

STUDENT UNION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI C O N S T I T U T I O N

Chapter I Student union

Section 1

Legislative position. The Student Union of the University of Helsinki shall be a corporation subject to public law, which shall have self-government in accordance with Section 46 of the Universities Act (558/2009) and the Universities Decree of the Finnish Government.

Section 2

Members. All university students admitted to studies leading to a lower or higher academic degree shall belong to the student union. In accordance with Section 34 of the constitution, the student union may also admit other students of the university as members.

Section 3

Purpose of the student union. The purpose of the student union shall be to act as a link between its members and to promote their societal, social and intellectual aspirations and their aspirations regarding studies and students' status in society.

The student union shall participate in the performance of the educational mission of the university referred to in Section 2 of the Universities Act by preparing students for an active, cognizant and critical citizenship.

The especial duty of the student union shall be:

- 1) to nominate student representatives to the administrative bodies of the university referred to in Chapter 3 of the Universities Act;
- 2) to nominate student representatives to the university's student financial aid board referred to in Section 9 of the Student Financial Aid Act (65/1994); and
- 3) contribute to the performance of tasks relating to students' primary health care referred to in Section 17 of the Primary Health Care Act (2010/1326) and Chapter 13, Sections 11—14, of the Health Insurance Act (1224/2004).

Section 4

Decision-making power. The representative council, which is elected through proportional elections, shall have the student union's decision-making power, as provided more specifically in this constitution.

In order to conduct the representative council elections, the student union board shall appoint the central election committee, which is provided in the election regulations.

The student union board elected by the representative council shall have the student union's administrative and executive power, as well as decision-making power in matters which are not determined to be resolved by the student union's representative council in this constitution.

The board shall decide on matters concerning the student union's properties, with the exceptions referred to in Item 10, Section 21, of the constitution.

The student union shall have presiding officers, who include the chairperson, the first vice chairperson and the second vice chairperson.

Chapter II

Right to vote and eligibility

Section 5

Right to vote. In the election of the student union's representative council, member vote and general meeting, only a student union member who has registered for attendance at the university and is personally present shall be entitled to vote.

Section 6

Eligibility. Eligible as a member of the representative council or the board shall be everyone who is entitled to vote, except the persons listed below.

The following shall not be eligible as the representative council members:

- 1) Student union's chairperson and vice chairpersons;
- 2) CEOs, directors, deputy directors and other senior management staff employed by the student union-owned companies, as well as companies in which the student union owns over 50 % or the communities where the student union otherwise has the decision-making power in accordance with the Accounting Act (1336/1997);
- 3) Persons who have fixed-term contracts with the student union, with the exception of those which last less than six months.

The following shall not be eligible as the board members:

- 1) Student union's chairperson and vice chairpersons;
- 2) Persons employed by the student union;
- 3) Persons employed by the student union-owned companies, as well as companies in which the student union owns over 50 % or the communities where the student union otherwise has the decision-making power in accordance with the Accounting Act (1336/1997).

Section 7

Eligibility as the chairperson. Eligible as the chairperson and vice chairpersons of the student union shall be former and current student union members who have completed a higher academic degree at the University of Helsinki. Persons employed by the student union shall not be eligible as the chairperson or vice chairperson.

Chapter III

Student union's member vote

Section 8

Member vote. A matter within the decision-making power of the student union's representative council shall be submitted to the public vote if at least three-quarters of the representative council members so request by vote.

Member vote shall be conducted based on the draft decision of the representative council, which may be approved or rejected.

The central election committee shall decide on the organising of member vote and be responsible for the conduct of the vote.

Chapter IV

Student union's general meeting

Section 9

General meeting. The student union shall be invited to a general meeting to express its views on matters mentioned in the meeting agenda when the chairperson considers it necessary or when at least one-twentieth (1/20) of the student union members make a written request to the chairperson in order to discuss the announced matter.

