

## **Report on New Requirement for Student Visas (affects self financing students only)**

ISU, in collaboration with NSU and StL, have sent out a press release regarding a change in the UDI rules for renewal of student visas. This was done on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March, after Eton Williams (ISU at UIO) accidentally stumbled over a new rule in the regulations.

So far, regulations have required that self-financing students in Norway must prove to have NOK 80 000 on their account in the beginning of each term. Now, a rule has been added that the students must also produce documentation of all transactions on their account for the last six months. This is to control that the NOK 80 000 was actually spent on covering the student's living expenses in Norway; not simply produced for a while to fill the requirements and then removed.

From reading the paper in which the change occurs, however, one would neither know this incentive, nor exactly what they would look for among the account details. This way, we fear that international students will be stigmatised, and made somewhat suspicious.

Moreover, initially, only the police stations and the embassies were notified of this change, which can be found as a single line on page 12 in a formal document containing all the student visa procedures. A month later, representatives from the universities and colleges were invited among others to be briefed on the contents of this whole document, a meeting to which no student organisations were invited, and we thus had to force our way into.

In short, we do not criticise the actual rule, however, we do not like the way in which the change was conducted. The student organisations should have been notified before the decision was made, and afterwards information should have been distributed in an effective way so that it would reach those concerned by it. Such a rule should not have been put into effect without prior notice, as those renewing their student visas this summer will have to answer to a requirement that they did not know about, and that did not exist the crucial six months before.

We hope for attention in the media on this case, to state that we do not accept such "hidden" changes of regulations which so directly affect international students.

This report was written on the 29.03.05, by Hanna Holmelin, National Secretary, ISU.