

MBO integration at ASVA

Status: Decision-Making

Dear General Assembly,

On August 30, 2023, the ASVA General Assembly approved the formal representation of MBO students. Presented here is a timeline outlining the steps we plan to take to represent MBO students formally. Additionally, we provide information on what ASVA can offer to MBO students and how we plan to engage them. As a union, it is crucial that we represent all Amsterdam students.

The decision to formally represent MBO students is based on a research, and the key points that emerged from it are reiterated below:

- ASVA must consciously invest in the MBO institutions with which we establish a connection.
- ASVA must become visible within various MBO institutions.
- The board must establish an active MBO portfolio, engaging with MBO students proactively.
- Larger events must be inclusive, addressing the positions of MBO, HBO, and WO students.
- Special attention should be given to the attendance of MBO students at General Assemblies (ALV) so that these students can also represent themselves within ASVA's highest organ.
- ASVA can actively assist in setting up student associations within MBO institutions.
- Within ASVA, consideration should be given to how we can involve MBO students in portfolios and various roles.
- Thought should be given to the representation of MBO students within the ASVA board. A good first step would be to involve MBO students in the Search Committee and Solicitation Committee.
- In 2024, ASVA will need to invest heavily in hiring an MBO employee and actively focus on the MBO student demographic.

Short-Term Plan

The ultimate goal is to achieve proportional representation of MBO students. To achieve this, we need to connect with two different target groups: MBO students and MBO institutions. Informal and formal forms of representation are outlined. Informal representation involves the opportunity to be a member of ASVA and utilize our member services. With formal representation, we engage with school administrations, proactively address issues within these schools, and expect a financial reimbursement for ASVA's efforts.

Inactive Member Engagement

During the ALV on October 30, the new statutes were submitted, allowing MBO students to become ASVA members. It is essential that MBO students can find us. Therefore, we informally focus on engaging Amsterdam MBO students in various ways, including targeting our social media output at least 4 times a year explicitly towards MBO students. This may involve creating info clips with the infoteam on topics relevant to MBO students. Additionally, we plan to hang posters in MBO institutions, contact MBO bodies to inform them that ASVA now represents MBO students, and make ALV information more accessible on our website, promoting ALV dates and writing ALV documents in simplified language.

Internal Contact with MBO Students

As a first step, we are hiring an MBO employee for the MBO portfolio. Currently, funds are allocated for a 4-hour-per-week MBO employee. It is crucial that ASVA not only talks about MBO students but also facilitates MBO students to unite within ASVA and collectively address common issues with other students from every educational fan. After hiring an employee, we will establish an MBO working group, leveraging our employee's network, posting a job vacancy on our website, promoting it on social media, reaching out to external parties to disseminate the vacancy, and hanging posters promoting the MBO working group.

MBO students are also welcome to work at ASVA, and these job vacancies will be promoted with extra care among MBO students, with priority given to MBO students for positions with equal competencies.

External Contact with MBO Students

It is essential to establish good contact with the central student representation of MBO institutions. ASVA can support such bodies and gain valuable insights into what is happening at their educational institutions. Additionally, we aim to create collaborations with other MBO representatives, such as the MBO Council of the City of Amsterdam, JOB MBO, and the alderman for MBO and labor market access in the City of Amsterdam.

Contact with MBO Institutions

We will initiate discussions with various MBO institutions in Amsterdam. If desired by the institutions, a financial collaboration will be established. Given that ROCvA is the largest MBO school in Amsterdam, we will initially focus on this institution. If ROCvA shows no interest in close collaboration but another institution does, we will redirect our efforts. We will actively contact the central board of directors, discuss mutual benefits, and integrate the key points from the MBO research. The goal of these discussions is for ASVA to actively engage with MBO institutions in exchange for financial support.

Furthermore, we will reach out to the other three MBO institutions in Amsterdam (ROC TOP, Hout- en Meubileringscollege, and Mediacollege Amsterdam) if ROCvA seems uninterested in collaboration. This is essential for informing these organizations that ASVA now represents MBO students and to prepare for potential future collaborations, including larger projects such as an MBO introduction week.

