

**annual report
WUR Council**

2022

Preface

Last year we closed the annual report with the hope that the corona measures would disappear, and we could meet again in the lecture halls, offices, and meeting rooms. In March, it was so, and a few months later, the lockdown seemed forgotten. And yet some things have changed. Online meetings and working from home have earned their place in our organisation. This also applies to the WUR Council. This has advantages. For example, meeting people that work off campus has become much easier and more efficient. However, we sometimes also miss personal contact to keep in touch with our peers and colleagues. In 2023, we will keep looking for a balance here, both for ourselves and in the organisation.

2022 was an eventful year in which essential dossiers came to us for our advice and/or approval. For example, there were heated, but ultimately also constructive, discussions with the Executive Board on the resits policy. In the end, we came to an agreement. In 2023, the renewed resits policy will be implemented. We expect it to lead to a lessened workload for staff and students and give both staff and students ample opportunity to take a summer vacation. The WUR Council is, of course, keeping an eye on implementing the new resits policy and will participate in its evaluation. The resits dossier is only one example of the many actions of last year, but it shows the important impact we make as participatory councils to support everyone studying and working at WUR.

In this annual report, the various committees of the WUR Council take you further into the activities that shape participation. Staff, students, and PhD candidates take place in these committees. The committees prepare the formal recommendations that - after joint discussion in the WUR Council - are issued by the Student Staff Council (SSC) and/or the Central Works Council (COR).

We hope you will enjoy reading our annual report and get inspired to participate in your local works council or the central participatory body. There is an upcoming election for new members this spring!



WUR Council from September 2022

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Glossary

COR	Central Works Committee
EB	Executive Board
SSC	Student Staff Council

Preview 2023

A lot is happening around WUR when this annual report is being written. The winter is very mild. With temperatures reaching the (positive) double digits; climate change is making itself felt. The war in Ukraine has been going on for a year, and its effects are felt here as we feel less secure of a peaceful world while we also deal with increased prices for energy and food. Seeking to address at least some of these issues, the year 2023 began at WUR with the temporary closure of buildings to reduce energy costs. COVID-19 is still present worldwide, and we remain alert for an outbreak of a new harmful variant of the virus. Inflation is rising, as are the costs of all kinds of products. We noticed that recruiting new personnel for WUR remains a challenge. At the same time, there are all kinds of initiatives worldwide to slow down climate change and the worldwide decline in biodiversity.

Fortunately, WUR is financially in good shape. WUR will face many challenges in 2023, which means there is much work to do for the WUR Council. WUR has a lot to offer in the themes of climate change, biodiversity, and in connection with it, food production, water management, healthy lifestyles, and so on. Both our research and education are of great international importance to address such global challenges.

Participatory councils fulfil an essential role. On behalf of employees and students, we discuss the organisation's functioning and pass on matters of attention or ideas to the Executive Board and the various Corporate Directors. This is intended to keep the organisation healthy so that people can work and study with pleasure and in safety. Therefore, we invite everyone to bring ideas and bottlenecks to the attention of the WUR Council, the Student Council, or the decentral Works Councils.

This year, the Recognition & Rewards programme will demand our attention, and its policies will be adjusted. The Strategic Housing Plan will continue to be further elaborated in the housing plans of the different departments. Annual topics such as the WU budget and Quality Agreements will also be back on our agenda.

This year is also a special year. The elections for the participation councils will be held in May and June. All current members of the Student Council and a large number of members of the COR and SSC will stop their participation work since their term will end. Of course, we hope many students and employees will stand for election and thus want to be delegated to the COR and/or SSC.

The WUR Council will ensure a good transfer of information so that in September, we are well invested in building a WUR Council that will be active for students and staff for another three years.

