

Policy plan 2023-2024 STUdance

31st board of STUdance “*Dance to the moon and back*”

Summary

Below is a summary of the plans formulated by the 2023-2024 board to uphold the core values of STUdance.

Main Goal 1: Quality

- New Dance Groups
- Honest Week
- Input of the members
- Attendance During Dance Classes
- Teacher Orientation
- Substitute Teachers

Main Goal 2: Companionship

- Bonding Within Dance Groups
- Bonding Among Members
- Chupitos

Main Goal 3: Professionalism

- Name Recognition
- NSDW (Dutch Student Dance Competition)
- Inclusivity
- Sustainability
- Mental Health Week
- Pnyx
- Board Workload
- ClubCollect
- Social Media
- Olympos 2028
- Plan 2030

1. Introduction

1.1 General introduction

STUdance, the student sports association, was founded in 1993 with the aim of promoting stage dance and offering dance classes to students. Over the years, STUdance has grown to become the largest student dance association in the Netherlands, with more than 300 members. In the academic year 2023-2024, STUdance offers classes in various dance styles, including jazz, modern dance, classical ballet, feminine jazz/modern, street dance, hip-hop, and feminine hip-hop, all taught at different levels. Additionally, STUdance offers a mix class, with a different style each block. These classes are taught by professional instructors employed by STUdance. STUdance also organises the Choreolab project each year, allowing members to create their own choreography under professional guidance. The dance season concludes with an annual final performance featuring all groups, which will once again take place at the Stadsschouwburg Utrecht.

Besides dance classes, STUdance also prioritises creating a fun and social atmosphere, with thirteen committees organising various activities throughout the dance year, including dance workshops, monthly socials, parties, dinners, weekend getaways, and more, all designed to enrich the student life in Utrecht.

1.2 Mission and Vision

Mission

Enriching student life in Utrecht with dance (classes) and companionship.

Vision

STUdance is a student dance association dedicated to promoting self-development in dance among its members. It offers various dance forms while striving to keep costs low and maintain high quality. STUdance aims to foster a positive atmosphere within the association, recognizing that dance passion can bring people together and create connections.

Additionally STUdance seeks to provide students with a social network and support system. Openness and accessibility within the association are crucial.

To ensure effective organisation, STUdance aims to operate as professionally as possible.

1.3 Three Pillars

Based on this mission and vision, three core values have evolved into the following pillars:

1. Quality
2. Companionship
3. Professionalism

The STUdance Policy Plan 2023-2024 presents concrete plans to uphold and/or improve these core values.

2. Main Goal 1: Quality

2.1 Introduction

STUdance places a high emphasis on quality. To attract new members and retain current ones, it is essential for STUdance to offer high-quality dance classes.

How does STUdance promote this core value?

To maintain the quality of dance classes at a high level, STUdance strives to employ competent instructors with suitable dance training. During their dance training, instructors gain extensive knowledge of dance techniques, styles, and anatomy. Engaging competent instructors helps reduce the risk of injuries among our dancers and creates a safe and inspiring environment that members value. This safe and inspiring environment is further enhanced through collaboration with Sportcentrum Olympos, providing STUdance with excellent facilities like spacious dance halls.

Additionally, the quality of lessons is regularly assessed by limiting class sizes and conducting teacher surveys that STUdance members can complete. The results of these surveys are also discussed during periodic evaluation meetings with instructors.

Quality is also ensured by offering multiple styles at various levels. Having different levels and styles allows dancers in a class to have similar skill levels, enabling instructors to adapt lessons to the collective skill level. This allows dancers to enjoy dancing at their own level and progress from there.

What are the plans of the 2023-2024 board to promote this core value?

2.2 New Dance Groups

In the current dance year, three new dance groups in different styles were launched: feminine hip-hop, feminine jazz/modern, and street 3. This means that STUdance can admit an additional 66 members this year. Given this expansion, the 2023-2024 board finds it important to conduct an initial evaluation of these three new groups, both among instructors and members. This evaluation would be appropriate during the Honest Week, which will be further explained in the next point. In addition to this evaluation, it's crucial for the board to brainstorm about how STUdance can sustain and continue this growth. This brainstorming will include strategies for attracting new members.

2.3 Honest Week

In the past year, the 2022-2023 board introduced an Honest Week to improve the quality of lessons. During this week, members could provide feedback to instructors about the classes. The 2023-2024 board intends to organise this week again and promote it further by involving instructors and their lesson plans.

2.4 Input of the members

Improving the quality of lessons can be achieved through member input. Currently, the suggestion box is only available on the website. The 2023-2024 board aims to explore the possibility of integrating the suggestion box with our other social media platforms. Additionally, reducing the barrier for member input is important. The Honest Week is one way the board hopes to achieve this.

