

Policy document regarding bias

Information about the Policy Document

The purpose of this policy document is to specify how Linnaeus Union actively works to counteract conflicts of interest (bias) in its decision-making processes. Since the Linnaeus Union's board members are usually themselves active in one or more student associations that have cooperation agreements with the organization, The union continuously and actively strives to ensure that all decisions are made as objectively as possible. Bias occurs when someone involved in a decision is or may be partial in the decision-making process, which means that the decision is not made on objective grounds. This document is divided into three parts, the first of which defines situations in which bias may arise and how it is determined whether a board member needs to declare themselves as biased or not. The second part deals with meeting formalities in situations where one or more board members are biased, and the third part addresses what happens if a decision is made that is later deemed to have been made under biased circumstances.

When is it Necessary to Declare Bias?

A board member in the Linnaeus Union is considered biased and should declare themselves as such before a decision is made in the following scenarios and circumstances:

- If the decision concerns a student association where the board member actively holds a board position.
- If the decision concerns a student association where the board member has held a board position in the last semester.
- If the decision concerns a student association where the board member has been elected or is in the process of being elected to a board position.
- If the decision concerns the introduction of a student association where the board member is or intends to be in a position of power during the upcoming orientation week, such as an introduction coordinator, general, mentor, team leader, or similar role.
- If the decision concerns a membership matter where the board member is in a sibling/family relation, or a romantic/domestic partnership with the member in question.
- If the decision concerns a student association or a membership matter that the board member personally believes could affect their objectivity in decision-making due to reasons such as romantic relationships, friendships, or other factors that the board member perceives as potentially influencing their objectivity.

How to Declare Bias?

To declare bias, the concerned board member must inform either the chairperson or all other board members before the meeting that they will not participate in the discussion or voting on the item for which they are biased. It is also possible to declare bias during the meeting, but it is recommended to do so beforehand to ensure that a majority of the board is present for the meeting to be quorate. If a board member declares bias in a meeting item, they must temporarily leave the meeting, forfeiting their right to speak, make proposals, or vote. The board may call the biased member back if a question arises that only they can answer. After the errand has been discussed, the member can rejoin the meeting and regain their right to speak, make proposals,

and vote. If a member is biased in a meeting errand, they do not have the right to participate in the discussion or vote on the decision. In the event that a biased board member receives a matter related to the relevant association, it should be handed over to another board member well in advance of the meeting.

What Happens if Bias Occurred in a Previously Made Decision?

If it is discovered that a decision was made under biased circumstances, it shall be invalidated. This can be done either through a per-capita decision or a decision by the executive committee. During the next board meeting, the board shall be informed that the decision has been invalidated and the reasons why. The matter shall then be reconsidered, and a new decision shall be made without any biased circumstances. If an entity within the union, a student association with an agreement with the union, or a member/group of members in the union alleges that bias may have occurred or did occur in a decision made by the union, the board has a responsibility to investigate whether this was the case and a duty to inform the outcome of the investigation to the concerned parties. Ultimately, the responsibility for investigating bias falls on the president of the Linnaeus Union. If the president is the one who is alleged to have been biased in the decision, the established succession order shall determine who has the ultimate responsibility for conducting the investigation. Depending on the extent of the situation, the investigation may or should be conducted together with or in consultation with the elected auditors of the Linnaeus Union.