

# Student Union Malmö's operational report 20/21

## §1. Introduction

The operational year 2020/2021 has been filled with many constructive, intensive, and productive discussions which have permeated the organization. In the long run, this provided a good basis for Student Union Malmö (the Union) to work during the year on writing new and revising old documents, reviewing the tasks and areas of responsibilities within the board to increase the efficiency of the Union's work, but also to drive important issues for the students. In the same way, like many other higher education institutions, Malmö University (MaU) has undergone a digital readjustment of education due to the covid-19 pandemic, which to some extent has affected the board's opportunities to work as usual.

This operational report will present the development of the operational year and how we worked with and managed the Student Union council's (FUM's) priorities.

## Covid-19

Both University and Unions operation has throughout the academic year 2020/2021 continued to be dominated by the Corona pandemic. Education was conducted with digital teaching as default, while possibilities to apply for exemptions for practical moments in the education and legally secure examinations were given. The decision-making was delegated to the deans at the respective faculties, with the ombuds involved in the process to ensure student influence in the matter.

The Union continuously pushed for acknowledging the dire work environment conditions many students face in their homes and the aggravation of students' mental health due to prolonged isolation and the increase in reported loneliness and overall aggravated mental health. This advocacy work was met by university management by suggesting the possibility of applying for exemptions to digital teaching on the grounds of students' work environment and mental health. However, this additional clause was never implemented due to the rising infection numbers when revising the decision.

The Union continued close contact with the university management on Corona-related questions despite the adjourned crisis group meetings. The university director arranged for bi-weekly informal coordination meetings. Furthermore, several sporadic extra meetings with the communications department were held to discuss the strategic communication and information on corona-related matters to students. A major lesson learned during the pandemic was the importance of clear, easily accessible, and transparent communication about the University's and the Union's decisions.

The adaptations of the Union's operations in order to prevent increased infection spread implied the cancellation of all physical events from late October in, including the temporary closure of the student pub that persisted throughout the entire spring semester. The Union's associations and student groups were provided with guidelines and recommendations regularly updated and encouraged to conduct digital events. This led to a substantial loss of members and challenges in recruitment, aggravating the Union's as well as the associations' and student groups' operations. To mitigate these effects, the council decided on granting the possibility of exemptions for outdoor physical events that could be applied for through an application process.

To alleviate the struggle the different groupings under the Union face regarding recruitment for their new boards, the Council approved the board's suggestion for a temporary support membership system. The support membership will allow students who graduate in spring 2021 to stay active board members of associations if no current students are willing to fill positions.

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To adequately analyze and follow up on the effects of the pandemic on the education, students' wellbeing, and the Union's operations, the board proposes to adopt "pandemic effects" as one of two focus questions for the operational year 2021/2022.

The Union house was kept open for regular opening hours throughout the year to provide students with places to study and remain a safe place to turn to for support.

This situation has resulted in some loss of income but also fewer expenses. For example, the income in new memberships, soup lunch, and breakfast has decreased. At the same time, there were fewer expenses for coffee, edibles, and other equipment we usually use.

The internal operations gradually shifted to an increased work from home, with working from home as a default from November. Exemptions for working in the office were made when physical presence was needed (e.g., for reception shifts, recordings) and occasionally on the grounds of work environment reasons upon consultation with the President.

The specific digital adaptations of the Union's work and their effects on the operations are explained in the respective chapters of the operational report.

## § 2. Focus areas

During the operational year, the Union has been working with the following focus areas.

- Visibility
- Students' work environment

### 2.1. Visibility

Everything the Union does is connected to visibility. But due to a lower outreach within the last years, visibility was decided to be a focus question for this operational year.

The Union has been more proactive this year when it comes to the media. Debate articles were written. Our social media channels have gotten more attention with the help of paid advertisements. The Twitter account has been revived, and the monthly blog posts on our website have received attention from the entire presidium instead of only from one person.

As the Union decided to cancel all further physical events, many digital substitutions came up. One of the most interactive ones was the digital Lunch quizzes, which already was launched during the previous operational year. The quizzes were conducted every second week and differed in topics. Some entirely held in English, others only in Swedish, some of them were mixed.

In April, the Union decided to celebrate their 20th anniversary with a celebration week. Every day of the week had a different topic, and students could win a prize worth 500kr each day. The celebration week ended with a digital music pub launched that day via the Union's YouTube channel.

### 2.2. Students' Work Environment

The preceding board suggested students' work environment as a focus question due to an identified lack of systematic work with the question at MaU in regards to students and unclarity in responsibilities and the degree of planned active measurements across the different faculties.

The previous President's task and handed over to the President of the operational year 20/21 was preparing a report on the physical work environment in collaboration with the Doctoral Student Union Malmö and the chief work environment officer. The report was finished in November and submitted to various university boards and groups, especially considering a potential new building and moving parts of the University's operations according to the revised venue

allocation plan. This pro-active input of work environment concerns was met critically by the central management level.

During discussion points on work environment questions in various university advisory boards and groups, a strategic question that the Union drove was acknowledging equal importance given to organisational and social work environment (OSA) aspects as to the physical ones. This is reflected by the greater incorporation of OSA perspectives in subsequent discussions and the ongoing work on that matter.

From previous discussions in USG raising questions on students' systematic work environment issues and insufficient routines in these regards, the working group consisting of HR and GV staff was appointed to initiate the process of handling these matters by conducting a mapping of current practices and routines in the different faculties, including external monitoring of other best practices.

The working group lacked student representation. The President and vice-president for education monitoring had two meetings with the working group to discuss the ongoing process and preliminary results.

Due to the increased government funding of Student Health Services, a new position aiming to develop the systematic work with students' work environment (with a specific focus on organisational and social work environment) was established. The recruitment process for hiring a work environment specialist started during the spring semester, with the President involved in securing the student perspective in the hiring process. Despite the ongoing recruitment process, the job description for the new position is not clearly defined yet, but rather is to be outlined and developed in close cooperation between the Student Center, the respective faculties, and the Student Unions. Hence, this task has to be continued by the new board.

Another strategic aspect regarding students' work environment discussed in a meeting with AKL is integrating students' rights and obligations in terms of their work environment in the courses on higher education pedagogy offered to teach staff at MaU.

The unfolding of the Covid-19 pandemic greatly influenced the angle of the Union's work with students' work environment. The large extent of education being digitalised implicated a shift from considering the physical work environment on campus to considering the conditions of students working from homes, such as overcrowded living conditions, lack of ergonomically appropriate study environments, or lack of technological equipment. Regarding OSA, aspects of digital education concerns being brought to the attention of the university management included a lack of contact to teachers and classmates, isolation, and aggravated mental health; and the insufficient communication of university decisions and their implications for students.

### §3. Monitoring of courses and program and student influence

One of the Union's main tasks and responsibilities is ensuring student influence and being active in monitoring courses and programs.

#### 3.1 Student influence Forum

At the beginning of the operational year, FORUM was held at the Faculty of Health and society. At the meeting, two students attended, which was the same number as last year. One of these students, later on, resigned from the assignment in the faculty meeting while continuing to serve as a Student Council member - a position they were also elected during FORUM; the other one carried on the participation in meetings for the whole year. There is still a need for a well developed strategy from the Union and the faculty on how the formal student influence on the faculty can be improved, together with a better advertisement of FORUM and possibilities for students to be more formally engaged in the operations of both the Union and the HS faculty.

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In the KS FORUM, there were students elected for every position. The faculty, however, created more meetings with student representative positions in the previous academic year, which made it more difficult to fill all spots. In the current academic year, yet another meeting with a student representative position was created in the spring term, which remained vacant for the remainder of the year. A difficulty in the past at KS has been that many of these students are international students whose Swedish may be of such a level that following the meetings is challenging; however, this year, similar to last year, almost all elected student representatives spoke and understood Swedish. Some student representatives, unfortunately, dropped out during the year. Representation at the Department of Urban Studies remains challenging and requires extra attention.

During LS FORUM, four students participated who were elected as representatives to various committees. All were elected to various committees at LS, but none to the seats that remained at the council. Two old student representatives also appeared after FORUM, who had missed the date and were later elected to the committees where they had already established themselves. During the operational year, it was also elected and filled in with student representatives in the various program committees that exist at the faculty. During the year, the ombud had contact with all the student representatives to give them both knowledge and support about what is to be discussed at the meetings. For the coming operational year and FORUM, both the Union and the faculty need to improve their strategy regarding student influence, how to best reach the students and how to get the students interested in getting invited and developing the educations given at LS.