2.5 Attendance During Dance Classes

The quality of dance lessons also depends on members' attendance. To track attendance, attendance lists will continue to be used this year. Additionally, the 2023-2024 board plans to raise awareness of the confidential contact person among members who are absent for an extended period. In case of prolonged absence, the secretary will contact the member via email, providing the contact information for the confidential contact person. This measure is aimed at creating a safe environment for members.

2.6 Teacher Orientation

STUdance employs professional instructors to teach dance classes. In anticipation of the future, the 2023-2024 board plans to explore ways to maintain the continuity of the instructor team within STUdance.

2.7 Substitute Teachers

STUdance utilises substitute teachers when a regular instructor is unavailable. Members have expressed concerns about the varying quality of these substitute lessons. Therefore, in the upcoming year, the 2023-2024 board intends to conduct a survey among both members and substitute instructors to gauge their experiences and gather feedback. This survey will become part of the teacher surveys.

3. Main Goal 2: Companionship

3.1 Introduction

As mentioned earlier, STUdance aims to offer its members not only dance lessons but also a positive atmosphere and a social support network through various activities.

What does STUdance do to promote this core value?

STUdance provides its members with companionship in addition to dance lessons. The association's board and committees organise numerous activities throughout the year. STUdance hosts a Monthly Drinks (Maandelijkse Borrel or MaBo) at Chupitos every first Tuesday of the month. In addition, several committees are responsible for various activities, including the party committee, dinner committee, weekendaway committee, dance activities committee and UIT committee. The other committees organise the monthly drinks and other specific activities such as the grime-workshop for the final show and the NSDW. The activities are very important for bonding between the members. Every committee has a scenario and a contact from the board. Besides the organisation of activities the Danceflash, a newsletter filled with information and fun facts, is sent every other week.

What are the plans of the 2023-2024 board to promote this core value?

3.2 Bonding Within Dance Groups

To foster companionship within the dance groups, the 2023-2024 board will encourage bonding within dance groups. One way the board wants to encourage this is to bring more attention to the STUcup. Next to this we want to bring more attention to bonding within the dance groups in the lesson plans of the teachers. Lastly we want to explore the possibility of involving the dance groups in making certain parts of the Danceflash.

3.3 Bonding Among Members

In addition to the connection within their own dance groups, the overall connection among members is also important for STUdance. In the upcoming year, as the 2023-2024 board, we aim to enhance the sense of unity among members. To achieve this, we plan to organise two board-led activities alongside our regular events. These activities will prioritise fostering connections between members, both among themselves and with the board.

3.3 Chupitos

This year, STUdance unfortunately cannot continue using its previous main venue, the Rex. It is crucial for the continuity of our social gatherings to have a fixed location. Instead of the Rex, STUdance has entered into a collaboration with the bar Chupitos. Both STUdance and Chupitos will need to navigate this new partnership together. As this is a new collaboration, as the 2023-2024 board, we intend to evaluate it both midway and at the end of the year. This evaluation will assess how the partnership has been established and identify the needs and preferences of both STUdance and Chupitos.

4. Main Goal 3: Professionalism

4.1 Introduction

STUdance aims to be more than just a student sports association; it strives to be a professional organisation for partners and instructors. Furthermore, it's crucial that the board presents itself professionally to its members and external parties each year. Professionalism plays a vital role in maintaining a well-functioning organisation.

What does STUdance do to promote this core value?

For both members and external parties, STUdance maintains a website where they can find various aspects of STUdance, including our mission and vision, current and past board members, our range of dance classes and prices, information about our instructors, the demo team, sister associations, and partners. In addition to the website, STUdance is present on various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X, Snapchat, Youtube, and LinkedIn.

Every year, a new board is elected for the upcoming academic year. To ensure continuity within the association, there are various structures in place to rely on. Different committees submit a scenario at the end of the year. Committee members can review what was organised in previous years, what decisions were made, and what went well or not so well at the time. Furthermore, there is a Google Drive where all this information is stored dating back to the year 2015.

STUdance also has a Board of Advisors (RvA), consisting of members or former board members with a proven affinity for the association. The RvA provides both solicited and unsolicited advice on decisions that the board needs to make throughout the year. Additionally, the Treasurer of STUdance receives advice from the Finance Committee (KasCo), which comprises former treasurers and other members. The advice from the KasCo is binding. The External Committee supports the External Affairs Commissioner with activities like sponsor acquisition and increasing STUdance's visibility this year. Finally, STUdance maintains an archive primarily for the Secretary and Treasurer's administrative records from past years. The incoming board receives a comprehensive handover, and there are established policies, a house rule document, and statutes. In 2020, Plan 2025 was created, and candidate boards can refer to this long-term plan in the new policy plan to ensure a stable future plan.

What are the plans of the 2023-2024 board to promote this core value?