Section 10

Deadline. If the chairperson is requested to convene a general meeting in situations referred to in Section 9, the meeting shall be held within three weeks of the request.

Section 11

Invitation. Invitation to the student union's general meeting shall be published at least one week prior to the meeting on the student union's official notice board and at least in two daily newspapers published in Helsinki. In addition, the meeting shall be annually announced in a manner confirmed by the board. The invitation shall state the matters discussed at the meeting.

Section 12

Meeting procedure. The student union's general meeting shall comply with regulations provided on the meeting procedure of the representative council when applicable.

Chapter V

Student union's presiding officers

Section 13

Election of presiding officers. The representative council shall elect the student union's chairperson and vice chairpersons. In the election of the chairperson and both vice chairpersons, the elected person shall receive more than half of the votes cast.

If no one receives the required majority, the second vote shall be conducted. If no one receives the required majority, the third vote shall be conducted between the two candidates who have received the most votes in the second vote.

Section 14

Term of office. The term of office of the presiding officers shall be a calendar year. However, the term of office may continue over the calendar year until the new presiding officers have been elected.

Section 15

Resignation. If the chairperson resigns from office during one's term, immediate action shall be taken to elect a new chairperson. When the vice chairperson resigns during the term, the representative council shall decide whether the presiding officers should be completed.

Section 16

Duties of the chairperson. The duties of the chairperson shall be:

- 1) to supervise that the operations of the student union shall comply with valid regulations and orders;
- 2) to convene a meeting of the representative council and the student union's general meeting and chair the meetings;
- 3) to sign the minutes of the representative council meeting and the student union's general meeting and necessary documents due to decisions made in the meeting;
- 4) to attend to other duties ordered to the chairperson in accordance with this constitution and regulations.

If the chairperson is unable to carry out one's duties, the vice chairperson shall replace the chairperson.

Chapter VI **Representative council**

Section 17

Representative council. The representative council shall consist of sixty members. The conducting of the representative council elections shall be specified in the election regulation.

Section 18

Term of office. The representative council's term office shall begin on the first day of December following the representative council elections and the duration of the term shall be two years. The term of the representative council, however, shall continue until the new representative council has been elected.

Section 19

Loss of eligibility and vice members. If a member of the representative council loses one's eligibility during the term or resigns from the representative council or if one is unable to take part in the work of the representative council due to a reason approved by the representative council, the chairperson shall invite a vice member to replace the member. The representative council shall state the loss of eligibility.

When a member of the representative council is a board member, a vice member shall be invited to replace the member during the term, as provided in the regulations concerning the operations of the representative council.

A vice member shall act as a representative until the end of the representative council term. When a person is invited to replace a temporarily prevented representative, one shall act as a representative as long as the actual representative is unable to attend.

Section 20

Preparatory committee. The representative council shall appoint a preparatory committee for one's term. The committee shall be specified in the regulations concerning the operations of the representative council.

Section 21

Duties of the representative council. The duties of the representative council shall be:

- 1) to elect the student union's presiding officers;
- 2) to elect and release from one's duties the chairperson and other members of the student union board;
- 3) to elect and release from the duty the student union's secretary general, the chief editor of *Ylioppilaslehti* student magazine and the student union's chief financial officer;
- 4) to appoint an audit firm for the student union's operating funds and property funds, which shall be the same for both;
- 5) to decide on the student union's annual budget and supplementary budgets;
- 6) to process the board's reports on the student union's operations and finances and decide on the caused measures;
- 7) to decide on the confirmation of the student union's financial statement and the discharge of liability to the board and others responsible;
- 8) to decide on the annual target budget for properties directly owned by the student union;
- 9) to decide on property purchase, selling, exchange, or conducting an exchange of land, mortgaging property or a building or facility on the property, and initiating the construction of new buildings;
- 10) to decide on the provision of loans and guarantees, as provided in more detail in the economic regulation;
- 11) to approve the student union's constitution, election regulations, administrative and economic regulation and other regulations. The student union's constitution and the election regulation shall be submitted to the rector of the university for confirmation;
- 12) to appoint student members to the university's executive board.