The HvA Executive Board has committed to acting as a liaison to connect ASVA with MBO institutions.

Financial Considerations

For the formal representation of an MBO school, it is crucial that ASVA receives a substantial reimbursement for its efforts. While there is a chance that ASVA will initially invest more than it receives in subsidies, representing MBO students is considered a core function of ASVA. It is more important for ASVA to represent MBO students than to be fully compensated for the investments made. Last year, one MBO employee was hired, and this amount is included in the budget. Focusing our financial resources on an MBO employee instead of other areas within ASVA is justified because MBO representation requires attention, and hiring someone dedicated to this cause is a necessary step forward.

Long-Term

The long-term goal is for ASVA to officially represent all the MBO institutions in Amsterdam (ROCvA, ROC TOP, Hout- en Meubileringscollege, and Mediacollege Amsterdam). Once a collaboration agreement is established with one MBO institution, it becomes easier to form connections with others. To build these connections, we will follow the same steps as outlined above.

To ensure ASVA has enough capacity to represent this large group of new students effectively, several steps need to be taken. ASVA must be mindful of how to maintain sufficient knowledge about students' concerns, navigate the distance between educational institutions, and address the various issues faced by students in different educational tiers.

Increasing Capacity

Effectively representing multiple MBO institutions will require a significant increase in capacity. This involves expanding the number of educational staff, with each educational institution having its designated staff member. The number of hours allocated to each staff member will depend on the number of students they represent. The team will also include someone monitoring national education issues and an organizing staff member who assists in coordinating events and actions.

The responsibilities of an educational institution staff member are as follows: maintaining contacts, knowledge, and information provision, and taking the lead in solving problems at that specific educational institution.

To maintain contacts effectively, it is deemed essential to appoint a dedicated staff member for each formally represented educational institution. This staff member should preferably come from the institution they represent. The staff member's tasks will include maintaining contact with the governing board of the represented educational institution, student assessors (if present), faculty councils, and OC's (Opleidingscommissies or Program Committees). It is crucial that this responsibility lies with the staff member, given the slower turnover of staff within ASVA, ensuring that established contacts do not quickly diminish.

These contacts are intended to stay informed about the happenings in different organizations. Additionally, it is essential to follow other news sources, such as student newspapers. To take the lead in solving problems at the educational institution, staff members must be well-informed about the power structures within their institution—knowing who decides what and how ASVA can influence policies. Therefore, it is vital to create a witboek for each educational institution outlining these structures.

Location

Currently located on Roeterseiland, ASVA tends to be predominantly visible only at this location. To be visible at various educational locations, our activities must be widely spread. It is important to organize an equal number of events, distribute an equal number of posters, and engage in other forms of physical advertising at each location. Since posters are often casually put up by ASVA staff members, the organization should strive to have a staff member present at each educational location. Additionally, the board should maintain an overview of where events have taken place throughout the year to ensure equal distribution.

Consideration has been given to the idea of an additional ASVA counter at different locations. This was attempted when there was an ASVA counter at HvA, but it did not attract students and ultimately served more as a living billboard. Therefore, an extra counter seems unnecessary.

Board

In the long term, it should also become possible to appoint an MBO board member. Currently, having HBO students on the board proves to be a significant asset in representing as many students as possible. Ideally, an ASVA board should consist of 2 universities, 2 colleges, and 2 MBO students. To facilitate this, it is crucial that each search committee (zoekco) and social committee (soco) includes an MBO member. Therefore, it seems advisable to codify this in the organization's bylaws (HR).

External Contact with MBO Students

On a long-term basis, it is essential to continue collaborations with external parties. While we continue to focus on the MBO introduction week, we will also direct our attention to issues such as the exclusion of MBO students from clubs. This could involve establishing a reporting point. The received reports can be forwarded to the municipality, where we would advocate for imposing measures if clubs do not adjust their policies regarding the admission of MBO students. Or they can be sent to other platforms that help with these kinds of issues.

Furthermore, it is crucial to advocate for the inclusion of MBO students to all student associations. This involves actively supporting the establishment of study associations within an MBO institution and consistently promoting participation in associations.