



Policy plan
Icarus 2020 - '21

Preface:

Dear Icari,

The board of 2020 – '21 is proud to present our policy plan of this academic year! We hope that everyone finds themselves agreeing with the plans we have set forward. Due to the coronavirus we all find ourselves in places we wouldn't even be able to imagine just a couple of months ago. It has certainly been a challenge for us to still provide our members with meaningful interactions with their peers and to try to keep the community alive. That's why we are so grateful for all the members we have that kept engaging with the community and kept Icarus going. And that's also why we are *especially* grateful to our new committee members who were willing to invest their time in making an even better place. We are very grateful for all of you!

With kind regards,

The board of 2020 – '21

Jasmine, Joris and Quinten

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Our policy plan is structured in seven interlocking themes. In every one of these sections, we explain our vision on the subject, the challenges we faces regarding it, and the solutions we provide. Under each section you will find *in cursive* every concrete policy summarized.

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**'life must be understood backwards. But it must
be lived forward.'**

- Søren Kierkegaard

1. Internationalization

We are proud to see that a large part of our community is made up of international students. The fact that so many international students have enjoyed Icarus as an important part of their community and as a way to get accustomed to living in the Netherlands, is a great achievement of previous boards. It's a great sign of the inclusivity of Icarus, that so many international students feel at home with us. We will happily maintain our policy of English as the official language of Icarus. This will also be the case with all our online activities, like the website, Instagram, and events . Furthermore, we will also write our official and internal documents in English from now on. We will do this so internal documents will be available for future international students, who have become a vital part of our boards and committees. Lastly Icarus will try to help international students adapt to their new environment by actively promoting relevant information about buddy-programs and language courses on our website and social media platforms.

- 1.a) Icarus maintains English as its official language and expands this policy to its media channels and internal documents to achieve more inclusivity in our association.*
- 1.b) We will provide and promote relevant information for buddy-programs, language courses, and other ways of getting accustomed to living abroad.*

2. Community in times of isolation

The coronavirus has obviously greatly impacted all of our social lives. We cannot count on our Social Room to bring people together and engage them in philosophy anymore. Although we have added a great amount of new enthusiastic members, there are many students who have not yet come into contact with Icarus, while there are also many members we have lost touch with. It's important that we engage new members to create the new generation of Icarus, while it's also important to maintain the old one. Unfortunately, we are bound to fulfill this task without any *real* social contact. Since we expect that this situation will last for at least the rest of the academic year, we should

adapt to face these problems head-on. Our solutions are manifold: **Firstly** we have to make our committees adapt to an online environment. This means the functions of the BaCo and AcCie need to change temporarily. The BaCo will replace the biweekly borrels with monthly or weekly activities, for example online borrels and discussion evenings. The AcCie will focus on creating events related to philosophy, studying or special one-off events like creating an online escape room or a philosophical walking tour. The ReisCie will remain mostly the same. However, since there is little security about the future of international travel, they will need to adapt and respond creatively to make sure our trip will be safe and responsible. Unfortunately, there is no way for the FeCie to responsibly fulfill their tasks and thus this committee will be temporarily suspended until there is less insecurity regarding corona-measurements. **Secondly**, we will need to inform and engage people regarding these events and all philosophical happenings. This task will be dealt with by the newly created *Social-media committee* (the SoCo). This committee will preside over our website, Instagram, Facebook, and all forms of promotion. They will also be in charge of the newsletter, which will inform members about our events, member-initiatives and interesting philosophical plays, podcasts, or movies to follow. **Thirdly**, we will diversify the nature of our activities as to engage more members and attract new ones. Our intended goal of this policy is to reduce the barrier of entry into our community for new members by catering to specific interest, while also keeping old members engaged.

- 2.a) *We will establish the SoCo to increase our online presence and accessibility. This committee will preside over the website, Instagram, Facebook, the newsletter, and all forms of promotion.*
- 2.b) *The BaCo, ReisCie and AcCie will need to adapt to perform their duties in a predominantly online and precarious environment.*
- 2.c) *The BaCo and AcCie will organize a wide array of online activities on a regular basis.*
- 2.d) *The FeCie will be put on hold until the situation allows its function to be carried out responsibly again.*

3. Preparing for the future

We owe great gratitude to previous boards in making Icarus the place it is today. We have a very active and engaged community, while having more members than we have ever had! It's quite essential that we do whatever it takes to maintain the community and advances we have made, so we can get back right on track of where we left off when the pandemic is over. In the meantime, we can focus on fine tuning the things we have to make things easier for future boards. There are plenty of critical documents which are in need of updating due to these different times. Documents like the code of conduct (*NL= huishoudelijk reglement*), script of the board (*NL= het draaiboek*) and even our by-laws are still only available in Dutch, and therefore not accessible to many of our members and even some of our committees. We will need to rewrite those in English to fully deliver on our promise of inclusivity and internationalization. We also see a great deal of opportunities in creating new functions and activities of Icarus that might stay with us after the pandemic. **Firstly**, we have set up the Social Media committee (SoCo) to help us with the goals set forth in section 2. We will also try some form of an education committee and an office for social safety, ideas on which we will expand in section 5 and 7. After some period of time, we can evaluate the performances of these instantiations and determine their value for Icarus and future boards. **Secondly**, we will establish our social media platforms, newsletter, and website firmly as tools for communication, information, and promotion. We will also investigate the possibility of *creating* a place for sharing philosophical publications of Icari and the likes, comparable to 'Plaf' or 'Politeiamagazine'. **Thirdly**, while our committees are adapting themselves and their activities to an online environment, we hope to create returning activities that, by virtue of their engagement and success, can hopefully be taken into the regular activities Icarus undertakes. **Fourthly**, we will try to undertake more activities and cooperate more with the other study association of the humanities: *Synkratos, K.L.I.C.H.E. and Merlijn*. By creating more shared recurring events, like the year-round pub quiz battle, we can create new social and philosophical exchanges.

