

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

Tallinn

March 9th 2026, no 1

Start of the meeting 18:02, end of the meeting 20:52

Chaired by Alexander Rein Robas

Minutes secretary: Kirke Piiskoppel

13 out of 15 were present: Ander Mägi, Maksim Dolinin, Sander Roosimäe, Sten Unt, Ketter Aljes, Hanna Savolainen, Ramon Kulp, Iiris Aljes, Annemari Riisimäe, Jan Enriko Viidermets, Maris Kortel (MS Teams), Karolina Perv (MS Teams), Markus Käpp (MS teams, hilines).

Absent: Arqum Shahid, Trevon Peek.

Invited: Emilia Jabloкова, Kaidrit Singh, Anna Triin Reilent, Lisette Johanson, Anna Latõševa, Katriin Saarep, Andres Brandmeister, Eliise Mändmets, Emma Rätsep, Carolyn Rõuk, Elis Ulla, Artur Lussmaa, Oskar Pihlak, Emili Järv, Mark Toomsalu, Rain Samarüütel, Renee Maripuu, Anna Suzdalev, Kristiina Vene, Karoliine Orav, Leana Jete Korb, Kristiina Vene (MS Teams), Ingrid Kirp (MS Teams), Kristin Liias, Kadri Jürissaar, Joonas Teder (MS Teams), Markus Soodla (MS Teams), Sirely Veri (MS Teams), Karl Markus Vallner (MS Teams), Taavi Tamm (MS Teams), Berit Tikenberg (MS Teams), Romet Šits (MS Teams), Terke Kram (MS Teams), Kristiina Kuusemets (MS Teams)

On the agenda:

I Elections

1. Regular Board elections – Chairman of the Board and Board Member in the Field of Student Life

The agenda was approved unanimously.

1. Regular Board elections

Alexander Rein Robas: Greetings to all present, esteemed Student Parliament and everyone else here, including candidates and friends, acquaintances and supporters. Welcome to the extraordinary meeting of the Student Parliament no. 1 – the Board elections special. I am Alexander Rein Robas, Chairman of the student body Board, and I will be conducting today's meeting. Let us quickly go over the election procedure and schedule. The elections will take place in two separate parts and at the end we will conduct votes for both positions. First, the Board Member in the Field of Student Life. There will be a self-introduction, followed by supporting speeches. Then the Student Parliament will ask questions, and afterwards we will also take questions from guests. The Chairman of the Board will follow the same format; once a position has been formed regarding the Student Life field, there will be a vote and then the final decision and its adoption. A small reminder for

Student Parliament members: if you wish to ask a question, raise your hand and I will give you the floor. For guests, there will be a QR code, and you can submit questions via Slido. I will take questions continuously. You can also like questions there. I will moderate and select the more popular and relevant questions. Does anyone have any questions regarding the procedure? Alright. Let us proceed. First, we will conduct the elections for the Board Member in the Field of Student Life. I invite Renee Maripuu to present their self-introduction.

Renee Maripuu: Nice to meet you, I am Renee Maripuu. I read that there is an opportunity to give a self-introduction speech. I did not prepare a speech. Instead, I will tell you a story. Many of you may know how I ended up at TalTech. I am a young guy from Saaremaa, although my dialect has mostly faded, but that aside. Initially, I was more oriented towards the arts and really wanted to study architecture, but by chance I did not get in. Then I thought about what to do with my life. I took a year off from university. Some would call it self-discovery; I was able to try entrepreneurship a bit and studied project management at the School of Economics. But then I thought that TalTech is actually a really cool university. The University of Tartu was also an option. But I could not decide, so I let fate decide. I flipped a coin. The coin told me to study electrical engineering and mechatronics. To this day, I do not regret that decision for a single moment, because I cannot imagine studying at the University of Tartu now. This is not because I particularly love my field of study, quite the opposite. By the end of my second year, I realised that this field is not entirely for me. The only reason I will complete it, likely within the nominal period and alongside a couple of minors, is because student life at TalTech is so great. Essentially, thanks to student life, I have gained motivating events, a motivating support network, and I have become a fan of my university. That is the only reason I am completing my studies in energy, because it provides a strong technical foundation. At the same time, I am taking minors in the School of Business and Governance, which adds a more humanities-oriented perspective. I want to study marketing and management at the master's level. My goal, if I become the Student Life Board Member, would be to create for other students the idea that if you are a fan of your university and genuinely want to be here, then by coming to study here you also receive a motivation package, and those three years of bachelor's studies or five years of integrated studies pass incredibly quickly. Looking back now, it feels like yesterday when I participated in my first Kick-off event orientation. And now, three years later, I am standing in lecture hall SOC 211a talking about my life story, which is not directly related to the position of Board Member in the Field of Student Life, but this is a self-introduction. The reasons why I am the best candidate – you will hear that shortly. Thank you!