At the TS FORUM, four people were elected into positions. Two people were elected as student representatives at the faculty, two people joined FUM, giving TS its first two representatives in FUM this year. All representatives stayed in their positions throughout the operational year. Unfortunately, some positions at the faculty remained vacant, the second spot for the TS Board of Education, and some suppliant positions. It is vital to try and find suppliants for all positions to ensure that there always is student representation in all meetings.

At Central Forum, the Union has managed to elect several student representatives for university-wide boards and committees.

### 3.2 Quality of education

The digital transition has meant many changes for education and has brought new challenges and questions about its quality but also new digital solutions and platforms. The Union has been active in all discussions regarding digital education and its components - teaching, examination, and learning environment.

A large part of the questions has concerned digital legally secure examination. The question is complex, and there have been no clear answers to what a digital legally secure examination is; there have been no national guidelines that can support higher education institutions either. This issue has been widely discussed at the university-wide level and the faculties. The Advisory board for Education has chosen to prioritize the issue and also appointed a working group, in which the Union has also been involved, with the task of coming up with possible solutions for digital examinations that are legally secure and how they can be designed. This work will continue during the next operational year, and the Union needs to continue to be involved in the discussions.

A particularly important aspect of legal security has concerned the surveillance of digital examinations. Surveilling examinations in the digital environment have entailed a potentially major invasion of privacy in students' private lives. The Union has opposed a broad monitoring

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process of digital examinations but has, together with MaU, found a temporary and suitable way to provide space for monitoring certain examination elements that really need to be monitored digitally to ensure the quality of the education. This has meant that the Vice-chancellor has decided to delegate to the deans of the faculties to, in consultation with Student ombud, make decisions on individual cases where surveillance would be allowed.

Another important recurring issue during the year has been the issue of camera usage in teaching. The Union has vouched for the importance of camera use in education, which often promotes interactivity in the digital environment, but also that camera use in education should not be mandatory due to many different factors that play a role in students' private lives - housing situation, financial issues, internet access, psychosocial issues, etc.

Since the two issues (monitoring of examinations and camera usage in teaching elements) have been very relevant during the year, the Union has also produced an opinion document on camera usage in education overall. This document has been distributed among employees at the University and has also been used as a basis in various contexts.

The Union has been active in another important part of the University's work that concerns the learning environments for the students. The learning environment group at MaU was commissioned to review how the university premises could be adapted for a more digitized education in the future. Students from the faculties have also been involved in the process, through interviews, as a focus group. The Union has given feedback and been involved in the discussions during the year and in the investigation itself. Based on the investigation, the Union shares the University's vision with the students about blended teaching in the future, where there are both physical and digital elements.

The issue of course reports and course evaluations and their publicity has continued to be relevant for the Union and the University. A Work that already began in 19/20 has concerned an opinion document on the course evaluation process at MaU. During the operational year 20/21, the Union has produced a complete opinion document on the entire course evaluation process, explaining many of the Union's positions regarding this process.

The Advisory board for Education at MaU has had student influence as a priority question. During the year, the Union's representatives in the board were able to organize and lead a half-theme day on student influence, in which the Student ombuds at the faculties also participated. The Union has had a perfect opportunity to present important views and questions that had been raised continuously by the students in recent years. A large part of the questions concerned information to students and communication between teacher-student. The board has also discussed potential future support documents that can be directed at both employees and students in relation to student influence and student representation. It is important that the Union continue to pursue these issues to strengthen student influence at all levels, especially in the educational environments where the Union is not present but rather the students and the teacher themselves.

The Union has been the reference body for many different issues and processes during the operational year regarding implementing new processes, steering documents, and overall issues and decisions. Some examples are 'Agenda for global engagement 2021-2026', 'Instructions for course and education plans', the Learning Environment Group's investigation of the future learning environments, the new local supply plan, and much more. It is important for the Union to continue to be a consultative body in all possible issues that affect students, directly or indirectly.

During the operational year 20/21, 'UKÄ' carried out a thematic evaluation of the higher education institutions' work with widened recruitment. The thematic evaluation had two major parts - the first concerns a self-assessment made by the University and the second - a student contribution written by the three unions that operate at MaU. The unions have also participated in the University's self-evaluation and development of a SWOT analysis of the work with widened recruitment. With regard to the student contribution, the Union has had a leading role and coordinating function and ensured that all unions have the opportunity to participate in the production of the student submission. The most important things that the three unions have raised in the evaluation of the University's work with widened recruitment have been the lack of unified vision at the University in relation to issues of widened recruitment and the question of an inclusive academic environment where information and communication are key components for widened recruitment and widened participation to work well.

Part of the operational plan talks about routines for feedback from student representatives. The Union has developed a template that student representatives who sit in various boards and committees will use. The idea has been that there should be written feedback from appointed student representatives so that the Union can have better control and follow-up of what happens in various meetings where the board does not sit.

The Union has also revised old internal documents, e.g., 'Development strategy for education monitoring at local level'. This strategy document aims to improve the routines around the local student councils at the faculties by creating a structure and follow-up of the work of engaging students from the faculties. This document was adopted during the operational 19/20 and was evaluated and supplemented during the current year.

### **3.3 Student errand management**

During the operational year 20/21, MaU established a 'Guideline for handling student complaints in education at Bachelor's and Master's level at Malmö University'. The Union has played a leading role in the discussions in the long term and also a key role in the working group that developed the university-wide guidelines. The Union has also adapted its internal procedures to better correspond to the University's way of registering student errands. However, an important part of the work remains: to follow up how the faculties have worked according to the new guidelines after their implementation. The Union has continued the work of producing its annual reports on student errands.

The number of disciplinary errands at MaU has almost doubled. This has led to a large workload for the Disciplinary board at MaU, where the Union represents the students. There has not been sufficient analysis of what it is due to, which means that no one knows if the amount of cheating has increased due to the digital transition or if the University has been more attentive. There has also been a certain increase in the number of students who have reached out to the Student ombuds at the faculties for advice and support.

## **§4 Student Union operation**

### **4.1 Working environment**

The Student Union is an organization representing students at four different faculties. Still, it has only two people hired at the office and seven full-time board members. The workload at times can be high, which can result in interpersonal tensions and conflict potentials.

The enlargement of the board with one voluntary board member and a three-person presidium led to establishing the position of the study-social vice-president. This additional full-time position allowed for redistributing certain areas of responsibility that were lying on the ombuds,

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respectively the President, in previous years onto the said new position. Such a great shift in the organizational work environment was not without challenges, especially since the position lacked distinct delimitations and was not clearly defined during the handover. This led to repeated re-evaluation and redistribution of specific tasks and responsibilities throughout the operational year. A lesson learned from this process is the need for clearer communication of expectations towards both strategic and operative work aspects of the various areas of responsibilities during the handover. It underlined the importance of pre-defined, equally balanced workloads among the team.

Given the anticipated challenges implied in the board's restructuring, an emphasis was placed on personality psychology, group psychology, time and stress management, conflict management, and communication during the Kick-Offs for both semesters. This was widely appreciated by the entire work team and indicated the need to systematically integrate these aspects in future handovers and kick-offs.

The previous President had planned for the current President to receive more education on the matters of the work environment and how to lead an organization. This aspiration was not fulfilled, partly due to the pandemic leading to a cancellation of many education offers, leaving the new President with a lack of education and mentorship to assume their new role and responsibilities. Furthermore, the planned consultation on ergonomics had to be cancelled.

The planned consultation from organisational psychologists in training aimed at tackling group dynamics and communication had to be curtailed due to a lack of time and sickness within the consultation team.

Two half-day workshops on Conflict Management and Robust Cultures of Collaboration were held instead to compensate for the missed opportunities for continued team-building and equipping the work team with the necessary knowledge and skills for conflict resolution and communication.

To further develop the Union's internal work environment, the organisational administrator received training on systematic work environment and was appointed as the Union's work environment officer. Given this added responsibility, internal documents, such as the Union's Code of Conduct and Consequence System, were revised with more transparent and more just processes and routines for processing breaches of conduct.

The annual employee appraisal addressed individual performance, dissatisfaction, expectations, and needs for support, as well as visions to develop both the dynamics of the work team and the Union's operations as a whole. Systematic patterns of identified shortcomings, challenges, and potentials were reviewed and discussed in an extra staff meeting (APT) in combination with continued exercises on group and interpersonal psychology in regards to self-and foreign perception, aiming to mitigate conflict potentials and open up for reflective conversations.

