Dear Geert, Karen, and Jan,

In light of recent events in the United States as well as the Netherlands, the issues of racism, systemic discrimination, and power abuse have become ever more salient in the public consciousness.

Even and especially at our institution, there have been tireless calls for reform.

From an official University of Amsterdam-hired research committee that created the 2016 “Let’s Do Diversity” Report, the consistent open letters to the CvB and press coverage over the years, to the petitions for decolonization and criticism of the University in the press and social media in the past weeks, the pressure seems to be rising.

Between the CSR and the CvB, Diversity has been discussed multiple times this year, from the Instellingsplan feedback to our review of the Diversity Nota implementation. As you may have realized, the time is ripe for institutionalized change. Before our year is up, we would like to strongly advise you to implement the following three measures:

**“Let Me Tell You” art exhibition on a university-wide scale**
This is a project originally hosted by the Faculty of Social Sciences. The purpose of the exhibition is to showcase student artwork interpreting the diverse experiences that are had at the UvA. To centralize this activity on a university-wide scale would provide a more serious platform for the expression of the minoritized.

**Implementation of the “Let’s Do Diversity” Report recommendations**
We believe that the UvA should implement the measures outlined by the official research committee of the “Let’s Do Diversity” Report within the next academic year. In this process, it is
important for the Diversity Forum to have a supervisory role.

We find it noteworthy that the recommendations created in the “Let’s Do Diversity” Report were personally tailored for the University of Amsterdam by the Diversity Commission, the official research committee hired by the UvA and selected by the Diversity Forum coalition and other stakeholders. Although the 2019 Diversity Nota is a commendable starting point for official policy, we believe that we can never be too ambitious when it comes to diversity, decolonization, social justice, and equity at the University of Amsterdam.

Many of the recommendations in the “Let’s Do Diversity” Report such as blind grading (the practice of grading without knowing a student’s name), are practical and timeless solutions that would generate pragmatic change, ensuring equal treatment of all students and staff. These recommendations also extensively cover social safety, a pertinent priority that has been brought to light once more through recent events.

As you may know, the Diversity Forum is an UvA coalition organization consisting of students and staff from the CSR, COR, Amsterdam United, Student Disability Platform, University of Color, Humanities Rally, ReThink UvA, and New Urban Collective. Such a representative body would be unarguably valuable in overseeing the process of implementation, especially considering the Diversity Forum’s role as the original advocates for the creation of the “Let’s Do Diversity” Report.

**Expansion of the Diversity Forum’s rights**

Furthermore, we believe that the Diversity Forum should have advising and policymaking rights in all discussions and decision-making procedures pertaining to diversity in the UvA.

As highlighted in the second measure above, the Diversity Forum more than sufficiently represents all the stakeholders in Diversity at the UvA. As compared to the Chief Diversity Officer's team, the Diversity Forum is more democratic and decentralized. With the expansion of the Diversity Forum’s supervisory role, the two parties would serve to complement each other, one based within the administration and the other representing the student and staff population.

In conclusion, we would like to ask you to take up the need for diversity, decolonization, social justice, and equity as a truly urgent point of action going into the new academic year. We need to implement new, reconciliatory worldviews and systems for the sake of our collective communities. The world is changing by the minute, and we truly believe that the University of Amsterdam has the potential to lead the rising tide of positive transformation.
Thank you for your time and consideration of our proposal. We look forward to your response.

On behalf of the Central Student Council, we hope that you remain safe and healthy in these circumstances.

Warm greetings,

Pjotr van der Jagt  
Chair CSR 19|20