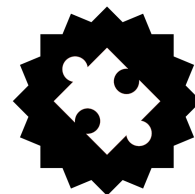


The Social Sciences Student Union's

Political Action Plan

2022/2023



**SOCIAL SCIENCES
STUDENT UNION**

Introduction

One main goal of the Social Sciences Student Union is to monitor and take part in the development of the education organised at the Faculty of Social Sciences. This work is carried out by the elected Presiding Committee, Education Committee, our delegation to the General Assembly (FUM) of SFS, and student representatives of the student union. The Presiding Committee is responsible for leading a division of responsibility over the points in the Political Action Plan. Multiple groups can work on the same area where it is relevant to do so.

This document is established by the Representative Assembly, which has been elected by the members of the student union. After the Opinion Programme, this Political Action Plan is the primary steering document for the student union's political work.

Revision of the Opinion Programme

During the Representative Assembly spring 2020 the Presiding Committee of 20/21 was put in charge of creating a working group for revising the student union's Opinion Programme. The Presiding Committee of 20/21 created the working group under the Education Committee during the fall and started the process of the programme's revision. During the spring semester, the working group examined the current Opinion Programme, revised and updated the different chapters as well as adding new chapters and areas of opinion. The revised texts have been sent out to the study councils and the Education Committee for input together with more general questions about what the Opinion Programme should and should not include. In addition to this, the working group has shared a survey asking for general input aimed at all students at the Faculty of Social Sciences.

The working group realised that there was not enough time to conclude the process before the Representative Assembly without negatively affecting the possibilities for input from the study councils. As the Opinion Programme is the most important document for the student union's political opinions, it is very important that it is regularly anchored and updated. The Presiding Committee proposed to prolong the process to make sure that the anchoring process is satisfactory. The Presiding Committee of 21/22 were unable to continue this work, and it therefore needs to be completed in the year 22/23.

Because of this, the student union shall:

- complete the revision of the Opinion Programme.

Resources and organisation

As a foundation for the quality of education provided at the Faculty of Social Sciences, lies the resources available for education and the way the faculty decides to organise itself. Within the current division of resources for higher education, social sciences, humanities and law students

have the lowest so-called “price tag”, meaning that our education receives around half the amount of funding per student that sciences, technology and medicine educations receive - and a mere tenth of the funding for opera students. This division is regulated by the government in its appropriation directions (regleringsbrev) to Lund University. The funding for our education is also negatively affected by the general productivity deduction (produktivitetssvdraget), which is a financial incentive for government agencies to make their operations more efficient. In order for there to be more teacher-led time, contact time with the subject, guidance for self-studies, and other quality-raising measures that require additional resources, the price tag system needs to change, and the general funding for education in the social sciences must be increased.

The Faculty of Social Sciences must use the resources available wisely, and organise itself in the way that creates the best conditions for students’ education and representation. In discussions surrounding potential reorganisation of the faculty’s departments, the student union should promote these interests, and advocate for proper student influence at all levels where these discussions are held.

Lastly, the university’s organisation falls short of its promise to be an international university when it excludes international students and personnel from partaking in the collegial decision-making processes at department, faculty and university level. Conditions for international students to become student representatives must be improved, by enabling more bodies to conduct their meetings in English. This is also relevant for national student representative opportunities.

Because of this, the student union shall:

- advocate for an increased “price tag” (höjd prislapp) for social sciences students.
- advocate for the removal of the productivity deduction (produktivitetssvdraget).
- advocate for the faculty to organise itself in a number of departments that promotes the best conditions for students’ education and representation.
- advocate for proper student influence at all levels where potential reorganisation of the faculty’s departments is discussed
- advocate for better conditions for international students to become student representatives, on a Faculty, University, and national level through the Swedish National Union of Students (SFS) especially by making it possible to use English as the working language of choice, whenever relevant.

Students’ mental health

Mental illness among young people is increasing and every other student experiences anxiety, worry or concern. At the same time many students encounter a long waiting time before getting help from the university’s support functions, and this is just among the students that know how to find and use these support functions. Studentbarometern from 2017 shows that there is a much higher number of students that need help from the university’s support functions than there are students who actually use them.

Efforts to improve students' mental health need to be made and the university can contribute by, for example, creating and evaluating supportive physical, social and academic environments. There is a need for a new Studentbarometer to get a better understanding of how the students are doing and what needs to be done in the ongoing work, as well as more systematic work on a faculty level.

Because of this, the student union shall:

- push for the university through the umbrella organisation Lunds universitets studentkårer (LUS) to send out a new Studentbarometer.
- strive for the university and the Faculty of Social Sciences to better their communication about the Student Health Centre and other supporting functions.
- advocate for increased funding to the Student Health Centre.
- strive for the faculty to conduct an annual survey of students' psycho-social study environment.
- advocate that the Faculty of Social Sciences hires a counsellor (kurator) for social sciences students.
- strive for the student health counselling to be approachable Monday to Friday from 8-18.
- advocate for CSN to be increased.

Campus development

Lund University has four campuses: one in Lund, one in Malmö, one in Ljungbyhed and one in Helsingborg. Despite the university's presence at several geographic locations, large parts of student life are still concentrated in Lund. Some of the courses and study programmes in social sciences that are conducted at Campus Helsingborg have semesters where the place of study is temporarily moved to Lund. There are also social sciences educations in Lund where certain elective courses are given in Helsingborg. Both the attraction of student social life and the need to commute to where courses and study programmes are located create travel costs that can be a strain for individual students to pay for. To promote a unified university and to support students financially the university should offer free campus buses between Helsingborg and Lund.

