1 JANUARI 2020

ADVICE ON CHANGING THE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE
OF STUDY ASSOCIATION MACHIAVELLI

FROM THE 56TH BOARD FOR THE 57TH BOARD

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Introduction

Machiavelli, just like any other organisation, develops itself by a process of trial and error and learning by doing. Over the past years, several different pieces of advices about the committee structures have been given from the former board to the next board. The previous advice on this was given by the 54th board to the 55th board. The goal of this advice was to give our committees more autonomy and lighten the boardmember in its task. That advice was focused on the internal structure of the individual committees.

Our advice does not discuss the individual committees, but instead elaborates on possible changes on the general structure. This is because in the past years, there have been some challenges with setting up the committees and having them function in an efficient way; committees started quite late in the year, and it wasn't always clear for the members how they can sign up, what the different committees do and what being part of a committee exactly entails. The goal of this advice is to order our committees in a more structured way and make them more visible. By doing this, the goal and content of committees becomes clearer for both the members and the coordinators. Having well-functioning committees as soon as possible is vital for the association. Committees do not only lighten the task of the coordinator, but also make members more involved and increase the social cohesion.

This advice is based on internal deliberation with for example our members during the Future of Machiavelli and contact with other associations (within the FMG, LOB and PvP). In this file, different possible concrete measures are discussed. Some of them we strongly advise you to implement (for example one central deadline, an information folder and one central file with all committee-members). Others are suggestions that you can decide on (for example the committee battle and central information moments for committee-members with the same functions). We hope this advice helps you to make committees live up to their fullest potential.

Highly recommendable advices

One central application deadline

This is something we strongly advise you to implement. In the past years, each coordinator decided how they would handle committee applications by themselves. So for example it would be possible that you would have to apply for a SAC committee before the first of November by just handing in a motivation letter, while applying for a PAC committee had to be done before the first of October by sending a simple email. This resulted in unclarity for both the members and the coordinators. A central deadline could be communicated in the information folder, during the committee market, during the presentation at the information day in the Intreeweek, etcetera. In this way members know when to apply and coordinators are pressured to set up their committees in time. We strongly suggest setting this central deadline around the third or fourth week of September, but this is something that you can decide on yourself.

Information folder

At the moment, information about the committees is distributed during the committee market, the presentation at the introduction day and via our website. Other associations work with an information folder in which all committees are described. This folder can be distributed online, or handed out during for example the introduction day or book sale. In Appendix 1 you can find examples from the information folder of de VspA (Study Association for Psychologists).

Ideally, this folder should include the following information but this is something that you can decide on for yourself:

- The name of the committee
- What you do in this committee
- When the committee is active
- How much work is the committee
- To which coordinator you should send an email to apply
- How many people are part of the committees

Central file with all committee members

At the moment, board members don't exactly know from each other who is in which committee. We would advise to create a file in the central Drive in which you register all committee members. Not only is it interesting to know who is in which committee, having a clear overview also has other benefits. It helps to structure the committees internally and it helps you to have a clear overview of your active members (which is for example helpful for the CoMa or Christmas cards). This overview also makes it easier to keep committee members active next year; you can easily see who was in the committee and contact them. Besides that, you can also register which functions all committee members have in the different committees.

Ideally, such a file should include the following details:

- Name
- Mail-address
- Function within the committee
- Year of the study

In Appendix 2 you can find an example from the format Pegasus uses for such a file.

Ways of keeping the committees visible & active throughout the year

Committee battle

Some associations work with a committee battle. Each month all committees get an assignment that they have to fulfil. This assignment has to be checked by the board and committees get awarded points for the assignments (points could also be awarded for the committee with most members present at the General Assembly for example). The committee with the highest number of points gets a fun prize like a dinner prepared by the board. You can also do a semi-annual prize. Something to think about is if Machiavelli members would be motivated to participate in such a battle.

Active member groups chat

You could create a group chat with all committee members. In this group chat, members can also share pictures of the completed assignments within the committee battle. The downside of this is that you might create an "inner circle" which could create a division between Machiavelli. This inner circle could also make it more difficult for people to become active.

Committee members-borrel

At the beginning of the year you could organise a committee members borrel during which committee members can meet each other. You could also give them some free drinks there. In that way it also becomes some sort of second CoMa, during which you encourage your new committee members.

