



International Students' Union of Norway (ISU)

Minutes of the National Assembly at BI in Nydalen, Oslo 24-26 April 2009

Prepared by

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Prepared for

Member Branches

and

Cooperation Partners

- Studentenes Landsforbund (StL)
- Norsk Studentunion (NSU)
- Studentenes og Akademikernes
Internasjonale Hjelpesfond (SAIH)
- Utviklingsfondets Ungdom (Spire)

ISU National Assembly – Nai09, Oslo

FRIDAY 24 APRIL

The Assembly started at 13:00 hours with Ice-Breaking activities lead by Chairman Jonas Ådnøy Holmqvist.

Initial greeting by ISU President, Farshad Tami

Welcoming all to BI in Nydalen and the first National Assembly in 2009.

Chairman, Agenda and timetable were approved.

Welcoming speech by Professor Guri Hjeltnes, Provost of BI Nydalen.

Professor Guri Hjeltnes welcomed us all to BI. She gave us some interesting facts about BI. BI is a private management and business school that was started in 1943 and it is currently the second biggest university in Norway, it has 19000 students, 1000 of them are international students. BI cooperates with many other universities, mainly in European countries, China and East-Asia.

Presentation of Partner Organizations

Utviklingsfondets Ungdom (Spire) – The Development Fund's Youth Organization (Spire)

- Presentation by Elisabeth Helseth, Vice-President of Spire:

Spire is the youth organization of the development fund and was founded in 2003.

Spire works with development issues and have partner organizations in the South.

Most of their work in Norway is information work and lobbying. Spire wants young

people to be involved in environmental politics and try to get young people in the

South to be part of climate negotiations that concern them. Spire has local chapters on

some higher education institutions in Norway.



Studentenes og Akademikernes Internasjonale Hjelpfond (SAIH)- Norwegian Students' and Academics' International Assistance Fund

- Presentation by Eirin Winsnes Isaksen, Vice-President of SAIH:
SAIH works with development cooperation in 5 countries in Africa and Latin-America. Their emphasis is on higher education and solidarity with students in developing countries. Solidarity is important; SAIH thinks students in other countries should have the same opportunities as students in Norway. They have local chapters on most higher education institutions in Norway and a national office in Oslo. In Norway they do information work and lobbying towards MoFA for a holistic Norwegian education policy in development. .

The Student Body of BI (SBIO)

- Presentation by Remi Wulff, Vice-President and Ole Steinsholt, Head of Information:
SBIO is the Student Body of BI run by and for students on a volunteer basis. 650 people are working voluntarily within SBIO. SBIO was established in 2005 when the different BI branches moved to Nydalen. They organize many different activities for students and have divided the different responsibilities into committees. They have among others a translation committee to translate all SBIO material to English.

ISU National Report and Finance Report by Farshad Tami

A presentation of the work ISU has done lately. Politically we have worked mainly on the quota student case, establishing a good dialogue with the Ministry of Education and Research. We have also become partners with Spire and kept our good cooperation with NSU, StL, LNU and SAIH.

The financial report was presented in written in Norwegian and orally in English due to a work overload at the national office caused by the fact that Posten lost all our financial documents. There was some discussion on whether this should have been presented written in English and that is hard to know what you approve when you cannot understand the language. This will be taken into consideration by the National Board. The NA approved the financial report for 2008 as per constitution and gave a go ahead sign for next year's budget.

Presentation of ISU Agder

ISU Agder is a new ISU branch at the University of Agder with campuses in Kristiansand, Arendal and Grimstad. They are working closely with the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) in Agder. ISU Agder has 4 elected board members, and they have already organized some activities in campus, for instance building an igloo and movie nights. They are waiting to be recognised as a student organisation within STA.

Voting on ISU Agder membership

The NA unanimously voted in favour of including ISU Agder as an ISU Local Branch and two observers from ISU Agder were thus given delegate status by the NA.

Presentation of Partner Organizations

Norsk Studentunion (NSU)- The National Union of Students in Norway



- Presentation by Ingvild Reymert, President:

NSU represents all students at universities and scientific colleges. Their main goal is education for all. Two of NSU's concerns are also shared with ISU: Quota Scheme Students issue and lack of housing for all students. Ingvild emphasised the importance of cooperation between ISU and NSU and that this should continue with the new board. She also talked about the upcoming merge between NSU and StL, meaning that all students in Norway will be represented by one big student organization.

Practicing of voting and debate procedures

Chairman Jonas and National Secretary Solveig explained the voting and speaking rules as per ISU Guidelines and then practiced with all attending participants. It was noted that there was a lot of improvement relative to last NA.

Workshop on group dynamics and team building

National Secretary Solveig conducted a team building activity that helped the participants understand more the dynamics of their board members as well as their colleagues from different local branches. It was seen as a good idea to be repeated during upcoming NAs.

SATURDAY 25 APRIL

The Assembly started at 09:30 hours.

ISU Local Branch Presentations

ISU Telemark

They have had success in organizing different activities, among them international food festival and sports activities like swimming and skiing trips; they also sponsor other gym activities. Their vision is to make a culture out of all the cultures present I ISU, keeping all the identities. Challenges are better education facilities, how to find part time jobs and student funding.

