



THE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

POLITICAL PARTIES AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS POLICY

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TABLE OF CONTENT

1 BACKGROUND	69
2 PURPOSE	69
3 POLITICAL PARTIES AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS	69
RELATIONSHIP TO SASSE	69
CRITERIA	69
CONTROL	70
COMMUNICATION	70
PREMISES	70
4 POTENTIAL ISSUES	71
4.1 DIVISIONS BETWEEN STUDENTS	71
Solution	71
4.2 INFORMATION OVERFLOW	71
Solution	71
4.3 ORGANISATIONS WITH QUESTIONABLE AGENDAS	71
Solution	71

1. BACKGROUND

The first paragraph of the SASSE Statutes states:

“SASSE shall be a non-religious and non-partisan organisation for students enrolled at SSE with the purpose of looking over their joint interests”

This kind of paragraph exists in almost all non-profit organisations in Sweden and has been a part of the SASSE Statutes since the organisation was founded. Politics in general, though, is something of interest to almost all students at SSE.

2. PURPOSE

The extent of political debate at SSE has always varied, with much more during election years and less in between. Many political parties have been more or less active at SSE during the years and SASSE has taken different stances towards these activities. The purpose of the following policy is to create a way for political and religious dialogue to be raised at SSE – with a focus on creating student benefit for those interested in these questions, and without damaging the association or its members.

3. POLITICAL PARTIES AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS

3.1 RELATIONSHIP TO SASSE

The organisations are not, and cannot become associations or organisations within the Student Association. In other words, the organisations are totally separated from the SASSE.

3.2 CRITERIA

This document applies to organisations meeting the following criteria:

- a) Student organisations representing a political party or religious group that are made up of mostly SSE students
- b) The organisation represents the party's or communion's branch at SSE specifically.

If the political organisation or religious group does not meet the criteria, none of the benefits mentioned below will be applicable. The activities approved by this document are limited to those that create member benefits. This includes lectures, debates, workshops and discussions. Events with the purpose of rallying votes are not allowed.

During the first 3 weeks of the academic year, and in contact with newly admitted students, no communication or activities are allowed.

3.3 CONTROL

The SASSE Board is responsible for the contact with the organisations and must approve of all activities. The decision of approval shall be made according to this policy as well as other factors that the SASSE Board deems relevant (e.g. past behavior of the organisation, risk for conflicts or discrimination etc).

It is essential that this policy is followed and that the governing bodies of SASSE are aware of everything the organisations are doing at SSE. It is the responsibility of the SASSE Board to make sure that this policy is followed and that SASSE remains neutral. It is also the board's responsibility to make sure there is not an information overflow from these activities and that they never compete with the regular activities organised by SASSE.

A member of the SASSE Board, as a representative of SASSE and its statutes, should abstain from publicly expressing support or disdain regarding a political party or organisation during the concerned events.

In an effort to keep the SASSE elections neutral to party politics, the organisations concerned will lose the privileges enabled by this policy if they support any candidate.

3.4 COMMUNICATION

The party organisations and religious groups can use the following of SASSE's communication channels for free to market their activities:

- a) SASSE Members
- b) Posters
- c) The SASSE Website (sasse.se)

The material must be approved by a member of the SASSE Board before being published. All events that are arranged and open to all students must follow regular booking procedures and be published on the SASSE web portal for signup.

In all communication there must be a disclaimer stating that the organisation is not a part of SASSE.

The organisations cannot use the SASSE logo, neither are they allowed to promote themselves graphically (nor any other way) as to look like a part of the Student Association.

3.5 PREMISES

The party organisations are allowed to use premises in the same way as any project or association in the Student Association, given that the event is approved by the SASSE Board no later than two weeks before the event is supposed to be held. If uncertainties arise concerning the security and arrangement of the event, the Vice President shall contact the Premises Administrator and Head of External Relations at SSE, in order to achieve approval of the usage of the premises. SSE has the right to confer about the decision for two days maximum before coming to a decision whether the event can be held at the SSE premises or not. In extraordinary situations, SSE may confer for a maximum of four days before coming to a decision.

The decision that SSE decides upon shall be communicated by the Vice President to the relevant parties in the situation as soon as possible.

4. POTENTIAL ISSUES

4.1 DIVISIONS BETWEEN STUDENTS

This policy will increase the exposure to party politics that SSE Students get. There is a risk that SSE students will feel obliged to pick a side, and that this will create division between students where the mission of good camaraderie within the association can be negatively affected because the difference in political opinions, or that SASSE will be affected because people will not be voting for a candidate in a SASSE Election that have different political opinions.

Solution

It is very hard to predict if this will actually become a problem. At many other schools where political debate is common it isn't, but at the same time SSE Students could be different. It is important to note however, that to attend lectures hosted by an organisation, students will not be forced to become a member of the organisation. If it becomes evident that this policy destroys more benefit than it creates, it should be revoked.

4.2 INFORMATION OVERFLOW

There is a risk that the parties will compete to get the students' attention and that they will do this more and more aggressively creating an information overflow.

Solution

As long as SASSE is aware of this problem, and the SASSE Board approves of all activities beforehand this should not happen.

4.3 ORGANISATIONS WITH CONTROVERSIAL AGENDAS

If an organisation with a controversial agenda that is in conflict with the values of SASSE is interested in arranging an event it could become problematic to reject the organisation as it could be considered a violation of the "non-partisan" aspect of the SASSE Statutes.

Solution

As long as there is freedom of speech in Sweden and the activity creates student benefit, this policy allows for organisation to be present at SASSE no matter the agenda. However, if the SASSE Board considers the event to be harmful to SASSE as a whole, they have the authority to reject any organisation.