The pandemic led to an increase in remote/ digital work. From November on, working from home became the default for the entire work team, with the exception of reception shifts and work that necessitated physical presence. Before that, the President arranged for one-on-one meetings with every member of the work team in order to discuss anticipated challenges and expectations with working from home, discuss helpful routines and structures and set up clear goals for the first month to aid the transition into working from home. The lack of personal interaction among the work team aggravated communication and collaboration processes and contributed to individual challenges regarding the physical, organizational and social work environment. During the spring semester, a gradual increase of exemptions to work in the office on the grounds of work environment issues in the home environment was made possible.

## 4.2 Faculty time

Kåren har förbättrat sina rutiner kring fakultetstid, vilket innebär tiden som studentombuden spenderar ute på fakulteterna. Detta har gjorts genom att veckovis komma ut med information om dessa tider för respektive fakultet via våra sociala medier. Att vara ute på våra kontor på fakulteterna så mycket som möjligt ska alltid vara viktigt och relevant, för att hålla närkontakt med våra studenter. Det är nästan omöjligt att etablera specifika tider när alla studentombuden kan vara på fakulteterna på grund av möten som dyker upp samt de olika individuella arbetsscheman de har. Dock är det viktigt att våra studenter hålls uppdaterade om dessa tider, men ännu viktigare att Kåren är närvarande på fakulteterna på de tider som annonserats. Kåren har under våren även haft fakultetstid digitalt på grund av covid-19.

## 4.3 Union house

The question of a new Union building has been urgent for the Union since a few years ago, as the lease for Amfitrite, the building where the Union is located, expires on 31 December 2021.

At the beginning of its mandate, the presidium conducted an independent study of Universitetsholmen and what opportunities there are for the Union to move to.

During the operational year 20/21, the Union has had continuous discussions and continued cooperation on the issue, both with the City of Malmö and MaU. The written document that describes what is desired by the Union in future suitable premises has been updated a few times during the year and has been used as a basis in the discussions with the city and the University. The board has also held a lively discussion with Festmesteriet's board concerning the future of the Student Pub in new premises.

Important factors and positions for the Union in these discussions have been to stay somewhere in the Universitetsholmen area, to have the opportunity to move all operations to the same premises or building, or at least close to each other, but also that the new premises will enable the Union's operations to grow and develop.

The University is planning to build where Amfitrite is currently located, but no decision has been taken yet. MaU is positive towards housing the Union in the new operational building, which is the best scenario for the Union to remain on Universitetsholmen and close to the students. However, the Union has found itself in a situation where temporary premises for the Union to move to are needed during the construction period. The Union must find some temporary solution as soon as possible.

## 4.4 Committees and working groups

### 4.4.1 Committee for intersectionality

One of the newly established internal committees for the operational year 20/21 has been the committee for intersectionality. The ombud for Education and society and the President has been part of this committee, where the former has had the overall responsibility. The meetings with the group have been based on discussing and looking more closely at inclusion, equality, and diversity and how it works within our current student population. The committee's main task has been to start a discussion on all these topics and initiate certain measures with the hope of improving MaU in all these aspects. The most important thing that the committee has strived for and will continue to work towards is strengthening the voices of those who are regularly underrepresented.

The committee has had regular meetings during the operational year and has focused on two main issues – an introductory text about the committee with the committee's goals and the start-up and a proposal for a project where you want to create an ally network for students at the University. The main idea of this project is to highlight the diversity of the student population at

Malmö university and create an inclusive and supportive environment for all students, regardless of background, language and identity.

#### 4.4.2 Committee for student engagement

The committee for student engagement entered its second year of existence. At the start of the year, the council had some ideas to rename the committee to the committee for student life, but the majority felt that the name student engagement covered the committee's purpose better.

The committee had about one meeting every month, between one and one and a half hours long. The committee grew from three members at the start of the operational year to six members at the end of it.

The committee did not inherit any specific tasks of the committee from the operational year before, but several members were part of the committee both this operational year and the last one. As such, some work was continued. The committee remained a platform for brainstorming all kinds of projects and ideas regarding student engagement. The "get engaged" webpage on the Student Union website was updated along with the committee's suggestion. The sections remained a topic of the committee, and at the end of the year, two sections were in the progress of being created. The Faculty Cup was discussed, but this event did not happen this operational year due to the pandemic. Several events in cooperation with the associations were discussed.

#### 4.4.3 Committee for mental health

The Union has been following student health-related questions on local, regional, and national levels. This year, this assignment was directly connected with the Covid-19 pandemic and its effects on students' mental health.

The Union also participated in a meeting with both local (Student Politiker Afton with City of Malmö) as well as regional (Region Skånes studentråd) politicians, where mental health was one of the focus questions. The purpose of those meetings was to bring politicians' attention to questions regarding student mental health and accessibility of mental health healthcare in Malmö and Skåne.

Additionally, the Committee for mental health prepared and executed a campaign called "Mental Health Fridays" on the Union's social media channel. Each week a picture or a movie related to mental health was published with short text shining light on more tips for students regarding improvement of their wellbeing.

#### 4.4.4 Working group the councils independence

The Student Union Malmö's operational plan 20/21 put the Union to work with the question of the council's independence: 'Formulate a strategy on how to increase the council's independence and consolidate its role as the Union's highest decision-making body.'

The Student Union Malmö's action plan 20/21 further clarified how to proceed with the question: 'Establish a working group for the work with the council's future independence'; 'Do external environmental monitoring on how other Union's councils work independently.'

The question of the council's independence has been relevant for many years back. A complex one, this question does not have one simple answer, and it includes more than one dimension. However, all dimensions of the issue are somewhat intertwined.

A working group was appointed accordingly at the beginning of the operational year, and it consisted of one board member and two regular council members.

The work within it has been done in the form of meetings, and an attempt to implement a new concept of a fika/mingle organized and led by council members.

Part of the issue with the council's independence concerns its composition and relation to the board. Today's board of the Union is part of the council. Currently, there are twenty nine (29) regular council members in the composition of the council. The number of board members is set to vary between nine (9) and eleven (11), and the board represents about a third of the council. Even with a composition of a smaller board, all boards throughout the years have identified that the board has too much power in the council. This power consists of having a voice that is too strong, which gives the board the possibility to bring up and drive its questions and execute decisions, which the council cannot influence in a very sure way. This can be seen as a serious structural problem that stands in the way of the council exercising its role as the highest decision-making body within the Union.

A change in the composition of the council and board, as well as how they relate to one another or are voted in, would imply a change in a lot of the Union's steering documents but, first and foremost - the constitution.

Another issue connected to the council's independence throughout the years has been the rather low engagement and participation of regular council members during the meetings. The Union boards have continuously strived to facilitate good discussions and well anchored decisions, always meaning to give the council the possibility to influence and determine the direction of the Union's work. However, it has often been that board members are the ones who actively bring up questions and decisions as well as actively discuss those issues and decisions during the meetings. In contrast, the regular council members have been rather passive in this regard. This can be seen as a sign of trust from the council towards the board since board members are working full time and are thought to be well-aware and better informed of all questions and issues within the University and Union. However, even if true, board members are not active students during their mandate and can often lack the proper student perspective since they are not where the education takes place.

A third dimension of the issue is the council's engagement outside of council meetings. Today, council members have been offered the possibility to participate in working groups and internal committees within the Union. However, the participation of regular council members in such has been rather low, resulting in board members being over-represented in those formations as well, bringing the issue back to the first one listed - the board's power and influence over the council's work.

The working group has submitted a detailed report on their work. This work needs to continue and is, therefore, part of the next operational plan.

#### **4.4.5 Working group revision of the constitution**

The Union board was tasked by the Council in the operational plan to revise the Union's Constitution, and this Council elected a working group to work with this task. The working group existed out of four board members and had a chairperson. Meetings were held once a month in the autumn, and the work sped up drastically in the spring, with five meetings in February and March. The working group involved the board and the Council in its work of revising the constitution through board meetings and Council meetings.

Many things were changed in the constitution, however, the working group did not plan to and indeed did not completely overhaul the constitution. Outdated terminology was updated, references to other Union documents were added, and unclarities were clarified or changed to the reality of how things actually work. Some of the changes are that if the voting for the Council elections results in a tie, the mandate firstly goes to the least-represented faculty. Another more

discussed change is that a board member can sit for a maximum of four uninterrupted terms of office. Student groups and sections were added to the constitution.