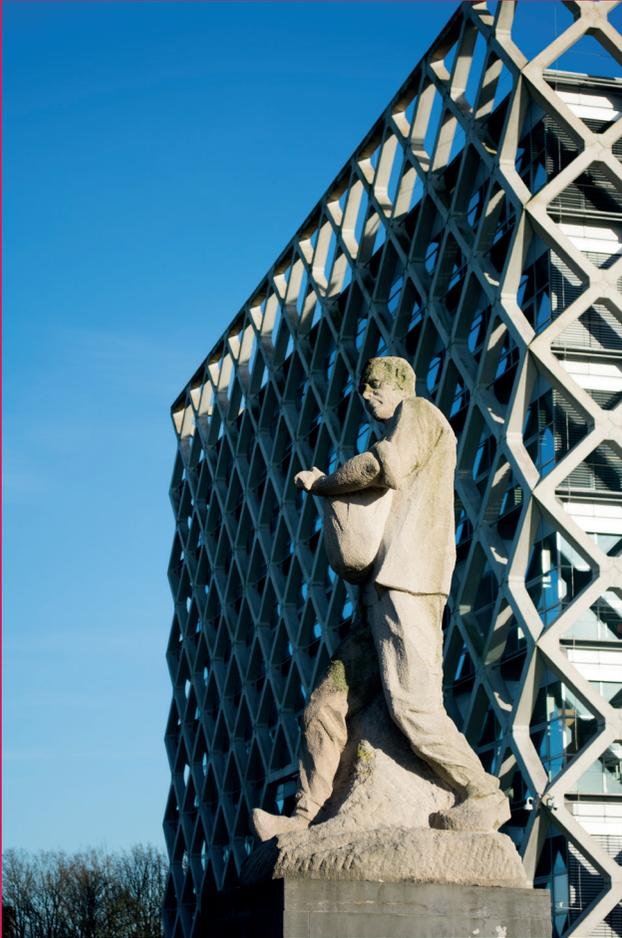
Would you like to stay informed about our activities? Then follow our WUR Council SharePoint for employees and students and/or intranet page.

WUR Council SharePoint voor employees and students:

<https://wageningenur4.sharepoint.com/sites/WURCouncilinformation>

WUR Council intranet page:

<https://intranet.wur.nl/Project/WURCouncil>



Picture made by Marte Hofsteenge (WUR brand portal)

Committee Communication

In 2022, committee Communication started regular technical meetings with Corporate Communications & Marketing and posted updates and outcomes of WUR Council meetings on our SharePoint for employees and students and intranet.

The committee experienced significant difficulties in communicating to their constituency, for example because students and employees have access to different media channels. The idea was born to create a new communication vision, and to start writing a general newsletter for students and employees. The newsletter will be available and interesting for all and distributed via email – the only channel our constituencies have in common. The goal of the newsletter is to inform the entire constituency of what the WUR Council does for them, and in their name. This idea was discussed thoroughly with Corporate Communications & Marketing, and together we are creating a more global vision about the visibility and communication of the WUR Council.

For 2023, the committee wants to continue with this new communication vision. The core of the vision focuses on the continuity of communication from WUR Council to its constituency. Not only via a newsletter, but via all available media channels. The committee will work on creating templates and formats for future WUR Councils. The committee will focus on informing, involving, and inspiring their constituency, to assure that people know where to find the WUR Council, what it does, and which questions they can ask. This is of particular importance with the upcoming elections in June 2023.



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Picture made by Joris Schaap (WUR brand portal)

Committee Education & Research

In 2022, the committee Education & Research (E&R) has engaged with different dossiers. One of the main topics was the resits policy. Before the summer the Student Staff Council (SSC) received a preliminary decision from the Executive Board which entailed the moving of the resit period from August to July and the reduction of the number of resits to a maximum of three per resit period. The SSC agreed with moving the resit period but did not agree on the reduction of the number of resits to a maximum of three per resit period as the SSC felt like this would not lead to a significant workload reduction for teachers. After the summer the SSC received a new proposal. After discussions with the policymakers and the Executive Board, the SSC voted in favour of the new proposal, which entailed the following: every student gets two exam opportunities per course per year. Resits are spread throughout the year into three moments; February, May, and July. In each period the student can resit courses of different periods related to that resit period. Besides, an extra resit opportunity is given to students who are on pace with their studies and must wait more than six months to graduate. After several years, committee E&R is pleased with the outcome of this dossier. While reducing the workload of teachers is an important factor, the committee recognises and values the effort and contributions of all parties involved in achieving this outcome.