4.2 Brand Awareness

In the upcoming year, it is the intention of our 2023-2024 board to increase the visibility of STUdance. We aim to achieve this, among other things, by organising the Dutch Student Dance Competition (NSDW). Additionally, our board plans to establish a new committee, the External Committee (Externco), which will focus on promoting STUdance. The committee members will assist the commissioner of external affairs in recruiting sponsors. Sponsors and partners play a crucial role for STUdance in various aspects. This is why our 2023-2024 board will dedicate significant attention to retaining current partners and acquiring new collaborations.

4.3 NSDW

As mentioned above, STUdance will be organising the Dutch Student Dance Competition (NSDW) in the upcoming year. The NSDW is a national dance competition for which student teams from various cities can sign up. The NSDW is hosted in a different city each year, and this year it will take place in Utrecht. The competition and related activities will span a weekend. Given that the NSDW is a significant undertaking that requires substantial organisation, our board will appoint a committee to work alongside us in organising the NSDW.

4.4 Inclusivity

STUdance has taken various steps in recent years to enhance inclusivity, and we, as the 2023-2024 board, aim to continue this trend in the coming year. We have several initiatives planned for the upcoming year. Firstly, it's crucial that STUdance provides a safe environment for members to be themselves. To support this, we want instructors to inquire about members' pronouns at the beginning of the year. Secondly, we'd like to raise awareness of Pride Week among our members and will explore the possibilities for doing so. Thirdly, we have welcomed several international members this year. As a board, we want to build on the work done in the past year, so we will survey international members to understand their needs related to STUdance better. Lastly, STUdance has opened its doors to vocational college (MBO) students this year, although there are currently no MBO students as members. In the coming year, our board will explore opportunities to welcome these students as well.

4.5 Sustainability

In the context of sustainability, our 2023-2024 board aims to replace birthday cards with birthday emails this year. In this way, we hope to save paper. Additionally, each member will receive a personalised email on their actual birthday, whereas previously, cards were sent around the time of their birthday.

4.6 Mental Health Week

It is crucial for STUdance to focus on the mental health of its members. For this reason, our 2023-2024 board intends to pay extra attention to Mental Health Week, including topics like body positivity. We will explore various ways to address this issue.

4.7 Pnyx

STUdance has a boardroom at its disposal for keeping records and holding meetings. This room is located in the Pnyx on Science Park together with boardrooms from other student associations. However, the Pnyx is a temporary building slated for demolition. It is essential for STUdance's records, meetings, and the connection between associations that a boardroom continues to exist. Therefore, our 2023-2024 board will investigate the possibilities for replacing the boardroom at the Pnyx.

4.8 Workload of the Board

The board of STUdance is a part-time board consisting of six board members at the moment. There have been concerns from various boards about the workload of these positions. Our 2023-2024 board intends to explore possibilities for reducing this workload, potentially by adding an extra board member. We will assess the need for this and whether the additional board member would have enough responsibilities to justify the role.

4.9 ClubCollect

This year, STUdance switched from Codex to ClubCollect. ClubCollect is a relatively new system with various new features and different functions compared to Codex. One example is that ClubCollect can immediately handle the payment for a specific activity during registration if necessary. Currently, ClubCollect lacks certain functions that could be important for STUdance members. For instance, members do not yet have their own profiles on ClubCollect. Additionally, there is no option to upload photos of activities on ClubCollect. Our 2023-2024 board plans to evaluate this system in the coming year. Furthermore, based on the evaluation results, we intend to conduct a brainstorming session to explore solutions for the missing features and any other issues.

4.10 Social Media

STUdance is active on various social media platforms, which serve different purposes such as disseminating information, fostering social interactions, and increasing visibility. In the upcoming year, our 2023-2024 board plans to assess whether we are fully utilising the potential of these platforms. If we find that there is room for improvement, we will also explore ways to enhance our social media presence.

4.11 Olympos 2028

STUdance's dance classes take place at the Olympos sports centre. There is a plan to redesign the sports centre and its surrounding facilities in 2028. This involves demolishing the current building and replacing it with a new one. Various parties are involved in shaping the new Olympos, with the sports council playing a crucial role as an advocate for sports clubs. STUdance actively supports the sports council through activities like the lobby group. In the upcoming year, we will work to lobby for the interests of both STUdance and other sports clubs in this process.

4.12 Plan 2030

'Plan 2030' is a five-year strategic plan of STUdance. It serves as a current addition to STUdance's policy document. 'Plan 2030' addresses significant, current developments and issues. It provides a framework for the management of the next five dance years. Creating this plan is a significant task. For this reason, we, as the board of 2023-2024, will lay the foundation for 'Plan 2030.' The board of 2024-2025 will build upon this foundation and finalise 'Plan 2030.'