

## Hi Everyone!

This is an update from the last **report** sent out in November. It's been 4 months since the last **report**, so this **report** is going to be really long. I apologize for that, but hope you will find it interesting.

First off, I would like to thank everyone for the email updates and the telephone calls ☺  
Congratulations on the excellent results that you have been achieving!

### **ISU Norway's next National Assembly will be held 21<sup>st</sup> -23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2005 in Oslo.**

The location will be the same as before, Høyskolen i Oslo, and has already been secured by Ricardo ISU Norway vice-president. The participant's fee of 1000nok for each of the two members that come is due 21<sup>st</sup> March. Almost all branches have already secured funding for this. Good work! ☺

We need the names and the birth dates of the two delegates you are sending to the NA **now**. Send this information to Hanna at [secretary@isu-norway.no](mailto:secretary@isu-norway.no) ☺

Constitution committee (Abar, Susana, Anna, Anastassia and Sally-Anne) received a "constitution package" from Hanna in December with all the necessary information including voting records and minutes from the two last NAs. We were lucky to be able to all meet (except Sally-Anne) in Stavanger 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb. We worked through the entire document that night! They will submit a draft of our brand new constitution a month before and will no doubt be a great help to all of us at the National Assembly.

Our National Board has met at least twice since October. Individually, I have good weekly contact with Ricardo, Andrea and Hanna. We have decided that Ricardo and Andrea may take up responsibility for taking contact with our member branches. You might hear from them soon! ISU Norway will have its accounts audited this month. A **report** will follow at the National Assembly.

### **ISU WEBSITE**

<http://www.isu-norway.no> Check it out! It has finally been updated, thanks to your input and pictures (thanks for taking the time to respond to the email ☺) and the work done by Mr. Pavel Petrovic in Trondheim. If you have any suggestions for improving the design of the website or want to add a picture from your branch to the collection on the site, please send me an email.

ISU Forum is active and can be accessed from the ISU Norway website. Now we can share and store information about what works best practices within our branches. We can also discuss proposed changes in our constitution with it.

There is a space on the ISU Norway website called "News from Members". If your branch has been profiled in the press, please let us now. Send us a link if the article is available on the net, or send the paper version to "International Students' Union, Thorvald Meyersgate 7, 0555 Oslo".

### **ISU EXPANSION**

A main goal for ISU Norway in Spring 2006 is to increase the number of its member branches. To reach this goal, we have targeted five Høyskoler/University Colleges connected with StL. We have also contacted the BI Norwegian School of Management located in Oslo. We've had dialogue with the leadership of their student parliaments and StL at the national level, and are hoping to welcome these prospective branches to our National Assembly in April.

January 20, we held a small presentation and spoke with the vice-**presidents** of various University Colleges (who happened to be in Oslo for a StL conference ☺). We got feedback and valuable insight into the situations at the different institutions and they in turn got information on our organization and about our different branches. At that meeting Ricardo and I benefited from the support of Elena (last years ISU Norway vice-president who was in Oslo for the same conference) and Mari, vice-president of StL.

February 24, we were invited by StL to present at their Spring Conference in Trondheim. The theme for the conference was "Inclusion in Higher Education" and the goal was to provide information to the representatives from many of StL's 30 member branches which were present. Our goal for the presentation was to highlight some of the challenges faced by international students ( i.e. housing choices, integration, language difficulties, visa fees, person number) and solutions that have worked. Most important was to get across the point that the best solutions are found through "samarbeid", or cooperation, between norwegian and international students, ISU and StL/NSU. Institutions with with international students of 30 more were encouraged to contact us about starting ISU member branches there.

We held 2 hours of group work sessions after our presentation. More than half the conference attended this. The following day, 3 out of 7 regional working groups decided to make "Internationalization" their campaign. Damien and Cecile, ISU Trondheim president and vice-president, represented ISU locally. They were considered really useful by the student parliament representatives who worked on ideas to improve the quality of stay for international students at their institutions!

### **COOPERATION WITH STL AND NSU**

ISU Norway has an observer position in the national meetings of NSU and StL. We have participated and/or given reports to the NSU meetings held in December 19 ( Oslo), February 24-26 (Stavanger) and will give another report for the NSU National Assembly to be held in March 25-26 (Bergen).

Participation these meetings is very important, as these are places where national student policy documents that deal with topics such as student housing, financing or higher education, etc are discussed and decided.

We are in constant dialogue with Katrine (StL international officer) as we work on expanding into StL University Colleges. She has been an invaluable help, and now more on the national level of StL are actively supporting our expansion. We meet with Jon Ivar (NSU international officer) and are expecting his support on upcoming cases.

I have been asked by NSU to represent them on the national Faculty Board called "Norwegian as a Second Language". This board deals with different issues concerning Norwegian language courses for international students at all the institutions in Norway and the subject field of Norwegian as a second language. In the past year they have been occupied with getting ECTS credits for the level 3-examination and evaluating the course at the different universities and colleges.

Jon Ivar has been working getting ISU Norway an invitation to the national board that discusses how to market Norway internationally in the field of education. This board is responsible for the <http://www.studyinnorway.no> site.

Hanna is the NSU representative to the NORAD program board. She attended the NORAD Fellowship seminar at Gol in February and gave a presentation on ISU Norway to most of the first year NORAD students in Norway. She was successful in making useful contacts with students and staff, and returned with a good impression of the needs and wishes of this specific group of international students.