The Council voted through the revised constitution in its April meeting and now awaits a second voting through by the Council in the following operational year.

#### **4.5 Council (FUM)**

The Council met three times during the fall semester and four times during the spring semester. A new activity recommended by the previous board that was implemented this operational year was a kick-off for the council. Half of the council members at that point attended the whole day workshop, which led again to a relative imbalance of council members (7/14) and board members (9/11) taking part. The day was dedicated to team-building. Critical reflection of norm-critical perspectives and one's privileges and discussing expectations and visions for the Union's strategic work in the upcoming operational year.

Due to a significant amount of council members' dropping out due to difficulties balancing their studies, their private lives, and their engagement, the council started the fall semester without any alternates and a considerable amount of vacant ordinary positions. Those positions were partly successfully recruited via FORUM, but due to further successive dropouts and some council members being demoted from ordinaries to alternates, respectively excluded from the council, due to neglect of their responsibilities, in accordance with the new routines in the revised rules of procedure the year before, some ordinary positions remained vacant.

Students expressing their interest in joining the council after FORUM were voted into the council in by-elections on the council meetings in November and December.

This drawn-out recruitment process aggravated the proper introduction for the council members elected throughout the fall semester. It was also identified as a systematic shortcoming in the biannual operational revision. The revisors recognized potentials for improvement in terms of clearer and more transparent communication from the board towards the council to give the needed preconditions for every council member to have an equal insight into the Union's daily and strategic operations and hence to be able to proactively participate in discussions and make well-informed decisions.

Active measures to foster clearer support structures and routines based upon the recommendations in the biannual revision that were implemented during the spring semester included a methodological shift from describing the "what" of our work to explaining the aspects of "how and why" in the written reports submitted by the ombuds and the presidium to the Council. Furthermore, the outdated documents for the internal and general Code of Conduct and Consequence System were thoroughly revised and translated into English.

The feedback on crucial information missing or being perceived as unclear (e.g., language requirements, workloads, expectations towards the role of being an elected student representative) during the introduction into the council was already taken into account in the strategic communication and information to interested students before being elected into the council and board. Accordingly, the information meeting for candidates and the introductory FUM-School before the statutory council meeting were thoroughly revised.

Noteworthy valuable points addressed in the council during the operational year included discussions of revision of the constitution, conditions for student influence and improvements for semi-formal and formal student representation, the digital adaptation of teaching and examination, input into the suggestion for the upcoming year's operational plan and focus questions, and discussing the recommendations from the biannual revision.

Strategic decisions being made by the council worth mentioning include the adoption of the action plan 2020/2021, the establishment of working groups and committees, the establishment

of a slack workspace as an alternative communication platform for the council, the adoption of new steering documents (i.e., the steering document for sections, and the code of practice for operational auditors) and opinion documents (i.e., the opinion documents on camera usage in digital teaching and examination and on the course evaluation process).

The decisions prescribed by the constitution of freedom of liability of the board and approval of the operational report 2019/2020 were belated and taken in the February meeting. Due to incorporating an annual process cycle included in the code of practice for the Union's operational auditors that take these processes into account, more transparent conditions and structured routines for handling these matters are aspired.

The council brought forward three motions during the operational year. These consisted of one discussion point on the possibility of establishing a trade and industry committee within the Union and three decision points. Motions on the provision of single-use face masks and reusable textile face masks as Union merchandise were met by an answer from the board, including a request for amendment that suggested investigating the possibility of negotiating student discounts with on-demand customisation service providers instead of producing facemasks as branded Union merchandise. The council approved the request for amendment, and the task was delegated to a board member but has not yet yielded conclusive results. The motion on allowing associations to hold physical study social events was met by an answer from the board, including a request for amendment suggesting the possibility to allow for physician outdoor events with safety precautions, including a specific application process. The council approved the request for amendment.

This proactive meeting culture is crucial for the further development of the council's independence of the board and, as such, is deemed a strategic question that requires continued attention during the upcoming operational year.

The working groups and committees of the council report on their work in their respective paragraphs.

#### **4.6 Visibility and communication**

The Union's communication goal is to make Union's work visible to the students and other stakeholders, make a dialogue with our members, capture the students' opinions and reach out to and engage more students in the Union's activities and work.

The Union's communication must be given high priority, as it is our chance to reach out with our work and our main messages. To conduct anchored student representation, we must succeed with our goal of capturing the students' opinions. From a membership recruitment perspective, it is essential that both potential and existing members have full transparency in the Union's activities and also can influence this.

During the past operational year, the focus has been on developing existing communication channels and making our work visible by increasing the number of posts on Facebook and Instagram. Furthermore, working with two-way communication and creating discussions in our different channels has increased during the year. During the operational year 2019/2020, the Union focused on the following communication channels:

##### **4.6.1 Social media**

###### **Facebook**

The Student Union's Facebook page is one of our most important channels for spreading information about the Union's activities and sharing photos, videos, and other current events. Facebook is also an important point of contact with students, where they can ask questions and

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get quick answers via chat. At the time of writing, the Union's Facebook page has about 5,400 likes, increasing from 5,092 people last spring. Facebook is an important tool for conveying the Union's message, and we can gain a lot from taking advantage of the transparency Facebook offers our brand. The Union has decreased to help outside companies to share their information. Instead, they can share their posts on the Union's Facebook page as visitors or publish them in our four student groups representing the four faculties. This is because the Union has enough to share from ourselves, our associations, or sometimes departments from Malmö University, and partly because we want to be more consistent. However, the Union can share posts for a fee according to our document "Marketing through the Union."

A sharing policy has been developed to fall back on something concrete where there are clear directives about what we share and do not share.

Paid posts have been used for our Facebook posts, for only events, several times. This has been used to highlight special, larger events such as Music Pub and Union Election. At the time of writing, a total of SEK 960 has been spent on these eight ads, which resulted in 55 event responses and reached 17,312 individuals. Our communication on Facebook will consist of paid ads and posts to a greater extent in the future and the Union's Instagram. What determines whether a company post is visible is the interaction between people, so we need to get people to talk to each other in the Union's post even more. During the year, ways for interaction in the posts we share, such as "tag a friend in the post," have increased to create more discussion and interaction. It has not shown any major increases in our figures. The Union has Facebook events for all its activities that occur continuously during the operational year with the following statistics. Some consideration should be given to the fact that these events took place during the pandemic.

- Digital Music Pub: 35 replies (201 replies HT19 for the physical Music Pub)
- Soup Lunch: Hasn't been held in physical form but replaced with movies.
- Student Breakfast: Has been replaced digitally but with different formats.
- Coffee with the Union: Remade into three digital Q&As with 440/578/300 views.
- Digital Lunch quizzes: Around 100 views each with 199 as the highest number.

We have continuously live-streamed two different events: Lunch Quiz (8 times) and Coffee with the Union's Q&A (3 times). We can see that the number of participants has been relatively high for Coffee with the Union but slightly less on the Lunch Quiz. The basic idea for these two events has been to increase the interaction with the students, and it has been best shown at Coffee with the Union, where students have been able to join the stream and ask questions directly to us.

The Union can add all associations' events under its page on Facebook to increase visibility if desired. This is a good way to increase the visibility of our associations and is appreciated by them and has been done continuously during the year.

On average, unpaid everyday posts on the Student Union Malmö's Facebook page, such as the week's events, shares from various institutions on MaU, or our competitions, reach 400 people. However, there are higher peaks with a range between 1500 - 3500 people on more eventful posts concerning, for example, Election or Student City of the Year. Posts that reach the farthest are posts such as blog posts from the presidium, opinion posts where we collect thoughts from students, live streams, and events.

Facebook is an important channel for us to share both external and internal material in a simple way and where the opportunity is great to create discussion together with our target group.

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## Film

A continued clear trend on social media is an increased demand for moving material as these are catching the most attention. During the operational year 2020/2021, a record number of films were created. A couple of films temporarily replaced the Soup Lunch where we show how to make cheap dishes have been made and received well. Most films about the Union Election have also been made. At the central level, we have created a short film about how the Faculty of Education and Society works if students encounter problems, this was an initiative that came from student representatives. A short and timeless film about the Union's function was produced to quickly explain to people who are unaware of what we do.

Moving format is often more time-consuming to create but worth the work as it reaches more people and spreads information better than via images.

