

# **Annual Report**

## **2023/2024**





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1<sup>st</sup> of July 2023 – 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2024

**Dear members,**

We would like to start by expressing our sincere gratitude to all of you, especially to those who contribute through voluntary positions. Your dedication is the very reason why student life at Jönköping University continues to thrive and evolve.

A key goal for JSU this year was to increase our visibility and clearly communicate what JSU is, who we are, what we stand for, and most importantly, that we are here for the students. We recognized that while many students were aware of JSU due to the membership fee, they often did not fully understand what we do. Our goal extended beyond simply completing the tasks outlined in the Plan of Operations and managing our daily responsibilities. We aimed to boost JSU's visibility among students while staying focused on achieving the objectives set during the Annual Meeting. To do this, we not only participated in various student activities but also introduced new initiatives to promote JSU and encourage participation in the Annual Meeting.

During the 2023/2024 operational year, JSU's Presidium consisted of an international President and a Swedish Vice-President. This blend of international and Swedish representation brought valuable diversity and fresh perspectives to the Union, along with some challenges. Striving for a balanced mix of representation has long been a goal related to integration, promoting a diverse mindset within our organization. However, challenges arose. The fact that the President neither spoke nor understood Swedish created a language barrier in certain situations, such as councils, committees, and meetings conducted entirely in Swedish. To address this, tasks were reallocated: the Vice-President attended all fully Swedish meetings with JU and other committees, while the President took on some of the Vice-President's responsibilities to ensure a balanced workload.

Additionally, obtaining a work visa proved difficult due to the Swedish Migration Office's regulations. This issue persisted into the following operational year, leading to a change in the By-Laws. The new rule, approved during the Annual Meeting, states that non-European students who require a visa to stay in Sweden would not be eligible to apply for a remunerated position within JSU. This change was made because the Swedish government does not grant visas for such positions, potentially leading to situations where individuals might be forced to leave Sweden while still holding a position.

Throughout the year, we focused on increasing our visibility as an organization, addressing unique challenges of the operational year, and continuing previous investigations. We remained committed to maintaining transparency with our stakeholders. We are saddened to announce that, during this period, we had to part ways with five employees, four from Rio and the Associations Coordinator. Unfortunately, due to contractual obligations, we are unable to provide further details. This decision was made in accordance with the terms of our contract.

*The JSU Board*



## Organisation

### The Board

During the year, the Board became more closely integrated with the organization by participating in some of the daily operations, following up on organizational matters, and maintaining a closer watch on economic decisions, all while continuing to fulfil their strategic responsibilities.

Board members had the opportunity to choose a chapter from the Plan of Operations that aligned with their interests. They would then offer their support to the employee or remunerated individual responsible for that chapter. This involvement included attending relevant meetings, events, workshops, and other activities. Employees appreciated having board members available to provide additional support, fostering a collaborative environment. Not only did the Board receive regular updates from the Presidium, but they also benefitted from direct communication with the staff overseeing their chosen chapter, giving them valuable first-hand insights.

A key objective for the Union was to create more opportunities for representatives to gain a deeper understanding of each role within the Union. To achieve this, representatives were invited to participate in various meetings with employees. Additionally, the Board organized workshops for new student representatives, helping them understand the structure and dynamics between Jönköping University, the Student Union, the student associations, and the sub-organizations.

During the 2023/24 operational year, purple overalls were worn at events to enhance the Union's visibility. This initiative successfully piqued students' curiosity about the unique overall colour. It often led to spontaneous conversations, providing an excellent opportunity to explain what the Student Union is and how it differs from other groups, such as the student associations.

### The Presidium

With the President being international and attending Swedish-based meetings with external parties, the Union and Jönköping University (JU) initially faced challenges concerning effective communication and sufficient understanding. These challenges prompted discussions within the Union about how best to allocate meeting attendance among the remunerated positions to ensure smooth operations.

