

WUR COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2021



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Preface by the Daily Board

The year 2021 has been an intensive year for the central participation council with a relatively high volume of approval and advice requests from the Executive Board, together with the yearly change of members from the Student Council and PhD representation, and the need to work and communicate online for most of the year. COVID-19 had a big impact, also this year, and the necessary measures from the government led us to work, teach and follow courses from home. All WUR Council activities therefore took place remotely, which is challenging for the Council as it relies heavily on good and direct communication.

In this annual report, the different committees will walk you through the activities that shape the Council. Committees consist of staff, students, and PhD candidates. Therefore, within each committee input is gathered from all corners of our organization. These committees prepare the formal advice that – after discussion in the WUR Council – are given by the Student Staff Council (SSC) or Central Works Council (COR).

This year we have been involved in developing the Strategic Housing Plan, "Working@WUR", the Wageningen University budget, the National Program Education, the appointment of the ombuds-person at WUR and the big investments in AFSG. The executive board implemented our advice of a central point for ordering remote working facilities, and the initiative of free Dutch classes.

We look back at an intense but also constructive year. And we look forward to the year 2022 where most COVID measures will have disappeared and we will meet each other again!

Composition WUR Council

Until September 2021

COR members: Ruud Bink (OR ESG, secretary COR), Lianne Bouwman (OR WFSR), Pieter Claassen (OR AFSG), Jan Helder (OR SSG), Rick de Jong (OR PSG, vice chair COR), Kees Laban (OR FB), Ard de Leur (OR CS+), Eef Lovink (OR ASG), Gerwoud Otten (OR AFSG), Michel Riksen (OR ESG, chair COR), Hein Stallinga (OR PSG), Peter van Tulden (OR ASG).

COR members also in SSC: Livio Carlucci (OR AFSG), Bart Gremmen (OR SSG), Leon de Jonge (OR ASG), Martina Lazzarin (OR PSG).

Directly chosen SSC members: Robin Barten (PhD candidate), Jelle Behagel (ESG, chair SSC/WUR Council), Thera Leenhouwers (FB), Frances Widjaja (PhD candidate, Secretary SSC/WUR Council).

SSC student members: Irene van der Boom, Wieb Devilee, Judith Kikkert, Chenyue Li, Lan Rajic, Renee Rooijackers, Ardhe Vashti, Marieke van Vonderen.

From September 2021

COR members: Ruud Bink (OR ESG, secretary COR/WUR Council), Lianne Bouwman (OR WFSR), Jan Helder (OR SSG), Rick de Jong (OR PSG, vice chair COR), Kees Laban (OR FB), Eef Lovink (OR ASG), Gerwoud Otten (OR AFSG), Michel Riksen (OR ESG, chair COR), Hein Stallinga (OR PSG), Peter van Tulden (OR ASG), Charlotte Michiels (OR AFSG).

COR members also in SSC: Livio Carlucci (OR AFSG), Bart Gremmen (OR SSG), Leon de Jonge (OR ASG).

