



# MINUTES

## ISU National Assembly 2005 1- 3 April, University of Bergen

### Abbreviations:

**NA: National Assembly**

**NC/NP: National Coordinator (changed at the assembly to National President)**

**VC/VP: Vice Coordinator/President**

**NS: National Secretary**

**NSU: Student's Union of Norway (Representing students at the universities)**

**StL: Association of Students in Norway (Representing students at the colleges – høyskolene)**

### 1.1 Welcome from the NC

National Coordinator, Arlene Pearce, opened by welcoming all delegates, observers and visitors to the first National Assembly of 2005. She also thanked the Bergen branch for hosting us. All delegates introduced themselves. List of delegates: *Appendix 1*

### 1.2 Acceptance of Chair Person

The NC proposed Øyvind Jakobsson, previous vice president of NSU Bergen, to chair of the meeting, and the NA seconded this suggestion.

### 1.3 Approval of meeting plan and agenda

The workshops that went out on Friday were proposed changed to the organisational workshop on Sunday afternoon (4.2). The agenda and the new meeting plan was adopted, however the agenda was opened and changed several times during the assembly due to severe time constrains. *Meeting Plan, see appendix 2*

### 1.4 Meeting procedure

Øyvind oriented the NA of the debating and voting rules of the meeting.

### 1.6 Branch reports

Friday afternoon: All the branches presented themselves and their work since the last NA. The main point was to exchange tips and ideas among the branches. Unfortunately we had a problem with power point, so the reports were orally presented, and printed handouts of the slides were distributed instead. This lasted longer than expected, and since a restaurant was booked at 8pm, the scheduled workshops were postponed. *See Appendix 3 for branch reports.*

### 1.7 NC Report

NC Arlene Pearce presented her report. She briefly talked about internationalisation of Norwegian education, and that she has recently attended a seminar in Bergen, in which politicians



and educational bureaucrats were present. She mentioned that political cases will be handled by itself later at the meeting, before referring for the rest to her written report in the case papers. *Appendix 4.*

A question was posed by Eton Williams, who inquired after the status of our organisational number, for which we have applied, and which will make us more independent. Arlene answered that we are waiting for the process to be finished, but that we will certainly get the certification within 2005.

Arlene also shortly briefed the assembly on the matter of quota students. There had been a mistake, and this case had been deleted from the minutes. This was therefore inserted before the coffee break at 4 pm as UDI case 3: no 3.3.

### **1.8 NS Report**

Hanna Holmelin informed the assembly that she was employed as National Secretary after Katarzyna Piesla resigned from her post from the first of March 2005. She then told the assembly that for the past month she had mainly focused on getting into ISU work and procedures, as well as arranging the practicalities of this assembly. Together with Arlene she has also written the application for funding to the Ministry of Education and Research, which was sent just before the assembly, and worked on the political cases. *Appendix 5*

### **1.9 StL Report**

StL was represented by Erik Evans, International Officer. He informed the NA that StL had provided ISU with NOK 50 000 last year; money earmarked for the planned expansion to and sustaining of new ISU branches. He then mentioned the close cooperation ISU – StL since the last assembly, especially with regard to the internal problems of the Stavanger branch and the recent UDI case, with the following joint press release which so far has been accepted by radio nova, channel 24 and various student radios and newspapers.

Eton was asked to contribute; he explained the UDI case 1; how he and his girlfriend came across the internal UDI paper, got to know about the meeting, and how Erik used his skill and network to get into the meeting. Arlene informed that she has asked Eton's girlfriend, Hilde, to be a special advisor on this case, because of her connection to and knowledge about the UDI.

Elena asked about the visa application fee, and Erik answered that this will be handled later.

Ashaba questioned Erik about the interview on the radio; why he had been contacted and not Arlene. Erik answered that this was a matter of urgency, and a matter of language since this was a radio interview. He ensured the NA that StL would like the ISU to have more media attention.

## **2.0 Organisational cases at the National Level**

### **2.1 New National Secretary**

Hanna Holmelin has recently been employed as new National Secretary, after Katarzyna Piesla resigned from her post due to personal reasons. The hiring committee consisted of ISU Coordinator and outgoing Secretary, one representative from StL, one from NSU, and one representative from the local ISU branches.



