

Candidate for President of VMU SC
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2021–2022
Operational guidelines

VMU students are facing increasing tensions due to poor social care, poor living and study conditions, and a closed and inefficient model of the Student Representative Council prevents them from engaging in student self-government both inside and outside the university. For these reasons, whole groups of students cannot enjoy their academic results or take a cultural or political initiative. According to the powers granted by the VMU SC Articles, the President should address these issues in 2021–2022.

First part

Towards better studies

1. New buildings of VMU appear every year. However, they are not intended for its community. Shiny buildings attract new students, who are increasingly seen as baskets of money rather than the foundation of the university community.

The Student Representative Council must strive for VMU to invest in the renovation of dormitories that everyone will be available to get a place in a dormitory, and to make their prices affordable for the most vulnerable students. In addition, there must be convenient public transport between dormitories and study places. Therefore, the Student Representative Council must actively cooperate with the city government.

2. The university administration is lightly tossing money for unsustainable support to cover the freshman Lithuanian Student Card fee, and private catering establishments operating on university premises fail to provide quality community care.

Therefore, the VMU SC should seek to direct the university's funds to more efficient student care and complete the VMU public canteen project. The non-profit department of the university would provide affordable food for the members of the VMU community and create a living communication space, which will be especially important in returning to a routine after a pandemic.

3. The quality of our studies cannot be guaranteed by overworked academic and non-academic staff working today in particularly poor working conditions - employees are hired for short-term contracts, sometimes lasting not even a semester, and not receiving adequate pay for their work.

The Student Representative Council must support the VMU employees' trade union and strive to prevent short-term employment contracts. Due to the decreasing teaching load, employees should be compensated with a salary for research activities, and salary rates should be raised.

4. Not only our lecturers and other university staff, but also students work in poor conditions. Many of them are forced to work due to poor living conditions and therefore pay less attention not only to their studies but also to their cultural and political activities.

Therefore, VMU SC must provide knowledge to working students on how to defend their interests in the workplace and improve working conditions. In the long run, through the Lithuanian Students' Union, the Student Representative Council must strive for even better conditions for state-supported loans and paid compulsory internships for students.

Second part

Democratic and independent student self-government

5. VMU SC claims to represent the interests of all university students. However, not all students belong to it, and too few all VMU students give mandates to the Student Parliament. The narrow circle of interests earned the Student Representative Council a deep distrust and a long-standing desire to have nothing to do with student self-government.

The Student Representative Council within the framework of university and national policy must strive for every VMU student, without exception, to have the rights and responsibilities of a member of self-government, which will strengthen the self-government's independence and accountability to students.

6. The current President of the Student Representative Council was elected by the votes of 25 Student Parliament members. This electoral system does not select the best candidate for the position and does not encourage the President to be accountable to all students.

The Student Representative Council must abandon the presidential election in the Student Parliament and will pass this decision on to all students in the general, secret and democratic presidential election of VMU SC.

7. On behalf of the students, the Student Representative Council distributes the money students paid for Lithuanian Student Card. However, the budget of the current closed and self-serving VMU SC is not used for the benefit of students. Why does the Student Representative Council need a budget surplus of 13 thousand euros? Meanwhile, VMU students bring only 18 percent of the VMU SC income, which makes it unaccountable and independent of them.

All students must become partners in the finance of the Student Representative Council. On the basis of universal self-government, VMU SC could collect a solidarity toll. The low semester contribution of each student would allow VMU SC to fund student clubs' activities independently of the university administration, provide more efficient and comprehensive social services, and ensure that VMU SC has a small but professional team of executives.

Third part

Student in National Politics

8. Due to the lack of ideas, organizational experience, student policy at the national level seems deplorable. The Lithuanian Students' Union knows that despite its laziness to take action to protect students' interests, will still receive funding through the Lithuanian Student Card.

Therefore, the system of Lithuanian Student Card administration and Lithuanian Students' Union financing needs to be changed. VMU students must have the right to choose whether they want to finance inefficient activities that do not meet the interests of the union. Lithuanian Student Card must be produced within the Government or the university itself. After all, the Lithuanian Students' Union must be funded by a decision of the Student Parliament. This will ensure that the union truly represents and is accountable to students.

9. Every year, the education communities protest against the Government's deplorable policy towards them. The fact is that they need more funding. So far, however, VMU SC has not supported those on whom their well-being depends most.

That needs to change. Students must actively support the demands of the higher education and education communities and support their actions not only through participation but also financially. Students come from the secondary education system, and some of them will become teachers or lecturers in the future. Solidarity between these groups is natural and especially important.

10. Too often, the Lithuanian Student's Union and VMU SC respond only orally to national policy events. The inability and unwillingness of organizations to shape national higher education policy leaves the voice of students inaudible.

Therefore, VMU SC must play a more active role in national politics during its membership in the Lithuanian Student's Union. First of all, make corrections to the Law on Science and Studies to reform student self-government. Secondly, to support and work with those political forces that will ensure better conditions for student loans and better working conditions for higher education workers, as well as increase funding for higher education.