

Party Program 2022-2023

Student Party ECCO



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Introduction

For the past 30 years, Student Party ECCO has been your voice in the TiSEM Faculty Council. In the past years, our focus has centred around the following topics: Career Development, Quality of Education, Student Welfare and Student Integration. These overarching focus areas have provided a solid base for the many positive changes, innovations and solutions that we have realised in the previous years. In this document, we used these focus areas to summarise our party program for the elections of the upcoming academic year with updated ideas and aspirations to improve your student life at TiSEM.

In the past, Student Party ECCO arranged several important affairs for students by forwarding different memos to the management team. For example, Student Party ECCO is co-responsible for the realisation of two start dates for most of the master programs offered at TiSEM. Furthermore, we have arranged that for TiSEM students there will be no forced additional costs on cases and software licences. Moreover, in collaboration with staff representatives, ECCO has achieved re-implementation of the Last Chance Regulation, starting in September 2020. Lastly, Student Party ECCO has forwarded in 2022 a memo regarding the need for internationalisation within TiSEM and several solutions have been implemented by the University, including the appointment of a Diversity and Inclusion Officer. ECCO will always advocate for improving the quality of education, even in times of austerity and performance targets.

What is the faculty council?

On a two-monthly basis, the faculty council takes place, where 7 students and 7 staff members meet with the Faculty Management Team to discuss ongoing affairs in the fields of education, research and budgets. We represent student interests in situations where the Faculty Management Team has decided to amend existing policies or introduce new measures. Furthermore, via our right of initiative determined by law, we create new benefits for students by being the students' voice and defending their rights. Often students and staff have different interests, but the discussions between the two sides are constructive. The challenge for both parties is to benefit from finding the best possible solutions.



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Career Development

Of the nearly 8.000 TiSEM students, most will probably pursue a career outside academia. We, at Student Party ECCO, want to improve the connection that TiSEM students have with the labour market, already during their studies, to make sure they feel prepared and confident when entering the labour market post-graduation.

Currently, students can inform themselves about the job market in various ways; study associations and other independent organisations fulfil a large role. However, we at Student Party ECCO believe that there is room for improving the opportunities available to the TiSEM student. Although our school already offers our students great facilities that they can use for career development, through our excellent TiSEM Career Services Office, improvement is always welcomed. For us, this improvement would mainly lie in better integration of these facilities into the students' lives, employing more accessible information from the very beginning. One way of approaching this is to update information and inform students about career portals through events since not enough students know about the career services platform. Student Party ECCO would strive for well-designed guidelines for everyone involved to ensure an optimal result for educational purposes.

Expanding the variety of opportunities

Furthermore, we want to increase the practical applicability of the faculty's career events. In our opinion, it is important that the faculty implements practical cases. Real-world cases give students a better grasp of the activities a recent graduate is going to encounter. Additionally, first-hand information from businesses, that are promoted through guest speakers, are highly beneficial for the students of TiSEM. It ensures compassionate and valuable tips from knowledgeable speakers, as well as networking opportunities for students and companies who seek to recruit future interns. These kinds of implementations can give bachelor students the ability to make more informed decisions when it comes to choosing the right master's program. We also recognize that promoting these possibilities to the students is of the utmost importance because several TiSEM students do not know about the existence of these possibilities.



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Internships and minors

Lastly, we see an opportunity for internships and the expansion of minors within the curriculum. First of all, we aim to achieve better assistance and support for gaining real-world experience through an internship. First steps have been made in previous years since students can now earn ECTS for doing an internship. A developed online learning environment (e.g. recorded lectures) would improve flexibility which is useful when a student is busy with an internship or other extracurricular activities from nine to five. The possibility of predetermined compositions of elective courses would not only help with exam schedules but also for students who find it hard to choose which subjects to take. Another improvement that ECCO wants to put in place is to establish opportunities for internships. Including this, we thrive to expand the possibility of going to another university within the Netherlands to follow some of their courses, which will count as minors within TiSEM.



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Quality of Education

Generally speaking, the main reason people choose to pursue higher education within a university is to get the best education possible in a specific field of practice. TiSEM strives to provide the very best education in the fields of economics and management. ECCO wants to make sure no measure is spared to provide students with everything they need to obtain their bachelor's, and master's degree in the best way possible, or to even pursue higher degrees within the university. We, at Student Party ECCO, encourage communication on every level to ensure that information is not misunderstood. We are of the opinion that there is room for improvement regarding structure and interaction between students and faculty. To tackle this misalignment of interests, we feel the following points are of great importance.

Responsiveness and Communicative Capability

Student Party ECCO would argue that a majority of studies within TiSEM are dealing with a communication problem; students in several Sounding Board and Education Committee meetings have made it apparent that they feel they have too little contact or responsiveness from their relevant teacher or coordinator. We believe that this needs to be tackled on a faculty level since it plays a part in all studies within the faculty. We need to look for a solution that involves students and enables other faculty members to help since this would lighten the load on both parties, ultimately making communication a smooth process again. This includes circumventing information overload. An example of this could be a Q&A session to avoid confusion or misunderstanding from the students' view and relieve the strain for teachers.