### **NSU-H**

We share our office with NSU-H, the organization within NSU that represents the scientific Høyskoler which are based in Oslo . I attended their meeting in January and gave a brief presentation on ISU Norway and got some information from them on the situation for international students at their institutions. We are cooperating on re-organizing our office space so that it will be easier for us to work together there.

### **Taciana Khoma**

November, I sent out the following towards the ISU branches regarding the expelled Belarusian student representative Taciana Khoma who is well known and respected for her contribution to students not

only of her own country but of all of Europe, through ESIB, the European Student interest organization.  
<http://www.stlweb.no/article.asp?w=987678&x=2997>

"Instances like these remind us to value our opportunity to represent ourselves in democratically. NSU and StL are well recognized student organizations, supported and recognized by both the Norwegian government and higher education institutions. And they in turn support the International Students Union of Norway. This ensures that ALL students in Norway are properly represented!

I encourage you to show your support for Taciana Khoma by signing the petition and by forwarding this email on your ISU mailing lists. After your name, remember to write "International Students Union of Norway".

### **CONTACT WITH ISU MEMBER BRANCHES**

We have received phone calls and email messages from branches, advising us of their elections and important new cases. Ricardo represented ISU Norway at the ISU HiO Board Elections in February.

In Stavanger, I was wonderfully hosted by Susanna, president of ISU UiS (Stavanger). We used the opportunity to give a presentation on ISU Norway to students at the university the day before the NSU meeting.

Anna, president of ISU UiB and Susanna were present also present at the NSU national meeting in Stavanger . At that meeting, it was actually stated by a student parliament representative that it wasn't important to work towards secure a variety of choices of student choices for international students- because "they all just want to live together anyway – and that's integration – lot's of different cultures" We were there to calmly explain that international students also deserve the right to have Options – to live among other international students and/or with norwegian students. Everyone agreed and the point was taken into consideration.

Damien from ISU Trondheim hosted us in their famous basement headquarters during our stay in Trondheim. He arranged for us to meet with other student representatives and with Pavel. It was great!

We've been lucky to have had NSU and StL sponsored events that made it possible for us to actually visit ISU Stavanger and ISU Trondheim. These trips wouldn't have been successful without them. We're looking forward to spending time with ISU UiB and ISU NHH in March.

Ricardo at ISU UiO (Oslo) has reported that he has received positive feedback on ISU Oslo's publication of the Academic Review of Norway. The second edition will be published this week! Contact him at [ricardo.vladblech@gmail.com](mailto:ricardo.vladblech@gmail.com) for your copy!

In December, an important opportunity for cooperation between the Student Parliament and ISU UiO came up:

#### **Self Financing Bachelors Case at UiO**

The Administration at the University of Oslo was planning to cut the support it gave to international students to learn Norwegian, which would have prevented them altogether from taking a bachelor degree in Norwegian. They wanted to do that without letting other faculties and the student parliament know. The student parliament found out about it and immediately called ISU UiO. Neither Ricardo nor Sally-Anne was available, so I was contacted at that time. Since then, the case has appeared in the University Newspapers many times, as Ricardo and the Student Parliament fight to keep this arrangement at our school.

A very good description of the case was made by the Editorial column this week.  
<http://www.universitas.no/?sak=47441>

These events have reminded us how important it is to have good cooperation with our local student parliament – they are invited to administration meetings and have access to documents and resources that we may not have. Use your resources! ☺

#### Certificates of Participation

We have been asked and it is possible to prepare Certificates of Participation for the next ISU NA, which will state, (with ISU Norway logo) position of responsibility and duration of service.

#### Student Parliament Elections

If you are interested and will be in Norway for another year- it is perhaps not too late to run for your student parliament. YOU are an excellent resource (an engaged international student who already has been elected to represent international students) You can do it!

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#### Student Parliament at the University of Oslo

I have continued to serve at the Student Parliament at the University of Oslo.

December 1, I was invited by the Student Health Services to give a speech at their annual motivation seminar. The theme was "Cross Cultural Communication". I told my story and shared my experience of coming to study in Norway and hopefully helped their understanding of what it is like to come from another country to study in Norway.

In January, I participated in a 3 week course called "Learning, Motivation and Leadership in Volunteer organizations", organized by the Foundation for Student Life in Oslo (SiO).

Recently, the Student Parliament has been working on a policy document called "Language in the academic environment" This document will discuss strategies for increasing Norway's participation in international higher education and at the same time developing Norwegian as a language to conduct research in.

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### COMING UP

NSU Landstinget (National Assembly) will be held in 25-26 March in Bergen. A new national board will be elected. I will be working to promote even closer cooperation between ISU and the position of the NSU International Officer. StL will also be having its national assembly that weekend and will be electing its national board. We intend to **report** on progress on the ISU Expansion project which StL has funded and continue to advocate for cooperation between norwegian and international students. At both meetings, it will be discussed how to best join the two organizations into one. We will participate in that discussion so that international students will be well- represented in such an organization.

"Norwegian as a second language" Faculty Board meeting 30 March. Please send me details of any issues that you want taken up on your behalf.

I have asked Hanna to collect information on the person number case ( related to the long time it takes to get person numbers, and thus study loans, for international students at some institutions). She has discovered reports that a solution is being discussed at the national level. Our goal is to provide some input into those discussions, based on our experiences with this.

ISU National Assembly, April 21-23<sup>rd</sup>. Case papers will be published on our [www.isu-norway.no](http://www.isu-norway.no) website well in advance. I'm looking forward to see everyone and for us to share our views and to welcome new branch members. It's going to be an great National Assembly!