

Protocol of the student general assembly at the FU on 7.04.2021

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Introduction of the assembly

Welcome by the moderator

- First student general assembly in online format, organized by an open preparatory committee
- almost 300 participants present at the beginning of the AGM
- Contact options for the preparatory committee:
 - Instagram: @vollversammlung_fu
 - Mail: koordination@astafu.de
 - Telegram group for further networking and collaboration:
<https://t.me/joinchat/MWdzFwBSok03ZGFi>

Greetings

Greeting from Bogazici University Istanbul:

- Mobilization against fascist politics in unis! International solidarity between students of different universities
- Universities, as a place of free exchange, are continuously under pressure: Arrests, investigations, criminalization of students, systemic attacks against the LGBTIQ+ community are increasing.

- More information (feel free to spread the word):
 - https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1GK5VSUx2zk4rqlzXai_2SAEQgCUxo8RD-nLWVAd4VPA/edit?usp=sharing,
 - <https://www.instagram.com/berlinboundayanismasi/>
 - <https://www.facebook.com/berlinboundayanismasi>
 - <https://twitter.com/BerlinBogazici>

Greeting of the students from Munich (Committee against the university reforms)

- Students and employees defend themselves against the privatization of universities: Against competition, pressure, profit, precarity.
- Solidarity with other unis, unions, initiatives (like ZeroCovid), because the struggles are shared: Isolation and psychological and other problems due to online university at pandemic times.
- We don't want to resign ourselves to the problems, we want to connect

Greeting from the Berlin Hospital Movement (Benjamin Franklin Campus)

- Description of a daily work routine in nursing: staff shortage is fatal, working conditions have to change. We do not have a problem of knowledge, but a problem of implementation. Trade unions must take the topic to the city and also build connections to students.
- Connecting moments of the next months: Invitation 21.04. Online city meeting with big party politicians and small organizations, alliances - come and spread the word!
- Read more: <https://www.redseat.de/stadtversammlung/> - sign up, be there!

Mentimeter

- Conduct a Mentimeter survey among the participants of the Assembly on the questions: 1. how are you doing in online studies? 2. what topics would you like to discuss today?
 - results: <https://www.mentimeter.com/s/c28ffd80d127db7a169ec0e0deb60a8b/2e656f10c036>

Agenda

Part 1: Study under pandemic conditions

- 1.1. online studies
- 1.2. study financing

Part 2: Students and Employees in University Operations

- 2.1 Working Conditions at the FU
- 2.2 Student co-determination

Part 3: What next?

Agenda vote: 177/292 yes, 2/292 no, 45/292 abstention, 68/292 no response. The agenda is adopted.

Part 1: Study under pandemic conditions

1.1 Online study

General speeches on online study:

On mental health:

- Physical balance to studies is missing, performance decreases, Mensa closed (additional burden).
- Demand: Reduce workload in seminars.

Initiative "Nicht Nur Online":

- Commitment to concrete opening perspectives of the universities, contact with politics exists.
- Against a future with digital teaching: Increasing neoliberalization of universities, standardization and formalization.
- Demand: open and democratic involvement of students in the development of universities.
- More information: #nichtnuronline, <https://praesenzlehre-berlin.org/>

Group "Klasse gegen Klassen":

- We are not here by accident, but because of a year of pandemic and inadequate crisis management by the federal government.
- Mental stress is increasingly common,
- job loss due to library closures,
- financial worries due to the loss of part-time jobs.
- The university presidium does not answer, there is no prospect of concrete help (little support, if any).
- Demand: See resolution "On the Current Learning, Teaching, and Working Situation at the FU"

Group "Marxistische Studierende":

- Concrete changes can only be implemented by parties.
- Demand: We as students have to be able to strike, extend the struggle to the workers:inside movement, networking. Only the Asta can organize this.
- Article with more information: <https://www.derfunke.de/rubriken/jugend/2853-lockdown-und-studium-den-kampf-organisieren-studentische-vollversammlung-an-der-fu>

On the topic of starting your studies as a first-year student:

- No help at all with online teaching, hardly any interaction in the subjects, zero discussion, studying is difficult and it is hard to imagine how teaching is in presence.
- Communication is difficult.
- Demand: Communication with lecturers and students instead of asynchronous videos.

On the topic of "networking":

- It is difficult to find a career because there is a lack of networking, which should lay the foundations for later entry.
- Demand: as long as only online teaching is possible, create more networking opportunities. This should not be left up to the students.

Initiative "Intersektionales Lehramt":

- Group of critical students at FU against racism and sexism in the teaching profession.
- Have become the point of contact for intersectional discrimination experiences.
- It is difficult to counteract this, not allowing the semester to count towards the standard period of study is not enough.
- Demand: teachers need to address power structures, online teaching is unacceptable from an intersectional perspective (networking with ZeroCovid!), solidarity.
- More information:
 - Instagram: @intersectional_teaching_bln
 - Twitter: @antiraFULEhramt and
 - Mail: intersek-antira-fulehramt@posteo.de

On the topic of "Didactics":

- Experiences with digital teaching mixed.
- Negative due to problematic didactics, political views in frontal format followed by asking personal opinions of lecturer in test format-> indoctrinating.
- Demand: More student discussion groups against isolation.

