tilburg University.



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