Policy of Symposion 2025/2026

24th Board - *Praedona Stulta Stultos Curat*

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1. Function

This document contains the goals, ideas, and ambitions of the 24th Board of Symposion *Praedona Stulta Stultos Curat*. This document serves as a guide and as a point of reference for the accountability of the Board and the members of the association in 2025-2026. This document is proposed by the Board, reviewed by the Committee of Advice and voted in by the Symposion members during the Policy and Budget General Members Assembly (GMA).

2. Introduction

Before stating and elaborating on the policy of the *Praedona Stulta Stultos Curat* Board, I would like to begin with a short acknowledgement of the work done by previous Boards. The only reason we are able to focus on the goals we have set out for ourselves is because the previous Boards have established a strong foundation for us to grow on. We have inherited an association that is stable and well-structured. The *Praedona Stulta Stultos Curat* Board wants to enhance existing structures, as well as take calculated risks to innovate.

3. Overview of Main Items

The Association shall always remain a safe and inclusive environment for all members, creating a space for social and intellectual exchange. The Board and the Committees of Symposion shall facilitate this exchange and ensure that the Association is as described above. In particular, it is the Board's responsibility to uphold and improve the organisational framework of the Association and the Board may take active part in creating the mentioned environment and space.

The *Praedona Stulta Stultos Curat* Board has agreed on the following three main policy items:

1) Internal Growth
2) Further Professionalisation
3) Honouring Symposion's History

4. Elaboration of the Goals and our Plans

In the following section, I will give a more detailed account of *Praedona Stulta Stultos Curat* Board's policy items. I will provide a short explanation as to why we are including the respective items in our policy, what the item entails, and how we plan to actualise it. In addition, I will reference any bylaws that are directly referenced by an action point.

1) Internal Growth

What do we mean by internal growth?

The Board defines internal growth within our policy as the steady trajectory from being an active member to becoming chair and/or Board.

Upon careful deliberation, the Board has decided that in order to grow internally, we need to (1) be transparent about what Board and chair positions entail, (2) sustain positive relationships across all levels of the association, and lastly (3) stimulate and encourage the active participation of members in Symposion overall. The exact details will be covered more concretely in the action points.

Why is internal growth important?

Internal growth is invaluable to the Association. It is most sustainable for the culture of the Association to have a steady foundation of active and experienced members that take on positions of responsibility within the Association. In the past years, despite the number of members increasing, less members are willing to fill the mentioned positions. Hence, the *Praedona Stulta Stultos Curat* Board has made internal growth its primary policy.

It is worth mentioning that the Board acknowledges not every active member goes on to take on roles of responsibility within the association. However, this is not a downside, indeed the opposite is the case. The Association relies on both steady participation of regularly active members and active members who take on roles of responsibility equally. Since we identify a shortage of people willing to take on roles of chair and board positions, our priority lies in increasing the latter pool of members. Any effects our action points have on increasing overall activity within the Association, we welcome gladly.

How will we be able to measure progress?

We hope to see effects of stimulating internal growth to be noticeable by the time the First Years Weekend committee is being formed. The full extent of the success of this policy however will most accurately be measured by next academic year. Notably, by seeing whether active members take on chair positions, and more experienced members apply for Board positions.

What are our concrete action points?

The *Praedona Stulta Stultos Curat* Board is planning to take the following steps to achieve the goal of internal growth.

(1) Transparency of Chair and Board responsibilities

Explanation: A point that may hinder active members from taking on chair or Board positions is uncertainty as to what these roles entail. We see this happen specifically in respect to Board positions. The position of a committee chair is more immediately observed by committee members and thus carries less mystery than Board positions. Nevertheless, it is possible that individual members who have never been part of a committee are motivated to take chair positions, but are hesitant to sign up because they are in the dark as to what the role of committee chair entails. Hence, the Board decided that in order to stimulate internal growth it is necessary to be transparent about these positions. In addition to transparency, we want to create systems of support for the beginning stages of these positions. In light of these agreements, the Board wants to proceed with the following actions.

Action Points:

- Continue attending Symposion events as Board members – being present as Board members not only reflects that we are committed to Symposion, but it also opens opportunities for members to enquire about Board positions.
- Continue holding Boardroom hours as the Board – this gives students the opportunity to talk to Board members about Board and Chair positions.
- Make posts on social media about Board responsibilities, i.e. "a day in the life of a person on the Board", vlogs, etc. - this increases visibility and transparency of Board roles.
- Create a *Chair Guide* that contains basic information about responsibilities of chairs, suggestions on how to create a well functioning committee, etc. - this supports upcoming chairs and makes becoming a chair more accessible.
- Keep an archive of transfer documents for committees and Boards - we can learn lessons from more than just the immediate predecessors.

