



## MINUTES

### ISU NATIONAL ASSEMBLY University College of Oslo 22-24th September 2006

International Student's Union (ISU) is an independent, student-run interest organisation which seeks to represent international students in Norway politically, academically and socially. The highest deciding organ of ISU is the National Assembly (NA), which is held twice a year.

The second NA of 2006 took place in Oslo, at 22 – 24<sup>th</sup> September. The meeting was held at the University College of Oslo, and included three days of meeting, socialising, inspiration and even a tour of the Norwegian parliament. A new National Board was also elected.

#### 1. REPORTS AND ORIENTATION CASES

##### 1.0 – 1.4 Approval of agenda, meeting plan, chair person and minutes from last NA

ISU National President Eton Williams welcomed all delegates and observers to the second NA of 2006, and thanked ISU at the University College of Oslo and their student parliament for hosting us. 24 branch representatives were present; which included 20 delegates and 4 additional observers. Also, the National Vice President, the National Secretary and the NSU International Officer attended the entire meeting. Several invited people from various organizations also came by or presented reports during the three days of the assembly (*List of participants – see appendix 1*).

The chair persons; Jørn A. Henriksen (last year's leader of NSU) and Erik Evans (last year's international officer of StL) were accepted by acclamation, and they explained the order of business of the meeting to the delegates (*See appendix 2*). The minutes from the last NA in April were also approved on, and they can be found at our website: [www.isu-norway.no](http://www.isu-norway.no)

##### 1.5 Presentation of ISU

First thing on Friday, Eton explained a thorough overview of the ISU structure and history, as most of the delegates were new to ISU and many also new to Norway. In particular he elaborated on the past achievements of ISU, and at what time the different branches were included into the ISU family. He also clarified the difference between Norsk Studentunion (NSU) and Studentenes Landsforbund (StL); that NSU represents students at universities in Norway while StL represents those at the university colleges. Eton stressed how close we work with these student organisations, and imprinted into his audience the main ISU strategy of SAMARBEID (Norwegian word for cooperation).

## **1.6 Branch Reports**

All branches presented their reports to the NA during the assembly, three or four each day. As most delegates were new to ISU, they were asked to both dig into the past activities of their branch, and to present their plans for the semester. The sessions were meant to inspire the delegates and to serve as a forum in which to share experiences and ideas. *(See appendix 3 for the branch reports)*

## **1.7 – 1.8 Introduction of observing and potential branches**

Unfortunately, none of the observing or potential branches we had invited could make it in the end, and this post therefore fell out. Expansion is the main ISU goal for 2007, and we will keep working hard to aid and follow closely up on interested university colleges. We have high hopes for being able to welcome new members into the ISU family at the next NA!

## **1.9 Presidents report**

In his report, Eton told the assembly of his areas of work, and of his achievements in his year as president. He elaborated on his various roles; maintaining communication with the local branches, being the link between local branches and national ISU, NSU and StL, representing ISU in NSU and StL's national meetings, to the Norwegian government and to external organisations, and that he is leading the work of establishing new ISU branches in Norway. Among his main achievements are securing the funding of NOK 50 000 from StL to our expansion project, and of course welcoming Bodø as a new member of ISU at the assembly in April. Eton is also a member of the Student Parliament at UiO.

*(See appendix 4 for the president's report)*

## **1.10 Secretary's report**

Hanna presented her secretary's report along with the financial report. She focused on explaining how the national administration works as a team, but that her role is non-representative as she is hired and not elected. She also told the assembly of her areas of responsibilities, and stressed that her ambition was to make ISU more formal and create the solid foundation which is necessary for ISU to grow as an organisation. *(See appendix 5 for the secretary's report)*

## **1.11 StL report**

Olav Øye, International Officer for StL, presented his organisation and their cooperation with ISU. Olav encouraged the assembly to be active in their student democracy, and to be present where decisions are made. He voiced awareness and concern that this might be difficult for international students as student democracy meetings are normally held in Norwegian.

Olav stressed the importance of ISU and the national assemblies, and urged the NA to contact him for dialogue on matters of common concern. He also told the NA that StL is working on improving the English links and information on their websites.

## **1.12 NSU report**

Kim Størkesen, International Officer for NSU, explained for the assembly how NSU is organised, and how ISU can influence NSU. In particular he focused on two "roads to power":

Road to power 1

- 1) Persistence (never give up!)
- 2) Participation (because you can and you will be heard!) You can, therefore you should
- 3) Samarbeid

Road to power 2

- 1) Samarbeid (cooperation) locally; Local ISU-branch, local NSU-branch (or StL) and student democracy
- 2) ISU national, NSU national (or StL), the minister of education (Djupedal), and the government

This implies to first think locally, and cooperate with NSU/StL and the student democracy, then to take the case to the national level, where we keep cooperating with NSU/StL and the national politicians. Kim's message to the assembly was: "Engage yourself! Because you can and you will be heard!"