Another topic that required the attention of the committee was the new bachelor programme Marine Sciences. The committee discussed the new programme in multiple meetings. In the end, the WUR Council expressed concern about a possible lack of opportunity for students to choose personal development pathways and a missing vision on interdisciplinarity. Committee E&R expressed the concern that there is inadequate attention for marine nature conservation in the programme. Recognising the importance of the programme for WU, the SSC decided to approve the new programme to start in September 2023 while keeping vigilant that students have ample opportunity to develop their own learning pathway within this programme.

Another important topic of 2022 is the Recognition & Rewards programme, which committee E&R has been involved in. The Recognition & Rewards team is working on the development towards recognising and rewarding a broader set of academic output and activities, more diversity in academic profiles, more flexibility, and an increased focus on qualitative assessment. Committee E&R is positive about the thorough iterative process the Recognition & Rewards team is working on and supports these developments in the academic system. The committee is looking forward to being updated about and involved in the next steps in 2023.

Furthermore, in 2022 a lot of discussions have taken place on the extended daytime schedule (EDS). An explanation has been made to clarify the schedule for students. The daily schedule will be evaluated at the end of the academic year 2022/2023.

Finally, the committee has been involved in many other topics and projects, for example, the Quality Agreements and the National Program Education (NPE) fund. The committee felt well involved in the decision-making and therefore looks back on the past year with satisfaction.

Finance

Committee Finance of the WUR Council deals with all dossiers related to WUR finances, with the focus on Wageningen University (WU). Every year we focus on monitoring recurring topics, of which are reviewing the budget, the Framework Letter, and the quarterly reports. Committee Finance works closely together with Corporate Finance & Control on these dossiers. The documents we get to review as committee Finance are often very technical and complex. Corporate Finance & Control helps us to understand these documents and to put them in a broader perspective. Committee Finance is therefore the perfect place in which you can develop literacy on financial policy documents, in addition to helping WUR keep being a financially healthy organisation. The financial data of WUR are confidential.

At the beginning of the calendar year, the budget cycle starts with writing the Position paper in which the Student Staff Council (SSC) offers its vision on WUR and its finances to the Executive Board. The Position paper of 2022 consisted of topics such as wellbeing, branding, high quality of education, maintaining human capital, and working from home and at the office.

After presenting the Position paper, the Executive Board presented their Framework Letter of 2022 to the SSC for feedback. The Framework Letter of 2022 contained for example topics on wellbeing for students, quality of education, and working from home.

In November 2022, the draft budget WU 2023 was presented to the SSC and Student Council. The (SSC) has the right of approval on the main lines of the Wageningen University budget, while the student council has the right of advice on the WU budget. The budget of Wageningen University 2023 was approved by the SSC after multiple technical meetings with Corporate Finance & Control, internal WUR Council meetings, and the consultation meeting with the Executive Board on 22 November 2022. The budget period runs on a tight schedule, so after all this we celebrated the finalisation of the budget and the beginning of the new year with celebratory drinks with the committee!



Picture made by Marte Hofsteenge (WUR brand portal)

Committee Housing, Working Conditions and Environment

Committee Housing, Working Conditions and Environment (HAM) engaged in a diverse range of subjects in 2022. The year saw the committee tackle many issues, the foremost of which were related to the Strategic Housing Plan – a weighty topic that required detailed follow-up discussion and progress reports. Additionally, the committee addressed the closure of the WUR buildings during the Christmas holiday due to the rising costs of energy and how to mitigate these expenses. This was a significant issue that received considerable attention.