In addition, the representative council shall decide on other matters, which elsewhere in this constitution or regulations concerning the student union have been ordered to be resolved by the representative council, or matters which the representative council has reserved the right to decide in individual cases or which the board considers necessary to be resolved by the representative council.

Section 22

Reserving decision-making authority. In individual cases, the representative council shall have the power to reserve decision-making authority in a matter that falls within the decision-making authority of the board. By virtue of its power, the representative council may not, however, reserve authority to make decisions which would amend decisions that legally bind the student union.

A motion on reserving decision-making authority in a particular matter may be made by five representative council members or the preparatory committee of the representative council. A motion on reserving decision-making authority may not be postponed

The board may not make a decision on a matter for which a motion on reserving decision-making authority has been made before the representative council has decided on the matter concerning the reserving of authority.

Section 23

Proposed resolution. The representative council may approve proposed resolutions addressed to the board.

Section 24

Inquiry. Five (5) representative council members may make an inquiry to the board. An inquiry shall be submitted in writing to the chairperson of the student union, who shall inform the board about the matter without delay.

The board shall provide a response in writing to the representative council members within two weeks of received information and orally in the next representative council meeting.

Section 25

Representative council meeting. The representative council shall meet at least:

- 1) between the first and fifth day of December after the representative council elections, when members are elected to the preparatory committee of the representative council and the chairperson is appointed;
- 2) annually between the first and fifth day of December, when the former of the student union board shall be elected;
- 3) annually after the fifth day of December, when the budget for the student union's operating funds shall be decided;
- 4) annually before 31 December, however, after the meeting referred to in Item 2, when the student union's presiding officers and the audit firm shall be elected; annually no later than May, when issues referred to in Items 6 and 7 in Section 21 shall be decided.

The representative council shall also meet at the invitation of the student union's chairperson at other times:

- 1) when the chairperson or the board deems it necessary;
- 2) when the preparatory committee of the representative council or five representative council members make a written request to the chairperson in order to discuss the announced matter.

Section 26

Right to attend. Each student union member shall have the right to attend the representative council meetings. However, the representative council shall have the right to decide that a particular matter is to be addressed completely or partly in a closed session.

Chapter VII Board

Section 27

Number of members. The student union board shall consist of a minimum of seven and a maximum of thirteen members.

Section 28

Term of office. The term of office of the board shall be a calendar year.

Section 29

Former of the board. The representative council shall elect the former of the board by majority vote.

Section 30

Forming of the board. The former of the board shall make a proposal on the board members to the representative council in the next meeting following one's election. If the representative council approves the proposal, the former of the board shall be elected as the chairperson of the board and the persons mentioned in the proposal shall be elected as the board members.

If the representative council does not approve the proposal, a new election for the former of the board shall be conducted and the former of the board shall provide one's proposal on the board members. This election procedure shall continue until the representative council approves the proposal made by the former of the board.

Section 31

Loss of eligibility and resignation. If a member of the board loses one's eligibility during the term, is released from one's duty or resigns from the board, the chairperson of the board shall suggest to the representative council a new candidate for the board.

The representative council shall state the loss of eligibility.

If the representative council approves the proposal, the suggested person shall be elected as a member of the board. If the representative council does not approve the proposal, the chairperson of the board shall suggest another candidate. When there are several persons to be elected, the candidate list shall be approved or rejected as such. The procedure shall continue until the representative council approves the proposal of the chairperson of the board.

When the chairperson of the board loses one's eligibility or resigns during the term, the student union's chairperson shall immediately convene the representative council to elect the new board.

Section 32

Question of confidence. With the majority of votes from the present members of the representative council, the representative council shall have the authority to discharge the board and a member of the board from their duties during the term of office by declaring that they do not hold the confidence of the representative council.

