

OYY: Now is the time to emphasize the quality of education and the wellbeing of the university community!

In the University of Oulu, planning and budgeting for the year 2019 is going on intensely. Preliminary plans and ideas, ones concerning education in particular, were worked on as early as in spring in the professor forum and the joint workshop between the education management group and the education council. The Student Union would like to thank the parties involved for the working method, which was participatory, took different perspectives into account, and which involved student representatives all the way from the beginning of the process.

The Student Union of the University of Oulu considers that in the year 2019 it is time to emphasize education and the wellbeing of the university community. During the current strategy season (2016-2020), the University of Oulu has emphasized research, and thus solidified its status as an international research university. Investing in education must not remain as something only mentioned in ceremonial speeches, but instead it should be visible in the faculties' budgets and as an increase in strategic funding for education. High-quality education and functioning support services are not only something that can be used in marketing, but also an investment that produces experts and future researchers for the society. Sufficient resources ensure that activities do not consist of surviving a day after another, but contain enough time for true development.

The Student Union of the University of Oulu considers that in addition to the financial emphasis on education, the development of the university should be focused on student-centered learning, improving the quality of education and the participation of international students and staff, developing career counseling, and on projects that support the wellbeing and physical training of the university community, without forgetting the objectives of continuous learning.

The Student Union of the University of Oulu would like to remind everyone that student feedback, such as the results of the ISB-survey, do not present a very flattering image of the quality of education and the pedagogical expertise of the teaching staff. Mandatory university pedagogics and making it possible for the teaching staff to take part in pedagogical studies would be clear signals that our university considers education and teaching to be of utmost importance. Studies suggest that the completion of university pedagogical studies is worth it: pedagogical competence improves the teacher's wellbeing and ability to work, and also reduces stress. The teacher's improved ability to work then reflects on students' learning. The students' learning improves and their studies become smoother as teaching methods used in courses become more versatile and of higher quality.

The Student Union of the University of Oulu also calls for equal opportunities for participation. An international science community requires equal opportunities to participate in official decision making, or otherwise the internationality is only partially realized. The Student Union challenges all faculties to produce bilingual communications and to make it

possible for international students and staff to participate in the faculties' events and administrative bodies with the help of translators, for example. If the Student Union can make it possible for international students to participate in student council meetings, trainings arranged by the student union and different committees and sections, we believe that every faculty can do it as well.

In addition to the aforementioned matters, the quality and accessibility of career counseling services has become one of the areas of development in the University of Oulu. According to student feedback, career counseling services are either not identified at all or their accessibility is considered very low. The Student Union supports the resources allocated to the planning of career counseling services, but also considers that the resources are only sufficient to develop and coordinate the services. The idea that the services in question would be able to serve all students in eight different faculties cannot be considered realistic. The OYY encourages all faculties to consider what kind of career counseling services can be found among their own services and with what kind of resources the services are implemented.

As the last focus area of development the Student Union of the University of Oulu would like to bring more attention to measures that support the university community's wellbeing and physical training. The Student Union is very concerned about test results, according to which over a half of university students spend more than ten hours a day sitting down. Meanwhile, the use of university sports services has decreased and the prices have increased. The Student Union requires concrete investments in the development and marketing of university sports services, and particularly in ways that reach those students who do not get a lot of physical exercise. Additionally, measures that reduce sitting and support cycling are needed. Sitting can be reduced, for example, with Bottom up-campaigns, with standing and electric desks, and by adding new apparatuses to the campus that encourage physical activity.

The Student Union of the University of Oulu wants to encourage faculties to continue planning and budgeting with participatory working methods. Group work and discussions in administrative bodies promote open conversation customs and allow all representatives to get their voices heard. Finally, the Student Union would like to remind everyone that the best business cards for a communal, multidisciplinary and internationally renowned university are a satisfied student and a healthy, capable staff member.

In Oulu, the 20th of September, 2018.

Kalle Parviainen
Chair of the Board
The Student Union of the University of Oulu

Aino-Kaisa Manninen
Secretary General
The Student Union of the University of Oulu