Kaidrit Singh: Hello! Esteemed decision-makers, dear listeners! I am Kaidrit Singh and I am running for the position of Board Member in the Field of Student Life of the student body of Tallinn University of Technology. The band Singer Vinger once sang that young people are lost, but today we know that this is not true. Young people are not lost, young people are our future – we are the future. We are the ones who create ideas, shape communities and move society forward, and that is exactly why I have decided to stand for ensuring that the voice of young people is heard. My journey began in basic school as a member of the student council and later as vice president, but quite quickly I realised that I wanted to do more than just contribute to my own school. I wanted the voice of students from Rakvere State Gymnasium to be heard more broadly. I became the vice-chair of the Rakvere city student council and at the same time served as a student representative on the school board of trustees. This path brought me to Tallinn University of Technology. At TalTech, I have been active in the Student Council of the School of Business and Governance, where I have held roles both in administration and marketing. One of my most memorable projects was the 2024 charity Christmas café. It was not just an event, it was an opportunity for us as students to

do something genuinely good and support the organisation Big Brother Big Sister Estonia. Recently, on 4 March, we organised the conference “Women in Business”, which addressed many issues faced by young people, especially women, such as whether to take risks as a woman and how to balance family and ambition. This experience confirmed something very important to me – when students act together, our impact is truly significant. In addition, I continue to represent young people on the board of trustees of Rakvere State Gymnasium as an alumni representative, a role I have held for two years. In my daily work, I am an executive assistant. My responsibilities include communication, planning, reporting and advocating for employees’ interests. I act as a bridge between employees and management. This has taught me structure, responsibility and strategic thinking. I have learned that good ideas are only the beginning – real value is created when ideas are actually implemented. Community engagement is also important to me, which is why I volunteer at the Song and Dance Festival and at the Opinion Festival. This year, I have the honour of being a coordinator of the Opinion Festival, where I support volunteers and organisers and help ideas turn into discussions. My development path has also included international experience. While studying in Belgium, I focused on management, administration and community development. At the same time, I was a member of the student organisation Minos at KU Leuven, where we represented student positions at the European level. There I experienced how important strong argumentation, good preparation and responsible representation are, especially in situations where the voice of young people must be heard equally among other decision-makers. All these experiences have shaped my understanding of the true role of the Student Union. The Student Union is not just an organisation, it is a team. A team where every student’s voice matters. A team where ideas turn into actions and a team that ensures that student life is meaningful, supportive and full of opportunities. I believe in this team, and I believe that my experience, dedication and energy will help strengthen it. That is why I stand before you – bold, motivated and ready to take responsibility. I stand consistently, strongly and purposefully for the students of Tallinn University of Technology. Thank you!

Alexander Rein Robas: Since supporting speeches were not submitted to me in advance, I will ask – does anyone wish to give a supporting speech for a candidate? Laur, please.

Laur Leemets: Hello! My name is Laur and I am the Coordinator of Outer Sports at TalTech. There are few people who do not know Renee Maripuu. Always doing something, organising or helping someone. The position of Student Life Board Member requires dealing with many things simultaneously, especially decisiveness and adaptability. I can confidently say that Renee possesses these qualities. Renee never does anything halfway or just adequately – on the contrary, they always give their best and often even more. This is also reflected in the fact that most internal sports events are oversubscribed and do not even require marketing. In addition to being the Coordinator of Inter Sports, Renee is also active in several student organisations, such as INSÜK and EuroTeQ. This allows them to stay close to students and understand what could or should be improved in student life. All these experiences and personal qualities demonstrate one thing – Renee does not act out of obligation, but out of passion. I believe that this is exactly the kind of person who should lead student life.