### **1.13 SAIH report**

SAIH is the "Norwegian Students' and Academics' International Assistance Fund". A substantial amount of their funding comes from Norwegian students, who contribute with an amount of their admission fees. SAIH's slogan is "Education for Liberation", and they support projects and organisations that work for education and student democracy in Africa and Latin America. They also lobby to influence Norwegian policies on development.

Jonas Holmqvist explained the structure and goals of SAIH, and told the NA how they work towards reaching the students. SAIH cooperate with ISU both locally and nationally, and Jonas stressed how he appreciates the work that ISU does.

## **2. REPORTS AND ORIENTATION CASES**

### **2.1 ISU Norway Financial Report and Budget**

Hanna presented the revised financial report and budget for 2006. The budget that was presented to the NA in April was based on our application to the ministry of education for NOK 250 000 from the state budget, but as we in June received only NOK 158 000, the entire budget had to be revised. NOK 158 000 is, however, 15 000 more than we received last year, so we are heading in the right direction!

Hanna also elaborated on the steps she has taken to formalize the financial records of ISU. To have order in the finances is a necessary prerequisite for any organisation to be taken seriously, and hence grow in size and influence. The major steps in this regard were taken before the NA in April, but as most branch representatives now were new to ISU, Hanna also explained those past changes and achievements to the delegates. (*The budget/accountings 2005/2006 can be found in appendix 6 and an explanation to the budget is enclosed in appendix 7*)

**Vote: The revised budget was accepted against one vote**

### **2.2 ISU Plan 2007**

The ISU plan was presented short and orally on Sunday afternoon, due to severe time constraints. Several posts on the agenda had already touched upon ISU's plans for the year to come; in which expansion is our core priority. Also, we will of course keep representing international students' interests politically, academically and socially. In particular, the national administration will work on our political cases, such as the work permit fee, information in English and the quota student issues.

### **2.3 Consideration of potential branches**

This post fell out as no potential branches were able to attend the assembly.

### **2.4 ISU Election**

The President, Vice-President and Alternate Vice-President of ISU is elected once a year, at the autumn assembly. All interested delegates were allowed a few minutes to introduce their candidacy at the Friday, and more thorough presentations were held on Sunday, right before the elections.

#### **2.41 Election for President:**

Candidates for President were Eton Williams and Ramil Aliyev. Each were allowed five minutes to present themselves and their visions, before both were asked to answer three questions from the delegates, the same for both candidates, in turn. The questions were the following:

- 1) What in your background makes you qualified to the position of president of ISU Norway
- 2) Do you as a person think that you can donate the time in your life to do an active job as president?
- 3) How will you solve internal disagreements

Hanna furthered a proposal for the voting session to be secret. 20 delegates and the president were allowed to vote.

**Vote: 10 in favour of Eton, 10 in favour of Ramil, 1 blank**

As the assembly faced a tie, a second round of questions to the candidates and a new voting was proposed.

- 1) How do you think you can contribute to and enhance the democratic environment of ISU?

**New vote: 10 in favour of Eton, 10 in favour of Ramil, 1 blank**

This implied a second tie, and the chairpersons in conference with the candidates suggested that the election be decided by the flip of a coin, which is common procedure in both NSU and StL. The assembly approved of the suggestion.

**Flip of coin: Eton Williams continues as National President of ISU**

#### **2.42 Election for Vice-President and Alternate Vice-President**

Ramil Aliyev, Suleyman Isikcan Aysev og Susana Serra forwarded their candidacy for Vice-President. Each candidate presented themselves, and all were asked the same two questions in turn:

- 1) What are your intentions for the year if you become elected as vice-president
- 2) Which concrete actions have you taken to contribute to the welfare of international students

This came to a voting:

**Vote: 10 in favour of Ramil, 8 in favour of Susana, 1 in favour of Isikcan, 1 blank**

A spin-off voting between Ramil and Susana was then required, with the following result:

**Vote: 11 in favour of Ramil, 8 in favour of Susana, 1 blank**

**Ramil Aliyev is the new Vice-President of ISU, Susana Serra is the new Alternate Vice-President of ISU.**

## **3. POLITICAL AND ACADEMIC CASES**

### **3.1 Issues forwarded by the local branches/national administration**

On the Sunday of the assembly, the branches were urged to forward any cases they would like the national assembly or national administration to be informed of or work to improve. This included constitutional proposals, proposals for resolution, and the academic review. Hanna also informed the assembly of resolutions adopted at the past assembly.

#### **3.11 Constitutional proposals**

##### **Proposal Hanna**

Change §4.2 to:

The National Assembly will once a year prepare a financial report to the National Assembly for presentation and approval. This financial report will contain the audited financial accounts of the previous year and a preliminary budget.