## 2.2 Proposal to add NHH as a new ISU Branch

Arlene introduced this case, and proposed that NHH, the MiB class, should be a new branch of ISU. The NHH, represented by Heather Schulstad and Myriam Decker, provided an in-depth presentation of their organisation along with the other branches on Friday.

Øyvind suggested that the relationship Norwegians – International Students in the ISU should be stated in the constitution. A debate followed on whether or not Norwegians shall be members of ISU, and if so; whether their rights of representation and voting at the NA should be limited in order to ensure that ISU remains predominantly international.

Eton questioned Heather about the structure of the MiB. Heather answered that her organisation was established in 1986, and that a majority of the members were now international. The MiB is a small international master class, which also admits Norwegians, which again is why Norwegians are so important in the organisation. She suggested that including Norwegians was essential for integration in such a small environment, and thus valuable for the international students. Elena agreed, and referred to Alta where the situation is somewhat the same. Arlene added that to allow Norwegians membership would help the ISU immensely; in terms of integration, practicalities, language and contact with the school. Joshua commented on lacks in the ISU constitution and practise, and Arlene agreed that the constitution should be specified at this point.

Øyvind suggested that a proposal should be made, of adding a No Norwegians Clause in the constitution. A **proposal** thus came from Priscilla; that the NHH will be accepted if they amend their constitution so that only international students have voting rights at the Assembly. The NA agreed to vote on this on Sunday.

In the continuing discussion, it became apparent that the NA was quite divided on this matter, and various suggestions and arguments were furthered. In the end, Werner wrote a second **proposal**; suggesting that a certain limit should be set to the percent of Norwegians from each branch at the NA, to make sure that no branch will only send Norwegians.

## 2.3 Proposed Amendments to the National Constitution

Arlene started this sequence by introducing her suggestions, which were posed several weeks before the NA. *See Appendix 6.* Heather was granted speaking and proposal rights along with all other observers. Erik suggested that all proposals must be in by 9 am Sunday.

The NA went through the entire constitution, and several proposals were added to change Arlene's originals, and to change other clauses. The main discussions were as follows:

- Change non-political to non-partisan, and changing the NC title to President to reflect the gradual change that the ISU has seen lately, from merely being a social welfare organisation to also being an interest organisation. The ISU has turned more political, and more focused on representing international students.
- Whether or not to include PhD students in the ISU



- The voting rights of the NC: general voting rights, an extra vote in case of a tie, or only a vote in the case of a tie.
- The NS position: Arlene suggested that the NC now should have full responsibility of ISU finances, not the NS. The hiring procedures of the NS were also debated.
- Abbreviations: Several branches would like their names or abbreviations changed
- Whether the members of ISU National should be defined to the branches, instead of the specific international students (these are obviously members of the local branches).

Finally, the No Norwegians Clause was debated further:

- Astrid pointed out that two human rights were colliding: a) Not discriminating Norwegian students, and b) Representing International students
- Whether or not, and how much, to restrict the representation and/or the voting rights of the Norwegian members at a) the NA and b) in the local boards.
- The image of ISU as an open, non-discriminating organisation. The NHH declared that they could not accept membership in the ISU should a No Norwegian Clause be adopted that challenged the fundamental principles of their organisation.
- All branches were in turn urged to orally state their view on this case.
- Arlene feared that the any No Norwegian Clause would allow attacks on the ISU for being racist, discriminative and that such a clause might even be illegal. She suggested that the main point is that the interests of international students are secured; who ensures this is of minor importance.

76 proposals had come in by Sunday morning. Along with Arlene's original proposals, these were voted for on Sunday morning and afternoon, and as this was quite time consuming, several posts on the agenda fell out. Still time was short, and there were several proposals that never came to voting. A full list of proposals and voting results are recorded in *appendix 7*.

## **2.4 Financial Report 2004 and Budget 2005**

This was presented by Hanna Holmelin. *Appendix 8*.