(2) Sustain positive and supporting relationships across all levels of the association.

Explanation: For Symposion to grow internally, it is vital that the relationships within the association remain positive. If the Board fails to sustain and nurture its relationships with the chairs and members, or fails to encourage positive exchange between chairs and between members, members may feel disinclined to become involved in chair or Board positions at later points in time. Thus, the Board has agreed on the following actions.

Action Points:

- Express gratitude towards active members and committees – this contributes towards a positive atmosphere.

- Maintain good communication at all levels – any tensions can be resolved or avoided through good communication.
- Increase financial support for committee members of ticketed event/product committees - we want to avoid committee members to pay the full price of their own ticketed events without affecting the price of the tickets for regular members negatively.
    - See Implications for Committees to read how we wish to distribute board subsidies.
- Archiving the work of creative committees on the Symposion website – this will increase visibility and show our appreciation for their contributions.

(3) Stimulating active participation within Symposion

Explanation: Stimulating active participation within the Association increases the chances of members becoming active regularly and later becoming motivated to be involved in shaping the association. Increasing the numbers of regularly active members is a positive byproduct of this subpoint. The Board agrees that participation among members is especially high at educational events and well-marketed events. Hence, the Board will focus on educational events, and on its marketing to increase participation. The Board wants to proceed with the following actions.

Action Points:

- Create and encourage a large diversity of educational events - Symposion members have diverse philosophical interests and Symposion should reflect that.
- Continue regular Boardroom hours and study sessions – this routine gives members more opportunities to meet one another.
- Announce monthly and weekly overviews of Symposion events – members can only attend events that they are aware of, and unstructured marketing makes it more confusing.
- Create a sharable google calendar – this again should facilitate members being aware of Symposion events.
- Improve marketing on Instagram, i.e. post stories, and photo recaps of events – this will enable us to reach and convince a wider audience to attend Symposion events.

2) Further Professionalisation

What do we mean by further professionalisation?

We specify that it is the further professionalisation of the association, as previous Boards have taken initiative to develop more professionality within the association. This year, we want to take concrete actions concerning the image of the Association and internal marketing. Specifically, *Praedona Stulta Stultos Curat* will continue on the path of professionalisation of the Association by (1) focusing on the outward facing image of the Association and by (2) focusing on the internal image of the Association. The latter specifically refers to the image that internal professional structures of Symposion produces. More details can be found in the explanation and action points below.

Why is professionalisation important?

Concerning (1), the outward facing image of the Association is crucial in building relationships with external parties, such as potential collaborators and sponsors. Not only will polishing our outward facing image increase our chances to collaborate with professional organizations, it will set future Boards up for a head start in building mentioned relationships.

As for (2), the internal image and functioning impacts the smooth-running of Symposion. It is important to consider how the Association comes across to its members, as this will influence how members relate to the association. Professionalising internal structures allows Board members to reduce time spent on for instance repetitive administrative tasks, and it opens up the door to further innovations within the Association.

How will we be able to measure progress?

Our further professionalisation of the Association will be measured most concretely by the completion of our action points. This goes for internal and external professionalisation equally. In respect to the latter, and as previously mentioned, it is not yet our goal to establish relationships with external parties, rather we will focus on implementing strong foundations for this to happen. Any partnerships we manage to establish are a bonus for this year's Board.

What are our concrete action points?

The *Praedona Stulta Stultos Curat* Board is planning to take the following steps to achieve the goal of further professionalisation.

(1) <u>External Image</u>

Explanation: First impressions matter, and we wish to polish our outward facing image by focusing on our website, social media pages and Board clothing. Overall, we want to strengthen Symposion's visual brand. The Board wants to proceed with the following actions.

Action Points:

- Completion of a presentable website - this means: no pages with the old layout, no "weird pages" (e.g. the old student well-being), and only user friendly and informative pages.
- Increase the budget for Board clothing – it is standard for Boards to wear embroidered vests, and these costs should be covered.
- Install Gmail accounts for all committees - committees can send emails in the name of the Association.
- Purchase a Symposion flag – we can easily represent Symposion at Open Days and other information events.
- Continue to document our events on Instagram – this is the most up to date place for external parties to discover Symposion.
- Continue to expand our network in Linked-In – we can connect with alumni and partners and post updates of our educational events and initiatives.