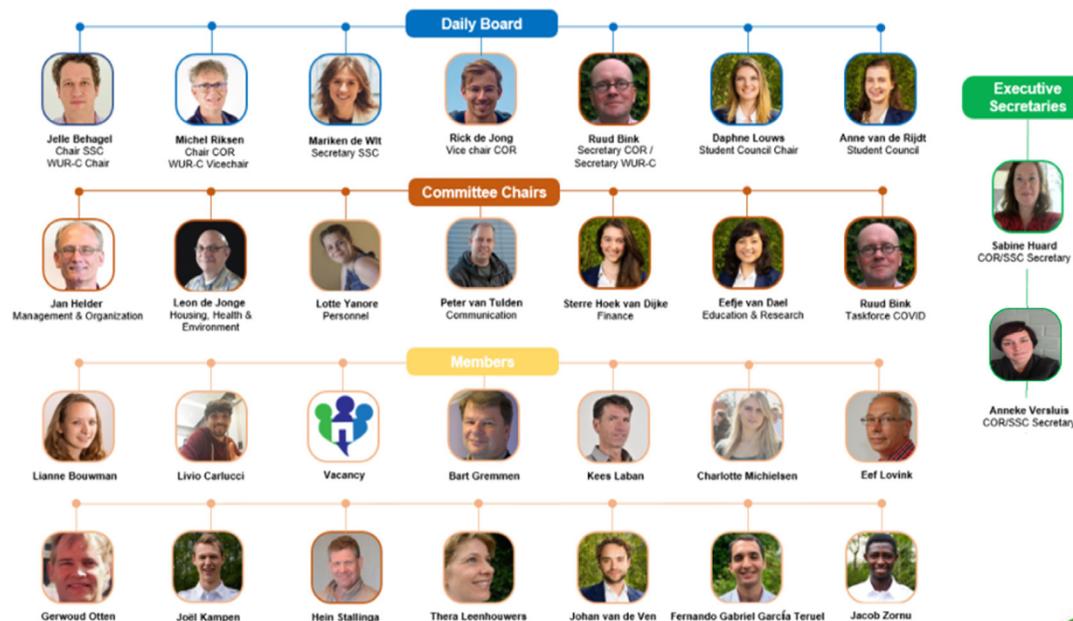
Directly chosen SSC members: Lotte Yanore (PhD candidate), Jelle Behagel (ESG, chair SSC/WUR Council), Thera Leenhouwers (FB), Mariken de Wit (PhD candidate, Secretary SSC).

SSC student members: 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.

Executive Secretaries in 2021

Sabine Huard, Anneke Versluis, Anne Langedijk, Clementine Sluijsmans, Anneke Vos – van Dijken.

WUR Council 2021



Committee Education & Research

+ Internationalization

The committee Education & Research + Internationalization (E&R+I) is an enthusiastic group and consists of employees, professors, a PhD student, and students. This diversity ensures that the committee represents a large part of the different groups within WUR.

In 2021, the committee worked on various dossiers, projects and own initiatives. An example of a successful initiative is the offering of free Dutch classes for employees, including non-contract employees. This year, the committee also took up the 'A smarter academic year' initiative in collaboration with the Personnel committee. The committee also worked on projects such as internationalisation, the chair plan strategy, the tenure track, and learning analytics.

Furthermore, the committee recommended the SSC to approve two new education programs this year. This concerned the Engineering Doctorate Programme for Design for Agrifood and Ecosystems and the new master Data Science for Food & Health. Other files that the committee has worked on this year are the Extended Daytime Schedule and the National Education Program. The latter concerns additional funding from the government that has been made available for higher education, as 2021 is still a year that is dominated by COVID-19. This funding can be used to minimise learning disadvantages that are being caused by the pandemic and to alleviate the workload of teachers.

In addition, the committee was closely involved in the realization of the Quality Agreements, which is an important project of the committee that is discussed every year. This year, after several consultations, the committee recommended the SSC to approve the updated document 'Results Quality Agreements per project per year' for 2022-2024.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the committee was able to meet physically a number of times mid-2021. The committee has drawn new energy from this and, partly because of this, the committee looks back on the past year with satisfaction.





Committee Housing, Working Conditions and Environment

In 2021, the committee on Housing, Working Conditions and Environment (HAM) consisted of eight people, including two representatives from the Student Council. The HAM committee's consultations took place on a monthly basis, mainly online during 2021 due to the COVID-19 situation.

The subjects offered to committee HAM for advice or approval were diverse. One very important topic was the Strategic Housing Plan 2020 – 2025. At the heart of this plan was the Remote Working facilities, which reduced the required number of square meters. The committee has played an active coordinating role in this request for advice. Committee HAM also worked intensively on the investment in a new process hall ("Tech-N") for Wageningen Food and Biobased Research, and the adaptation of existing housing. This application will continue to be processed in 2022. Other larger requests for advice were related to the Safety Incident Reporting and Handling Policy (committee HAM advised to approve this) and the Multiannual Environmental Plan WUR 2021 – 2023 (for which the committee advised the COR to give a positive advice).