## Instagram

The Union's Instagram account functions as a complement to other social channels and is based on spontaneous and direct communication where we share snapshots. This makes the planning spontaneous and requires everyone in the working group to contribute with photos & videos from current events to be quickly posted on Instagram before they lose their actuality. Instagram has been prioritized during the operational year, and at the time of writing in May 2021, we have 1130 followers (from 911 followers in May 2020).

During the past operational year, the channel has grown naturally and gained an increased following. The function 'stories' is frequently used to post direct posts that are visible in 24 hours. All ombuds have used this during the year where spontaneous thoughts and reflections during events have taken place. Our associations' events are also shared into stories. To increase student engagement and provide a personal sharing, the strategy 'associations weeks on Instagram' has been developed to further help the channel grow. This is not something that has been used during the operational year 2020/2021 but can be a future solution for increased interaction on the Union's Instagram.

On the other hand, SUM – Student Union Magazine has had a takeover where they managed our account for 24 hours, which we should always offer to all our associations. This year, videos have been more prominent with features about Arrival Day, Union Election, digital soup lunches, saddle covers for students, and films about mental health. Furthermore, it is a format that should be used to an even greater extent where the most attractive formula is short and fast clips, preferably in the form of a music montage.

## Twitter

The student union's Twitter has great potential as a communication channel but is not fully utilized. Twitter is a good tool for participating in public debates and conveying the more political part of the Union. To have a more personal dialogue with students and other actors, Twitter should be used by the presidium. It was planned that a clear structure would be developed to facilitate the use of Twitter on an ongoing basis. However, this has not been prioritized as this year's presidium is not used to using Twitter and has not shown willingness to use it.

## The Union's website - [malmostudenter.se](http://malmostudenter.se)

The Union's website contains a lot of information that is not found anywhere else and therefore works as an important information base and channel. The technical responsibility has rested with the communicator. The focus has been on structuring and making the web more user-friendly during the year. A calendar solution has also been developed to reflect our associations and our

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events to be accessible to everyone. The student engagement committee has given the communicator feedback during the year, and this has resulted in, among other things, the pages for student engagement being made more easily accessible. In total, nearly the entire website is now available in English.

### **Canvas - The Union's course area**

Early in the autumn of 2019, the Union's page on Canvas was started up properly. Here, students can join and get direct information from us. Canvas is a concoction of our website, with short information about how to contact us, what we do and what is going on. At the time of writing, our Canvas has 812 (275 a year ago) students chosen to subscribe to our site. At the beginning of every semester, we receive a global post made by the Canvas manager at the University that reaches all students at MaU, encouraging them to subscribe to our channel.

The development potential for Canvas is great, and there are many interactive modules that we do not use at present. You can, for example, create discussion forums, quizzes, or information pages that can lead to various modules via links like a game. A workshop was held in connection with the kick-off in the autumn of 2020, where plans were developed around how we can let the associations in and use Canvas more dynamically. Work on this will continue next year, and concrete functions will be developed. What has been implemented over the past year is a calendar that all members see.

### **Other**

#### **Screens**

There are three digital screens in the Union house, two in Kølsvinet's entrance and reception and one in the study rooms, installed by Universitetsmedia (also the owner of Studieblocket). All screens have worked well and have given us increased visibility among our members who visit us. The screens are continuously updated in connection with new events and happenings.

#### **Student calendars**

Malmö University has let us in its Student Calendar, a digital event calendar on the website mau.se. Here we have the opportunity to submit posts about our various physical events. Unfortunately, there have not been a large number of events that have been physical since the function was released, and in the past year, this function has been untouched and somewhat forgotten. In the future, when the restrictions are eased, this will be used more frequently and can give us increased visibility at the University, which is highly valued.

## **4.6.2 Printed material**

### **Posters and flyers**

Previously, printed material in the form of posters and flyers has been used for marketing the Union's activities. A certain reduction has taken place in the production of posters as many of our activities are regularly recurring, and social media has instead been used to spread them. Posters have been produced for the larger events such as Union Election and the Toilet Paper, our physical newsletter. In addition, the pandemic has meant a further reduction as few students are on campus. The production of flyers has been non-existent, due to which it can mean littering around Malmö and few students on site. Surveys show that posters and flyers, particularly, are a difficult channel to reach out through. However, they still fulfill an important function by strengthening the Union's profile and highlighting our messages. Ordering timeless posters in larger formats and editions can be a good investment for the future and has been made for posters, for example, mental health. Smaller sizes A4 / A3 that our printer prints are often harder to see.

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### Survival guide

The survival guide contains useful information and tips for the first time as a student in Malmö. The guide turns out to be very popular, especially in English, but about 200-300 Swedish copies are still left at the time of writing, which is slightly more than there usually are. After the initial distribution of the guides at the start of the semester, the ombuds have issued survival guides to the students at the faculties. You can also pick up a copy in Kølsvinet. Printed in a total of 3800 copies (3000 pcs 2020 due to pandemic).

### Term appendix

Membit gets most of these to be sent out to students at the beginning of the semester to give them all the info they need before becoming members together with a member's letter.

The term appendix is a compressed version of the Survival Guide and useful information that can be good to read before the semester. At the time of writing, we have a very large number of appendices left over, and even if the number has been reduced by 3,000, there should be further reduced. Printed in a total of 12,000 copies (9,000 pcs 2020 due to pandemic).

### Other printing

A previous vice president and the communicator has designed a student representative handbook that is ready for printing if there is a budget and interest. So far, it has only been printed with us on regular paper.

Posters with tips for better mental health have been produced together with the committee for mental health. These are ordered in A2 format and set up on Campus.

New pins were ordered for the council members.

### Profile products

Before the start of the autumn term in 2020, an order was placed for pens and saddle covers. We have evaluated the interest in profile products and chosen to replace keychains with bottle openers, proving very popular. Another product to vary with would have been good to have. A new order for saddle protection that was distributed during the autumn was made in May 2020 and will last for two years. Our fair-trade tote bags have not been sold at all. However, we have given away a number as prizes.

Our profile products are awarded during various activities as a prize and have been much appreciated by the students.

### Email send-outs

The student union sends out a welcome email in connection with the start of the autumn semester to all new students at Malmö University. The email contains information with links to, among other things, the Survival Guide, the Union's website, and Insparken. The statistics from the mailing show a high opening frequency and many link clicks, which means that this is an important and effective communication channel. Regular newsletters have been planned via APSIS, our information system. Poor planning and sometimes too little information from our side, due to a constantly changing activity, have meant that they have been absent during the pandemic.

On the other hand, newsletters have been sent out to our members about candidacy, voting in the election, and nominating students for the Union Award. These have all had a good impact and a large opening frequency. As of May 2021, we have upgraded to a more advanced version of APSIS; Apsis One. The idea is that this will be used for more functions next year, such as automation of email send-outs, contact forms, and newsletters.

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#### 4.7 SUM - Student Union Magazine

The collaboration between the Union and SUM has worked well during the operational year, and the communicator has had continuous contact with SUM's editors-in-chief and good insight into SUM's work and finances, the communicator also handles the contact with SUM's advertising suppliers. Currently, there are agreements with Bring City Mail regarding the distribution of SUM and Elvins Grafiska regarding the printing of the magazine. Both collaborations have worked well.

The previous ad sales with Förbundsmedia expired at the end of 2019, and now all ad bookings go via the communicator. Two physical issues were published on two occasions during the year and printed in 1,000 copies each (from previously 4000). The magazine has been received better than the year before, but we have continued to find it difficult to distribute all magazines. In terms of content, there is a good balance between study political content and study social content.

The reduced advertising revenue that previously caused SUM to bleed a lot of money has meant that SUM is instead seen as an association and can therefore ask (äska) for money, which covers 1000 copies of 2 physical issues per year. The magazine now publishes two issues instead of four issues per year.

The editorial staff has also started up a website for SUM ([sum.malmostudenter.se](http://sum.malmostudenter.se)) and releases articles every week. This is to offer Malmö students articles even when the money is not enough for four issues.

Two new editors-in-chief have been recruited for next year.

During the year, SUM's editorial staff used the Instagram account [sum\\_magazine](https://www.instagram.com/sum_magazine) to reach out to our students and their Facebook page.

The communicator and the organization administrator continue with the policy document signed by the editor-in-chief when the assignment begins to clarify who is responsible for what and to have a clear profile for the magazine that suits both the Union and the readers. SUM is printed at most 64 pages, and FUM/Union has control over five pages of each SUM issue, this to make visible and broaden a student perspective in the student magazine. Three pages, the communicator is responsible for and the remaining FUM.