On the topic of "studying with child(ren)":

- No career possible at FU while raising and caring for children,
- Registration at the Dual Career Center necessary to be informed about the possibility of maternity leave.
- Quota for pre-registration for seminars leads to competition.
- Part-time study helpful due to extended study time, but useless in communication, there is no entitlement to a part-time study curriculum.
- Attendance in seminars: Communication with lecturers and students important, but attendance rates too high (85%) with frequent illness of children. Agreement with lecturers to postpone work does not create relief, cycle by attendance deadline.
- Demands are still being formulated and will be submitted as a resolution to the next plenary meeting

Speeches on barrier (in)freedom:

- Online university reduces barriers, but makes communication much more difficult, inaccessibility of lecturers is not okay.
 - Demand: Hybrid solution (to reduce barriers).
- People with depression and other mental illnesses are currently suffering especially because there are no adequate structures for online teaching. Online didactics is different, therefore formats like the current ones are unsuitable
- Facilitation through digital semester, more barrier-free learning. Offers of help from psychological counseling at the university or contacting lecturers is always good.
 - Demand: possibility of digital teaching even after the pandemic to relieve people for whom face-to-face teaching is not possible.
- Digital-presence mix important to break down barriers if resources are available. Networking hardly possible, rights unclear.
 - Demand: open up libraries, address future (what's next?), talk about abuse of power and harassment by faculty.
- Different needs, but shouldn't my studies rather adapt to my condition?
- Accessibility has to be physically fought for at the university as well, being more inclusive online should not be the only solution.
- There is poor knowledge about the disadvantage compensation (zT there is also little access to it due to lack of diagnoses). Also, the disadvantage compensation is not necessarily more accessible.
 - Demand: More internships, accessibility at the university (e.g. disadvantage compensation must be known more and be actual compensation, not just postponement of benefits).
- Classroom teaching as the norm, but online teaching as an additional offer, inclusive university for all; there are already helpful advisory services, but no real compensation for disadvantages. Advice: contact Ms. Anja Ahrens (Disability Officer of the FU).
- Demand regarding compensation for disadvantages: for students with disabilities, instead of deadline extensions (into the new semester), fewer words for written work.

Survey among students of the department PhilGeist:

FSI Philosophie on survey at FB Philosophie und Geisteswissenschaften: conducted in February 2021, questions about sensitivities, digital teacher, first-year students

- less problems in technical respect, but 15% of the participants had no sufficient technical equipment (mostly internet connection)
- almost all participants satisfied with the technical implementation of digital teaching
- similar number of courses as in the face-to-face semester
- but worrying: 2/3 report a higher workload
- many problems to reach the lecturers
- one third of the participants do not have a sufficiently quiet working environment, therefore opening of the libraries

- 80% of the participants report problems with concentration: Problems getting ahead academically
- 10% of the first-year students stated that they had already made friends during their studies.
- Presidium wants to think about strategy for reopening, but still has no plans, therefore demand for pressure from students
- Summary: <https://box.fu-berlin.de/s/stfRTfkTbAfPDy7>

1.2 Financing of studies

General speeches on student financing:

BAföG advice from the Asta FU:

- Social counseling of the Asta also advises on financing if there is no right to Bafög.
- The advisors are hardly reachable by phone and on site, they are not available.
- Extension of the standard period of study for Bafög comes too late, since applications must always be submitted in advance, even if the semester has not yet been classified as an extension of the RSZ.
- Only 12% of the students get Bafög, after the fourth semester you can't change and the rates are too low (housing allowance in Berlin unrealistic).
- Standard period of study = 30 CP per semester, which means that students cannot work at the same time, and administrators are not informed or are poorly informed.
- People would have to file an appeal, but are dependent on the money and cannot do so.
- Basic problems with Bafög.
- Contact:
 - bafogberatung@astafu.de for Bafög advice
 - sozialberatung@astafu.de for student financing outside of Bafög.

Group "Marxistische Studierende":

- Loss of student part-time jobs, low funding from federal government as lower repayable loan, Bafög too bureaucratic,
- Demand: unconditional financial emergency aid without interest, income-independent Bafög, no compromises with capitalists - organization on the part of the AstA as official student representation

Speeches on the housing issue among students:

FU group "Deutsche Wohnen und Co Enteignen (DWE)":

- We no longer want to spend months looking for an affordable apartment, to have to spend our money completely on rent, students have their own needs.
- Deplorable state of the housing market counteract
- More info and organization about <https://t.me/joinchat/E25hmXqQoExMBUY5>

- Demand: Sign the referendum "Deutsche Wohnen und Co Enteignen", involvement in Kiezteams and/or the HSG, participate in events, more on this in Resolution "Support of the petition "Deutsche Wohnen and Co. enteignen!"".

Group "Klasse gegen Klasse":

- Positioning against compensation of DW and Co.
- Exemplary for the incompetence of the corporations are the rental conditions that tenants report. The money could be used more sensibly.
- Demand: Support of expropriation without compensation on the part of the students (see amendment to resolution "Support of the petition "Deutsche Wohnen and Co. enteignen!"").

