



Initiative
Trainings for Students
Confidential Advisors

FRONT

FOR THE ACTIVE STUDENT

February 10th 2022

Introduction

A few years ago, the 'MeToo' movement made painfully clear that sexual misconduct is still far too common in our society. Due to the recent revelations about misconduct at 'AFC Ajax' and 'The Voice of Holland', undesirable behavior is again a topic of conversation. This is also a much-discussed topic among students. Last November, it has been revealed that at Maastricht University 39% of the students have dealt with sexual misconduct at least once in their life.¹ According to this research, members of study or student associations are more likely to become victims of sexual violence.

Tilburg University already has a Code of conduct outlining a roadmap for students on integrity and its violation. This shows students where they can turn to when something is going on in the area of sexual abuse, discrimination, violence, bullying etcetera. However, these violations may occur not only at universities but also at various associations connected to the university. Student Party Front therefore believes that the roadmap lacks one crucial step. Within Tilburg University, the appointment of confidential advisers is already anchored in article 1.12 of the collective agreement (Cao) of Dutch Universities.² Among other things, this establishes the appointment and duties of the confidential advisor. Student Party Front endorses the importance of this function within the university. However, for students it can be a big step to go directly to a manager or confidential advisor at the university. Due to the reason that they do not know these persons and are often far away from them. A low-threshold intermediary step, such as accessible student confidential advisers within associations, could fill this gap. Currently, certain associations in Tilburg already have such confidential advisers.

The current strategy of Tilburg University describes that the university wants to be 'caring' and pay attention to diversity, inclusion, social safety and that it strives for a socially safe environment. Additional student confidential advisers for misbehavior among students can make a positive contribution to such an environment. It is necessary that these confidential advisers have training to be able to support the students as best as possible.

¹ *Bijna helft studenten Universiteit Maastricht slachtoffer van seksueel wangedrag.* (2021, November 4). Science Guide. Retrieved from: <https://www.scienceguide.nl/2021/11/bijna-helft-studenten-universiteit-maastricht-slachtoffer-van-seksueel-wangedrag/#:~:text=Onderzoek%20onder%20bijna%20500%20studenten&text=Onder%20de%20respondenten%20bevonden%20zich,overige%20538%20deden%20dit%20niet>

² Universiteiten van Nederland. (2021, November). *Cao Nederlandse Universiteiten.* Retrieved from: https://www.caouniversiteiten.nl/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/CAO_NU_2021-2022.pdf

Proposal

Student Party Front proposes to facilitate annual training courses for confidential advisors of student-, sports- and study associations. These confidential advisors are the first, low-threshold contact points for reporting abuse about unfriendly behaviour, discrimination, racism, exclusion or bullying. Many associations already have appointed confidential advisors or are in the process of installing them within their association. Student Party Front has been in contact with different associations. They indicate that the confidential advisors are already approached by students with complaints. However, the confidential advisors often do not know how to deal with certain cases and to whom they can refer these students. The training sessions will teach the confidential advisors how to handle certain issues independently. In addition, they will be trained with the proper knowledge to refer the students to other people and/or agencies when necessary.

The training courses need to be given each year at the beginning of the academic year. All associations linked to Tilburg University are given the opportunity to register two people for these trainings, preferably a man and a woman, with possibilities for expansion depending on the size of the association. This way, each association has low-threshold confidential advisors who are close to the students themselves, and a large accessible network of people whom students can turn to is created among students of Tilburg University. The appointed confidential advisors have the task of providing initial support to students who have experienced undesirable behavior and are a point of contact for complaints about all kinds of abuse. Training sessions are essential to ensure that this task is carried out in the best possible way. In addition, offering training courses will encourage associations to introduce confidential advisors.

Furthermore, we would like to link a certificate to this training, which confirms that the confidential advisors participated in the training. This way the associations can actively promote among their members that there are trained confidential advisors present. It is important that students know where to turn to and that they know these people have had certified training.

Conclusion

By means of this initiative, Student Party Front wants the university to host annual training sessions for confidential advisors of associations. This way, these confidential advisors will be trained to be an accessible point of contact for students within their association who have to deal with abuse. This way, the university contributes to creating the safest possible environment for its students. Student Party Front is motivated to remain involved and to enter the discussion with the university and the involved associations for the further practical implementation of the training courses.



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