After evaluating different options, it was decided that while certain tasks, such as attending meetings with HJÖN or DAN, could be managed by a different remunerated member than in previous years, the designated attendance requirements for the Presidium would have some changes. During meetings with JU, the Vice-President was permitted to attend and actively participate in place of the President. Both the Union and JU expressed satisfaction with the Vice-President's performance in these meetings. To balance the workload, the President took on smaller tasks previously handled by the Vice-President, easing her responsibilities.



One of the key priorities for the Presidium was to strengthen the connection and collaboration between the Presidium and the broader Union. Their aim was to involve the Board as much as possible in all aspects of the Plan of Operations, ensuring active participation and engagement. Additionally, the Presidium placed significant emphasis on fostering strong relationships among employees, remunerated members, the Board, and external parties, promoting a cohesive and collaborative organizational culture.

## **Core operations: Student Influence**

### **Education**

Education is the main Student Question for the Student Union; it is the Vice-President that has the responsibility for this area, and they essentially work full-time with it. Most of the work within this area is continuous, and most achievements made cannot be assigned to a specific year. The Vice President participated in the designated meetings with the Head of Education at all faculties, the committee for education and research, and the presidents of each educational committee. Additional work that was undertaken included working with the project course developer reports (PCD), and the Quality Assessment Reports (QAR) of JIBS, which demanded recruitment and delegation of tasks for Studentpoolen – students who receive financial compensation for participating in ensuring the quality of education.

### **Work Environment**

There were two Generals who were the main responsible for this area during the operational year. Together with the work group WORC, it was clarified that all faculties had representatives in the safety rounds, and everyone was given a chance to be educated in the area in fall 2023. The concern towards exams period was highly considered and discussed throughout the operation year on how the Union can lobby for a suitable exam period for students, unfortunately we weren't able to lobby for the implementation of 2 scheduled free days between exams. Another big issue also taken by WORC was the non-working outlets in classes. WORC had several discussions with JU to fix them as students didn't have where to charge their computers when battery was low. Questions from the students were raised in all forums that the general took part in, and the following plan of operations was updated with the goals of solving some of these questions.

### **Equal Opportunity**

There was one General in charge of this area during the operation year. The EQO committee, which includes a student representative from each faculty, and JSU kept working on actions and routines to make the Kick-Offs safer. For the first time, EQO organized a "Health Day" to support students' physical and mental well-being. In the morning, EQO and the JU Health Office handed out Fika to encourage students to stop by and learn who they could ask for help if needed. During lunch, guest speakers shared their experiences with mental health. To wrap up the day, students could join a free yoga



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class at Friskies. The event was completely free for students, thanks to sponsorship from JU and the JSU budget.

### **Accommodation**

During the 2023/24 operational year, one general and an employee led the chapter. They held several meetings with students and the JU Accommodation Office to ensure fair and high-quality accommodation services. They sent out surveys to students to gain a better understanding of the accommodation situation and worked on creating a committee to give students a better platform to communicate about accommodation issues, events, and more. They also handled accommodation cases from students on an ongoing basis.

### **Integration**

JSU has continued to ensure that the information provided by International Office and JSU is synced, while working with integration questions from a strategic perspective. This includes collaboration with the municipality with which we have an agreement, as well as keeping up with the collaborations with JU International Office, which includes the GoExchange event. The buddy programs were improved from both quantity and quality perspectives. The program grew in visibility, and a focus was placed on communicating that the program is provided by the Student Union. Another type of activity that continues to grow is the food safari and cultural days. We see more and more people participating in these activities as they promote integration and bring people together.

### **National Representation and Collaboration**

JSU continues to strive to lobby student politics on a national level and has therefore taken part in all the member meetings as well as the annual meeting of The Swedish National Union of Students/Sveriges Förenade Studentkårer (SFS). The collaboration between JSU and Studentkårer i Väst (SiV) which begun in 2021/22 grew stronger during the operational year and JSU participated in all the meetings that took place at the respective universities for the student unions of Trollhättan, Skövde, Borås and Halmstad. An annual plan and shared goals for this collaboration was established as a result of workshops held during these meetings.