## § 5. Student union operation; area of responsibility

### 5.1 Housing

The Union has proactively worked with drawing attention to the severity of the lack of affordable housing and apartment layouts adequate for the heterogeneous student population in Malmö by bringing the topic into media, such as via a debate article in response to SFS's characterization of Malmö as "yellow" in their housing report 2020. The Union gave input to discourse on the housing situation from the student perspective in collaborations with other relevant actors, such as a webinar on young people's accommodation wishes together with the Swedish tenants' rights association (Hyresgästföreningen), the exhibition on housing in the researchers' gallery in the Orkanen library as well as engagement in the nation-wide network "Nej till marknadshyrer." Furthermore, the question was driven with relevant local politicians and civil servants by repeatedly taking up the topic during Student-Politician-Evenings and submitting written statements during the public consultation of the city planning office for the detailed plan on the Smörkajen area (DP5611-Smörkajen).

Furthermore, the Union supported students living in the MKB property Xantippa in a conflict with the landlord regarding the planned police training with search dogs on the premises.

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## 5.2 Music pub

There was no physical or digital music pub during the Fall semester. Due to corona restrictions, it was impossible to hold such an event in physical form, and due to scheduling issues, a digital music pub did not happen either.

In the Spring semester, the planning for a digital music pub started earlier, and a new source of musicians was sought out through the Facebook group "Musiker i Malmö." Around 15 interested bands and singer/songwriters contacted the Student Union to express their interest in playing for the digital music pub, which was at the same time part of the Union's 20 Year Celebration.

A camera team from Malmö University was hired to help make the process as smooth and professional as possible, and in the end, together with one band and one singer/songwriter, the Union produced a pre-recorded stream which was shown on the Union's YouTube channel on April 23rd, just in time for the finale of the 20 Year Celebration Week.

## 5.3 Election

In this year's election to the council, there were 26 candidates for 19 seats, which is an increase from last year, and it was very successful to recruit candidates in digital forms. To reach the students both during the candidacy and the election, a number of several short films were produced about why it is important to be active and run, and these were shown by both teachers during lectures and in the Union's social media. A live event with its panel where students could ask questions about the election was held during the candidacy period with over 600 screenings. The turnout for the election was unfortunately low but can still be seen as a good result during a pandemic when it has been difficult to reach out to the students and talk to them face to face, which is the best communication.

## 5.4 Soup lunch and student breakfast

At the beginning of the operational year, it was still possible to hold physical events; therefore, the Union's weekly Soup Lunch and monthly Student Breakfast were held as usual. As some associations distanced themselves from physical events nonetheless, the Union took over more soup lunch passes than usual, which led to only organising it every second week instead.

In the middle of the Fall semester, the government issued stricter corona regulations which led the Union to cancel all physical activities until further notice, including Soup Lunch and Student Breakfast.

The vice president for study social matters organized a brainstorming session with the whole team to develop digital substitutions for the cancelled activities. It was decided that soup lunches will be substituted by a by-weekly cooking instruction video posted on the Union's social media. A similar concept would replace the student breakfast but with the main focus on doing something affordable/sustainable/upcycling. The physical student breakfast usually happens on the Tuesday before CSN, when students are low on money.

The videos for both the lunch and breakfast substitution have been relatively successful and were appreciated by students. Some associations have occasionally taken over a digital soup lunch pass during the weeks that the Union did not offer it.

## 5.5 Cultural cooperation

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, no cultural cooperation's during the operational year have been conducted since establishments like theatres, the opera, and cinemas have been closed for most of the year.

### 5.6 Sofa project

The Sofa Project has not been very successful this year due to the ongoing pandemic. Not many students have applied for this temporary accommodation, and even fewer new hosts have contacted the Union. Once the corona regulations got stricter during the Fall semester, almost every available host from the Union's database that had been contacted informed the Union that they don't feel comfortable hosting any new students at this point. This resulted in the Union deciding to pause the Sofa Project until further notice.

### 5.7 Internationalisation

To further the knowledge on the topic of internationalisation, the TS ombud took part in the UHR internationalisation day, which was digital this year. Afterward, the information has been shared with the rest of the board, helping especially those who also sit in the faculty internationalisation councils.

During the year, the Agenda for Global Engagement was finalised. The Union, among others, was able to give their input for the content of the agenda. The agenda is supposed to strengthen and develop the University's work with internationalisation and will be in place until 2026.

The work with the International Office on the development of the Certificate of International Merits has been continued and this year saw the introduction of CIM at the faculty for Technology and Society, as well as even Odontology. To inform students about CIM, there were plans to have a workshop with student representatives at TS, however, this has been postponed to HT21. In the meantime, there has been contact with IO to further discuss possible events for students in connection with CIM.

### 5.8 Coffee with the Union (KmK)

KmK this operational year did not have a single edition in the faculty buildings of Orkanen, Almäna Sjukhuset, and Niagara due to the pandemic. Nonetheless, a KmK was held every month. Two physical editions were held in the autumn, of which the second one was fairly successful. Due to the restrictions, KmK then moved to be completely digital as the Union did not wish to promote in-person events. A call for students to answer yes-no questions stayed in Kølsvinet and was the only remaining physical part of KmK.

A few editions were held as online questionnaires for students to answer, but these did not prove to be very engaging. The setting then changed to a live stream on Facebook, where members of the board mixed the format of a Q&A and a panel discussion regarding students' questions and experiences. This type of digital KmK proved to be much more effective and attractive.

Examples of topics we asked students for their opinion about and informed about were "what do you wish you knew when you started studying," what to do after being admitted to studies, "what is the hardest thing about being a student," and "what would you want to change if you worked at the Union."

### 5.9 Introduction

Since both the International Introduction Week and Tjuvkik were held digitally during the Fall and Spring semesters, a substitution for the traditional "Mini-Fair," usually held in one of the university buildings, needed to be found to inform the new students about the Union and its many associations. Therefore a digital mini-fair was created via the website partywithmetoday.com.

The digital fair was held both during the Introduction in the fall and the Spring and was relatively successful during the International Introduction Week. The fairs during Tjuvkik, however, had very low attendance.

During the fall semester, a 40 minute long live stream introducing the Union and its activities was implemented as well, with the help of the Communications Department at MaU. The stream was entirely in English and was focused on the new international students. It was part of the International Introduction Week and was shown through a link in Canvas which only the new students could access. This stream had been cut and adjusted during the Spring semester to be reused.

During Tjувkik, one of the ombuds took part in their live stream to introduce the Union (both in the Fall and Spring) but compared to the International Introduction Week live stream, the screen time during Tjувkik was limited to 10 minutes only. This time was shared between the Union and the Generals promoting "Mini-Insparken."

### 5.10 Collaboration

Unfortunately, the work with collaborations has been difficult during the pandemic, as the University has been closed and no organizations or companies have been allowed to visit the University- The organization administrator has had some contacts with stakeholders during the year. Hopefully, these collaborations can be actualized during the next operational year.

### 5.11 Associations and Student Groups

The negative effects of the Covid-19 pandemic are especially visible in regards to student life and the Unions associations. In the middle of the fall semester, the Union decided to prohibit all physical events until further notice due to new government regulations in regards to the pandemic. Some associations tried to keep their usual activities running as much as possible by going digitally, while others shut down their entire operations for the time being. Unfortunately, most digital association events seemed unsuccessful, which led the associations to a bigger struggle - finding new active members and filling their vacant board positions.

During the spring semester, the Student Union Council decided to allow physical activities again if conducted outside and under strict regulations. To hold a physical outdoor event, the associations have to apply through an application form. As of today, only one association took advantage of this offer.

During the last Student Union Council Meeting of the operational year, the council decided to allow for a "Support Membership" that allows students graduating in the Spring '21 to continue holding a board position within their association if no active student can be found to fill the position.

Despite the associations struggling during the past semesters, Malmö Debating Society, a debate club founded during the fall semester, and Triple S, a former student group with its main focus on sustainability and sustainable business development, gained their association status this operational year.

This year a spike of interest in forming new student groups has occurred, with the Association Responsible meeting up with several students, creating a total of three new student groups.

### 5.12 Digitalisation

Digitalisation has been much more of a focus this year. The students have received a spot for a student representative in the Advisory Board for Digitalisation (URD), filled by the TS ombud. The same is the case with the steering group for mau.se, further increasing the student influence in areas that concern digitalisation.