The question of confidence shall be initiated either immediately in a council meeting convened in order to discuss the matter or by a request made to the chairperson by at least one-sixth of the representative council members and submitted at least nine days before any other representative council meeting in order to include the matter in the meeting agenda.

When initiating a question of confidence, reasons for the question of confidence shall be submitted in writing to the chairperson of the student union, who must immediately forward them to the board.

If the representative council states that the board or a member of the board do not have the confidence of the representative council, procedures shall be taken at the same meeting to elect a new board or a member of the board, unless the representative council decides to shelve the election of the former of the board or a member of the board with the simple majority of votes.

Section 33

Organising the board. The board shall elect the vice chairperson from among the board for the term of office. The board may have preparatory organs or organs set up for specific purposes that are established due to a regulation or a decision of the board.

Section 34

Duties and authority of the board. The board shall use the student union's power of speech, take responsibility and respond on behalf of the student union in court and to other authorities, as well as draft contracts and other legal actions on behalf of the student union. The student union board shall decide on grounds according to which other university students referred to in Section 2 of the student union constitution are approved. In addition to what is provided in other sections of the constitution, the duties of the board shall be:

- 1) to appoint student representatives to the university organs referred to in Section 3 of the Universities Act, excluding the university's executive board and the organs, for which the election is otherwise determined in the student union regulations;
- 2) to appoint student representatives to the university's financial aid committee in accordance with Section 9 of the Student Financial Aid Act (65/1994);
- 3) to appoint student representatives to the board of the health service unit of the Finnish Student Health Service;
- 4) to make the student union's proposals for other organs of the Finnish Student Health Service.

Authority and its transfer. The administrative, executive and decision-making power of the board may be transferred to an organ appointed by the board in separately defined matters according to the rules of procedure and guidelines or a separate decision of the board.

Section 35

Reports. The board shall annually provide the representative council with reports on activities and finances.

Chapter VIII

Secretary general and chief financial officer

Section 36

The student union shall have the secretary general and chief financial officer.

Duties of the chief financial officer and secretary general shall be enacted in more detail in a separate guideline approved by the representative council.

Chapter IX

Languages of the student union

Section 37

Languages. The languages of the student union shall be Finnish and Swedish. The language of the minutes shall be Finnish. Documents shall be provided in the student union language used by the person who makes the request.

Activities targeted at the student union's Swedish-speaking members shall be arranged in Swedish.

Chapter X

Documents

Section 38

Archives. The student union documents shall be archived so that the archives serve as a source of information to the creator of the archives, the student union members, authorities and research.

Section 39

Publicity of documents. Documents related to the student union's public administrative duty shall be public as provided in the Act on the Openness of Government Activities (621/1999). The student union documents shall be public to the student union members.

Documents related to the student union's property operations and business operations shall not be public. The person in question shall have the right to see the documentation concerning oneself.

A proposal, draft, report, statement, memo or other clarification created among an organ within the student union's operating funds, however, shall be public unless otherwise decided by the organ in question.

A document under preparation shall not be public.

The student union members shall have the right to access extracts of the documents of the student union's representative council, board, committees, sections, commissions and boards, which are public to the student union members. For these extracts, a fee decided by the board shall be paid to the student union.

Chapter XI

Member initiative

Section 40

The right to make an initiative and response. A student nation or organisation within the student union or thirty student union members shall have the right to make initiatives to the student union's representative council and the board.

The representative council shall respond to an initiative within two months and the board within one month from the date of submission to the student union's secretary general.

Representatives of the community or members who have made the initiative shall have the right to participate in discussion concerning the matter in the representative council and the board.

Chapter XII

Finances

Section 41

Student union's finances, property and business operations and contingency fund.

Expenditure caused by operations that implement the student union's purpose shall be covered by the student union's property, revenues generated by activities and membership fees. The representative council shall have the right to order the membership fee to be paid by the members of the student union. The rector of the University of Helsinki shall confirm the membership fee.

