Policy of Symposion 2024/2025

In Vino Frigido Confidimus Board
By Esmée Koelewijn

Function

This document contains the combined written goals, ideas, and ambitions of the In Vino Frigido Confidimus Board of Symposion. The document will also serve as guidance and accountability for the 23rd board and the members of the association. Furthermore, this document is agreed upon and proposed by the In Vino Frigido Confidimus Board, reviewed by the CoA (Committee of Advice) and voted in by the Symposion members during the Policy and Budget GMA.

Overview of the main items

The board has the responsibility to create a safe, inclusive, and enjoyable atmosphere for all members of the Study Association Symposion. This is achieved by the continued social and intellectual interchange between the board, the committees, and the members of Symposion. As the board, we facilitate the organisational framework of the association and aim to create a thriving environment for both the association and their members. Consequently, this document contains the approach of the In Vino Frigido Confidimus Board and its goals. Our policy is aimed at improving the association and creating a foundation on which upcoming boards can build. The policy vision can be structured into three main goals. We, as the board, are committed to these goals. The goals are:

1. Growing the association with more active members and more activity throughout the year.

2. Strengthening our relationship with the University and supporting the educational skills of members in the association.

3. Focussing on well-being and creating a safe and comfortable space for all of our members.

Before elaborating upon the three points stated above, we want to express our gratitude to the previous boards before us and all the work they have done. What they have written in their policies is very important to us, and we want to continue their line of thought by continuing to improve the structure of the association and professionalise where we see a general benefit to do so. That being said, we will move on to our three points. We feel these three points are needed this year so we can continue building upon the framework created before us. Thus, we will elaborate below on these mutually supporting pillars that we feel represent relevant points to focus on in order to uphold the existing framework of Symposion.

Elaboration of the goals

Activity within the association

We feel that the previous boards have left us with a good foundation upon which we can develop a more active association. With extra input and support of the board, we believe that we can positively supplement general activity and interest among our members. We believe that the association should start off the year stronger to create more enthusiasm right from the beginning of the year. This aim will be realised through the following points:

General

- Starting the year strong by giving presentations at introduction days
- Organising multiple events as the board in September, before the committees have started organising the events
- Supporting chairs in getting the committees running before October, so they can start organising events
- Being more active and consistent in promoting our events, both on our platforms and in personal interactions
- Making the association more appealing to a broader public, for instance, by trying to increase activity from master's and PhD students, as well as collaborating with other associations
- Opening up the boardroom to Symposion members for several hours every week so that we can maintain a safe and cosy environment for all members
- Continuing the 'Nos Non Nulla Fossarum' aim to reward active members, fostering belonging and engagement
- Finding creative ways to promote GMAs so that more members attend and are actively engaged in the GMA discussions

Board

- Having an organised board at the beginning of the year (board clothing, board pictures, appointing other roles in the association, etc.) so that we can focus on growing the association
- Being an active board that is present at all events with at least one board member
- Collaborating with other associations to increase our visibility within the study associations
- Greeting members to keep a positive and active image
- Being more proactive in organising events for the association

Strengthening educational focus

We have noticed the growing interest in education in our association, and we want to ensure we can keep catering to the evolving interests of our members. Therefore, we want to implement more educational opportunities for our members. Moreover, our relationship with the university is very important to us as a study association. Particularly with this focus on education in mind, we want to maintain a good relationship with our faculty and professors. We rely on the professors to participate in our events, especially within the educational spheres of our Association. Thus, we should also seek to improve our contact with the faculty and teachers. We plan to realise this point by:

Educational focus

- Hosting career events to offer more information on what to do after our members have completed their studies, preferably with alumni
- Hosting events for students to improve their skills and give them tips
- Hosting philosophical discussion nights, where members can discuss topics
- Strengthening our tutoring programme so that Symposion members know that they can contact us if they struggle with their study load
- Organising study nights before exam weeks, or more frequently when possible
- In the case that we want to talk about political topics, we provide opportunities for political conversations within our association that will be able to take place within an educational sphere, where a discussion takes place in a controlled environment, with someone that is able to mediate

