STRATEGY OF THE STUDENT UNION
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI
FOR 2020–2024

Purpose, use and monitoring of the Strategy

The Strategy is, after the Constitution, the highest document guiding the activities of the Student Union of the University of Helsinki (HYY). The Strategy examines the Student Union and its objectives as a whole and defines HYY’s purpose, dream, values and objectives.

The Strategy functions as a tool for planning annual operations. It is used especially for planning the programme of objectives and directing the work of the Central Office. The programme of objectives determines the strategic objectives that are under particular scrutiny at a given time. The Strategy is also taken into account when drafting various programmes and other documents that guide the activities.

The realisation of the objectives of the Strategy is monitored regularly using different indicators. The findings are reported annually to the Representative Council. The secretary general and the chair of the Board are responsible for the monitoring and the reporting.

Purpose of the Student Union

The Student Union is a community that provides its members with support and space for their growth into active, cognisant and critical citizens. The Student Union acts as a link between its members, looks after their interests at the University and in society as well as promotes their societal, social and intellectual aspirations.

Dream

We are a healthy and impactful community. We are building a more just and sustainable university community and society.
VALUES OF THE STUDENT UNION

Education

Education refers to critical knowledge and understanding of the surrounding world. Education includes the ability to create, apply and share information for the benefit of society as well as the ability to face different opinions and views. In our activities, education can be seen in our research-based decision-making and defence of the societal importance of education and research. We are a community that supports our members’ academic growth, promotes their education and prepares them to act as active and critical members of society.

Equality

Equality means that everyone has a genuine opportunity to participate and fulfil themselves regardless of their personal characteristics. We are a diverse, feminist community, and we strive to recognise different privileges and take their effects into account. We take the diversity of our members into account by building a multicultural, equal and trilingual community. Everyone in our Student Union is treated equally, and no one is placed in an unequal position based on any characteristic of theirs. Everyone can feel safe in our activities, and we do not accept any form of discrimination. We advance the equal treatment of our members at the University and in society.

Courage

Courage refers to daring to form and express one’s own opinions. It is the desire to try out something new, influence matters and work for our dream and objectives. We comment on issues concerning students and act as a pioneer in society. We dare to disagree, demonstrate and propose new kinds of solutions. We are a community that encourages our members towards independent, critical thinking. We boldly reform our own operating methods and constantly examine their impact.

Sustainability

Sustainability is ecological, social and financial in nature. Ecological sustainability sets the boundaries for all our activities. We influence matters in our own activities, at the University and in society, fighting against climate change and other environmental problems in order to keep the Earth habitable. Social sustainability translates into enabling the humane and ethical actions of individuals and the community both now and in the
future. We take responsibility for our members and employees as well as the University
community. With financial sustainability, we are ensuring that future student generations
will also get to enjoy the opportunities and services provided by HYY.

Transparency

Transparency in our Student Union refers to active interaction, ensuring that dialogue is
possible and communication that reaches its target groups. Decisions are made in a
transparent manner and information on our activities is accessible. We are a community
whose members are aware of their rights and opportunities to influence matters both within
the Student Union and at the University. Clear and inspiring communication and an
atmosphere that values activity support the broad participation of our members.

OBJECTIVES FOR THE STRATEGY PERIOD

Meaningful membership

Members form the core of our community. Our members on all campuses consider
membership in the Student Union meaningful. HYY is seen as an important builder of the
University community and an impactful and bold advocate. Every single one of our members
is able to feel at home in the Student Union. We take the diversity of our members into
account and provide diverse participation opportunities. Acting in the Student Union is a
genuine way to influence matters in society. We create student culture by organising events
and supporting our members’ independent student activities. Our services meet the needs
and wishes of our members and are accessible to and known by their target groups. Our
services are continuously developed with operating resources and the needs of the users
taken into account.

Indicators:

- Questions on the objective in the member survey
- Feedback on our services collected from organisations and members
- Awareness and accessibility of member and organisational services on different
campuses and digitally
- HYY’s presence on campuses
- Feedback collected on events

Volunteers as community builders

Volunteers build our community and act as part of HYY’s advocacy work and decision-
making processes. The work done by volunteers is a central part of our Student Union, and
our appreciation towards them is visible in our activities. We will create and establish sustainable structures for volunteer activities in order to support the volunteers' wellbeing and help them succeed in their position and find volunteering meaningful and rewarding. Working as a volunteer supports the personal development and growth of our members. We will develop volunteering to make it more interesting and accessible to our diverse membership than before.