- 3.a) The current board will rewrite important documents in English like the script of the board (NL= het draaiboek), code of conduct (NL= huishoudelijk reglement), and by-laws (NL= statuten) and update them to be relevant and accurate.*
- 3.b) The SoCo will be evaluated on its merits at the end of the year and will, when judged by members at an ALV as a successful addition, be codified in our list of active committees.*
- 3.c) Recurring activities tried out by the BaCo and AcCie will be evaluated at the end of the year and if successful codified in the list of active duties of a commission.*
- 3.d) Icarus will improve cooperation with the other associations of the Faculty of Humanities. We will investigate the possibility of longstanding recurring projects, such as the year-round competition of the pubquiz.*
- 3.e) We will investigate the possibility of creating a place for sharing philosophical publications of Icari and the likes, comparable to 'Plaf' or 'Politeiamagazine'.*

4. Icarus as a steppingstone

By being a place of philosophical debate and exchange of ideas, Icarus has always been a place for personal growth. Our new modes of communication should reflect that. It will be our goal to update the website, such that new students can find helpful information about many different aspects of studying and living as a student. One issue which is facing many students, is envisioning futures and paths to take in life with their philosophy degrees. Luckily, we have many alumni who have woven their own paths and whose examples can help students envision their own. We want Icarus to provide members with those visions, mainly by keeping contact with alumni and organizing career related events. Our new media channels will also promote the work of our alumni. We will also investigate the possibility of creating an online platform for Icarus-alumni to maintain professional and social contact or to share their work. This project has been fittingly dubbed by the A.R.O.B. as 'Daedalus', canonically Icarus's father.

- 4.a) We will design our website to provide relevant information for many aspects of studying philosophy, like: studying abroad, selection of courses, student experiences, links to counseling, student rights, VU policies, etc. .*

- 4.b) *We will try to establish better contact with alumni, while also promoting more of their work. One possibility, that we will investigate, to do this is 'Daedalus'.*
- 4.c) *Icarus aims to help members with envisioning their future careers and other paths.*

5. Philosophy

Since the Faculty of Religion and Theology parted ways with us last year, Icarus officially only represents philosophy-students in the department of humanities. However, due to some past events, there exists a negative perception of Icarus which many of the board of the FGW take as true. These misperceptions center around the idea of Icarus as solely facilitating drinking and partying. This perception has been quite harmful for us and we aim to change things for the better this year. We hope to change their perspective by communicating better and showing them what Icarus can provide in terms of study-experience and philosophical development. The AcCie will focus more heavily on creating study/philosophy-related events to further this goal and to actually fulfill our promise of facilitating philosophical development, The AcCie will for example organize study sessions and guest lectures. We will also use the newsletter and other social media to keep people updated and informed about all kinds of philosophical instantiations (articles, movies, books, podcasts). Lastly, we will experiment with the idea of an education committee. This committee would in theory take over the tasks of the AcCie as a body with the sole purpose of furthering educational development. This body would also function as a middleman and point of contact between teachers and students as to gap the communicational bridge between these groups.

- 5.a) *We aim to better the relationship with the faculty of the humanities by means of better communication and showing our benefits in terms of study-experience and philosophical development.*
- 5.b) *The AcCie and BaCo will focus more heavily on creating studying-related activities.*
- 5.c) *The newsletter will, besides its other uses, be used as a tool for furthering philosophical participation by recommending philosophy in all its forms: articles, museums, plays, podcasts, movies, etc.*
- 5.d) *We will investigate the option of creating an education committee.*

6. Climate responsibility

Climate change needs no introduction, nor do we need to emphasize it's destructive nature or it's live-ending capabilities. Carbon emissions from Icarus will probably be at an all-time low due to the corona-measurements. But still, we didn't feel it to be appropriate to leave out such a generation-defining problem. In this section, we want to reiterate our commitment to become as carbon neutral as possible. This also entails we will ban the use of single use plastics, like plastic plates and cutlery.

6.a) Committees and boards will strive to reduce all unnecessary carbon emissions.

6.b) Single-use plastics will not be used in any event, unless absolutely necessary.

7. Diversity & Inclusivity

Diversity and inclusivity are core values of Icarus. We didn't put this section at the end of our policy plan as an afterthought. We put it here because we hope that every other measurement works in its service. By having a website and increased internet-presence, our activities will attract new people who might have not been informed about the things we do. By having more activities that relate to philosophy and specific interest we will attract members with different interests and viewpoints. By offering everything Icarus has in a language everyone understands, we hope to leave no barrier in place for anyone interested. By making Icarus work for everyone, we hope to meet different people and come across new ideas. This will however not always go smoothly. There's always the chance for conflict in human interaction. Icarus needs to be a safe space for **everyone**, and when that's not possible there needs to be someone to resolve any points of conflict. For this purpose we want to seek out a trusted and impartial member of the community to become a sort of talking figure for those whose social conflict needs to be resolved. This person cannot be a member of any current boards or committees since impartiality is crucial for trust.

- 7.a) *We will investigate the possibility of creating a new function: a person (a confidant) who people can contact to hear their complaints and resolve social conflicts within our association.*

**'If I had more time, I would have written a
shorter ~~letter.~~'**
Policy plan

– Mark Twain

Appendix: list of all policies and commitments

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