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# Strategy 2023–2027

This is an unofficial translation of the document *Strategia 2023–2027*, originally published in Finnish by the Student Union of the University of Vaasa. This document is for informational purposes to international students. Translated by Communications Specialist Aino Hyyryläinen in spring 2026.



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## Introduction

The strategy for the Student Union consists of our vision, mission, values, and projects, which include our goals for the period of this strategy and the actions required to reach those goals. Additionally, there is a description of the special characteristics of our operational environment, as well as current challenges.

In our vision, we describe the ideal state that we want to reach as a Student Union in ten years. Our mission tells us why we strive for our common goals every day. Values intersect with all our operations and are the foundation on which our operations stand.

Our strategy tells us how we can reach the vision we have set. The strategy strengthens our competitive advantage and helps us cherish the statutory obligations and educational role, which together form the foundation for the entire student movement. Strategic thinking is a daily part of our operations, and it is the most important tool for our Representative Council when managing the Executive Board. Our strategy period is four years, but the strategy may be renewed earlier based on the currency of its content.

Projects strive towards our joint goal, our vision. We begin each project with defining its objective that describes the ideal goal in ten years. Then we define the goals for the current strategy period and list the concrete actions to reach them. These are the actions that we look at on an annual basis. Annually, our Executive Board creates an Action Plan that is based on the strategy.

Because trends affect our operational environment, we aim to concretely demonstrate the factors independent of the Student Union that will have significant impact on the university community in Vaasa and the daily life of higher education students. Thus, this strategy requires that actors in the Student Union observe the dominant trends and keep up with the changes. Describing these trends also provides background to the context of our operations at the moment of creating this strategy. This will help future readers understand the document.



## Vision – Where are we in 2033?

### **Vaasa is home to the happiest students in the world.**

Our Student Union empowers its members, the organizations within its scope, and student culture. Our community is tight-knit, diverse, and safe for all. We are in seamless cooperation with the University, the city, and the surrounding society all the while maintaining our strength and independence. We bravely pioneer both in the local and national student community. Our Student Union is a respected advocate and sought-after partner in our home town, where VYY members can dwell, live, and thrive.

## Mission – Why do we exist?

### **From students to students**

We exist for our members. We promote the position, rights, and benefits of our members both locally and nationally. We form a community and produce beneficial and essential services for our members. We support our members through the different stages of studies and life. We cherish the student culture in Vaasa, and it is known for its diversity and community.

## Values – What guides our operations?

### **Community**

We do things together. We acknowledge our entire community in our operations and cherish a sense of community as our strongest asset. We invest in an interdisciplinary and diverse community and maintain an open conversation with the University and our other stakeholders. In our equal community, we respect diversity, being interdisciplinary, and the right of everyone to participate in the student life in Vaasa as they want. We encourage our stakeholders to do the same.

### **Responsibility**

We take responsibility for our actions and respect our shared resources so they may benefit many generations of students to come. We manage our finances responsibly. We support the wellbeing and safety of our members. We take responsibility for the ethical and ecological impact of our actions and promote the actualization of the principles of sustainable development in our university community.



## Equality

We respect the diversity of our community and acknowledge it in all our operations. We invest in the accessibility of our activities and in making diverse voices heard in our community. In our Student Union, everyone is free to be themselves and participate in a way that best suits them.

## Projects

### A healthy Student Union

#### Our goals for 2033

Every one of our members feels that they belong in our community and that they are treated equally. All our members are heard and respected as they are. No one is left alone.

#### Our goals for the strategy period

- Our student culture is respectful and safe for all. Equal practices have established themselves as a natural part of our student culture. Our Student Union is a significant pillar and pioneer in the changing operational environment.
- Our Student Union supports and enables the all-round wellbeing and fulfilling student life of our members in a changing campus environment. Our members receive high-quality support for their wellbeing and studies.
- Our university community understands the diverse backgrounds, starting points, and needs of our students, and they are acknowledged in studies and student life.
- The staff and volunteers in our Student Union are well. Work is meaningful and it causes only reasonable strain.
- Help is always available to students regarding their study life and mental health. Students have access to preventative care for both mental and physical health. Our members have accessible, versatile opportunities for affordable physical activity.
- Our diverse, high-quality events offer everyone an accessible opportunity to meet people from other fields.

#### Our actions

- We critically examine our own operations and the customs and traditions in our community. We actively update our guidelines and models, so that the members and organizations in our community can commit to promoting a student culture that aligns with our goals.



- We invest in acknowledging our members in various stages of life so that all our members have the opportunity to integrate into our community and receive a high-quality education. We train and guide the organizations within our scope to recognize our diverse and possibly regionally fragmented membership base.
- We ensure a smooth daily life for students through the entire campus development project. With our advocacy and actions, we ensure that our members and organizations get the best possible campus to succeed and thrive in. We investigate the effects of the renewed campus on student life even after the renovations are complete.
- We ensure the continuity of sport services. We influence the availability of student support services and where need be, create our own low-threshold support services.
- We develop the selection and concepts of events related to physical activity and wellbeing to make them a natural part of our event selection. We raise the profile of our sport and wellbeing events and encourage organizations within VYY to invest in events that support wellbeing.