University relations

- Maintaining closer contact with the Program Director and Study Advisor
- Involving professors in non-educational events that we think can benefit professor-student relationships, like magazine launches or certain activity events
- Collaborating with the Program Director to organise activities throughout the year where staff and students can enjoy positive interactions
- Collaborating with the Study Advisor to reshape the mentoring program in collaboration with Symposion
- Collaborating with the PhD council
- Strengthening our contact with the Opleidingscommissie (OLC)
- Deepening our ties with a wider range of professors for education events and pub lectures

Well-being within the association

We have noticed that both in general and at the university, there is a growing need for more focus on well-being lately. We, as the board, find ourselves in an advantaged position insofar as we can help fulfil this need for our members. We also feel that the well-being of our members should be one of our top priorities. We want to strive towards providing our members with clearer information on where to find resources or contact points for problems that they encounter. In this way, we can be of greater support to our members on the topic of well-being. The following points will help us in realising this point:

Target groups

- Our members
- The board
- Committee chairs

- We want to emphasise that this association does not endorse any political views; all people are welcome regardless of their political views as long as they adhere to the code of conduct
- Supporting the application for a staff and student-funded JEDI project, which includes an event series and a task force between staff and students to contribute to structures for inclusion and empowerment at the Institute for Philosophy
- Supporting and providing assistance to the JEDI project and task force during the year as Symposion, if it is established
- Maintaining good contact and relationships with our committee chairs and checking up on them regularly, which includes helping them out with their committee if they are struggling
- Creating a clear point of contact for any member who wishes to voice issues or complaints
- Setting up a system for an independent confidential contact person (ccp) for the following years
- Setting up events throughout the year with a focus on well-being
- Creating a clearer structure for struggling students so that they have an easier overview of whom to contact
- Adding a tab on the website for well-being, with clear contact points and important information around well-being
- Create a safe space for our members with open boardroom hours, where they can de-stress and relax in between classes
- Putting greater emphasis on promoting an enjoyable and open atmosphere at events where all members are welcome and included

- Creating moments to open up conversation and discussion on topics that are felt necessary to be addressed and can promote well-being
- As a board, following the well-being trainings offered to us, so that we can implement the things we learn in the association

The organisation of the board roles

Praeses: Esmée Koelewijn (she/her)
The Praeses is responsible for the overall welfare of the association, to make sure that the GMA-approved policy is realised and to function as the front-facing board representative to both members and other bodies. For this, she has an open attitude towards all the members, as well as a clear overview of what is going on in the association. Moreover, it is the responsibility of the Praeses to pay attention to the well-being of the other board members and possible tension between board members. She is there to help out when that is needed, for both other board members, committees and members. This year, she will focus on setting up the system for the CCP and trying to make it more clear who are contact persons and how to contact them, to support our aim of improving well-being. In light of our first aim, she is making sure that there are board members present at all events and that the open boardroom hours are organised and communicated. The aim is to rule the association by maintaining harmony within the board, as well as in the committees and the members.

Ab-actis: Francesco Limacher (he/him)
The Ab-actis is tasked with keeping the member registry up-to-date, updating information on the association's website, organising the emails, sending out monthly emails, writing the minutes for board meetings, and ensuring that the board's tasks and plans are well-structured. This year, the Ab Actis will make a comprehensive review of the member registry to ensure that the document accurately reflects all active members in this document and to carry on the previous board's efforts to professionalise and generalise the structures of the association. He will also prioritise attending all the wellbeing workshops offered to the association, in line with the policy of contributing to the well-being of members within the association, by writing a reflection document that provides notes and reflections based on knowledge gained from attending the workshops. Finally, he will strive to play an assisting and advisory role to board members, specifically in matters of editing, the bylaws, and education-related activities gained from his experience in the education committee to strengthen the policy of educational focus and continue professionalising existing structures.

Quaestor: Cedric Schutter (he/him)
The Quaestor is responsible for handling and overseeing the Symposion spending and earnings. It is their responsibility to know where, why and how money is being spent. Consequently, he also needs to know the ins and outs of the committees, events and any other money-related activities of Symposion and isn't shy to make their stand when people disagree with certain choices. The Quaestor is responsible for creating the yearly budget in which the financial resources of the associations are distributed. The Quaestor will focus on making changes in the budget this year that will support the realisation of the policy. This year, the

Quaestor will focus on spending last year's profit. All spendings of this budget should be in line with the general policy or should further professionalise the association. Besides that, he will be responsible for using the monthly buffer to further fund events. The decision of how this money is spent will be decided by the board. These bigger or additional events are there to further reach our goals in the policy. Examples are the Opera event which expands the educational activities the association gives and the drink and snacks we provide for the open boardroom hours which boosts both the members activity and boosts the wellbeing that is the aim of these open boardroom hours. He will also rewrite the now-outdated transfer document to assist future Quaestors more realistically.