In addition to these, the Union worked a lot with questions regarding distance learning and camera usage during exams. The TS ombud was part of the Working group for legally secure digital examination, ensuring the student's rights and point of view.

### 5.13 Student health

The Union's work regarding student health in the operational year 20/21 was mostly connected with the questions raised by the Covid-19 pandemic. One of the areas of work was participation in discussions with HS faculty regarding vaccinations for students participating in study-related activities in the healthcare sector. It was possible to ensure that those students receive vaccinations in the priority group together with the medical staff.

Additionally, the Union participated in two ANDT-network meetings regarding substance use and addictions organized by Student health services. Those meetings, scheduled once per semester, bring together both local and regional actors, and it is advised that the Union continue to participate in them in the future.

The Union also developed a project with Student health services where posters were created covering the information regarding student health and especially mental health on personal and University levels. It is recommended that next year the Union continues to work on this project to prepare the poster covering healthcare options on regional level.

### 5.14 Sections

Sections can be described as a type of association that focuses on students of a certain part of the University. The work regarding sections started where it was left off the year before, and the steering document for sections was brought to the Council for discussion in October and was voted through in the November Council meeting. Advice and suggestions from the Kick-off (Insparken) Generals were asked before the voting through of the document and afterward to establish a cooperation between sections and the Kick-off. The faculty ombuds were also involved in how to best proceed with created sections at their faculties. A web page for sections was added to the Union's website. Financial support from Sparbankstiftelsen was received to work with the project's goals, and further financing of sections was looked into. A section for the department of Criminology and a section for the Data Science educations are in the progress of being created.

### 5.15 Faculty Cup

The Faculty Cup is a project that aims to increase social engagement from students and build upon the culture created by the Kick-off, including the overalls. Associations are to create competitions that generate points for the students' respective faculty team, after which the team with the highest amount of points wins the Faculty Cup towards the end of the academic year.

The Faculty Cup outline document was revised, and a communication plan was created. A logo and a Facebook page for the Faculty Cup were also created, and the associations were invited to participate in the project. The project was also talked about with the Kick-off Generals. However, at this point, the Kick-off for the spring semester was cancelled due to the pandemic, as well as an event where the Faculty Cup was going to be promoted publicly for the first time. This meant that the Faculty Cup did not start in the spring term as planned, and its' start-up is an ongoing project.

### 5.16 Pedagogy

The digital transition has brought many new challenges for both teachers and students. Using digital solutions and platforms has become an integral part of education. This has meant demands for new knowledge and experience from both sides - students and employees.

The Union has promoted new and good digital solutions for digital pedagogy and ways of teaching, which is suitable for students but at the same time does not increase the teachers' workload immensely. A good example is the discussion basis that was produced on behalf of the

Advisory board for Education. This discussion basis has been intended to support both teachers and students in discussions about conditions and expectations in relation to digital learning in all individual educational environments.

The Union has had a network meeting together with CAKL ('Center for Academic Teaching'). This network meeting has been the start of a future collaboration that is important for both sides. CAKL has a special mission to work with higher education pedagogical issues in different ways, and the same applies to the Union, even though the assignments look very different. The meeting has also focused on the role of the representatives in the Teacher suggestion boards at the faculties. Among these representatives, there are also students, and it is extra challenging for students to assess the pedagogical skills and merits of different candidates. The board and CAKL have also begun to plan a future workshop on pedagogical issues, which is intended to be carried out during the next operational year.

The development of an internal guide for student representatives in the Teacher suggestion boards has also been an important part of the Union's work. This guide would support old and new student representatives on these boards by guiding them towards what is important to focus on and where to find information and support in such extensive and complex work.

### **5.17 Verksamhetsförlagd utbildning, VFU**

During the operational year, the student ombud of HS and LS have been responsible for the questions and development regarding the VFU at the University. In the middle of autumn 20, a survey was created and conducted focusing on VFU and internship at the faculties of HS and LS. There were 22 responses, but unfortunately, only one from students at LS. The questions focused on how the students experience their VFU/internship, what it was considered that there were opportunities for improvement, etc.

Specifically for the Faculty of Health and Society, the Covid-19 pandemic has meant that it has been necessary to monitor the VFU with a completely different set of questions in mind during the academic year 20/21. The epidemiological situation forced to implement some of the VFU elements digitally, but after some concerns were raised, all HS students got the chance to participate in VFU during the times they devoted to their programs. The HS ombud has been in constant contact with VFU coordinators, especially regarding nursing education, due to the rapid changes. It is important to add that the vaccination program in Skåne included students who completed their VFU in medicinal facilities in the same group as medical workers, which was a decisive factor for their safety and educational opportunities.

At the faculty for Education and Society, during this operational year, many questions have been received from anxious students and their safety in the implementation of their VFU. The LS ombud has had regular contact with WFU responsible for the faculty and responsible for education and the dean in more difficult discussions related to specific students and VFU. In summary, both ombuds have been very up to date and familiar with the quality work linked to VFU and internship to be able to create as good conditions for the students as possible.

## **§ 6. Student Union operation faculties**

### **6.1 Health and Society (HS)**

During operational year 20/21, the Union's work at the Faculty of Health and Society has shown uneven results, especially when it comes to student engagement. Overall, informal and semi-formal engagement is higher in some programs than others, with students participating in program councils but having little interest in Student Union activities. Regardless of this trend,

the engagement in the Student Union council has still increased since last year, which is hopefully a sign of rising knowledge and interest in the Union's work.

The ombud has been working with visibility for both the Union and herself by participating in program councils on both first and second cycle levels and by being available digitally for the students as much as possible. The perception is that many know how the ombud is and that the students, to a large extent, know to whom and where to go if they have problems. Two first Student councils at HS, conducted in HT20, brought in good results in engagement and resulted in two additional HS students taking vacant spots in the Student Union Council. Overall, this year's biggest achievement is the interest of HS students in the Student Union Council elections, which resulted in 5 students from the faculty being elected to this body. Since historically, the engagement in Student Union Council was low for HS students, this trend should be fostered by being present for the students and regularly reaching out with information and potential engagements to those students who previously have shown interest in the Union.

The faculty time at HS, done mostly digitally due to the covid-19 pandemic, has many areas for improvement since the engagement in this type of student-ombud contact during the operational year 20-21 was very low. The same issue could be seen when it comes to HS Student Council meetings conducted in VT21. The possible ways of approaching this question can be connected with a better advertisement of the faculty time schedule as well as when meetings will be held in person again, reducing the meeting at the Union house and other parts of the University to focus more and always to prioritize being at the faculty, which was suggested by the previous ombud.

The question about classroom visitation also needs to be addressed since this hasn't happened at HS due to the mostly digital education, except for the regular roll call for the start of the semester. At the beginning of the semester, the ombud participated in Tjuvkik and introduction for all the bachelor programs and master programs, either personally or by submitting video greetings with contact information.

The student errands at the faculty have been few but often very complex, and many of the errands have been going on for weeks and even months. Mainly, the complicated errands were connected with the issues concerning the change of examiner, problems with grades, and questions about problems with exams and mistreatment of students. In general, there is an area of improvement in the communication between teachers and students, which should be one of the Union's questions in the future. It is also advisable for the ombud to work closely with the HS Vice Dean for Education when dealing with student errands since this collaboration yielded many good results in operational year 20/21.

## 6.2 Education and society (LS)

During this operational year, the faculty of Education and Society has had a permanent ombud who was previously a student at the faculty. As the faculty did not have a proper ombud during the spring semester, the assignment had been delegated between the former board members. The handover included a lot of personal work and reding of documents to familiarize themselves with the work. During this operational year, the faculty and their management have been very happy for an ombud with a background at LS, and during this year, they have succeeded in securing and improving student influence.

During this year, there have been some changes at the faculty regarding the meeting structure and the composition of the groups, which has created a clearer structure and which members and student representatives will participate in different meetings. There were clear instructions about

meeting frequency, who will participate, and what the meeting has for content/assignments in the document that went out.

Another topic that has been discussed throughout the year has been the development and action plan to strengthen the course evaluation process at LS. This was discussed for the first time at the faculty's dialogue meeting during the spring semester 2020/21, which then showed that only course reports were prepared for only 30% of LS courses. The development and how this work went was evaluated at an extra workshop on 28<sup>th</sup> of November, with a focus on course evaluation processes and examples of results of this formed the basis for the feedback to UKÄ on the University's strengthened quality work. This report was made on March 20, 2021.