(2) <u>Internal Professionalisation</u>

Explanation: The Board agrees that improvements can be made regarding internal professional structures of Symposion. We are specifically referring to professional structures and tools that relate to our members directly, such as online chats, emails, calendars and marketing. Some of the following action points affect the members' experience of Symposion directly, while other points relate to tasks of the Board. The Board wants to proceed with the following actions.

Action Points:

- Introduce a WhatsApp community system - links all chats together and gives Symposion the means to enforce more easily a code of conduct. It has potential to be expanded in the future.
- Share a Symposion Events (google) calendar that members can link to their own calendars – this point is mentioned in (3) of internal growth, but equally pertains to the policy of internal professionalisation.
- Link the google calendar to the Symposion events page to the Symposion website – reduces repetitive tasks for the Ab-Actis.
- Install automated emails for failed membership payments – reduces repetitive tasks for the Ab-Actis.
- Invest into Symposion's inventory, i.e. buy a Symposion camera – this facilitates internal marketing.
- Install automated emails for memberships and ticketed events – reduces repetitive tasks for the Ab-Actis and committee members and keeps members informed by confirming their purchase.

3) Honouring Symposion's History

What do we mean by honoring Symposion's History?

Symposion will be entering a Lustrum year in 2026. The *Praedona Stulta Stultos Curat* Board has decided to set the next Board off to a good start by collecting and archiving Symposion's history. We are specifically looking to document unique turning points of the association's structures, notable innovations and [anything else]. We are also looking to create a data-base of honorary members, find ways in which we can honour them satisfactorily, and create means in which Symposion Alumni can connect with the Association. In addition to looking at the past of Symposion's history, the Board wants to focus on the history that is being currently created. We are hoping to initiate and carry on recent traditions and make sure that they will be continued.

Why is honoring Symposion's history important?

First, the collection and documentation of Symposion's history will give the next Board time to focus on Lustrum related events rather than squandering around for information.

More importantly however, the Board, as well as past Boards agree that with every new generation of Symposion, traditions and knowledge goes lost. In documenting Symposion's most crucial changes and memorable traditions, this knowledge can be passed down to all the future Boards and members.

In addition, writing down Symposion's history will enable current members to reflect on the history they have witnessed and have actively taken part in shaping. This addition contributes to our first policy point, internal growth, as active members, Board members and chairs can see how their actions and initiatives contribute to the ever evolving culture and face of the association. By documenting and archiving the work of the committees we are expressing our gratitude towards them and honoring Symposion's history simultaneously. Furthermore, documentation of Symposion's history also contributes to our second policy, that of further professionalization. Having archives and a written history on our website on the one hand contributes to our external image and opens the door for collaborations with Symposion alumni. While on the other, having a clear outline of Symposion traditions provides a ground and layout for future committees and Boards to follow.

How will we be able to measure progress?

This policy is centered around the completion of the tasks and projects it sets out for itself. Our progress will be measured most concretely by the end of the year.

What are our concrete action points?

The *Praedona Stulta Stultos Curat* Board is planning to take the following steps to achieve the goal of honouring Symposion's history.

Explanation: It is not possible for the current Board to create an exhaustive overview of Symposion's entire history, therefore we have decided on a distinct number of projects and tasks which we will hopefully be able to complete by the end of our year. Notably, this policy does not contain concrete sub points that will contribute to the goal of honouring Symposion's history, rather the action points count as separate projects that are directed at this goal. The Board wants to proceed with the following actions.

Action Points:

- Add a section on the website, i.e. About Us page, that tells the history of Symposion – the concrete information we want to include will be gathered by the following action point.
- Recorded interviews/podcasts with Symposion Elders and honorary members – this will be stored digitally and analogue, information gathered from these may be used to write the short history of Symposion.
- Create a data-base of Symposion's honorary members – without a clear data-base, it will be impossible to keep records of honorary members.
- Create a data-base and out-reach form for Symposion alumni and/or partners – former Symposion members or partners may want to (re)connect with Symposion for their own projects or Symposion may want to be able to contact them.
- Begin writing commentaries to the bylaws – the last Board has given us a clean slate to start with.
- Carry on Symposion traditions – this includes simple things such as keeping the annual dinner a themed event, making curry at the First Years Weekend, choosing Latin puns for the Board's name, secret santa between Board and chairs etc.
- Start some of our own traditions, e.g. mascot and other ideas – the Board agrees that we have the freedom to be weird and creative with any tradition suggestions.