Pending files (without a formal request for advice or approval) that committee HAM worked on in 2021 were: the Sustainability Report 2019 (discussed during a technical meeting), the annual report on working conditions 2019, the energy audit (MJA-3) (discussed during a technical meeting), the report from the Ministry of Social Affairs regarding the Nuclear Energy Act inspection (no abnormalities or irregularities were found during this inspection). Committee HAM has received notification about the Risk Inventory & Evaluation instrument with a module for location-independent working (from home), and has reflected on this subject. The formal approval of this Risk Inventory & Evaluation is the task of the COR.

Communication with WUR Council committees is carried out through technical meetings with the responsible person (usually within the Facilities Department) on the basis of a specific file. At the end of 2020, the committee started regular consultations with the Safety & Environment Department (within the Facilities Department) to discuss ongoing developments. This periodic consultation was less frequent in 2021 due to COVID-19 and changes in personnel within the Safety & Environment department.

Mid-2021, the student committee members conducted their own research into the needs and quality of thesis workplaces. For this purpose, those responsible within the different knowledge units were interviewed on this subject. The results of this research have been used in the discussion about the future housing situation.

Committee Personnel

In 2021, a total of twenty-three meetings were held, of which fifteen were regular meetings, one technical meeting with the company doctor (Zorg van de Zaak; Care on the House) and corporation council staff (BMW), two with JOPS (Job Participation Support) and six technical meetings with Corporate Human Resources. At these technical meetings, both urgent matters and business at hand were discussed.

In 2021, several permanent matters have been discussed, such as the annual reports of 'Zorg van de zaak' and 'BMW'. Persisting worries are work-related stress and the workload. Although this continues to be a point of attention, an approach remains difficult. A concrete action plan will be defined in the beginning of 2022.

At the beginning of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic reached the Netherlands, something that affected all departments of WUR. This has led to a transfer of working places and activities. In 2021, many colleagues were asked to work from home to prevent COVID-19 infections. Working from home is also one of the pillars of the Strategic Housing Plan from WUR. Together with Corporate Human Resources, committee Personnel identified minimal requirements for working from home and how the availability of supplies to work from home can be organized. This advice was adopted by the Executive Board.

During 2021, a new R&O tool was being introduced and, after several sessions together with Corporate Human Resources, a positive advice was given for the introduction of the new tool. Although the new system of 'Let's talk together' will be integrated in the new tool, the experiences with the new tool and Let's talk together will be closely monitored during 2021 and 2022.

In 2021, the 'Language guidelines' for the period of 2021-2024 were defined. As requested by the WUR Council (prepared by the committee), these guidelines include the decision to make free Dutch classes available for international employees and their partners. The Executive Board also confirmed the availability of the courses in Dutch as well English for PhD candidates and non-contract employees.

In 2021, multiple meetings were held with JOPS (Job Participation Support) on the support of people with a functional disability who want to work at WUR. JOPS struggled with contracting employees and sick leave. Despite these issues, a growing number of colleagues with a functional disability were hired within WUR. In the Strategic Housing Plan, JOPS can also finally move to the Campus. The committee Personnel addressed a suitable location for JOPS at Corporate Human Resources.



Ad hoc committee COVID-19

2021 was another eventful year that was still dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic and in which vaccination was seen as a way out of the pandemic. At the beginning of 2021, we still found ourselves in a second lockdown where the entire WUR had no choice but to work and study from home. During this period, the ad hoc committee COVID-19 was involved in an evaluation of the Crisis Management Team COVID-19 of WUR, which was set up at the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020 and was operational for several weeks. After the Crisis Management Team, a special advisory body was set up within the regular management under the name Corona Team. The ad hoc committee COVID-19 has periodic consultations with the Corona Team about the implementation of government measures within the WUR organisation.

In the summer of 2021, the population of the Netherlands was vaccinated to such an extent that restrictions were eased again. During this period, WUR had the opportunity to welcome its employees and students back on Campus and on external locations. Many employees and students took this opportunity, and it was good to see that the Campus was lively again. At the end of September, even keeping a 1.5-meter distance and wearing face masks was not mandatory anymore.

However, during the winter the virus resumed its march and mutated into a new variant, forcing society to go into lockdown again. At WUR, the strict advice to work from home was applied again, unless there really was no other option. Students continued to have the opportunity to study on Campus, even though by the end of the year all education was back online with the exception of the practical sessions and exams.