Another important workshop conducted during the autumn term was a workshop together with two student representatives, where the workshop was about conditions for the students' influence and commitment.

Once the University had switched to only digital learning due to Covid-19, with some exceptions and deviations for educations that required physical meetings in small groups, the ombud switched to having faculty Time entirely digitally via zoom. Although both the faculty time and the student councils have had very low absenteeism from students this year, the ombud has received some emails from students and many student errands. This indicates that the ombud was still visible even if there was not much physical time at the faculty's associated office. The faculty times have been advertised on the Union's social media throughout the operational year.

Besides doing faculty time, student councils, and handing out SUM, the ombud also had the responsibility to work with the quality work for VFU and have been a support in pedagogical questions together with one of the vice presidents.

### **6.3 Culture and Society (KS)**

The amount of student errands continued in similar amounts of the previous year. During certain times of the year, a noticeably larger amount of student errands of a certain type came in. Overall, there was a good spread during the year with no moments sticking out where there was an excessive amount of extra workload due to student errands. There were close to no treatment issues, and most errands related to administrative matters and grading. Many student errands were solved by giving the students in question advice and making their rights known to them.

A project to increase the connection between the KS ombud and the semi-formal student representatives has come to a stand-still due to course and program administrators being extremely slow in providing the contact information for said students. By the time the information is provided, the semester has already almost passed, and the information has lost its purpose. It is, however, key to continue working with creating closer connections to the semi-formal student representatives, and the project should not be seen as a lost cause.

At some freestanding courses at KS, there is no student influence. This is an issue that has been brought up for several years. The faculty has started to work on creating structures for student influence at the K3 department. The good examples of this are then to spread to the other departments. This has, however, not yet been done and is an issue for the KS ombud to continue bringing attention to.

KS has a long-standing issue that course reports are not uploaded to the external website. While the faculty now realizes these have to be uploaded to the external website, which is already an improvement, their priority still lies on starting to upload the course reports to Canvas. In

practice, this means that they are postponing the publicizing, of course reports to the external website, and as such, it is an issue that must remain on the agenda of the KS ombud.

Student influence at a formal level at the Department of Urban Studies remains very difficult, and students of the said department do not seem attracted to being formal student representatives. Student engagement at the departments of Global Political Studies and K3 remains stable but continues to almost solely come from English-speaking bachelor programs. For example, the sole bachelor program in English at K3 supplies nearly all of the students active at the Student Union of this department.

#### **6.4 Technology and Society (TS)**

During the beginning of the term, it was possible for the ombud to do classroom visitation in all programmes' first year courses to introduce the Student Union to the new students. All classroom visitations at TS were digital via Zoom. There have been additional classroom visitations in some programmes to promote the local student council meetings.

Faculty time, where students can drop in to talk to the ombud, has been continued throughout the year, first in person at the faculty, later in digital form. While still at the faculty itself, few students frequently dropped by. When shifting to digital faculty time, no one showed up anymore.

Student engagement was a main focus, especially since the year started without any representation of TS in the council. While two more students from TS could be elected into the council during Forum, an additional TS student was elected during a by-election, bringing the total number of TS students in the council to three. In addition to that, the ombud has been in close contact with program leaders to reach the students, especially those that are not regularly on campus. During early spring term, the ombud was able to get the contact information of all elected semi-formal student representatives at the faculty and establish contact with the students directly. This close contact proved successful, as the local student council meetings were well attended at TS.

After a discussion of the ombud with the vice dean, there will now be an education for semi-formal student representatives at the faculty at least once a term. This shall further establish a well-functioning student influence at the faculty. The first education happened in early March.

In regards to student errands, most of them seem to have a connection to the ongoing pandemic and resulting distance learning. Errands came from both departments and both Bachelor and Master students.

### **§ 7. External collaboration**

#### **7.1 Student City Malmö**

Student Union Malmö has been an active member of the steering group "Student City Malmö." In the group, there are students represented through Student Union Malmö and Odontological Student Union, representatives from Malmö University, and the city of Malmö. The student coordinator acts as the convener.

In terms of representatives, the group's composition has changed throughout the operational year due to a transition of boards on behalf of the Odontological Student Union Malmö and a reallocation of the student coordinator's position from the community planning department to the department of marketing and attractivity.

During the operational year, the established action plan was followed up and concretised. Building upon the previous years' work, the newly established structures, and routines were

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consolidated, leading to the meetings between the Student Union Malmö, the Odontological Student Union Malmö, and the student coordinator ("studentforum") to become a regularly re-occurring discussion platform. This collaboration proved to be especially relevant during the intensification of the corona-related restrictions and enabled quick communication and crises meetings with relevant actors, such as the city libraries. Current work involves discussing whether and how to include the Doctoral Student Union Malmö into the cooperation, which is a question Student Union Malmö has been raising since the beginning of the mandate.

Another project from the previous year that came into fruition was the establishment of the Student-Politicians-Evening (Student-Politiker-Afton, SPA) as a recurring platform to discuss students' needs and perspectives with municipal politicians and civil servants. During the operational year, 3 SPAs were held - one physical and two digital with topics of consolidation of discussion fora for students and politicians, campus development, housing, mental health, transition into the labour market, and the pandemic's effects on students' situation at large. The ongoing work involves the establishment of a collaboration contract for the SPA.

Another new event format stemming from the steering group's network is the Future City Malmö workshops, where students get a platform to discuss their needs and wishes for future city planning in inner Malmö with relevant actors in the private and public sector. One such workshop was held physically in the Union house at the beginning of October. A second workshop, complementary to the first one with an additional focus on the Southern campus nodes, was initially planned for December but had to be postponed repeatedly and aspired to occur in June.

The steering group felt confident to apply for the SFS Award "Student City of the Year 2021/22" based on the previous work. The Unions were a proactive driving factor during the application process, coordinated by the student coordinator. Malmö was awarded the title as successor to Borås in April. This implies hosting SFSFUM in Malmö during spring 2022.

## 7.2 SFS

During the operational year, the Union has participated in six SFS members' meetings.

Most points that were supposed to be processed during the SFSFUM meeting during the spring semester 2020 were postponed into fall 2021 for an extraordinary SFSFUM held in a hybrid format. The President represented the delegation from Student Union Malmö in Stockholm, while the rest of the delegation participated digitally from Malmö. Student Union Malmö submitted five interpellations and six motions, of which one was approved.

The ordinary SFSFUM meeting in the spring semester of 2021 was held entirely digitally. Due to recruitment difficulties related to decreased outreach and visibility, this year's delegation consisted solely of board members. Student Union Malmö submitted three interpellations and one motion, which was withdrawn after the board's answer.

As an activity for increased members' coordination, SFS established networks for education monitoring and work environment ombuds. The Union was represented in both networks and actively participated during several meetings throughout the operational year.

## 7.3 Other Student Unions

Student Union Malmö, the Odontological Student Union Malmö, and the doctoral Student Union Malmö signed a collaboration agreement at the end of the previous academic year. Student Union Malmö and the Odontological Student Union intensified their exchange due to the joint work on the Student City of the Year application.

Due to diverging transition times of the respective Union's boards, it has been hard to schedule a time for a network meeting, which was eventually held at the end of March. To avoid repeated

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scheduling issues, it is planned to book a date for a network meeting at the beginning of the fall semester during the end of the spring semester.

The Unions collaborated on a joint submission to the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) thematic evaluation on widened recruitment, with the main responsibility and coordinating role lying on Student Union Malmö.

Moreover, following the dedicated work on the matter in the previous year, the cooperation between the Student Unions of the South (Studentkårer Syd - SKS) was renewed in September. Studentkårer Syd is a cooperation between the student unions who are part of the universities in Lärosäten Syd. The coordinating role within the network lies with LUS, with Student Union Malmö having the vice-coordinating role. Despite renewing the cooperation with much enthusiasm and aspirations during the fall semester and holding shared presentations within the Lärosäten Syd meetings, the cooperation ceased during the spring semester 2021, and outstanding tasks, such as the revision of the manifesto, was halted for an unforeseeable time.

After being put on halt due to Corona, Region Skånes Studentråd continued its operations during the fall semester 2020. Student Union Malmö took a driving role in the first meeting, and, based on previous discussions at the SPAs, the topic of students' mental health on the agenda led to a thematic meeting on the matter with relevant regional politicians in April.