The future of Campus Helsingborg has become a discussion of strategic importance for the Faculty of Social Sciences. The central student union should work closely with Socionomsektionen and Agora to well represent the students' interests in this discussion, and develop clear opinions that can be confidently expressed towards the faculty and university.

The third stage of the development of the Faculty of Social Sciences' premises in Lund (from hereon referred to as "Campus Paradis"), are moving into a decisive process where renovations will begin and the organisation around who holds main responsibility for classrooms and study environments will change. The student union should do its best to safeguard a good study environment for social sciences students during the disruptions that the upcoming renovation and construction projects will entail, and should advocate for students to be informed in good

time about upcoming renovations and evacuations. It should also stand behind the faculty taking over responsibility from the departments over classrooms and study environments, and ensure that the faculty provides equitable and safe learning environments across Campus Paradis, and generous access for students to these learning environments.

At the university-level, the student union should push for a development of the Lundagård area that serves the interests of the students and makes more study places available at the heart of the university. It shall also monitor the development of Science Village at Brunnsbög, and do its best to prevent escalating university overhead costs for the project, that would be partly covered by social sciences students without them reaping the benefits.

Because of this, the student union shall:

- work towards equal campus environments on all campuses both indoors and outdoors.
- advocate the costs for travels for students that commute between campuses should be subsidised.
- advocate for the implementation of campus buses that drive between the different LU campuses free of charge for students.
- advocate for cheaper public transport for students in Skåne and the Öresund Region.
- work closely with the relevant sections regarding Campus Helsingborg and develop clear opinions about the future of Campus Helsingborg.
- safeguard the study environment of social sciences students during coming renovations and construction in the Paradise area.
- advocate for clear and well-timed communication towards students that will be affected by the development projects in Campus Paradis
- work towards ensuring equitable and safe learning environments at Campus Paradis, through more faculty-held responsibility over classrooms and study environments.
- strive for generous opening-hours for students at Campus Paradis.
- advocate for 24/7 access to study places and libraries with the LU student card.
- work on developing a booking system on a faculty level that will provide the students access to rooms for study purposes.
- continue striving for students to be able to use classrooms for studying/educational purposes.
- push for the development of more university-wide study places in Lundagård.
- monitor the development of Science Village and work to prevent escalating university-level overhead costs.

Pedagogy and digital learning environments

The education at the Faculty of Social Sciences has been characterised by a low number of teacher-led hours, inadequate pedagogical standards and structural underfunding for a long time. Students need more contact hours with teaching personnel and improved pedagogic measures in order to increase their experience of the quality of education.

During the pandemic digitalization became an area of increased relevance out of necessity. It is now important that the university and faculty continue to develop the usage of digital tools in ways that improve the quality of education. Digital education and blended learning, however, means more than moving “business as usual” to Zoom. Further education for academic teachers in how to design engaging and methodologically brilliant online teaching must be made available. It is also important that the university and the faculty make sure that all students have access to the digital tools and resources required to conduct their education. Lastly, many exams are currently not anonymised in accordance with the list of rights as they should be. This is something the faculty has promised to work on, and the student union should monitor their progress.

We critically observe the organisation of student-lead additional teaching and mentoring hours. While we welcome the opportunity to have peer-to-peer learning situations, educational work must always be paid fairly and students in charge of student-led teaching must get access and time to educate themselves properly.

Because of this, the student union shall:

- advocate for more teacher-led hours.
- advocate for an increased number of contact hours within education at the Faculty of Social Sciences.
- advocate for improved guidance for self-studies.
- strive to improve pedagogical training for teaching staff.
- strive to increase the exchange of pedagogical expertise among teachers at the Faculty of Social Sciences.
- advocate for the faculty and university to strive towards being at the forefront of utilising digital learning environments as tools for pedagogical development and flexibility.
- advocate that the library services should provide loans of computers, web cameras and other necessary technical equipment for students to borrow and bring home, in addition to stationary computers on campus.
- advocate for anonymous examination to become the standard across the faculty.
- demand that students who are serving as tutors, mentors or in student-lead additional teaching facilitated by the faculty to be employed orderly, informed about their union rights and paid according to their academic qualifications.

Course evaluations

The course evaluations are an important part in the development of courses at the university. It is often through the course evaluations that the students' experiences of the individual courses are captured and their answers are used to identify what needs to be improved in the education. It is therefore important that students are aware of how the course evaluations are conducted and used, and are aware of their importance.

During the year 20/21 the university provided new routines for course evaluations that apply to the entire university. The faculty wrote new routines, based on the university's, in 2021. The purpose of these new routines was to better the university's general work with course evaluations and to establish clear guidelines for how to work with course evaluations. During the year 21/22 the student union wrote a report discussing the benefits of different ways to organise course evaluations. This work needs to be continuously followed up on.

Because of this, the student union shall:

- ensure that the List of Rights and routines by the University and the Faculty for course evaluations are implemented and followed at the Faculty of Social Sciences.
- hold an informational campaign on the importance of answering course evaluations.
- advocate for all departments to systematically provide student representatives with influence in the design, content and follow up of course evaluations.
- advocate for students to be informed about gender bias and other biases that may affect responses to course evaluations.
- advocate for course evaluations to always be available digitally.
- advocate for results from all course evaluations to be collected in a digital faculty archive.