Group "Marxistische Studierende":

- Expropriation is going too slowly, everyone will oppose the Senate (including the Federal Constitutional Court).
- Demand: force an effective law through class struggle instead of trusting in institutions, build pressure through strike and mass mobilization. The Asta should mobilize the masses.

On "socialization of housing":

- Question about compensation sums deliberately open, therefore set very low amount.

FU group "DWE":

- Sympathies for low expropriation sums, but position of DWE campaign according to GG: 8 billion € compensation, so that tenants:inside pay one third of current rent; furthermore, less privileged investors:inside are also affected by pension funds

On the subject of "living in a student dormitory":

- Resident of a student dormitory wants to extend lease due to extension of standard period of study; Studierendenwerk cannot check until next year

1.3 Resolutions and voting

Resolution "Reducing Barriers"

Reducing barriers through online formats in parallel with face-to-face teaching after pandemic.

Discussion Items:

- Question of funding and privacy? At the Institute of Biology it was said that the effort would be too big
- At other universities it is also possible to record lectures, students need to discuss their needs, not details of feasibility

Resolution adopted: 84 yes, 2 no, 15 abstentions (out of 143)

Resolution “Discrimination-sensitive teaching”

Initiative "Intersektionales Lehramt"

Resolution adopted: 74 yes, 3 no, 18 abstentions (out of 143)

Resolution “On the current learning, teaching, and working situation at FU”

"Klasse gegen Klasse"/"Marxistische Studierende"

Contributions to the discussion:

- the concept of standard period of study is unclear, amendment: standard period of study (also for Bafög calculation).
- Consent of the university groups, therefore accepted

Resolution adopted: 66 yes, 8 no, 21 abstentions (out of 137)

Resolution ““Support of the petition "Deutsche Wohnen and Co. enteignen!””

DWE Hochschulgruppe FU

Contributions to the discussion:

- Amendment on the demand for expropriation without compensation.

Amendment adopted: 34 yes, 29 no, 27 abstention (125)

- Speech on the amendment:
 - Amendment correct in content, but doesn't fit with campaign support, so signal support and additionally call for expropriation without compensation
- Speech contribution to send emails to all FU students:
 - DWE would like to address all students with their concerns.
 - There is no mailing list with all students to which the student body would have autonomous access through the Asta
 - Mails to all students have to be requested at the university
 - Mass mails have to be approved by the presidium. To achieve this, the backing of the general assembly is crucial,
 - Mass mails are filtered/edited/censored by the presidium, but AStA tries its best

Resolution passed with amendment: 70 yes, 7 no, 13 abstentions (out of 117).

Part 2: Students and employees at the university

2.1 Working conditions at the FU

Staff Council Dahlem and initiative "fu:fair and unbefristet":

- Thanks to the supporters of the personnel fights for the academic mid-level staff.
- Cooperation with students and further struggle for a better university
- Call for coordinated responses from lecturers

ver.di group and staff council Botanical Garden:

- Solidarity between staff councils and students, industrial action at the Botanical Garden, successfully supported by students
- in the context of the amendment of the Berlin Higher Education Act (BerlHG) the abolition of the departmental characteristics and the staff council of the Botanical Garden is threatened, because this staff council fights against precarious working conditions
- Staff Council solicits the support of students: no abolition of active staff representation
- the Botanical Garden also exists as an institution thanks to the struggles of the employees against austerity measures
- Demands: see resolution "Preservation of the Botanic Garden Staff Council"

Group "Klasse gegen Klasse":

- Unity of students and employees has a long tradition (incorporation of the Botanical Garden, strikes), against the policy of cuts and gifts to big companies
- Protest on the street on May 1st in a common block of employees and students, formation of an action committee
- Demands: see resolution "On the situation of the employees"

2.2 Student co-determination -> postponed

2.3. Resolutions and votes

Resolution "Preservation of the Botanic Garden Staff Council"

Staff Council Botanical Garden, retention of the department and staff council

Resolution adopted: 56 yes, 1 no, 2 abstentions (out of 81)

- Comment: thanks to the plenary, continue to pull together with employees and students

Resolution "On the situation of the employees"

Group "Klasse gegen Klasse", on the situation of employees at the FU

Resolution adopted: 52 yes, 0 no, 4 abstentions (out of 79)

Part 3: What next? (mostly postponed)

Due to the advanced time, it was agreed on the procedure not to discuss the items "Student co-determination" and "How to continue" anymore and instead to vote on continuing the plenary meeting within the next weeks at a new date.

3.1 Next plenary meeting

Convocation of another plenary meeting within three weeks

- Preparation by an open committee, feel free to participate! Contact options:
 - Mail: koordination@astafu.de
 - Instagram: [@vollversammlung_fu](https://www.instagram.com/vollversammlung_fu)
 - Telegram group for further networking and collaboration:
<https://t.me/joinchat/MWdzFwBSok03ZGFj>

Procedure Proposal adopted: 57 yes, 0 no, 5 abstentions (out of 76).