ISU Trondheim

They have rearranged their board in order to work more efficiently, and have divided the work into teams. They arrange activities for students; parties, trips to Lofoten and Geiranger, movies, board games, chill out evenings and cultural activities. They are still working to get more Norwegian courses for international students, updating their website, and trying to find a person who can be responsible for contacts between ISU and cooperation partner and authorities.

ISU Stavanger

They have a newly elected board and they have changed their constitution to get a smaller board with elections once every year instead of twice. They are still working on the deposit case where international students have to pay while Norwegians do not, and they have had progress on this case, but it is still not finished. They are also concerned about the process in UDI which is very slow. They have many activities like salsa night, film nights and Coffee around the world which is very successful.



ISU NHH

At NHH they are called the MEBA council and represent all the international master students. They have some new members in their board, also a Norwegian who helps with translations etc. they have international dinners every month and they have had very successful integration activities like skiing trips, fishing trips and an educational trip to a gas storage plant. They are working on getting a better financial control and on internship possibilities for international students.

ISU UiB

They have increased the board from 6 to 7 members. They have hosted many social activities; welcoming party, goodbye party, Halloween party, football tournament, and quizzes, movie nights etc at Klubb Fantoft. They also have a language café in cooperation with NSU. They have had the Fantoft Student Coalition represented in the Students' Parliament. They have some challenges, including spreading knowledge about ISU, getting members to commit and join the board, high turnover and continuity.

ISU Narvik

To improve the ISU management they have training programs for new ISU members. They have created an advice book for new members. Narvik has 215 international students from 27 countries. They host many social activities; movies, parties, radio program, sports, language courses, pizza debates and "how to find a job". They also have international students' week and ISU Narvik would like to host the next NA in October 2009.

ISU Bodø

They have new board this year. Usually Bodø had 50-200 international students. They want to be a bridge between international and Norwegian students. They have coffee hour each Wednesday with a different team every time, this has been increasingly popular. They have had trips to Kjerringøy and Lofoten for both Norwegian and international students.

ISU Ås

UMB had the highest percentage of international students among Norwegian universities. They can get funding from the university's inclusion fund for activities including both Norwegians and internationals. They have had an international university fair, ski race, chocolate factory trip, cabin trips etc. they have also participated in a trip with Scanbalt experience and met many other student politicians. Their challenges are quota students, integration problems and high turn over in the board.

ISU Tromsø

They showed a video from their office, presenting all ISU Tromsø. They have had many activities like welcome-back party and world peace party. They also have very good cooperation with other student organizations in Tromsø.

ISU HiO

They have a new board for the semester. They arrange coffee hours, trips and international dinners. Some of their activities have been covered by the student press. They have also has trips to Sweden, the chocolate factory and movie nights. It is a challenge to get international students interested in committing to organization work.



Branch cooperation and commit activities

Presentation by Vice-President Mary Korotkova:

Despite what was agreed on the last NA, there has been no progress considering branch cooperation. Mary would like a discussion on what we would like to do about this and if branch cooperation is wanted by the branches. There was some discussion on why this has not been successful before. Regional groups for local branches were suggested as well as forming committees made up of social officers of each branch to increase cooperation, and it was suggested to make use of facebook, blogs, video etc to communicate between branches.

Workshop on Inclusion

Helge Lundsvoll Andersen from NSU:

He held a workshop about inclusion. The objective was to prepare a sort of package that all ISU Local Branches can use during the beginning of the year. First we had a discussion on topics such as “Are Norwegians cold and is inclusion possible?”, “what is most important for new students to know?” etc. Secondly, all the participants were then divided into six groups and each had to work out an inclusion plan. The results are presented in a separate document.

SUNDAY 26 APRIL

The Assembly started at 14:00 hours.

Discussion on what should be political priority for the next year

Housing – it came up as an important issue, especially connected to that universities that want to increase the amount of international students while the housing capacity is not increased. It was decided that the four branches that have this problem should work together to make a case.

UDI Issue – it is a big problem for students that the processing time to get a permit and a renewal of permit with UDI takes very much time. This is a problem because students cannot travel out of Norway and come back while waiting for an answer from UDI. It should be a priority to get a dialogue with UDI and find out what can be done to speed up the procedure and make them understand the problem for students that can't leave the country due to the delay in the bureaucracy.

Other issues – the NA had other concerns that are related mainly to finding a speedy solution for students that apply for Norwegian social security ID number, getting access to their own funds and other bureaucratic problems.

ISU National Board will place the above concerns as priorities in the next year's action plan.

Presentation of the results of the inclusion workshop

All the six groups were given 10 minutes to present their result of Saturday's workshop. The presentations were provided and it was agreed that they will be merged into one document for to be used by local branches later.



Voting on Changes to the Constitution

Several changes were voted in and the new version of the constitution was approved unanimously.

Voting on Changes to the Platform

Several changes were voted in and the new version of the platform was approved unanimously.

Presentation of the next National Assembly in Narvik in October

Ilya from Narvik gave a presentation of their university college and the city of Narvik. They have looked at different options for organizing the NA and there were presented in a power point presentation. It was suggested to make a realistic budget and that we can live with the cheapest option. Suggestions from the participants included sightseeing in the area, museums, more time for branch presentations and dividing these presentations in two bulks, and fruit in the coffee breaks. It was also agreed that they can send Ilya more suggestions by email.

The Assembly ended at 17:30 hours.

Solveig Aamodt
ISU National Secretary

Farshad Tami
ISU National President

Place and Date

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