The committee also paid close attention to 'Zorg van de Zaak' – a vital occupational social work and confidential counselling service that supports the wellbeing of WUR employees. Furthermore, the committee evaluated the sustainability report in conjunction with the Multi-Year Environmental Plan for WUR, highlighting their commitment to the preservation of the environment.

The committee worked within the national legislative framework on working conditions, safety, and the environment, paying attention to relevant regulations. Some of the recurring issues addressed by the committee included the environmental annual report, EED energy audit, policy on working from home, annual radiation hygiene report, substances of very high concern policy, annual report on working conditions, incident reporting, and the environmental Multi-Year Environmental Plan mentioned earlier.

Communication between the committee and WUR Corporate was carried out through technical meetings with the responsible person(s), typically from the Facilities & Services (F&B), based on specific files. Starting in 2020, the committee began regular consultations with the Safety & Environment Department – a branch of the F&B – to discuss ongoing developments. This approach ensured a coordinated and effective response to emerging issues.



Picture made by Marte Hofsteenge (WUR brand portal)

Committee Management & Organisation

The committee Management & Organisation (M&O) deals with the general policies of WUR. The WUR Strategic Plan and the Code of Good Governance are examples of this; such dossiers recur annually. This year, the committee dealt with a few small but all-important dossiers.

We prepared a positive advice on the Executive Board's intention to revise the rules on protecting personal data. Above all, the regulations have been made more readable and accessible, which also aligns with the requirements of the Personal Data Authority and the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation. The Central Works Council (COR) adopted our advice and approved the decision of the Executive Board.

The existing Network regulations Governing Staff and Other Personnel 2021 and the Network Regulations Governing Students 2021 needed revision. The Executive Board sent a preliminary decision on this effect to the COR and Student Council. The committee took this up with the student council's IT committee. Those regulations and rules of conduct are essential to keep clear what is an acceptable use of IT facilities, how the privacy of employees and students is protected, and what the consequences are if the regulations are violated. We have concluded that the revisions create stronger regulations that ensure a safe environment to work and study in. Therefore, the COR and the Student Council have approved both regulations.

WUR has had a Whistleblower regulations in place since 2017. This regulation needed to be adapted to current European legislation to a "Whistleblower Regulations, 'Regulation on reporting suspected wrongdoing, violation of integrity or possible infringement of European Union law.'" The preliminary decision was submitted to the COR for approval; the committee M&O took it up. We made several suggestions to make texts more transparent and to include "links" so that those who have questions or want to file complaints can quickly get to the correct office. The Executive Board adopted the suggestions, and the COR gave its approval.

WUR has produced a vision statement on "Food and Beverages." We have been working with this vision for some time; on the initiative of some student council members and the committee, we started to pay more attention to it. The idea is progressive and clearly shows the desire for more sustainability and inclusiveness in the way WUR wants staff and students to be able to obtain food and beverage. It will take some time to translate the vision into practice; the caterers will also have to make the necessary changes. The conversations about the image within the WUR Council make it clear that this topic is alive and well, and all sorts of related questions arise. For example, why is a canteen possible in one building and not another? The conversation about this is still alive and will also come up in the discussions about housing.



Picture made by Marte Hofsteenge (WUR brand portal)

Committee Personnel

COVID-19 gripped the Netherlands for almost two years. Fortunately, in early 2022, "normal" life could be resumed. In the meantime, much has changed. Working from home made its appearance, but the adverse effects of the pandemic on employees also became painfully apparent. In 2022, many more colleagues and students had psychological and physical complaints.

Thus, the year 2022 can be seen as a year of transition. Not only did the pandemic have consequences, but the war between Ukraine and Russia also had a significant impact.

At the beginning of the year, our discussions were mainly about working from home, home office allowances, commuting allowances, and how to claim them. During the year, talks about the energy transition and high energy and transportation costs came to the top. In early 2022, we were happy to be able to come back to work on location and for students to come back to the university. In practice, it still proved difficult to persuade many employees to return to the office. We shared our concerns about this and suggestions for getting people to the office with Corporate Human Resources. This, in turn, leads to other complex challenges, such as supervising employees who do have to work on-site or managing new employees.