### **Core Operations: Study Social**

#### **Kick-Off and other events from the Union:**

Both Kick-Offs were a success. The fall Kick-Off received positive feedback, and we immediately addressed any negative feedback. We considered input from students, teachers, and the JU faculty. Communication was key for us; we wanted students to trust us to do our job and ensure they had the best experience possible. One issue that came up was confusion among Fadders about how much money they needed to spend during the Kick-Off. To address this, we've been working on a budget guide that will help them understand the potential costs before they apply. We also implemented a JSU tent for the Kick-Off Festival with all the generals, and many students came over to check it out.



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Throughout the year, the Union hosted several events, including Valborg, RadioK Bryr Sig, and Festive Friday. All these events were successful, attracted many participants, and met their objectives. A new addition this year was the JSU Annual Fair, a fresh concept that gave our sub-associations more exposure and allowed the JSU Board to promote the Annual Meeting. The event was a lot of fun, and the students who attended had great feedback about it.

### **Trips:**

During the 2023/2024 academic year, the number of participants increased significantly, with most trips fully booked within the first week of opening. The Union maintained its collaboration with Timetravels and actively gathered student feedback to drive further improvements. Additionally, JSU independently organized successful trips like the Copenhagen trip and the moose safari, both of which operated as self-sufficient events. In response to student interest, new trips were also added to the program. JSU remained proactive and committed to continuously enhancing the opportunities available to students.

### **Associations:**

We received tremendous support from students in making the sub-organizations as successful as possible. The Associations Coordinator played a crucial role in guiding these sub-organizations, providing continuity where vital information had previously been lost during transitions. Additionally, the Associations Coordinator offered support during the By-Annuals, ensuring that sub-organizations understood their structure and responsibilities.

This year, we explored the implementation of HiTrach, an app designed to enhance JSU's communication with students by providing clear information about upcoming events and associated organizations. Beyond improving general communication, HiTrach aims to help sub-organizations connect with more students by offering accessible event schedules. Given its potential, HiTrach could replace the existing JSU app in the coming year, although discussions on this transition remained ongoing throughout our term.

## **Core Operations: Support Functions**

### **Administration:**

Administration encompasses the work managed by the Head of Financials and Administration, as well as tasks carried out within the Student Service. Daily responsibilities include maintaining up-to-date budget posts, processing payments, registering students, handling membership fee transactions, managing financial reimbursements, and overseeing the minibus usage log, among other administrative duties.

With the Head of Financials and Administration reducing working hours, the Operations Service Manager took on additional responsibilities related to the organizational environment. This included supporting employees and remunerated staff, ensuring they



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had the resources they needed, and fostering a supportive workplace atmosphere. Additionally, the Presidium collaborated closely with the Head of Financials and Administration to enhance the transparency of the financial reporting system.

### **Communication**

We welcomed a new Communications Manager who effectively ensured that planned events proceeded smoothly. She conducted workshops for her team and introduced a fresh concept for the annual meeting, the Annual Fair. Unlike the traditional Festive Friday, the Annual Fair focuses entirely on student life, with no sponsors invited. Communication regarding events, annual meetings, and recruitment processes remained on track and aligned with the overall plan.

The Communications Manager also developed a comprehensive Crisis Communication Plan and strengthened key relationships between JSU and JU, as well as with sponsors and the municipality.

### **Service operations**

Throughout the year, our focus remained on steering service operations back toward breaking even. With student life fully returning to normal and all students back on campus, our services were able to operate as intended. However, inflation significantly impacted our costs, necessitating some price increases. We made every effort to keep these adjustments to a minimum.

Several new team members were hired to support operations at both Rio and Akademien during this period. Following the departure of the long-term Akademien Manager in early September, another employee stepped in to take over the role.

Akademien performed well financially, generating profit thanks to strong attendance on regular Wednesdays and additional open nights, including Fridays and Saturdays. Meanwhile, Rio also improved its operations, though it continues to operate at a loss. To boost performance, Rio resumed offering hot lunches and brought on two new employees to assist with daily tasks.