This concludes the elaboration of the policy goals and plans of the *Praedona Stulta Stultos Curat* board.

5. Implications for Committees

The *Praedona Stulta Stultos Curat* Board has made its plans on achieving the policy goals clear. As per bylaw 4.2 , committee chairs are responsible for carrying out any policy that relates to their committee. I would like to use this section in the policy to lay out the concrete consequences of our policy for affected committees of Symposion.

Activity Committee, Dinner Committee, First Years Weekend Committee, Merchandising Committee, Study Trip Committee

In the policy of internal growth, we specified that members of committees of ticketed events will receive financial support by the Board, so that they may receive higher discounts on their own events without affecting the cost of regular members highly.

The above committees, except the Merchandising Committee, usually organise at least one ticketed event and are thus included in this fund. The Merchandising Committee is included in this list as it produces a paid product, similar to a ticketed event, and we would like to grant the Merchandising Committee members access to their own product at a discounted price.

Currently, Symposion's budget does not yet allow for the proposed discounts to be fully funded by Symposion. The Board has set aside a "Organizer reimbursement pool" in the Symposion budget. Find below how we will allocate these funds.

Symbol	Meaning	Symbol	Meaning
B_T	Total Board-allocated fund	D_c	Discount Cost
P	Regular price of ticket/product	F	Allocated fund for committee
M	Number of committee **members**	S	Self-fund for committee
D_t	Target Discount (e.g. 100%, 25%, etc.)	$\sum D_c$	Sum of discount costs of all committees

$$D_c = P \times M \times D_t$$

to calculate the discount cost of each committee

$$F = D_c \times B_T / \sum D_c$$

to calculate the fund that the Board-fund can allocate to each respective committee. With this formula the fund will be used up fully and it supports each committee equally.

$$S = D_c - F$$

to calculate the self-fund that each committee would have to include in their own budget in order for them to reach their target discount.

The Board specifies the following target discounts:

Activity committee: 100 % discount for 1 ticketed event
Dinner committee: 100 % discount for 1 ticketed event
First Year's Weekend committee: 25 % discount for the first years weekend
Merchandising committee: 100 % discount on any 1 item up to 20€
Study Trip Committee: 25 % discount (calculated based on the average price of the ticket types) on the ticket of choice

The Board-allocated fund (F) **must** be used to give **each** committee member a discount on their own ticket or product. Committees are advised to reach their target discounts (D_t) but are not obliged to do so. Committees **may** agree to give individual members (such as Chair or Head of Food) higher discounts on their tickets, however these discounts must be calculated within their own budget.

Education Committee

In the policy of internal growth, we specified that educational events shall be representative of the wide-ranging philosophical interests of Symposion members. This shall be reflected in the education committees' choice of events.

Formation Committee

In the policy of internal growth, we **recommend** that the formation committee focuses on marketing Board positions to experienced members, preferably ones who will be entering their third (or higher) year of their studies. We acknowledge that past Formation Committees have recognised the importance of this, nevertheless the Board now states this recommendation explicitly.

6. The Board's Functions and Actions

In the following paragraphs each board member elaborates on the function of their role and specific actions that they will undertake in light of the policy.

Praeses, Maureen Clara Foley (**she/her**)
The Praeses carries the final responsibility of the Association as a whole and therefore must keep overview of all of Symposion's happenings. Over the course of the board year, Maureen wants to lead with vision and she is not afraid of making innovations happen. Beyond her role of Praeses, and in relation to the action points of the policy, she will be in charge of improving the interface of the Symposion website and creating and sharing monthly and weekly overviews of Symposion events. She will ensure that projects of the third policy point – honouring Symposion's history – will be completed. She has already introduced a WhatsApp community system. She is a strong advocate of good communication and will ensure to maintain harmony within the board and Association as a whole.

