ISU Norway Platform 2009

Passed by the ISU Norway National Assembly, April 2009

NOTE: SUGGESTED CHANGES ARE MARKED IN RED AND NUMBERED IN BLUE

The International Students Union of Norway (ISU) Platform expresses the views and position of the ISU Norway on those issues that affect international students.

It reflects principles important to our organization and will be used by future ISU national and local representatives when representing ISU.

International students should enjoy equal opportunity regardless their race, religion, gender or social background.

ISU considers international students as potential ambassadors for Norway after the completion of their studies.

Against Tuition fees for international students in public institutions

ISU believes that, if Norway is to maintain its competitive edge in international education, tuition fees for international students should not be introduced in Norway.

Better Equality (Likestilling) in our learning environment (Læringsmiljø)

(1) ~~ISU believes that international students should have equal access to information surrounding their education in Norway as Norwegian students have.~~

(2) ~~Since all international students are required to know English to be accepted for studies in Norway, they have the right to have the information that is vital to their situation as a student in Norway also available in English, for example:~~ International students should have equal access to information in English related to their **(3)** ~~courses~~ education, health care **(4)** ~~/doctors office~~, ~~Samskipnaden~~ Studentsamskipnaden (i.e. student welfare organization), cafeteria, school signs, rent contracts, Lånekassen (student loan fund), bank loans **(5)** and residency permit extension.

~~ISU notes that there is a substantial lack of information available in English~~ **(6)** International students should have equal access to information in English on student related websites **(7)** ; such as, student democracy isses and parliament papers.

Improved Access to Norwegian Courses

ISU believes in guaranteed improved quality and improved access to Norwegian courses for all international students.

Improved access to Norwegian courses for all international students is an important part of the internationalization process of higher education in Norway.

ISU believes that the ability to speak and understand Norwegian; **(8)** ~~increases~~ ~~integration~~ enhances inclusion between international students and the Norwegian **(9)** ~~students~~ society, provides a wider range of educational courses at their relative institutions and opens the opportunity for international students to contribute to the Norwegian economy.

(10) ~~This increases the opportunity for international and Norwegian students to learn more about each other's culture and values.~~

(11)~~This also gives international students a wider range of courses to choose from at their institution.~~

(12)~~Improved access to Norwegian courses for international students increases the overall quality of the international student's stay in Norway. Competency in Norwegian will enable international students to contribute to economic activity in Norway.~~

Quality Education in English

ISU believes that the education offered to international students in English should be of the same quality as the education offered in Norwegian.

If courses or lectures are promised in English, they should be given in academic English **(13)**, including notes and supporting documents.

(14) ~~Receiving notes in English from the lecturer of a sub-standard quality and at a delayed time disadvantages the international students.~~

Instructors of courses taught in English should be offered professional courses in academic English so that they can instruct with confidence.

Competence in academic English should be a requirement when hiring academic staff to teach courses in English. **(15)** ~~Other~~ Current lecturers **(16)** ~~will~~ should be offered courses in English to promote their academic English.

(17) ~~**Samarbeid/**~~**Cooperation with (18)** ~~**NSU, StL**~~ **NSO, LNU, SAIH, Spire and other student (19)** ~~**representative**~~ **organizations**

(20) ~~Norsk Studentunion (NSU) and Studentenes Landsforbund (StL) are the two~~ Nasjonal Studentorganisasjon (NSO) is the national organization~~s~~ that represent all students in Norway, including international students. **(21)** ISU has partnership agreement with NSO and has membership status with Studentenes og Akademikernes Internasjonale Hjelpefond (SAIH) the *Norwegian students' and academics' fund focused on fostering education in the developing world*, Landsrådet for Norges barne- og ungdomsorganisasjoner (LNU) the *umbrella organization for youth in Norway* and Utviklingsfondet Ungdom (Spire) *the youth organization for the development fund*. ISU believes that working with and increase the number of partnerships would strength the credibility and the representation of the organization in Norway.

(22) ISU has agreements to exchange representation as observers at NSO, SAIH and Spire national meetings. ISU encourages that this agreement would be disseminated at the local level.

(23) ~~ISU believes that cooperation/samarbeid with NSU, StL and other student representative organizations, nationally and locally, is important since many representatives in ISU may not speak Norwegian or have had the experience working with the administration of their educational institution or the Norwegian government (both locally and nationally).~~

(24) ~~Local student governments at universities/høyskoler represent all students at that institution, including international students.~~

(25) ~~ISU strongly encourages local and national officers in NSU and StL to attend the ISU National Assembly.~~

(26) ~~The presence of a representative from Norwegian student politics within the local ISU board will increase the effectiveness of that local ISU board in representing international students.~~

(27) ~~The presence of representatives from ISU in the local student government will increase the effectiveness of that student government in representing international students.~~

(28) ~~ISU believes cooperation/samarbeid with NSU, StL and other student organizations is an important and effective way to reach its goals of representing the interests of international students in Norway.~~

(29) ~~**Action Plans**~~ **Inclusion**

(30) ~~ISU wants to see Action Plans for Integration between international and Norwegian students developed between local ISU boards, the local student government and the local student Samskipnaden (student welfare society).~~

(31) ~~The aims of these Action Plans for Integration are to increase the overall quality of the international students' stay in Norway.~~

(31) ISU should have strategic action plan to ensure the inclusion of the international students within the Norwegian society. ISU believes that this would increase the quality of the students' experience and stay in Norway.

(31) ISU should have a more cooperative role in Studentsamskipnaden organizations in Norway.

Public services, Legal communication and Emergency Situations

ISU wants the relevant institutions to jointly implement plans and procedures to handle the potential problems experienced by international students during emergency situations.

Access to medical services needs to be improved for international students.

Housing for International Students

(32) International students should have an accommodation guarantee at least for their first academic year in Norway.

International students should **(33)** ~~have a~~ be provided by the Studentsamskipnaden with a wide range of **(34)** accommodation options ~~for where to live~~. They should have enough information about these options that they can make a good decision before arriving in Norway. The information should include **(35)** ~~realistic information on~~ proximity and travel costs to campus and city centre as well as types and options for transport, shopping distances and arrangements for sharing kitchen facilities.

Housing contract arrangements for international students need to be flexible and address the specific needs of those students. Every student should have the opportunity to reserve and have guaranteed accommodations from one study year to the next.

(36) ~~**National ID number and Bank Account**~~

(37) ~~A national ID number or functional substitute should be guaranteed to all international students as soon as possible, and no later than 3 weeks after arrival.~~

(38) ~~Representatives from the immigration police should be sent to the universities at the beginning of the semester to process student residence permits.~~

(39) ~~In order to open a bank account it is required to have a national ID number. The process of opening a bank account takes a long time and needs to be accelerated.~~

(40) ~~**UDI**~~ **Visa Regulations for Family Visit**

Utlendingsdirektoratet (UDI) the *Norwegian Directorate of Immigration* has **(40)** ~~introduced~~ tough visa regulations **(40)** ~~to~~ for international students (outside EU) **(40)** ~~who~~ that want to invite their partners/family to visit them while they are in Norway. These **(40)** regulations introduce unnecessary hardship for international students. **(40)** ~~ISU wants UDI to make this process easier~~. ISU should open up dialogue with UDI to discuss ways to lessen the impact of these regulations on students.

Work for International Students

ISU believes that it is important for international students to be able to supplement their finances during their stay in Norway through part time work.

ISU believes that international students should be encouraged to gain practical experience related to their education, during and after completion of their studies in Norway.