

Political action plan

2018

Established by the Representative Assembly 2018-01-30



Samhällsvetarkåren
vid Lunds universitet

Introduction

The Social Sciences Student Union covers the Faculty of Social Sciences and the centres LUCSUS, Center for Middle Eastern studies and Center for East- and Southeast Asian Studies at Lund University. Our main goal is to survey and take part in the development of the educations organized here. This work is carried out by the elected presidium and student representatives of the student union.

We are a democratic organization run by students and we are obligated to work for the best of the students. This document is established by the representative assembly, which has been democratically elected by the members. After the opinion programme, this political action plan is the primary steering document for the student union's political work.

Resource allocation

For many years the Social Science Student Union has been criticising the current resource allocation system. The system suffers from a lack of transparency, is dependent on economies of scale and it leads to underfunding of the education. Today, the state appropriation for educating students in social science does not match the actual cost of a qualitative education. In addition to that, every year the appropriation is undermined by the requirement for productivity increases within the price- and salary recalculation.

The student union's work with advocating for changing the resource allocation system has led to a state investigation called "Styr- och resursutredningen (U 2017:05)" which is to be presented the 3rd of December 2018 at the latest. During 2018, the Social Sciences Student Union at Lund University therefore has the opportunity to influence the reformation of the resource allocation system, through working with the faculty, Lund University's Student Unions (LUS) and the Swedish National Union of Students (SFS).

Some things that the Social Sciences Student Union should protect in this work is to keep the appropriation for education separated from the appropriation for research but also, even if it is in contrast to the investigation's directive, to increase the funding for studies in social science to fully compensate for the true costs of the education.

Because of this, the student union shall

- *play an active part in the Swedish National Union of Student's (SFS) work with having the resource allocation system reformed*
- *play an active part in Lund University's Student Unions' (LUS) work with having the resource allocation system reformed and in its implementation at Lund University*
- *strive to keep the appropriation for education and research separate*
- *strive to increase the appropriation amount for social sciences*

- *strive for a system that is not based on performance*

Social security

Students are traditionally in a borderland between employment and unemployment which leads to students not being fully protected by the social security systems and in those cases students are protected, they are on worse terms than others. For example the waiting period for sick leave is 30 days for a student and just one day for others considered equal to employed. Sick leave is also only available on full time. This puts students in a tough situation where they either have to prove that they are sick enough to not be able to participate in anything at all or not able to perform as good as they would if they were not partly sick.

During the first half of 2018 the state investigation on giving students protection in the social security system will be finalized and presented. Therefore it is important that the Social Sciences Student Union uses its voice to influence the Swedish National Union of Students' participation in the investigation. One question that is important to raise is to also include students that do not receive student grants from the Swedish National Board of Student Aid in the system so that those who do not have any grants left to receive or for any reason do not want student aid also can go on sick leave.

Because of this, the student union shall

- *play an active part in the Swedish National Union of Student's (SFS) work with the state investigation on students social security*
- *strive for a social security system for students where part time sick leave is a possibility*
- *strive to shorten the waiting period for sick leave*
- *strive to disconnect the possibility for sick leave from getting student grants*

Equality

Education is a human right and in order to make it truly accessible for more people, it is imperative for the university to step up their work with gender equality, equal treatment and diversity. Several processes to ensure equal conditions in higher education and improve the university's gender equality have been started over the last few years.

However, the university is lagging far behind on measurements for diversity. The recruitment to the university is very skewed when it comes to ethnicity and class. Only 15% of the students at Lund University are born outside of Sweden or have both parents born outside of Sweden, compared to 19% of the whole population. Similarly, while only 38 % of the population has highly educated parents, as many as 53 % of the students at Lund University do. This situation is further reflected in the lack of diversity amongst doctoral students, lecturers and professors. While Lund University does state that the recruitment should be broadened, it is imperative for

us as a student union to demand a better follow up on this and push for a more active work on the area.

Firstly, the university has set a goal regarding the recruitment of professors. Before year 2020, 40% of all professors being recruited throughout a year are supposed to be female. This goal is to be achieved through the vice-chancellor having the possibility to stop recruitments of professors if there is not both male and female candidates. Furthermore, the goal seems to have been reached this year already. The problem with the imbalance amongst existing professors however, still exists and is especially severe locally at certain departments. As such, the problem cannot only be addressed at a central level.