## **An attractive, diverse membership**

### **Our goals for 2033**

Students consider the Student Union membership beneficial and valuable, and our membership fees do not strain students' subsistence. Students want to join the Student Union, and if automatic membership were discontinued, our basic operations would not be threatened. The resources for our advocacy are secure, and our sources of income are stable and versatile.

### **Our goals for the strategy period**

- We manage our finances in a sustainable and visionary manner, and we lower our membership fee.
- The price of university sport services is either partly or entirely tied to Student Union membership. Our members can use sport services without separate cost or at a discounted rate.
- Our Student Union recognizes the effects that the possible discontinuation of automatic membership would have on our operations and finances.
- Our income from events remains stable, and we create other sources of income like corporate relations and other member services.
- We organize the tutoring for all students at the University of Vaasa. The service agreement covers all resources needed to organize tutoring.
- Our advocacy work is visible, and students know how and what we advocate for.



## Our actions

- We create central goals for our service design and strengthen the resources to reach them.
- We lessen the financial load from VYY Holding Oy in a manner that is sustainable and supportive of our Student Union.
- Our corporate relations are long-term, secure sources of income. The governance of our holdings strives to become more stable and profitable.
- We invest in developing and communicating our member benefits and services.
- We broaden the service agreement with the University to cover tutoring for both degree and exchange students.
- We loudly and visibly defend tuition-free education and investments in student subsistence.

## A strong democracy

### Our goals for 2033

Every Student Union member understands how decisions are made in the Student Union and wants to make their own voice heard in their community. Over a half of our members vote in the Representative Council elections, and student politics within the Student Union are valued.

### Our goals for the strategy period

- Everyone knows the organizational structure of the Student Union, and dialogue is seamless between the Representative Council, operative bodies, and members.
- Voluntary tasks in the Student Union are seen as valuable and meaningful.
- The processes to elect people are democratic, and members know how Student Union actors are selected and how to stand as candidate.

## Our actions

- We invest in showing the different parts of our operations in our communications. We support and encourage organizations to found and maintain student media, so our members have access to interesting, current media content.
- The Representative Council receives thorough training about the operations of the Student Union and the different administrative bodies. Training is organized throughout the Council's term.
- We train and guide actors and encourage sharing skills between organizations. The Student Union encourages sharing knowledge across organizational borders and working together.



- The operations of our administration student representatives are developed to become a more enticing and natural part of the Student Union's advocacy work. We ensure that administration student representatives receive sufficient incentives.
- We develop a culture that thanks people for their work in the Student Union. We show our appreciation to each other's work through, for example, rewards.
- We create transparent practices for appointing the Executive Board of the Student Union. We create a set of guidelines for the Formateur and Representative Council to follow throughout the Board negotiations.
- The Representative Council plays a more active role in managing the Student Union's operative actions. The Representative Council is an active part of the strategic planning of the Student Union's operations and defining the policies of the Student Union.
- To establish our operations, we will create a document that describes our continuous activities. This document will define the schedule and process for updating the different documents that guide the Student Union's operations.

## Trends in our operational environment

**National higher education policy** is in a perpetual state of change. In 2020, the admittance numbers of higher education institutions were significantly increased, but funding has not increased at a similar rate. Additionally, tuition fees for higher education have come up in public conversation. Because of this, the focus of VYY's advocacy is affected by the limited human resources of the University of Vaasa. This will lead to the possible decline of support service accessibility and quality of education. In national advocacy, we will invest in securing free education.

In the next decade, **the strategic focus of the University of Vaasa** will strive for a more international university that prioritizes research. A more international University means a more international Student Union, which will possibly pressure VYY and the organizations within VYY to become more bilingual. Prioritizing research will create more pressure for VYY to advocate for students in a tripartite university community and to support more students aiming for the academic world.

**The conversation surrounding automatic membership** will impact the atmosphere within and towards student unions. Political turbulence aims to question the benefits of student unions. VYY must act from a student-friendly standpoint, and all actions must be based on creating value for members. VYY must make significant preliminary decisions to ensure that the Student Union remains financially stable in the future.

**Redefining student life** after the Covid19 pandemic is strongly present in the Student Union. An entire generation of students were sheltering in place, which has broken existing practices and traditions that are now being recreated. The digital

**The Student Union of the University of Vaasa**  
Est. 1968.



leap in our society has permanently changed studying, and online studies and hybrid student life are the new norm. The work that VYY does for the sense of community will restore, fix, and create traditions in VYY's own activities, and we will aid organizations within VYY to do the same.

The importance of the campus is also determined by **the campus environment** in Palosaari, which is undergoing major changes at the start of the strategy period. VYY's advocacy will emphasize the students' right to a functional, flexible, and high-quality education, and our sense of community must include those members who are not primarily on-site in Vaasa.