Employee health is critical to the functioning of our organisation. Over the past year, several topics of importance to this have been reviewed. During 2022, there were several performances of *Mindlab*, a play about social safety in the workplace, which put social safety back on the agenda. This was a creative introduction to an important topic whose content we will follow up on in 2023. Adjacent to this is the new codes of conduct drawn up by WUR, which give direction to manners.

2022 also saw the start of a new Performance and Development (P&D) tool in combination with the "Let's Talk Together" process. The goal is to facilitate a good conversation between employee and supervisor, keep having that conversation, and not limit it to just the P&D talk. The tool used to record the P&D talk did not work as intended. Eventually, a simpler version was chosen that is both functional and practical. A good conversation remains the starting point.

In 2021 it became clear that interns within WUR sometimes received different compensation in similar situations. Thanks to a proposal by the WUR Council, since 2022, all interns will receive the same reward in comparable cases. Also, differences in compensation between education levels are now a thing of the past.



Picture made by Sam Rentmeester (WUR brand portal)

Ad hoc committees & working groups

The WUR Council had several ad hoc committees and working groups in the past year to address specific issues. One of these committees was the ad hoc committee Regulations, which reviewed the regulations of the COR, SSC, WUR Council, in close cooperation with the Executive Board. The committee reviewed and recommended updated regulations, which were subsequently adopted. These new regulations now include provisions for a technical chair for the WUR Council.

The ad hoc committee COVID-19 is a previously formed ad hoc committee (part of committee M&O) that was still in place. While new variants of the virus emerged, the Delta variant led to a lockdown and online lectures at the end of 2021. The ad hoc committee COVID-19 and the Coronateam ended their cooperation in 2022 with an evaluation of the past two years, but the Coronateam was temporarily reinstated to provide input for the government-mandated plan for COVID-19 prevention.

The ad hoc committee Resits was set up to address the resits policy dossier. This ad hoc committee was discontinued upon approving the proposal presented at that time.

Another ad hoc committee was the ad hoc committee Financial Compensation student council Members, which engaged in ongoing discussions with the Executive Board regarding the financial compensation of student council members.

Additionally, the WUR Council has created an elections working group (WOV) that is responsible for organising the upcoming participatory councils elections.



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2022 WUR Council in a nutshell

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Members when all positions are filled

Combined of
 COR
SSC



Student members change annually



PhD candidates change annually



Staff members change every 3 years



Regular internal WUR Council meetings



As many requests for advice or approval than in 2021



Consultation meetings with the executive board



Active committees on various topics



Ad hoc committees and working groups

General information

Elections and composition WUR Council

The Central Works Council (COR) and Student Staff Council (SSC) are both central participatory councils, and together they meet as WUR Council. The WUR Council consists of twenty-eight members if all positions are filled. There were several vacancies during the WUR Council year 2022. The composition changes annually as each year, after the summer vacation, a newly elected group of students takes seat, and the old group leaves. There are also two newly elected PhD representatives each year. As a result, the WUR Council had a change of ten members in 2022 (eight students and two PhD students). The Daily Board has had a change of several members as a result as well.

Committees

Six committees have been active during 2022: Communication (C), Education & Research (E&R), Finance (F), Housing, Working conditions and Environment (HAM), Management & Organisation (M&O), and Personnel (P), and five ad hoc committees / working groups for the files COVID-19 (part of M&O), resit policy, regulations COR, SSC and WUR Council, financial compensation student council members, and the preparation of the elections in 2023. The committees discuss dossiers and conduct technical meetings with WUR Corporate, and the committees thus prepare formal advice and/or approval for the COR and/or SSC.