During the year, the committee mainly focused on clarifying the COVID-19 measures that apply to WUR by asking the Corona Team questions. In addition, the committee has communicated signals from students and employees to the Corona Team. Furthermore, the committee closely followed social developments regarding the potential implementation of the 3G-policy and the impact it could have on education. The wellbeing of students and staff has also started to become an increasingly important topic, which the committee has kept an eye on during the past year and will continue to do so in the future. After all, it remains important to look after and support each other where possible, especially in times of a lockdown.



Committee Finance

Committee Finance of the WUR Council deals with the financial dossiers of WUR. Every year, we focus on monitoring the recurring topics, consisting of the budget, the Framework letter and the quarterly reports. The financial data of WUR is confidential. There are technical meetings with Corporate Finance & Control to discuss the quarterly reports, budget and the Framework letter. This year, the committee consisted of two members from last year and some new members from the Student Council, including a new chair. The involvement of the two members from last year contributed to the smooth take-over.

Committee Finance worked together on the budget with the Student Council Finance committee. This collaboration proved beneficial. The Student Staff Council has the right of approval on the main lines of the budget of Wageningen University, while the Student Council has the right of advice on the Wageningen University budget. At the beginning of the year, the budget cycle started with writing a Position paper in which the Student Staff Council offered its vision to the Executive Board. The Position paper consisted of topics such as support for employees with fixed-term contract, sustainability, blended education, working from home and IT support.

After this, the Framework letter was made by Corporate Finance & Control and the Executive Board. This was presented to the Student Staff Council for feedback. The Framework letter contained, for example, the points blended education, avoiding accumulation of financial reserves, working from home situation and the timeline for the approval by the Student Staff Council. In November 2021, the draft budget was presented to the Student Staff Council and Student Council. The budget of Wageningen University was approved by the Student Staff Council after multiple technical meetings, internal WUR Council meetings and a Consultation meeting with the Executive Board on the 23rd of November 2021. The approval was combined with the request to invest in blended education, working from home, IT support and strategic housing.





Committee Management & Organization

Committee Management and Organization (M&O) deals with WUR's general policy guidelines. WUR's Strategic Plan and the Code of Good Governance are examples of this; such files come back annually. Committee M&O regularly asks members of other committees to think along because of the interfaces between the general policies and the more specific files they handle.

The Student Staff Council (SSC) received a request for approval from the Executive Board for the amendment of the Wageningen University Administration and Management Regulations. The previous version dated from 2018. Important adjustments were needed so that it is clearly established how the internal supervision is arranged, such as the internal audit function and the data protection officer. An adjustment was also needed for the (desired) possibility to invite students as advisers to a joint works council. This can be useful for certain topics. The Student Staff Council approved the amendment.

The COR and the SSC have been consulted by the Executive Board about its intention to harmonise the duration of the Strategic Plan of WUR and the Strategic Agenda of Wageningen Research. To this end, the realisation period of the current Strategic Plan (2019-2022) had to be extended by two years. The committee has advised the COR and SSC to give a positive response to the Executive Board. As a follow-up to this, the Executive Board has amended the Strategic Plan. In the eyes of the COR and SSC, this plan mainly has the character of a general vision. This vision is endorsed by us. However, (extra) attention has been requested for cyber security and Knowledge security; the Executive Board then indicated that this has plenty of attention and that it also translates into a greater financial commitment. Based on the advice of committee M&O, the COR has given a positive advice and the SSC has given an approval.

In addition to these two large dossiers, the committee has regularly dealt with smaller files such as 'employee participation 2.0', 'Leadership profile', 'Strategic Alliance Universities' and the 'Equal Pay Research'.



Committee Communication

In 2021, committee Communication was mainly providing messages regarding the outcome of WUR Council meetings. With the new academic year, the committee has increased in size, from two to six members. This allowed for the start of a structural technical meeting cycle with Corporate Communication. The committee has posted regular updates about discussions and outcomes of WUR Council meetings on the intranet and worked on developing ideas for future work.

