

1 STRATEGY OF THE STUDENT UNION 2 OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI 3 FOR 2020–2024

4 **Purpose, use and monitoring of the Strategy**

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

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

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

17 **Purpose of the Student Union**

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

22 **Dream**

23 We are a healthy and impactful community. We are building a more just and sustainable
24 university community and society.



25 **VALUES OF THE STUDENT UNION**

26 **Education**

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

34 **Equality**

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

43 **Courage**

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

50 **Sustainability**

51 Sustainability is ecological, social and financial in nature. Ecological sustainability sets the
52 boundaries for all our activities. We influence matters in our own activities, at the
53 University and in society, fighting against climate change and other environmental
54 problems in order to keep the Earth habitable. Social sustainability translates into enabling
55 the humane and ethical actions of individuals and the community both now and in the



56 future. We take responsibility for our members and employees as well as the University
57 community. With financial sustainability, we are ensuring that future student generations
58 will also get to enjoy the opportunities and services provided by HYY.

59 **Transparency**

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

66 **OBJECTIVES FOR THE STRATEGY PERIOD**

67 **Meaningful membership**

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

78 *Indicators:*

- 79
- 80 • Questions on the objective in the member survey
 - 81 • Feedback on our services collected from organisations and members
 - 82 • Awareness and accessibility of member and organisational services on different
82 campuses and digitally
 - 83 • HYY's presence on campuses
 - 84 • Feedback collected on events

85 **Volunteers as community builders**

86 Volunteers build our community and act as part of HYY's advocacy work and decision-
87 making processes. The work done by volunteers is a central part of our Student Union, and



88 our appreciation towards them is visible in our activities. We will create and establish
89 sustainable structures for volunteer activities in order to support the volunteers' wellbeing
90 and help them succeed in their position and find volunteering meaningful and rewarding.
91 Working as a volunteer supports the personal development and growth of our members. We
92 will develop volunteering to make it more interesting and accessible to our diverse
93 membership than before.

94 *Indicators:*

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

101 **Accessible decision-making and influencing**

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

112 *Indicators:*

- 113 • Development of the indicators of the Representative Council elections
- 114 • Feedback annually collected from the Representative Council and HYY's other
115 decision-making bodies
- 116 • Accessibility of administrative documents
- 117 • Reach and attraction of communication related to HYY's decision-making processes
- 118 • Development of influencing methods aimed at members



119 **Supporting student representatives**

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

131 *Indicators:*

- 132 • Feedback collected from student representatives
- 133 • Development of the number and backgrounds of the applicants for the positions of
134 student representative
- 135 • Diverse representation of student representatives at different levels of
136 administration
- 137 • Feedback collected from faculty organisations on the cooperation both on the calls
138 for applications to become a student representative and on supporting the work of
139 the representatives
- 140 • Reach of the communication on the guide for student representatives and update of
141 the guide

142 **Bold advocate**

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



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154 *Indicators:*

- 155 • Questions related to advocacy work in the member survey
- 156 • Media hits related to HYY's advocacy work
- 157 • Results of the survey for interest groups
- 158 • Development of measuring the impact of advocacy work

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

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

172 *Indicators:*

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

179 **Continuously improving work community**

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

186 *Indicators:*



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