Last spring, a plan for gender mainstreaming was established. Simultaneously, the plans for equal treatment have been removed as tools for the equality work. The plan for gender mainstreaming has a focus on recruitment on all levels, both students and teachers/researchers. The next step for the upcoming year is to have the plan implemented and reviewed.

Lastly, an issue that has been raised more and more is the demand for a more inclusive language. With the internationalization comes a responsibility to be more inclusive. At the same time, the use of English is costly to the university and can represent an obstacle to Swedish speaking students with poor English skills.

Because of this, the student union shall

- *strive to make the university prioritize actions for improved diversity*
- *strive to make the university achieve the goal of 40/60 in the gender balance amongst professors both at the department level, faculty level and central level*
- *strive to ensure thorough follow-up on the gender mainstreaming plan*
- *be involved in the discussion about the use of English at the university and push for a situation where the goals for internationalisation is followed by measurements for inclusivity*

Quality assurance

In 2016, the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) developed a new quality assurance system for evaluating and developing the quality of higher education. The task of developing a new system was assigned by the government and the new system has been used for the first time in 2017 and will be used for the next six years.

The new system implies that the universities take greater responsibility for their internal quality assurance. For a decentralised university like Lund University this has meant a lot of challenges. In February 2018 Lund University will have a central policy for quality assurance in place, and three guidelines which the faculties need to take into consideration when organising their own

quality assurance systems. Due to the different nature of the faculties, each faculty will have the freedom to construct their own quality assurance system.

The Faculty of Social Sciences is one of the faculties with the biggest challenges to construct a functional and quality driven system, applicable for all the departments and centres. During the upcoming year the Social Sciences Student Union should strive to take an active role at the faculty in order to ensure a system that benefits students and quality aspects from a student perspective.

Moreover, even if the Faculty of Social Sciences have not had a coherent quality assurance system in place, there is a lot of continuous work that is done in order to assure the quality of the educations. Actions such as annual quality dialogues, course evaluations, syllabus and more take place every year. There is room for improvement in how the departments handle course evaluations and syllabus and the Social Sciences Student Union should advocate for a systematic way of handling these as they directly affect students chance to influence their education.

As part of assuring the quality, the faculty meets with the departments in so called quality dialogues each fall. This year, we have managed to get more student representatives seats on these dialogues. This has given the student union the possibility to bring both one central student representative from the faculty's education council and one local student representative from the department to the meetings. However, we believe more could be done to improve the student union's part of the dialogues.

Because of this, the student union shall

- *strive to strengthen the student influence in all the quality related processes*
- *take an active role in the construction of the faculty's quality assurance system in working groups within LUS, EQ-s, the education council and the faculty board*
- *continue to push for a systematic development when it comes to the handling of syllabi and course evaluations at the faculty of Social sciences*
- *develop a new procedure for the handling of quality dialogues, which includes involving the student representatives in the dialogues at an earlier stage and discussing with the study councils and equivalent how to anchor the student union's opinions before the dialogues*

Digital examination

The central educational board (utbildningsnämnden) decided in the beginning of September 2017 to start a pilot project in the upcoming two years with Inspira, a well known digital exam supplier. During these two years Lund university will try Inspira for digital examinations and in the meantime also work to develop pedagogical and technical competence within the area. The educational board will finance the project which means that all related costs for the faculty's will be covered by the educational board (400 tkr).

This project will allow not only for digital, but also anonymous examinations. The work for anonymous examinations have been a prioritised matter for the Social sciences student union for many years. Being a broad and complex faculty entails that the departments have different practices and many departments still do not have comprehensive anonymous examinations where possible. Inspira will now allow the departments to try and implement digital examinations.

Besides the opportunities with digital examination some challenges also need to be tackled. In order to be able to take all students' needs into consideration it is important that the departments also continue to offer students the opportunity to write their exam on paper, if they wish to do so. Lund University should moreover be able to offer computers that can be borrowed for those students that do not have their own laptop. Another risk to minimize is to make sure that additional costs will not be burdening the departments. Therefore the current and very costly agreement with Akademiska Hus regarding extension cords have to be renegotiated.