Main points:

- ISU has three main sources of funding: The Department of Education and Research (UFD) and NSU, together NOK 200.000, a sum which is guaranteed by NSU, on the terms that they support us with the rest if we are granted less than this sum from the ministry. The third source is StL, which supports the establishment of new ISU branches.
- The sum of NOK 200.000 has not proved sufficient; and in the new application to the ministry, we have applied for 300.000. The budget of 2005 is thus based on this amount of income, and several posts are therefore expanded compared to 2004.
- In particular, we hope to raise the hours of the National Secretary from a 25% position to a 33% position, the first step towards a secretary in a full-time position. This would enable us to expand our activities, ensure that professional work is done and hopefully increase continuity.
- A post was added; covering NC/NS travels, since the NC does not live in Oslo.
- A second post was added, to separate the StL contribution to expansion of new branches from the rest of the budget.
- Arlene posed a suggestion of arranging the next NA in Oslo, since there are big sums to be saved on travel costs.



**VOTING: about the budget for 2005: 14 for, 1 against.**

## **2.5 Proposed changes to the Organisational Structure of ISU National**

Discussed as part of the ISU plan 2005

## **2.6 Project Proposal (ISU Translators)**

Went out due to time constraints

## **3.0 Political cases**

### **3.1 UDI Case 1: Visa Renewals for Self-Financing Students – changes**

Arlene briefed the NA on changes in the student visa renewal procedures. In March, ISU found that new UDI regulations required the students to present bank details for the past six months. ISU did a press release on this, and the Narvik branch made it to the local newspaper. *See Appendix 9.* UDI was then publicly criticised by the Data Inspectorate (datatilsynet), who stated this to be intrusion of the private sphere, and was forced to withdraw the rule. Well done!

### **3.2 UDI Case 2: NOK 50.000 requirement for visitors from developing countries?**

Erik summed up this case for the NA: In Denmark, a host must pay a deposit of DK 50.000 for welcoming visitors from certain countries. If the visitor then fails to return, and disappears, the deposit is lost. The Norwegian government has agreed to investigate a similar solution, which for instance would make it impossible for international students to have family or friends visiting during their studies in Norway. Unfortunately, Erik believes that this law, in some form, will pass. If it does, however, then organisations like ISU and StL can and will make a difference. *See appendix 10* for Narvik's resolution on this case.

### **3.3 School Fees for International Students?**

There is a continuing discussion on school fees in Norway. The NA discussed what our policies should be on this matter, and the views varied. Arlene urged us to be engaged and not remain passive just because "all the other countries do it". Erik provided an in-debt explanation, stating that when the tuition debate comes to Norway, and it will come, then international students will be "the first to go". He thus strongly hoped we would support this case, along with StL, NSU and several other strong organisations.

### **3.4 QUOTA Students – update**

ISU lobbied for help on QUOTA student issues in 2004 with the help of NSU and StL. The program was granted more funding for 2005. In particular, this money will benefit Quota students studying in the North of Norway, who are now excepted from the severe restrictions on travel grants that lately has been applied to Norwegian students. This way Quota student studying in Tromsø may receive an additional grant of about NOK 3000, which will enable them to maintain contact with their home country during their studies in Norway.



#### **4.0 ISU Workshops**

The following two workshops went out due to time constraints:

- **4.1 Crash Course in Public Relations (PR)**
- **4.2 Good Organisational Practices**

#### **5.0 ISU Plan for 2005**

Arlene oriented the NA, and the main points were: *(See Appendix 11 for the whole plan)*

- ISU is turning more political, and aims at being more visible, in the media and at the study places, both locally and centrally, in the time to come.
- The plan to raise the hours of the National Secretary from 25% to 33%. This would enable us to expand our activities, ensure professional work and help continuity. Lack of continuity is one of ISU's main problems, since new boards and a new president are elected each year. The NS already works many unpaid hours, is often forced to have two part time jobs in addition to studies, and hence, presently, the NS is unlikely to be able to stay in the post for long.
- A suggestion was put forward, that either the NC or the VC should be based in Oslo.
- The NA decided that the next National Assembly should be in Oslo

**VOTING: On the plan as a whole, and then on having a plan: Both unanimous.**

#### **6.0 A.O.B**