In addition the National Administration should inform the National Assembly about any major changes in the financial situation that may occur during the financial year.

**Vote: The change was accepted by a 2/3 majority vote and will be included in the constitution**

##### **Proposal Mario:**

To add a bullet point number two to § 3.2.1: Duties of the president:

Being responsible for reports from the National Administration to be sent out to the branches once every two months

**Vote: The addition was accepted by a 2/3 majority vote and will be included in the constitution**

#### **3.12 Proposals for resolutions**

Three resolutions were submitted from the NTNU branch regarding language courses and exams at NTNU. The assembly agreed with a majority vote that the National Administration and the NTNU branch together write a resolution on this, to help them improve conditions at their university.

NHH forwarded a proposal regarding creating an internal exchange network for all students connected to ISU. The idea is based on a network of contacts where international students can expect free accommodation in cities where an ISU branch is established, provided that they commit themselves to host travelling students in turn. The goal would be to increase travel opportunities for international students and between ISU branches, and thus enhance the usefulness and visibility of ISU for the “average” international student. The idea requires that organizers volunteer, but the assembly was positive to taking the effort further.

One proposal from UMB never came to a voting due to time constraints.

*(For all proposals for resolutions, see appendix8)*

#### **3.2 Academic Review**

Vice President Ricardo presented the academic review, which is a journal in which international students can get their work published, and which stands as a visible symbol of the valuable contribution that international students make to Norwegian academia. The Review was initiated by the UiO branch one year ago, and has been run by them as a trial project for one year. Ricardo presented his proposal that the Review be taken to the national level, with the vice president of ISU Norway assuming particular responsibility for its

continuation. He also proposed a fee paid by all branches of ISU to cover printing costs, but this was made voluntarily as the branches expressed their wish to have the review sent electronically and hence organise the local printing themselves. The UiO branch will also continue to look for external funding. The review is open to the entire ISU for those who show the will and interest to get themselves involved.

**Vote: A majority of the assembly voted for passing Ricardo's resolution, with the proposed changes.**

(The entire passed resolution is enclosed along with the other resolutions in appendix 8)

### **3.3 Resolutions from the past assembly**

Hanna presented to the assembly the resolutions that were written after the NA in April. These concerned lack of information in English from Lånekassen, from the Universities and at Samskipnadens facilities. Susana told the assembly that the resolution on English around campus was a success in Stavanger, and that the university now has promised to improve these conditions. These resolutions address problems that most branches are facing, and we hope that they will be used by more branches to improve conditions where they study. *(For the past resolutions, see appendix 9)*

## **4. GUEST SPEAKERS**

### **4.1 Jan Paul Brekke**

Unfortunately Jan Paul Brekke had to cancel his speech at the assembly. Instead, his report; "International Students and Migration to Norway" was handed out to the delegates.

### **4.2 Utrop: "Working with Media".**

Majoran Vivekananthan is the editor of Utrop; the first multicultural newspaper in Norway. Utrop is run by immigrants, and started off as an online web portal at UiO in 2001. It now covers the whole of Norway, and publishes news, research, interviews, and articles related to ethnic minorities.

Majoran elaborated on how foreigners are referred to in the media, and how the rhetoric regarding the way immigrants are being portrayed changes with time. Immigrants in positive contexts are commonly characterized as Norwegians, while in negative contexts their ethnical identity is often emphasized.

The Utrop editor also explained to the delegates how they can contact the media, that it might be smart to get friendly with specific journalists and how to portrait our cases. He advised the assembly to check that we are being quoted right, and how to get our stories covered. He ended his session with a workshop, in which the delegates were divided into four groups, who each had a task to solve regarding how to attract media attention.

### **4.3 Famara Sanyang: ISU President 1994-95**

Famara Sanyang was the ISU president in 1994-95, and we were lucky to have him come and speak about ISU at that time. In 1994 ISU was called Foreign Student's Union, and Famara started his ISU career by re-building the Bergen branch which was no longer up and running. After one year as ISU Bergen president he was elected National President in 1994.

At the national level, Famara and his fellow ISU colleagues tried to create a common national constitution, as there was no national document, only the local constitutions. Among the other

issues that ISU was concerned with at the time he mentioned welfare, and getting transcripts of the Norwegian degrees translated to English terms.

Famara also reminded the assembly that they as international students bring insight and perspectives to Norway, and that they challenge the established. He was questioned on his aims for ISU then, compared to where we are now. He replied that he had focused on the small milestones; and to get it all to start working at the local and the national levels. He told the assembly that cases may shift, but the basic structures are crucial for our organisation to work. Hence today we benefit from Famara's work in 1994, and in the same way our work today will benefit international students to come.

**This report was written and submitted by Hanna Holmelin, ISU National Secretary**