The goal for committee Communication for 2022 will be to structure our own communication around the WUR Council and make our topics visible to all the employees and students and decentral participation councils. We want to be available for our colleagues and fellow students through several communication means (starting from wur.council@wur.nl). And we would like to facilitate to everyone within WUR to come to us with questions and issues so we can put them on the agenda of the WUR Council. Besides that, we want to support Corporate Communication & Marketing to continually improve communication, both within the organisation (this will be our main focus) and externally.

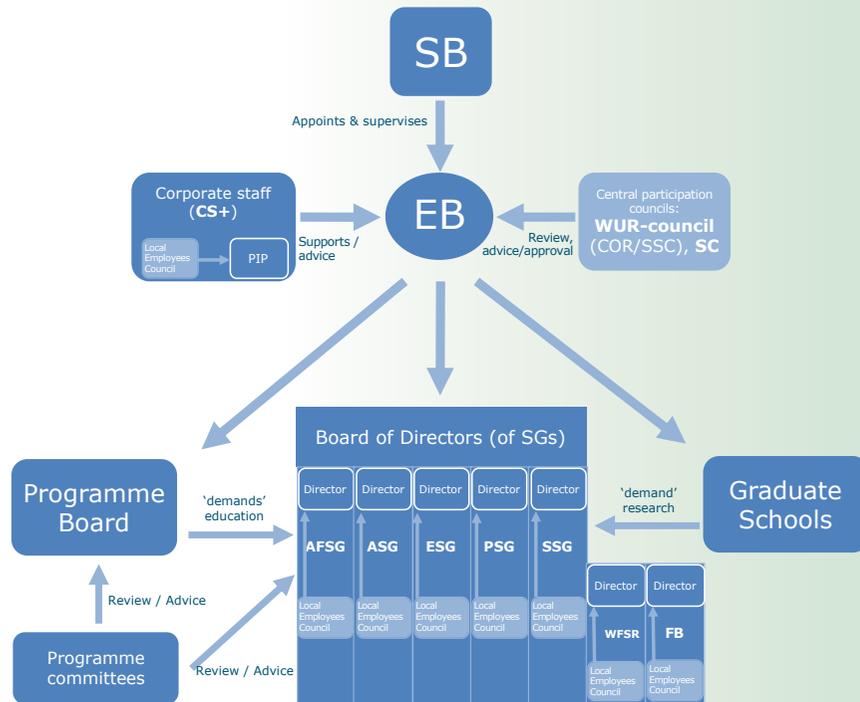
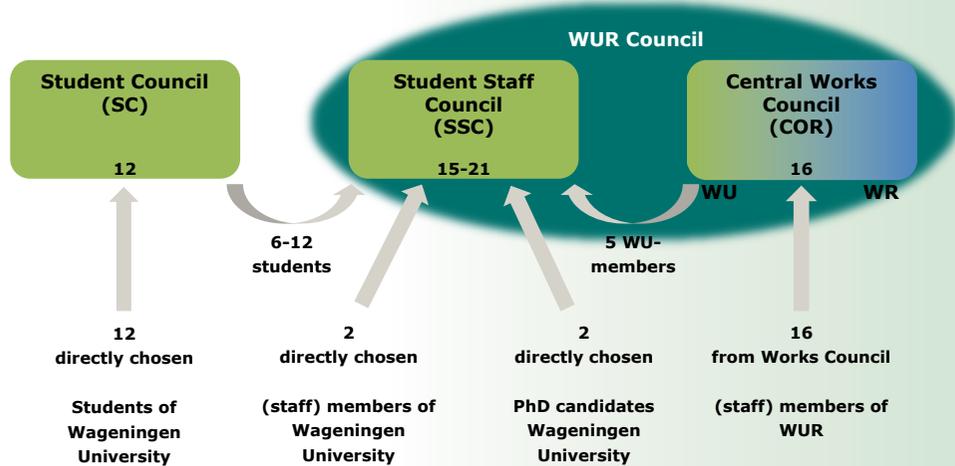
Especially the contact with employees and students is important for the WUR Council; in 2021 we regularly received remarks and questions via our mailbox wur.council@wur.nl. Questions and remarks like 'What could be done differently and perhaps better' are very useful for our work as WUR Council.