The student union's operating funds shall be tied to regulations and the budget of an autonomous corporation subject to public law. Operations covered by the operating funds shall be defined by the student union representative council at any given time.

Properties owned by the student union shall form separate finances as property and business operations, which have accounting obligation based on the Accounting Act. The student union's representative council shall define the use and economic principles for properties owned by the student union. The student union may own other business corporations and act as their parent company within property finances.

The student union's decision-making on issues related to the ownership of company shares and voting rights, as well as loans to corporations or guarantees or collateral given to them shall be determined in this constitution and the regulation concerning economic affairs.

Revenue based on distributable income and capital of the company formed by the student union's property and business operations shall increase the contingency fund of the student union's operating funds. When the student union decides on the profit distribution of business operations, it shall pay particular attention to securing the continuity of the group.

The contingency fund shall be annually spent for the student union activities with the maximum amount decided in the budget of the student union's operating funds, supplementary budget and the amount decided in connection with the processing of the financial statement at the latest.

Other permanent funds shall be provided in more detail in regulations.

Section 42

Accounting period and budget for the student union's operating funds. The accounting period of the student union's finances shall be a calendar year.

All revenue and expenditure of the student union's operating funds shall be included in the budget, which the representative council approves for every accounting period before the beginning of the accounting period.

The board shall not exceed the budget allocation approved by the representative council without the consent of the representative council, excluding the exception mentioned in the economic guideline or use for purposes other than the designated purpose in the budget.

Section 43

Payments. The representative council shall decide on the imposing of fees referred to in Section 41, in connection with the approval of the budget of the operating funds or other financial plan. During the accounting period, however, an additional fee may be imposed.

The membership fee shall be paid each semester. The fee shall be determined to be equal to each student union member registered for the attendance at university for the academic term. The representative council may impose a membership fee of a different amount to a student union member undertaking a doctoral degree and other university student accepted as a member of the student union. The student union board shall decide on the collection method and time of the fees paid by members.

The board may decide on the exemption from the membership fee in part or in total if it is evident due to a member's proven indigence that the membership fee jeopardises one's right to education in accordance with Section 16 of the Constitution (731/1999).

The student union board may decide on partial exemption from the membership fee, accordingly to the amount credited to the Finnish Student Health Service if a member proves to have paid the membership fee for the academic year or term in question to two or several Finnish university student unions.

Section 44

Imposing the membership fee. If the rector of the university does not confirm the membership fee, the representative council shall rediscuss the budget of the operating funds and make any changes considered necessary.

Section 45

Implementation of the budget for operating funds. It shall be the duty of the board to implement the budget for operating funds, which shall be approved by the representative council.

Commitment to costs shall be the duty of the board, unless the board has delegated this right to other organ or official of the student union. Commitment to costs outside the budget shall be the board's duty.

A student union organ or official entitled to commit to costs shall be responsible for ensuring that the exercise of this right does not result in exceeding appropriations entered in the budget.

Regardless of the budget for operating funds, the board shall be obliged to pay the expenses for which the student union is responsible in accordance with the law or agreement.

Section 46

Audit firm. An audit firm shall be elected for accounting, financial statements and administration of the student union's operating and property funds for each accounting period. The audit firm shall be an audit firm approved by the Chambers of Commerce, i.e. APA firm.

Audit committee. An audit committee may also be elected for the student union's operating funds, as provided in regulations concerning financial affairs.

Section 47

Financial statements. The board shall make financial statements on the student union's operating funds and property funds for each accounting period, which shall be submitted to accounting no

later than March of the following year. At the same time, the board shall also provide the auditors with related documents, as well as other documents clarifying the student union's administration during the accounting period.

Section 48

Auditor's report. The audit firm shall provide the board with a report on their inspection no later than April following the accounting period. The board shall deliver the report and clarifications due to reminders to the representative council in sufficient time in order to be processed at the representative council meeting held in May at the latest.