Meetings

The WUR Council met fifteen times in 2022 in a regular internal meeting (WUR-C 153 to 167) and once in an additional internal meeting around the theme "gender and diversity (gender+ SMART)". A typical consultation meeting with the executive board was held seven times (CWUR-C 76 to 82). In addition, additional consultations took place with the Executive Board especially around the resit policy. There were also two internal meetings (SC/WUR-C 3 and 4) and one WU budget 2023 consultation meeting (CSC/CWUR-C 2) together with the Student Council.

Advice and approval

Depending on the subject and legal requirements, the executive board regularly submits preliminary decisions to the COR and/or SSC for advice and/or approval. During the year, this happened nine times. The Student Staff Council formally responded four times (including: "Budget WU 2023" and "Resits policy 2023-2024 and beyond") and the COR five times ("Whistleblower Regulations" and "Training and Development Facilities WU 2021"). On one occasion, the SSC and COR jointly issued a perspective on the closure of the buildings on campus during Christmas 2022. Compared to 2021, there were half as many requests for advice and approval, making 2022 comparable to 2020. It should be noted that the Executive Board regularly submitted documents to the COR or SSC for information; over fifteen times in 2022. This sometimes leads to technical meetings and/or questions to the executive board in the consultation meeting.

The supervisory board requested and received formal confidential advice from the COR once, and jointly from the COR and OR-WU (employee members only of the SSC) on two occasions. All three dossiers were also sent to the student council.

Composition WUR Council

Executive secretaries 2022 for supporting the WUR Council

Sabine Huard
Anneke Versluis

Until September 2022

COR members

Ruud Bink (OR ESG, Secretary COR & WUR-C)
Lianne Bouwman (OR WFSR)
Jan Helder (OR SSG)
Rick de Jong (OR PSG, Vice chair COR)
Kees Laban (OR FB)
Eef Lovink (OR ASG)
Dirk-Jan Melssen (OR CS+)
Charlotte Michielsen (OR AFSG)
Gerwoud Otten (OR AFSG)
Hein Stallinga (OR PSG)
Peter van Tulden (OR ASG)

COR-SSC members

Livio Carlucci (OR AFSG)
Kutay Cingiz (OR SSG)
Leon de Jonge (OR ASG)
Michel Riksen (OR ESG, Chair COR)

Directly chosen staff members SSC

Lotte Yanore-van Rangelrooij (PhD candidate)
Jelle Behagel (ESG, Chair SSC & WUR-C)
Thera Leenhouders (FB)
Mariken de Wit (PhD candidate, Secretary SSC)

Student members SSC

Eefje van Dael
Fernando Gabriel García Teruel
Sterre Hoek van Dijke
Joël Kampen
Daphne Louws
Anne van de Rijdt
Johan van de Ven
Jacob Zornu

From September 2022

COR members

Peter Assink (OR WFSR, Substituting Lianne Bouwman
July 2022 to February 2023)
Ruud Bink (OR ESG, Secretary COR & WUR-C)
Lianne Bouwman (OR WFSR)
Jan Helder (OR SSG)
Rick de Jong (OR PSG, Vice chair COR)
Eef Lovink (OR ASG)
Rob Manders (OR FB)
Charlotte Michielsen (OR AFSG)
Gerwoud Otten (OR AFSG)
Paul Smeets (OR AFSG, From 17 October on)
Hein Stallinga (OR PSG)
Peter van Tulden (OR ASG)
Xiaoyong Zhang (OR CS+)

COR-SSC members

Livio Carlucci (OR AFSG)
Kutay Cingiz (OR SSG)
Leon de Jonge (OR ASG)
Michel Riksen (OR ESG, Chair COR)
Mariana Santos Couto Silva (OR PSG)

Directly chosen staff members SSC

Jelle Behagel (ESG, Chair SSC & WUR-C)
Thera Leenhouders (FB)
Renske van Lonkhuijzen (PhD candidate)
David Meijer (PhD candidate, Secretary SSC)

Student members SSC

Wybrig Bakker
Peter Beyenburg-Weidenfeld
Maartje van den Bosch
Wietske de Groot
Levi Kusters
Muskan Mathur
Sanne Vermeij
Wessel Weterings

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