Because of this, the student union shall

- *strive to make all the departments within the Faculty of Social Sciences to implement digital and anonymous examinations where possible during these upcoming two years*
- *monitor the work with digital examinations and ensure that the student perspective will be ensured*
- *strive to make the departments take all students needs into consideration and therefore always offer non-digital examination for those students that prefer to write their exam by hand*
- *strive to have the agreement with Akademiska Hus renegotiated to make it less costly for the department*

Renovation in Paradiset

For many years, a renovation in the Paradiset area have been planned. Both new constructions and renovations of the M and O building have been discussed. During the fall of 2017, a new project group and a new project leader have taken on the project.

Social sciences students are in huge need of better study facilities. We lack a common building for social science and many of the buildings are old and worn down. It is imperative that the student union stays active in the process of planning the reconstructions and works to have the students' needs and wants taken into account.

During 2018, the move of the School of Social Work will continue. The Social Sciences Student Union shall first and foremost here support the student union section Socionomsektionen in their advocacy in this matter.

Because of this, the student union shall, in the process of reconstruction

- *strive to increase the number, diversity and availability of study places*

- *strive to increase the number of eating areas with access to microwave ovens*
- *strive to establish a method laboratory*
- *strive to increase the number of bookable and non-bookable group rooms*
- *strive to increase the number of quiet and semi-quiet areas*
- *strive to create rooms for student organizations*
- *strive to establish a recording room, for recording lectures*
- *support Socionomsektionen in their work to advocate in the process of moving the School of Social Work*

USV

The university's specialized centres (USV) are intended to serve as a platform for cross-border activities aimed at complementing the traditional disciplines at Lund University. USV conducts both research and education and also consists of center formations that work as networks for researchers at a regional and global level. There are many problematic aspects related to USV since they exist outside of the faculty structure, such as weaker student influence, abnormal guidelines for how the work should be conducted and lack of control from other influential university instance. Due to these reasons, and more, dismantling of USV has slowly started and all centres except for Pufendorfinstitutet and IIIIEE, International Institute for Industrial Environmental Economics at Lund University, will be moved to and belong to a specific faculty. The Centre for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) will from January 2018 belong to the Faculty of Social Sciences LUCSUS, Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies, will move to the Faculty of Social Sciences on January 1st 2019. The Centre for East and South-East Asian studies will become a part of the Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology in 2019.

Today the Faculty of Social Sciences have the responsibility for quality assurance of the Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies and LUCSUS. Hence, students as well as the student union at these centres will be affected by the move.

Because of this, the student union shall

- *Ease the move of the centres to and from the Faculty of Social Sciences by providing the students with information about their student union, student representation and ways to influence their education*
- *welcome the new students from CMES to the the Faculty of Social Sciences and the student union*
- *collaborate with the Student Union for Humanities and Theology (HTS) to be able to have a smooth transition for the students and student representatives at the Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies*

Pedagogic Academy

Each year, a number of teachers apply to the faculty's pedagogic academy. Getting accepted is a way of being rewarded for great pedagogic competence. This can be both theoretical knowledge

from having done research on the subject, and practical competence in the lecture hall or classroom. Amongst other things, the recipient gets a pay raise.

The student union is asked to give input on the candidates. For many years, this process has not been planned well enough in advance and therefore the input has not met the standard we would wish for. However, if starting on time, the process could be synchronized between student representatives at different departments, and the investigation of the students' experiences of the teachers could be evaluated more thoroughly.

Because of this, the student union shall

- *before the summer, together with the study councils and student representatives, set up a process for the collection of the students' experience from certain teachers*

Internationalisation

Lund University's strategic plan states that the university should strive to become more international. Originally, this comes from a decision by the Swedish government.

Internationalisation means more and more lectures are held in English, more and more students are going to and from Lund on exchange semesters, and more and more international students are coming to Lund to study a full programme.

However, international students are not always very well taken care of by the university. Amongst other things, the administration sometimes fails at providing all relevant information in English and giving students a proper introduction to the Swedish academic system. As a result of this, student representation is not always fully functional for international students, as the working language of the departments, faculties and university is Swedish. For example, all quality dialogues have up until now been held in Swedish.

Moreover, making programmes international affects the learning environment. More perspectives can be present in discussions, while the discussions themselves can sometimes be hindered by language problems. We are confident that teachers and students can overcome these problems, but first they need to be addressed.

During 2018, a report from the government on how the internationalisation of Swedish universities are going is expected.

Because of this, the student union shall

- *strive to improve the departments' welcoming of international students and introducing them to their studies from the departments*

- *demand that more administration is done bilingually and that quality dialogues on departments with only English-speaking programmes are held in English*