Section 49

Regulations on financial affairs. Detailed provisions on the student union's finances and the administration of properties owned by the student union, the duties of responsible organs and officials, as well as auditing, shall be provided in regulations on financial affairs.

Chapter XIII **Signature and notifications**

Section 50

Signature. The student union's chairperson, vice chairperson, board's chairperson or vice chairperson together with the secretary general, chief financial officer or other official separately entitled by the board shall sign under the student union's name. Documents of the student union's representative council and the board shall be signed by the chairperson or vice chairperson in question and confirmed by the student union's secretary general.

Section 51

Notifications. Notifications concerning the student union shall be received on behalf of the student union by the secretary general or a person whom the board has separately entitled to receive notifications on behalf of the secretary general.

Chapter XIV **Appeal**

Section 52

Appeal. A decision concerning the student union's administration may be appealed to the Administrative Court as provided in the Administrative Procedure Act. In addition, a student union member may appeal a decision of the student union organ on the grounds that the decision has been made in an order deviating from the law, decree or the student union regulation, or is otherwise against the law, decree or student union regulations. The Administrative Court's decision may not be appealed.

A student union member shall be deemed to have received the decision when the decision is set to public inspection.

A decision made by a section, commission, committee or board elected by the student union board may be appealed to the student union board within 14 days of the announced decision.

A decision, which is only for preparation or implementation purposes, may not be appealed.

Section 53

Implementation ban. The student union's chairperson shall have the right to prohibit the implementation of an appealed decision if the decision is apparently against the law, decree or constitution or other regulations concerning the student union or has been created in a deviating order and if the implementation of the decision makes the appeal unnecessary.

Chapter XV Celebrations and honours

Section 54

Anniversaries. The student union shall annually celebrate its anniversary to commemorate the decree on the general meetings of university students provided in 1868. The anniversary date shall be determined by the inauguration of the Old Student House carried out on 26 November 1870. This date is the same as the reinauguration date of the Academy of Turku after the Great Wrath in 1722. The student union shall celebrate its spring festival on 13 May to commemorate the first performance of *Maamme* anthem in 1848.

Section 55

Other festivities. The board shall decide on the organising of festivities, other than those referred to in Section 51.

The board shall also decide on actions, which have the character of respect, joy, sorrow or such, as well as flagging and festive lighting of the student union properties.

Chapter XVI Specific provisions

Section 56

Responsibility in a position of trust. An elected official appointed by a student union organ may be dismissed from one's office if one takes advantage of an issue or reveals a confidential issue which one has received in one's position of trust, or has by one's actions in the student union or outside the student union significantly damaged the student union.

Section 57

Information. The decisions of the student union's representative council and the board shall be displayed on the official notice board of the student union no later than the fourth working day after the meeting. In addition, information shall be provided by other means annually confirmed by the board.

Section 58

Old Student House. Student and other activities are organised at the Old Student House to the extent decided by the Student Union.

Section 59

University's rector. Issues raised in the representative council meeting shall be reported to the university's rector at the same time when the meeting invitation is sent to the members of the representative council. The rector may make a written notice to be addressed in the meeting if a certain issue is not suitable for the purpose of the student union.

The university's rector shall be immediately informed about decisions made in the meeting of the representative council or the board.

Section 60

Amendment of the constitution and entry into force. The representative council shall decide on the amendment of this constitution.

The amendment of this constitution shall be decided in two representative council meetings held at least two weeks intervals. Such a decision requires that in both meetings at least two-thirds (2/3) of the present representative council members support the decision. The decision shall be submitted to the rector of the university for confirmation.

This constitution shall enter into force immediately after the confirmation of the university's rector.

I have confirmed this constitution today.

Section 58 approved 30 September 2016

Helsinki, Administrative Office of the University of Helsinki

20 January 2014



Jukka Kola

Rector of the University of Helsinki