



**ISU-Stavanger**

International Student Union in Stavanger, Norway

## **Semester report from International Students' Union – Stavanger Branch**

**September 22-24, 2006  
National Assembly in Oslo University College**

### **Overview**

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The International Students' Union (ISU) – Stavanger is located at the University of Stavanger (UiS). ISU-Stavanger is a young branch of ISU Norway and has been submitted to several changes since its establishment in 10<sup>th</sup> of February 2004.

Every semester ISU-Stavanger has considered in its vision and strategy an increase in the quality of services provided to students. This quality increase is a demand in order to give international students a high quality of life despite being abroad – away from home, family and friends. Integration is our motto and all our actions go towards reaching this goal.

The community of members in ISU - Stavanger grows every semester. In the fall semester ISU-Stavanger welcomed approximately 120 new students. In the spring semester, ISU welcomed around 40 new students. ISU-Stavanger does not have concise information about the actual number of international students on campus as it is considered confidential, but has been informed that there are approximately 350 students. The international students that ISU/UiS welcomed come for study programs in diverse areas, from Petroleum Engineering to Hotel Management. The duration / permanence in Norway of international students vary between three months and seven years. We have Erasmus students that comes for just three months (the comparative education program); as well as for six months (the hotel management program). The students that come to study their entire program here learn Norwegian language and culture in the first year, followed by their three-year bachelor's and two-year master's. Some of these students even plan to complete their PhD in Stavanger.

One of the milestones achieved last semester was a more international campus. All the campus maps were both written in Norwegian and English; our student newspaper named

Hugin dedicated a column just for news in English; Menus at the cantinas are now in English and Norwegian. Part of this was result of a tight “fight”, strong energetic pulse from our International department – our biggest recognition to Arve Kristiansen who gave to ISU his best: signs at UiS in English!! Big thank you!

An even stronger sense of cooperation with the international department and StOr was reached. In August ISU accompanied and welcomed hand-in-hand with the international department, the approximately 130 new students. In addition to participating in the welcoming week, ISU aided in the integration of these students, organizing a welcome party for them in one of the dormitories and keeping in close contact with the students during the transition period, having events going on every week.

ISU continues to be engaged actively in issues concerning students, striving every day for a more international UiS campus with the needed infra-structures, especially language based structures, which need to be improved apart from the encouraging conquests reached until now.

## ***Rewind***

Since April 2006, ISU continued walking towards the service excellence on its back and front-office. The continuation of a strong leadership and an even better coordination inside the union, towards members and between the other unions / organisations in UiS campus, conducted the branch in the right way to reach and accomplish several of the proposed goals and challenges to this period. Again, ISU revived and expanded significantly its role on campus. The repetition of the initiative “Engasjert” during the welcoming / Fadder week made ISU very popular and one of the sweetest union to visit. Simple give-aways as candies, waffles, coffee, made for both Norwegian and internationals ISU tent very attractive. New Amigos game was one of the challenges proposed! This was accepted! Norwegian students set with Spanish, Italian, German, French, and English speaking students and like this exchanged vocabulary in front of our sweet and sunny tent in the Fadder village!

The second challenge was to put international students and Norwegian drawing their countries flag ☺ you wouldn't say how creative people can be

ISU was part of a “Olabil” race – wooden cars with no engine made by our future oil engineers and won best paintjob prize!!

From the goals that were proposed for last semester, two of them were improved. Quota-program students are getting now scholarships within one and a half month, getting prioritized their UDI application processes. We consider it as a local victory.

Second which was improved was the available information in English, still the elected board will continue on striving to improve this.

### **Harmonious power transfer**

ISU was supposed to hold elections on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September. Our election process was not conducted once there was just one candidate for each position. The previous board officially transferred their positions to the new executives on 21<sup>st</sup> of September.

All the ex-officers will be contacted by the new, in order to receive a job description and projects up to finish. This will be made to promote continuity in ISU work and also to the welfare of the members (students).

During this period of accommodation of the new officers, the outgoing president will do a training program to better fit us in the taken positions.

### **Infrastructures Created:**

The invitation from StOr to ISU be again, by the second consecutive year, a part of Fadder/*engasjert* campaign revealed it self very determinant for the integration of students in UiS. Fadder/*Engasjert* campaign consists on joining hands and effort with all organisations from UiS campus to welcome the new students at UiS campus. In harmonious cooperation, the unions prepared four amazing days to students. ISU got the opportunity to engage several international students and Norwegian students by preparing food from all over the world, live music performances and provide a trip around the world to the audience.

ISU got several activities to facilitate the students’ presence in Stavanger. By developing a campaign to collect kitchen / room material, from students that were going back home,

ISU continues to provide to the new students with no costs involved this material. Becoming a tradition, student life became cheaper!

Costs of books are one of the main complains by international students. ISU-Stavanger thought about it and created an easy solution, we dedicated some space on the board with a list of persons buying / selling literature with the information of study programs and contacts. It has been a success for both parts.

Strategy of uniting efforts with all the organisations/unions in campus has also revealed very positive in what concerns integration aspects as well to the short ISU budget once we divide costs of arrangements and students have the opportunity to bland with non-international students. The *engasjert* experience revealed such an importance that ISU is trying to continue with the project all year long. A partnership network, with StOr, SHCLOBROCKS, Folken, STIL, and Sudentsangforening is continued. Being a close neighbour of ISU, IAESTE is now also one of the partners☺.

### **Budget**

Last year ISU Stavanger received a fund of 17.500,-kr. This year ISU applied for a 53.250,- kr budget and got 22.000,- kr. ISU was assured by SiS – Welfare system that even though we did not receive the whole amount, this should not be an hindrance to performing our activities. ISU always has the possibility of applying for special funding; again SiS never closed doors to ISU.

During ONS 2006 the outgoing president and treasurer collected a wide list of contacts of oil companies which are interested in sponsoring the trip of International student of Stavanger to Trondheim in February 2007 to ISFIT – to the delivery of the student peace prize ☺ we'll let you know if when we get it!

The new treasurer together with the new president will contact all this new sources of sponsorship and hope for the best results!

### **Upcoming Events:**

Trip to Denmark;

Dinner at different international restaurants with a discounted price;

Hiking trips;

Football tournaments (all semester);

Table tennis tournament;

New Amigos competition;

International Day – International food, music, travel/study around the world.

### **Bigger aims / proposals to discussion**

#### ■ **Obligatory exam/project regulations course**

Last semester ISU Stavanger faced an increasing number of international students or students with international background, who used non-permitted material during exams or used quotes in projects without respecting intellectual property rights, (which implies quotation of author when using ideas from those authors).

Some of the students come from countries with completely different educational policies and so they are unaware of what is or is not allowed in the exams. Some of the study programs with higher representation of international students are having a course informing students about the exam regulations at UiS. It is compulsory for some programs, but for others the course is not a part of the program. ISU would like to propose that all Norwegian universities have a compulsory course on the Norwegian educational system, which can be included in the welcoming week where all the rules for examinations and compulsory course work are clearly stated.