



Proposal for membership fees

Background

The Coronavirus has caused unimaginable disruptions in the association's normal operations. Both larger activities such as the bi-annual trip, Career Day and the Gasque, as well as weekly events such as lectures, career seminars and debate workshops have been cancelled. The smaller number of external activities have resulted in a decline in members with almost no new sign-ups. Since January, the number has dropped from 1200 to 1000 which is equal to a 17% decrease. During the same period last year, there was a 100-member increase. If the same trend continues during the fall, we will lose another 750 members. As our largest source of revenue, the MUCF grant, is based on the total number of members we have under 26 years, this is a situation which can have dire implications for the financing of future board's operations and the survival of the association. Furthermore, a smaller number of members can cause problems with finding those who wants to be active. This can make it difficult to organise the normal activities and limits the number of new activities and projects we can undertake.

Proposed change

The presidium proposes to remove the membership fee for all new members until either Uppsala University continues with its normal lectures on campus, in which we could also resume with our external events, or the 28th of February 2021.

Purpose

The purpose of this change would be to enable the new board to easier recruit members. As much of the association's funding rely on a steady stream of new members, it is necessary that we adapt to the new circumstances. Maintaining a relatively large membership base also allows for more people to get active in helping out with our activities. With free memberships, new types of campaigns such as those online, we believe will prove more effective. Important to note is that this change is not to be seen as a permanent change in the membership fee policy of the association, but rather a temporary change meant to facilitate member recruitment. Our hope is that the global situation at the next electoral meeting is better and that we again will be possible to re-instate the membership fee of 100 kr for non-high school students.

The reasoning by the presidium

There are both pros and cons with removing the membership fee. The obvious advantage is that it makes it cheaper for individuals to become members. Given that it is a risk that Uppsala University continues to be closed during the fall, much of the marketing, lectures and activities will instead have to take place online. As the association's content is up against significant competition from global actors who for free produces high-quality and foreign affairs-oriented

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material, it might be difficult to convince people to pay 100 kr to get access to what we do. We might furthermore also not produce as much content as we do under ordinary circumstances and the content that we produce will be at a lower cost (e.g. no fees for venues or travel costs for lecturers). These three reasons we believe is enough to warrant a removal of the membership fee. Although losing revenue, the association will be more likely to sign-up new members and reach out with our activities as well as possibly engage more people to become active in the association. This both makes it possible to continue with our day-do-day activities and receive a MUCF grant more similar in size to previous year's.

There is one large draw back from implementing this change, and that is that the membership fee revenue will be lost for much of the coming operational year. If calculated on the current member count, that would equal approximately 100 000 kr in lost revenue. However, worth noting is that it is unlikely that given the current situation, we will be able to get 1000 members to pay 100 kr in fees, meaning that this sum of 100 000 kr should be taken with a grain of salt.

We have discussed some ways to minimise this economic burden. First, we will not spend the budget surplus created this year and instead use it to off-set some of the losses in revenue from the membership fees for next semester. Secondly, thanks to the current board's hard work with member recruitment, we have 50% more members today, compared to the same time last year. This means an increased size of the MUCF grant the coming board will receive in January 2021 which in turn will compensate for the losses in revenue from membership fees for the spring semester of 2021. In total, we believe that although losing the revenues from the membership fees, the coming board will not be worse off financially than the board of 2019/2020. In addition, the change will help securing the size of the MUCF grant which helps future boards as well. We see it as the most responsible way of action possible that combines promoting growth of the association this year with taking responsibility for the future.

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