Are you interested in the organization of the WUR Council and are you perhaps interested in joining, then visit our intranet page for all information concerning the WUR Council: <https://intranet.wur.nl/Project/WURCouncil>

If you are not an employee of WUR but nevertheless interested in the participatory bodies of WUR, you can find more about us via the WUR website: <https://www.wur.nl/en/About-WUR/Corporate-governance/Participatory-structure.htm>



General Information



Elections

The WUR Council consists of a maximum of 28 members. The composition changes every three years because of the term of office of a large part of the members. In addition to that, there are yearly elections for the Student Council and PhD-representation in the SSC. In 2021, the WUR Council had 26 - 27 members available, of which the students and PhD representatives were replaced in September. As a consequence, three members of the Daily Board have been replaced.

Committees

Seven committees have been active during 2021: Communication (C), Education & Research (E&R), Finance (F), Housing, Working Conditions and Environment (HAM), Management & Organization (M&O) and Personnel (P), and the ad hoc-committee for the COVID-19 dossier. In the committees, dossiers were discussed, and technical meetings are being held with staff of WUR. The committees thus prepared formal advice and/or approval of the COR and SSC.

Meetings

In 2021, the WUR Council has had 15 internal meetings (WUR-C 138 – 152), 7 consultation meetings and 2 budget-meetings with the Executive Board (OWUR-C 69 – 75).

Advice and Approval

The Executive Board submits proposed policy, depending on the topic and the legal provisions, for advice and/or approval to the COR and/or the Student Staff Council. Throughout the year, this happened 25 times. The Student Staff Council formally reacted 11 times (for example on 'Framework letter budget Wageningen University 2022' and 'National Program Education'), and the COR formally reacted 14 times (for example 'appointment Ombudsperson', 'Profile Chair Executive Board' and 'investments WFBR'). Furthermore, the SSC and COR together have formally reacted in several areas (for example concerning 'Working@WUR', 'Strategic Housing Plan', 'Update Strategic Plan WUR'). The total number of provided formal reactions has been twice the amount compared to 2020.

7

Consultation meetings

7

Committees

15

Internal WUR Council meetings

26-27

Members



Preview 2022

In 2022, we will devote a lot of our attention to the Strategic Housing Plan, and the continuing pandemic and its aftermath. The main elements of the Strategic Housing Plan will be developed at a decentralised level. The decentral participation councils will have their hands full with this task. It is to be expected that certain matters still require centralised consultation with the Executive Board. Good contact with the decentral participation councils therefore remains essential (as was the case in 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic is not over yet. At the end of 2021, the big question was when it will be. The government is therefore working on a long-term strategy. As of yet, we cannot predict this strategy, and the global actions. What is clear, however, is that in 2022 we will still be 'forced' to work from home, follow online lessons or attend online meetings; face masks and self-tests will also remain part of our lives. And even when those measures no longer need to be in place, a return to 'normal' will still require efforts from all of us. And that means that the participation councils may have to pay even more attention to the mental and physical health of employees and students, and make extra efforts to promote social cohesion. The WUR Council will be happy to receive and pass on the signs it receives from employees and students to the Executive Board and the management. We would therefore like to invite everyone to raise their ideas and bottlenecks with WUR or the WUR Council.

We also expect a series of requests for advice or approval this year. In 2022, for example, we will focus on the Personal Data Protection regulation and the Network Regulations for employees and other staff members. These are interesting topics at a time when cybercrime can be a serious threat to WUR. And of course, regular subjects will also require attention – the Wageningen University budget, the Multiannual Environmental Plan, the Quality Agreements and so on. Moreover, the WUR Council will be involved in the appointment of the new chair of the Executive Board and give an advice – the current chair will complete her second term on the first of July.

The WUR Council wants to improve its own communication with its supporters by more closely following the various forms of communication that have become common in recent years. For us, this is a fun challenge and we hope that we will reach more people than we currently do.

The above are just some of the subjects the WUR Council handles. Are you interested in a specific subject? As a WUR employee, you can always become an external committee member for one of our committees and participate in the discussion of a specific subject. We look forward to receiving your response at wur.council@wur.nl.

The WUR Council will remain active in 2022!