There's also a possibility to organise this at the middle of the year. In that way you can thank them for what they have already done, and you can also use this moment to recruit new committee members for the second half of the year.

Committing members to your committee for a longer time

If members stay in a committee after summer, the committee would partly set up at the beginning of the year. In that way, it can start operating sooner. A way to do this is by appointing a Chair of each committee already before the summer break.

Possible ways of selecting the committee-members

Context

In the past years, practically everyone that applied for a certain committee was accepted in the preferred committee. However, this resulted in some committees having too many members and other committees having too few. Therefore we advise you to think before the registrations open about how many people you want within each committee (this can be discussed with your predecessor of course). Of course, you can then also decide to just open up the committees for everyone that is interested (and don't work with any form of selection).

Different associations work with different ways of selecting the committee-members. The most important thing here is that an applicant should always be directed to a certain committee (also if the first choice is not possible). Besides that, the mindset of the application should always be "where does the applicant belong?" and not "where is the applicant accepted?".

We strongly recommend not using application talks or a complex application procedure. However, we advise you to use one way of filling the committees for all committees. In that way, the procedure is clear to all new members and is less arbitrary then when all coordinators think of their own way. For the sake of completeness, the ways in which some other organisations select their committees are stated below. But like stated before, we do not recommend using this possibilities

Application talks with the coordinators

1. All the applicants send an email to the coordinator of the committee (possibly with a motivational letter)
2. The coordinator holds application talks with the applicants
3. The coordinator selects the people that become part of the committee.
4. The applicants that weren't able to become part of the committee, are directed to another committee.

Application talks with a central application committee

1. The board selects a central application committee (probably consisting of board members)
2. The applicants send an email to the mail address of the central application committee (in which they also mention which committees they prefer)
3. The central application committee holds application talks with the applicants
4. The central application committee selects the members of all the committees

Possible ways of getting the committees started more efficiently

Transmission documents for the committees

Some committees already have this, but you could make a transmission document for all committees. This transmission document can also function as a data base with for example locations, speakers, themes etcetera. This transmission document should be updated at the end of each year by the committee members themselves (or at the end of an event, for e.g. the open evening committee or the big trip committee). The transmission document is given to the new committee at the beginning of their term.

Function specific training moments

Some associations work with function specific training moments. During this moment, the board member with the same function as the committee member, teaches the committee members about the function. The chair of the board would for example give a lesson about good chairmanship to all the committee chairs, or the treasurer of the board could teach all the treasures of the committees something about finances. There are multiple ways to structure this:

- One general moment where all the committee members get instructions from the board member with the same function at the same time.
- Multiple moments where the board member with the same functions sits down with one, two or three committee members with the same function.
- Function-lunches, all committee members and the board member with the same function get together one time during for example a lunch (this is how they do this at Pegasus). During this informal meeting they have a talk about what the function entails and get to know each other.

Appendixes

Appendix 1: Example Information folder (from VspA)

Ski Trip Committee

Every year the VSPA organizes a ski-trip for the members. It's one of the biggest and craziest events of the year. During the trip there will be skiing, snowboarding, dinners, games, snowball-fights and après skiing in the worst (and therefore best) pub in the neighborhood. The trip is fun for people who have never skied or snowboarded before, but it's also really nice for the people who slide down the slopes like Dutch people ride their bikes. As a member of this committee you will take care of organizing this amazing trip and the fun activities within it. For activities during the trip you can think of a beer pong tournament, a silent disco or other fun things.

In short:
What: organizing the VSPA ski-trip
When: May until January (next academic year)
Time indication: committee meeting once a week

Culture Committee

The culture committee originated from a shared desire of students, who felt like going to cultural activities. You can think of a trip to a museum or play or a creative workshop. Last year the committee organized a clog painting workshop, a trip to the TapasTheater and a boat tour during the Amsterdam light festival. The committee is re-established to make cultural activities more accessible for students. It's a perfect committee if you are into anything that has to do with culture and would like to organize fun events.

In short:
What: organizing three cultural activities
When: throughout the whole year
Time indication: committee meeting once a week

Appendix 2: Example central file with all committee members (from Pegasus)

Education Committee

Function	First Name	Second Name	Phone Number	Mailadress
Chair	Tim	Wagelaar	(+31) 00 000 00 00	email@email.com
Secretary				
Treasurer				
Promotion				
Contact intern				
Contact extern				