

Concept for the General Student Committee (AstA) for the term starting in SoSe 2024 at HAW Hamburg

A coalition program of student activists and university political lists

Despite various backgrounds and worldviews, our desire for change at HAW unites us toward a university that actively contributes to the development of a sustainable, just, and solidarity-based society.

In this spirit, we advocate for a respectful, dynamic, and well-equipped learning environment characterized by collaboration, mutual support, and innovation. Everyone should be encouraged to think creatively, interdisciplinarily and critically, as well as to advocate for social justice. The university should be a place where we enjoy spending time (even after classes), find joy in learning, and build a community.

Education aims not only to impart professional competencies but also to foster the personal development of students by providing space for exchange, collaboration, and open discussion. For us, lived interdisciplinarity means promoting a broad understanding and diverse perspectives. The existing hierarchies and dependencies between member groups are not conducive to this goal. Therefore, we aim to dismantle them together.

We see critical thinking and action for societal improvement as essential components of education. Our studies should encourage us to question existing views and our own fields of study or profession, actively advocate for social, economic, and ecological sustainability, as well as for peace and understanding. In engaging with controversial issues and developing our own perspectives, education should support us, strengthening our self-assurance and fostering our ability for self-reflection and critical analysis.

We are already working towards realizing these goals by advocating for improvements and cooperating with many stakeholders within the university and the student representation. We see the following **three themes as central points of discussion, through which we also effectively counteract right-wing ideologies. Therefore, we aim to further advance them through the General Student Committee of HAW and invite everyone to participate!**

Improving the social and health situation of students

The social situation of students has continued to deteriorate: According to the Federal Statistical Office, nearly 38 percent of students in 2021 had incomes below the poverty line. Given the high rents, the situation in Hamburg is likely to be particularly difficult. A survey of students at HAW showed that almost half of all respondents exhibited signs of depression, and nearly half reported symptoms suggestive of anxiety disorders. Therefore, we are faced with significant burdens at the university. Central to improving the situation is improving the financial situation of students and creating structures for participation, thereby also contributing to educational equity.

- We aim to create public awareness and initiate discussions on the follow-up process of health reporting. Together, we can develop positive examples of how studying and the university can promote health.
- We are collaborating with students from other universities and other allies on a campaign (awareness-raising, demonstration, nationwide networking) for universal

student financial aid (BAföG) for all: independent of parents, origin, age, and in sufficient amounts! Only when we can study without financial worries can we focus our thinking and actions entirely on improving society.

- We continue to advocate for public funding of student services, more university housing, and lower rents. This includes ongoing protest actions to lower student contributions to student services instead of massively increasing them. Additionally, it is about social and cultural improvements rather than implementing further austerity measures (abolishing cash payments).

Strategy development and academic reform for a socially responsible education

HAW is expected to undergo significant changes in the coming months: from structural reorganization (restructuring of faculties) to setting thematic priorities. We are shaping this transformation process and intervening in strategy development to ensure that HAW becomes a university for comprehensive sustainable societal development.

It is long overdue to overcome the high density of exams and focus, as well as other restrictive regulations and measures. They limit our ability to study cooperatively and interdisciplinarily, dampen creativity and social interaction. This includes tight deadlines, exams, and grades! A multitude of studies repeatedly show: grades say little about learning progress, pit us against each other, and cause pressure. This makes us sick, not smart.

- We are already advocating for the removal of restrictions, such as abolishing the limit on exam attempts (currently usually 3). In doing so, we consider not only formal aspects (such as study duration, avoiding unnecessary work for students and the university) but also cultural aspects. When the university no longer instills fear with exams, when learning is more in focus than testing, it has a positive impact on our interactions. This also reduces power structures. If a professor can no longer "test me out," I am more likely to critically question their statements. Isn't that also more enjoyable for the teachers?
- We also advocate for the introduction of project-based learning with cooperative learning development discussions instead of exams and grades. This involves discussing our current learning status with the respective instructors, then collaboratively developing a plan for further learning based on our respective interests. Thus, instructors become learning partners rather than examiners to be feared.

For the full funding of HAW!

[Definition of Full Funding: ensuring financing for something]

HAW Hamburg is currently grappling with a deficit in the order of 10 percent of its basic funding. The causes primarily stem from political "missteps" of the past nearly 30 years (global budget: decoupling of tasks and resources, debt brake, temporary or third-party funding). They increasingly impair the university's ability to act and its future viability and have already caused a massive loss of expertise, diversity, trust, and functionality. This affects everyone but particularly disadvantaged groups among students (and staff) as positions for labs, workshops, counseling hours, and tutorials disappear. The circumstances have become unbearable in many cases. Underfunding is harmful because it intensifies competition within HAW, diminishes educational success, and is socially selective. Instead of escalating conflicts over resources among students, instructors, departments, and faculties, we want to collectively

fight for better funding! This requires solidarity and an understanding that good education requires adequate financial resources. We aim to:

- Form protests and inform through events and publications about the state, causes, and consequences of underfunding, as well as participation opportunities for overcoming it and alternatives to underfunding. A society-oriented and future-proof strategy is crucial. It is essential to convince not only HAW members but also the Hamburg public/civil society of the meaningfulness of adequate funding. This can only be achieved with convincing initiatives!
- To do this, we will form alliances within the university and beyond, with other universities, civil society (e.g., trade unions, initiatives, and political parties), and participate in further creative formats for full funding.

We are already working on these issues. We want to push them forward with full force through the General Student Committee of HAW and welcome everyone who wants to join! As the General Student Committee, we want to collaborate with the student councils, the Student Parliament, with working groups, and initiatives such as the AG Ausfinanzierung, the AG Antifa and the AK Frieden. We also want to support, initiate, and expand cooperation among ourselves and with various contacts at HAW. All students who aim to improve their own and collective situation, who oppose injustice, or seek support and advice are welcome in the AstA. The AstA should be a place and organizational point for all those who want to participate in the development of the university and who want to use material and ideological resources for this purpose.

Candidates

Board: Sabine Derboven
Mathis Lauterbach

Departements

Finances: Johanna Zimmermann

Culture: Marleen Harms

Social concerns: Florian Brand