Indicators:

- Feedback annually collected from the volunteers
- Number of training events for volunteers, number of participants in them and feedback on the events
- Number of volunteers, number of volunteers operating in different languages and the faculty distribution among the volunteers
- Establishing the practices for the recognition and rewarding of volunteer work

Accessible decision-making and influencing

Our members understand how to influence matters in our Student Union and actively use their power. We will offer a wide variety of influencing opportunities and develop new ways to help our members' opinions and suggestions reach decision-makers. Voting in the Representative Council elections is considered a meaningful way to influence matters, and working in the council is meaningful. We will critically assess the current decision-making practices, ensure the transparency of the decision-making processes and support our members in understanding them. Information that is needed to participate in the decision-making processes is shared actively, accessibly and trilingually. HYY’s employees and members of the Board systematically monitor the realisation of our Student Union’s objectives and make regular reports on the matter.

Indicators:

- Development of the indicators of the Representative Council elections
- Feedback annually collected from the Representative Council and HYY’s other decision-making bodies
- Accessibility of administrative documents
- Reach and attraction of communication related to HYY’s decision-making processes
- Development of influencing methods aimed at members
Supporting student representatives

Our task is to organise the selection of student representatives to ensure that students’ voice is heard in the University’s decision-making processes. We want to have as many different students from different backgrounds as possible as student representatives. We will ensure that our support for them is accessible. Besides training, we provide the student representatives with information to support them in their advocacy work and actively communicate with them in three languages and on all campuses. We help student representatives and persons in charge of advocacy work to network and receive peer support. Acting as a student representative is a meaningful experience. Student representatives learn skills needed in advocacy work, reach their own goals and get recognition for their skills and for the work they do to develop the University community. Student representatives are an equal part of the University’s decision-making processes.

Indicators:

- Feedback collected from student representatives
- Development of the number and backgrounds of the applicants for the positions of student representative
- Diverse representation of student representatives at different levels of administration
- Feedback collected from faculty organisations on the cooperation both on the calls for applications to become a student representative and on supporting the work of the representatives
- Reach of the communication on the guide for student representatives and update of the guide

Bold advocate

We conduct bold and impactful advocacy work both at the University and in society. We conduct advocacy work in cooperation with various parties and actively seek partners to improve our impact. We defend, challenge and develop the University community and act as a pioneer in society. We support the advocates acting in student organisations. Our advocacy work is research-based and corresponds to the needs and wishes of our members. We regularly commission reports to support our advocacy work. The advocacy work is also meaningful for our members’ studies, wellbeing and future. We take bold stands and propose new kinds of solutions. Operating in the Student Union is a genuine way to influence societal matters. We set the direction for societal discussion and provide our members with avenues for participating in and influencing discussion. We are a well-known and trusted expert cooperation partner for our interest groups.
Indicators:

- Questions related to advocacy work in the member survey
- Media hits related to HYY’s advocacy work
- Results of the survey for interest groups
- Development of measuring the impact of advocacy work

**Action and business that mitigate the climate and environmental crisis**

We are a believable and well-known actor in the fight against climate change and other environmental problems. Environmental impact is taken into account and environmental damages minimised in all our activities. We will determine the size of our operations’ carbon footprint and make a plan to minimise and compensate for it as well as begin implementing the plan. Our Student Union and business activities are pioneers in the fight against climate change. To support this, we make research-based decisions on our own operations and our corporate governance. We take the principles of sustainable development into account in all our business activities. We advance the protection of the environment and the mitigation of climate change at the University, in the city and in society. We conduct research-based advocacy work in cooperation with other environmental actors. We encourage organisations operating under us to take part in the mitigation of climate change and to take environmental impact into account in their own activities.

Indicators:

- Assessment of the Student Union’s greenhouse gas emissions and environmental impact as well as a plan to minimise and compensate for the emissions
- Results of the survey for interest groups
- Realisation of Ylva’s sustainable development goals
- Development of the extent to which organisations operating under HYY take environmental impact into account

**Continuously improving work community**

HYY is never complete. The development of our Student Union’s internal practices is active, goal-oriented and continuous, with necessary resources also reserved for it. We ensure that our own processes and operating methods are sustainable and do not unreasonably burden our employees or other people acting under us. We are a responsible and respected employer as well as an interesting and sought-after workplace. We focus on the wellbeing and development of our employees and the members of our Board.

Indicators:
• Drafting and implementing the annual plan on internal development
• Wellbeing at work is monitored systematically and regularly
• Regularity and amount of the supervision of work for the personnel and the board
• Regularity and number of sector-specific performance reviews
• The personnel’s participation in training during the year
• Attractiveness as an employer
• Assessment of the workload of the Board’s areas of responsibility