Ab-Actis, Veere Nieuwenhuizen (**she/her**)
The Ab-Actis managed to install automated emails which she intends to implement from now on, bringing us closer toward our goal of further professionalization. Automated emails provide more transparency for members. For instance, they will be able to know that their payment for a particular event successfully came through. Furthermore, while it is one of the tasks of the Ab-Actis to keep track of member payments, Veere located a wider problem of failed payments and discovered that a certain issue has been occurring for some members subscriptions over the past few years. The Ab-Actis aims to resolve this issue this year by getting in touch with those involved. Finally, the Ab-Actis will be keeping documentation of all our events. This includes keeping track of information of when, what, the number of attendees, as well as some comments. This will enable us to make more comprehensive transfer documents for our successors. Moreover, keeping records is also a way of capturing Symposion history so that future generations will have access to that as well.

Quaestor, Wiek Johannes Petrus Breedeveld (**he/him**)
The role of Quaestor entails working closely together with both committees and external partners. Wiek has transposed this year's policy to a financial plan. For the budget, this means using Symposion's financial wellbeing to fund our goal of stimulating internal growth, for example by redistributing assets in favour of committee members, and investing into making the Symposion boardroom a place where members can have a good time. Regarding Symposion's external relationships and the policy of further professionalisation, Wiek has noticed that through a decrease of proper care, our relationship with Index has grown lacking. Having done a

fruitful meeting at the start of the year, Wiek is already close to his goal of making sure our ties stay strong. Some other changes are made to the way we approach our partnership, for example by focussing on delivering the yearly book list in advance.

Co-Assessor Intern, Wiek Johannes Petrus Breedeveld (he/him) & Hidde-Bas Adriaan van Campen (he/him)

This year the role of intern is shared among two people, Wiek and Hidde-Bas. In light of this, any information and advice given to chairs should be uniform and coherent. In beginning their board year, the Interns have created a *Chair Guide*. More than laying out useful information for chairs, the guide also elaborates on principles and values of Symposion that are relevant to chairs. This document will be made accessible to all the new chairs this year, and can be built on in the future. The Interns have already undertaken the task of creating committee specific gmail accounts, and linked to the board Google drive that is managed by the Association. To further ease the new chairs into their roles, the Interns have also made all transfer documents available to the chairs. Furthermore, the Interns will continue working towards the policy goal of internal growth specifically by upholding a positive and relaxed environment for chairs in meetings and other bonding activities.

Assessor Extern, Hidde-Bas Adriaan van Campen (he/him)

The Assessor Extern cares for and maintains the board's relations with external parties, such as boards of other study or student associations, university committees such as the Vero, faculty council as well as other companies and organizations.In order to profile our association as professional he has advocated for a classic suit as board clothing. For our digital presence, he has delegated the Symposion Instagram to a more experienced user of this platform in order to boost our reach. He will manage the image of the Board on LinkedIn in a professional manner. Hidde-Bas intends to use our digital presence to help profile our association as serious and proper to any businesses he will approach concerning the career event Symposion intends to undertake this year.

Assessor Education, Tillie Jane Rose (she/her)

The Assessor Education works with other members of the Board, the Institute for Philosophy, and the Education Committee to promote a flourishing academic community. Serving as a bridge between students and the Institute, the role encourages engagement across all levels of philosophical thinking in the University. Responsibilities include coordinating the BA and MA Mentoring Programmes, the Symposion Tutoring Programme, and the Student-Run Seminars, as well as supporting career support (like the Alumni Events). The Assessor Education also collaborates with events like talks, debates, and other philosophical events that motivate conversation with students and lecturers. In regard to the policy, Tillie, as delegated by the

Assessor Extern, is in charge of the Symposion Instagram. She will keep members notified about upcoming events, post recaps of past events and keep the content informative and entertaining. She will ensure that board responsibilities will be made transparent to members through Instagram as well. Concerning educational events, she will ensure that diverse educational fields will be represented through Symposion events, strongly advocating for the inclusion of Theoretical Philosophy.

7. Final Remarks

Overall, the *Praedona Stulta Stultos Curat* Board is willing to set up future generations of Symposion for success by focusing on internal growth, by innovating in respect to the further professionalisation of the Association, and by documenting and honouring Symposion's history.

Finally, while the Board's priority is to reach their policy goals and actualise their action points, we are not limited to the policy. We will make sure our actions and decisions are in line with the well-being of Symposion members and contribute to a safe and inclusive environment where social and intellectual exchange can flourish.

To round off *Praedona Stulta Stultos Curat*'s policy, all items and concrete action points are in line with the bylaws (June 6th 2025). We have taken into consideration Article 2 of the bylaws to ensure the overall duties of the Association are met by our policy. We aim to reach all our policy points by the end of our term, and hope that our efforts will count positively towards long-lasting effects on the Association as a whole.