



ISU NORWAY MEETS MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

ON 18TH SEPTEMBER, 2012

Ministry of Education Delegation: 1. Ragnhild Setsaas (State Secretary). Ragnhild Setsaas is State Secretary for the Minister of Education and Research Kristin Halvorsen since May 7, responsible for policy related to research and higher education. Setsaas is a former Deputy to the Parliament representing the Socialist Left Party in Sør-Trøndelag. She was Deputy Mayor of Trondheim in 1988-89. She has also been a board member of the NSB.

2. Ingebrikt Holmen (Adviser-Finance)

ISU Delegation: Jorid Martinsen (Officer of Welfare & Equality-NSO), Isaac Wanasolo (Academic Affairs & Welfare-ISU), John Ganyo (National President-ISU)

Agenda: 1. Increase in English medium courses/internationalisation:

State Secretary commended ISU for doing a good job over the years. They have enjoyed much cooperation with regards to internationalisation of education. Although it is not a goal of the Ministry to recruit as many foreign students as possible the Institutions have been doing so well in this direction. On one hand the goal is to encourage the local language (norsk) as a scientific language. The following increases have been noted over the years:

In the academic year 2010: There were 2,380 English medium courses

By the academic year 2011: This increased to 4,300 English medium courses

Between last year and this year, the number of international students increased from 13,500 to approximately 18,000. The Ministry of Education is happy with the increase, but not pushing institutions in this regard since there are no financial incentives from the ministry.

NSO Representative, Jorid, made the following observations: There has been lack of sufficient interaction between international and local students due to thin line between norsk/English taught courses. It was also noted that most teachers feared teaching through English. With regards to Multiculturalism she noted that there had been insufficient collaboration between foreign and local institutions which needed further attention.

The State Secretary then referred ISU to Welfare, Working Life and Migration, a research institution who are in charge of internationalisation on behalf of the ministry. The Foreign Ministry (NORAD) is also in charge of Funds for internationalisation. ISU needs to contact them directly on issues regarding funds in this direction. The Ministry of Higher Education and Research is in charge of learning environment, including measures to promote integration.



2. Increase in Quota Scheme Beneficiaries: There is no immediate plan to increase quota students. However, a letter has been sent out to stake holders, including ISU, for evaluation of the quota scheme so far to enable the ministry assess the way forward. This involves comments, opinions, impressions and suggestions about the scheme. Until this evaluation is received, there would be no change of policy. ISU has asked for increase to 12 months and the number of beneficiaries from 1100 to 2000 while NSO asked for an increase to 11 months. This would be a good opportunity for both organisations to put across a unified front for more positive results.

3. Residence Permits/Renewals: There have been positive results regarding family reunion and research opportunities. A report has also been received from a research committee in Bergen where evaluations were discussed with regards to immigration. The State, as well as the Ministry is aware of the issues raised by ISU which have been covered in the aforementioned report. Since these researchers are experts, there is the hope for positive response in this regard.

4. Discussion of ISU financial situation and the future: ISU acknowledged the fact that there has been a substantial increase in funding this year, for which they are really grateful. However, this is inadequate due to the increased responsibility as a result of a considerably larger organisation. Ragnhild encouraged ISU to operate within the current budget, but could apply for more funds during the next application date in March 2013. Jorid added her voice for the need for a 100% position for a National Secretary. This was particularly acknowledged by Ragnhild, to be prioritized next allocation to help ISU with continuity.

New Issue: Housing Guarantee: Owing to recent press information from SiO about cessation of housing guarantee and prioritisation of international students in terms of student housing, ISU raised concern to the ministry. Jorid explained that it was realised that institutions were in charge of recruiting international students, but not considering availability of housing units. That was the more reason why this responsibility has been transferred by SiO to the various institutions. Ragnhild acknowledged the plight of international students, since they are new to Norway and might find it really challenging to secure private accommodation. In the same vein, SiO cannot put up housing without state funding. She however noted the following: This government has been very concerned about student housing. Student housing doubled from 1,000 to 2,000. For instance, in Trondheim international students get 30% of student housing. Stavanger is also planning to put up more student houses. The long term solution would therefore be the putting up of more structures to alleviate the problem which keeps mounting year after year.

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