

# MOTIVATIONAL LETTER

Hi! My name is Chiara Poli, and I'm a student at the University College Twente (UCT, or ATLAS) and part of S.A. Atlantis. I'm currently in my second year and I'm specializing in Business Management in the Tech Industry.

My first impression of the UCSRN was a quick slide in my study association presentation during our intro week and all I knew at that point was that the UCSRN was some sort of umbrella organization for the University College students in the Netherlands. I got to know a bit more about the organization thanks to my participation in Atlantis' connection committee (CoCo) during my first year. This is the committee responsible for managing connections and organizing events with other study associations, both within and outside of the University of Twente. Within this committee, we had the opportunity to work together with some of the UCSRN events, namely organizing and X-factor-like audition event to select candidates for the UCSRN spotlight and working as the hype team for the Spotlight and UCSRN tournament. Still, with the corona situation and the tournament being online, my knowledge and awareness of the UCSRN were still rather dim.

I'm going to admit, with the risk of sounding like an alcoholic, that it wasn't until Atlantis organized a cocktail event together with Caerus (UCG) at the start of 2021 that I had given much thought to the UCSRN or its potential. In the middle of the isolation and boredom of the lockdown, it was nice to be reminded of the existence of other UCs and other students that are taking a path similar to mine. This got me thinking that the UCSRN is right now playing too small of a role in the lives of our students, while it could be a great way to bring more cohesiveness and visibility to the University College community of the Netherlands.

As chair of the UCSRN, my vision would be to increase the unity and **prestige** of UCs and UCs study associations by increasing both inter-UC collaboration, and sponsorships with other universities and companies.

In order to promote unity and inter-UCs collaboration, my plan would be to a) further develop the current buddy program, b) organize a couple more (smaller) UCSRN events to better involve the community, and c) work on increasing the presence and visibility of the UCSRN throughout all of our students.

Thanks to my past experience in CoCo, I know what it takes to imagine and oversee the organization of an event that is fun and attractive for a diverse group of people, and I believe that organizing events where the different UCs collaborate (instead of competing against each other) could help foster an increased sense of community. Perhaps, an event could even be organized where buddy universities pairs (or triplets) collaborate with each other to win the title of "best buddies" or something (to foster collaboration while still keeping things interesting and competitive).

Another thing I find important is to make sure we offer help and support to our members and students during this difficult time and lockdown, and in the period right after. I would be nice to offer workshops and activities aimed at improving the students' wellbeing and state of mind, as well as promoting new connections and friendships (perhaps a round of inter-UC speed dating?).

On a different note, increased social media presence (especially Instagram -to connect with students- and LinkedIn -to connect with sponsors) is needed, as well as more moments where we as the UCSRN board introduce ourselves and present our association to the students of all of our member associations.

As a seasoned member of the External Relations Committee of Atlantis (the committee responsible for sponsorships), I have plenty of experience in dealing with companies and finding sponsors. My wish is to apply this knowledge to make a reasonable and effective plan together with my External not only to help the UCSRN increase their sponsorships but also continue with the project aimed at helping all UC establish better sponsorships and connections.

An idea I would love is coming together with companies to create a career fair targeted to UC students. Something similar could be organized with Dutch and international universities to present possible masters to our students. Both

these events could be organized either in person, if possible, but also rather easily online if Covid were to still be a problem.

In conclusion, my vision is to increase the visibility of the committee both within our members to increase the feeling of community and cooperation, and with outside partners in order to provide more and more opportunities for our students and their future.

Now, I have recently been selected to be team leader for my current semester project where I am leading 14 people. Together with this, I'm taking a course on leadership to help me develop my skills in this direction. What I'm discovering is important to me as a leader is to always challenge myself and my teammates while still creating a stimulating and supporting environment. I believe that the role of the leader is to help not only to create and communicate a clear and inspiring vision, but also to help people realize that they are capable of much more than they might think, and fulfill their full potential. Still, at the same time, as a leader, it is important for me to ensure that all members feel supported, heard and that I'm fostering an environment where people are not afraid of making mistakes or expressing their opinion sincerely. I believe that I would be a great asset to the UCSRN board as a chair, as I would be able to set an ambitious vision, help everyone feel motivated and challenged, and create a strong and supportive community.

Getting this opportunity would be great because while I have enough experience to know that it is a role I can handle, I'm still inexperienced enough for this to be a challenge and an opportunity to learn a lot and gain some useful experience, especially considering that management is my field of specialization. Furthermore, especially after these months of isolation, I'm really looking forward to meeting new people and creating a tightly-knit group that likes each other and enjoys working together and hanging out (be it in person or online). Also, my name is almost a perfect anagram of Chair, so it's clearly meant to be.