Assessor Intern: Simone Aronson (she/her)

The Assessor Intern is responsible for the guidance and welfare of the committees. She does this through clear instruction for the chairs and making sure they, and their committee members, know they can always reach out to her. At the beginning of the academic year, she is mainly occupied with forming the committees. This year, she wants to form the committees by first appointing chairs, making sure they know what is expected of them, helping them get members (e.g. by organising a committee market) and eventually making the transition from being directly in contact with them, to indirectly (with the help of board representatives) so they are and feel more independent. As committees organise events and flourish throughout this year, the Assessor Intern plans on fulfilling her responsibility that the chairs and committee members feel appreciated and are rewarded for their hard work. In light of our first policy aim, her goal for this year, specifically, is to personally reach out to interested members, who might want to either join or chair committees, or even become a board member in the following year, by providing them with clear information, getting them intrigued and actively involve them in Symposion activities so they’re able to become more experienced and active members. Moreover, the assessor intern is responsible for the structure of the planning of events as well as for the marketing of the events (e.g. by creating planners).

Assessor Extern: Hannah van Riel (she/her)

The Assessor Extern will take the lead in organising joint events with other student associations; think about the Cobo, film analysis night, humanities cafe and a well-being event. This involves initiating contact, coordinating schedules, and ensuring the seamless execution of activities that benefit both our members and connecting with a broader student community. The aim is to build strong inter-association relationships and create opportunities for networking, learning, and social engagement. She will also be responsible for establishing connections with non-study associations, such as organizations that can benefit from our PR and network. This includes initiatives like philosophical gatherings—events aimed at philosophy enthusiasts, students, faculty members, and anyone with an interest in

philosophical discussions. To establish and strengthen these connections, she will be responsible for handling these types of emails. A key responsibility is to elevate the marketing efforts of Symposion on platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn. The Assessor Extern will devise and implement a dynamic social media strategy, focusing on increasing engagement, boosting follower growth, and ensuring our events, initiatives, and successes are effectively communicated to both our internal and external audiences.

Assessor Education: Inga Triebel (they/them)

The Assessor Education is responsible for providing the intellectual landscape for the members of the association as well as keeping close contact with Leiden's Institute for Philosophy. The Assessor of Education collaborates with the Study Advisor and Programme Coordinator to support the Institute for Philosophy in the organization of events, for example the Everything Sucks event, a staff and student picnic or possible further workshops or well-being events that focus on students. In light of our goal to strengthen the educational focus they aim on achieving a better visibility of the tutoring programme, document the mentoring structure, and is open to co-organize events that support students with their studies, like well-being events focussing on how to deal with procrastination and writer's block or going to the opera to encounter joy in a cultural activity. Next to that, they set up the student-run seminars and are part of the application process for a student and staff JEDI project on developing a framework document for addressing issues that occur regarding JEDI-perspectives in the philosophy classroom. Lastly, they also try out new events, since the aim to strengthen the educational peer support in the association is a big point of our policy. Such formats are philosophy study nights, or a peer skill-sharing event. In summary, the Assessor collaborates with the education committee and has an open mind towards realising particular educational events members might have (for example, a skill sharing event).

Final remarks

The points mentioned above are somewhat abstract, but we feel like Symposion is redirecting its focus and that these goals suit that well. Where previous boards dedicated much time to resolving problems regarding the structure of Symposion, we experience the benefits of already implemented structures. We now find it a good time to shift the focus of the goals more towards our members and cater towards their needs. There are no major problems we have identified in terms of the structure, and we feel that we can now work towards our goals while still fixing problems as they come up along the way. We, however, do not feel the need to address this specifically in our policy.

In conclusion, thanks to the efforts of the previous boards, the In Vino Frigido Confidimus Board already has a solid foundation. Nevertheless, there are still areas where we can improve the association. In particular, we strive to fulfil the goals of creating more activity, strengthening academic ties and improving the general well-being. The board will reflect on these goals during several GMAs over the year. Through these GMAs, we will keep the members updated on the state of Symposion, the board and on the plans for Symposion.