Post-pandemic life

Currently, most classes are taught in-person. Therefore, Student Party ECCO wants students to have a smooth transition back to in-person learning in a post-pandemic world. Although students benefit from having resources available online, as it allows students to follow and comprehend the material more easily, unfortunately, these resources are not offered consistently across all bachelor and master programs, which can lead to a disadvantage for both students and teachers. While the university gives freedom to teachers to adapt their teaching style as they see fit in order to encourage students' interaction in class and to increase the number in attendance, the switch from online to offline education has to be done in a collaborative way with students so that all parties involved can benefit from the educational value provided. The university gives freedom to teachers to teach as they see fit in order to encourage students to come to the campus or if they feel that it is good for the educational value. We at ECCO believe that this negatively impacts students who do not have time to attend all lectures at their specific time slot but are still working hard to finish their studies.



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Moreover, in today's labour market, students are expected to be well-rounded, which means that simply having a high academic record is not enough. Students who participate in extracurricular activities (e.g., board year, committees, internships) cannot attend all lectures. We are convinced that the professors should assist students who are willing to expand their horizons outside of their studies. Some reasons that account for this issue can be the fact that the student is sustaining himself/herself financially and therefore he/she is not always available to come to campus. Having material available to go back to online has become an integral part of students' study routine and has shown itself massively valuable in the eyes of the student in terms of their personal development; we fully align ourselves with that belief.

Effective examination

Exam periods can be the most difficult and stressful times of the academic year and TiSEM should do as much as it can to make the process as smooth as possible. Student Party ECCO believes that TiSEM can do a lot more to prevent the number of issues that could arise during exam periods. If something goes wrong, students are asked to be flexible or adapt to the situation. To improve this inconvenient circumstance during exam periods, teachers should be available to answer students' questions, if necessary. We would like to point out that many exams are scheduled close to Christmas. As 30% of the students at Tilburg University are international, it is difficult or almost impossible to return home when exams are scheduled a day or several days before Christmas. Therefore, we believe that the exam dates should be scheduled accordingly for students so that there is a possibility to get home on important dates.

Another issue we encounter is that exams should be tested for content and representativeness. A lot of exams (especially early in the bachelor's) are made to be easily checked and graded. However, this has taken a turn for the worse as many students feel they are making a test that measures their knowledge of replicability of theory rather than the concepts discussed. We believe that there is room for improvement when it comes to the overall quality of examination, and we want to work to get a feasible alternative to the current state of affairs.



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Student Welfare

During your time as a student at Tilburg University, student life can sometimes be perceived as difficult and stressful. Stress that is being amplified by the pandemic and the consequences that the past year had on the education system is moving forward.

The pandemic has created many challenges for students, forcing them to adapt to a new education format, which has allowed us to understand the underlying issues that students face with our best efforts to improve them. With the pandemic coming to an end, we would also like to focus on continuously improving the students' academic support.

Clear channel of communication

To make sure that all students have all the resources necessary to deal with the stress created by the topics mentioned above, we would like to promote the accessibility of necessary information for students.

Information that we believe should be accessible is: the right people to contact such as student psychologists, education coordinators, self-help tips and details about workshops that can help students improve their academic life by allowing them to find their strengths and the right learning style for them.

PASS Improvement

PASS (Program for Academic Study Success) has been designed to help first-year TiSEM students receive the help, support and guidance they need for the duration of their first year. We believe that the PASS will improve the experience of student life and student well-being. Therefore we position ourselves to be of support towards the study associations, MAK and CS.



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Student integration

TiSEM is a very international faculty with an international presence of 1440 students. We indeed believe in internationalisation. Moreover, Student Party ECCO has already started working on this topic by forwarding a memo to the management team. However, we perceive that this international character is not fully exploited, in a way that both Dutch and international students can engage in activities, both in and out of class, that can benefit them in terms of knowledge and information about each other's experiences and cultures. Thus, ECCO would like to dedicate itself to promoting and implementing practices to keep the University a diverse, safe, and inclusive atmosphere for all international and local students.

Uniting the student body

The lack of social engagement between international and Dutch students is detrimental to the scope of the study programs because it is directly impeding the learning outcomes and social aspects that we could all benefit from. Getting to know many students from different backgrounds prepares us for our future careers since we live in a globalised world where cultural sensitivity is of great importance. We would like to change this by advocating for mixed workgroups (i.e. diminishing the chances of having groups formed of students of the same nationality) and the continuous recommendation to speak English so that everyone can understand each other.

Internship opportunities for international students

Generally, international students have a difficult time finding internships in the Netherlands. Student Party ECCO will work closely with TiSEM Career Services to the best of our abilities to offer more opportunities for international students. Furthermore, we will advocate for the organisation of events involving companies as well as collaborations with other student parties and associations that have an international orientation, so that both Dutch and international students can benefit from an enriching work experience in an international setting.



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Improve the representativeness of the mentorship program

The PASS (Program for Academic Success Skills) mentors are another important aspect of integrating the Dutch and international students. They make up the first impression as well as the first interaction with the university for the new students.

Different from last year's approach, we will work with the faculty in order to improve the group dynamics of the Pass program. The ECCO party believes that creating groups of one Dutch and one foreign student could help students feel more welcome at Tilburg University. We believe that speaking English through the

Pass mentoring programs and even Top week can significantly improve the dynamic between international students and Dutch ones.



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