Alexander Rein Robas: Thank you! Any other speakers? Yes, please.

Anna-Triin Reilent: Good evening! From what I have seen of Kaidrit, she has not set herself merely a goal, but a journey. This journey runs through TalTech classrooms, through organising events, through active participation both within and outside the university, through diplomacy and through the hearts of her friends. She is active and intelligent. She has a natural talent for critical thinking as well as the skills acquired from public administration studies to identify problems, analyse them and

ultimately find the best solution. As we both know, the best solution does not come solely from identifying the problem, but also from framing it correctly. I see her as a supportive friend but also as a determined individual whose drive is difficult to keep up with. This is for good reason. Kaidrit has a broad network. She has the ability to highlight each individual's strengths and create synergy within a team, enabling efficient and thoughtful achievement of goals. Every time I meet Kaidrit, she is always engaged in something, and it did not surprise me at all when she told me she wanted to join the Student Union. Therefore, I sincerely hope that her journey continues here in the Student Union, and knowing Kaidrit, she will make the experience of other students at TalTech memorable as well. Thank you!

Alexander Rein Robas: Thank you! Does anyone else wish to give a supporting speech? Alright, then I would ask both candidates to come forward. We will continue with the round where the Student Parliament can ask questions. Student Parliament, the floor is yours.

Maksim Dolinin: I have a question for both of you – how do you see the day-to-day work of this position and what powers and responsibilities, in your opinion, come with this role?

Renee Maripuu: I can start. I see the day-to-day job as creating an understanding among students of what the Student Union actually does, while also shaping for regular students (who are not familiar with student activism) the understanding that there are additional opportunities at the university for spending free time, creating a motivation package, building connections and all the other benefits that student life can offer. In terms of responsibilities, the Student Life Board Member must of course be aware of the work of people operating in their field, to some extent micro-manage, be present, support, guide when necessary, and make agreements at a higher level when needed, as well as discuss and deliberate ongoing matters with fellow Board members that may concern the Student Parliament, university management, dean's offices or other relevant structural units.

Kaidrit Singh: I will continue that line of thought. A very good point, and I agree with it. I would add that I see the Student Union not as a hierarchical unit, but as a team. We are equals and must respect one another. We are a bridge between management and students. We must stand for students' needs and their concerns consistently and at all times. To conclude, as my grandmother used to say – golden words – I quote her: "Communication is the foundation of relationships, but relationships cannot exist without communication."

Alexander Rein Robas: Thank you! Student Parliament?

Ander Mägi: Have you communicated with current Board members? If yes, then the second part of the question – do you see a desire to continue their vision or do you have your own direction that you would like to pursue differently?

Renee Maripuu: Regarding the current Board members whose term is ending, I have communicated directly with both Sass and Anna. From Sass, I have heard what is happening behind the scenes of the Board to understand his perspective. I have also had one-on-one conversations with Anna, asking how things looked a couple of years ago when she held a partial mandate as the Student Life Board Member and how it functioned. I have gained a lot of contrast and good recommendations on what went well and what could be improved, both then and in the current situation. So I believe I am fairly well informed about the roles of both individuals whose mandates are now ending.

Kaidrit Singh: Unfortunately, I am not familiar and have not communicated with them. That is because initially I did not plan to run, as I thought I was not sufficiently competent. However, my friends encouraged me to apply, because there is nothing to lose – you gain experience. So in the

last hours I decided to take on this responsibility and run, and I believe that by communicating with others and identifying pain points, it is possible to address problems. That is why I submitted my candidacy at the last moment. For example, in my current role as an executive assistant, I also did not initially know what the issues were or how to establish contact with employees, but I learned it on the job, and I believe everything can always be learned.

Sten Unt: A question for both. What do you consider the biggest challenges of this future role? How do you plan to address them?

Renee Maripuu: I can give an example that I strongly relate to from former Chairman Joosep Perandi. He was a very hands-on leader. He was involved in all processes more than necessary and thereby created additional workload for himself. I also see myself as a rather hands-on person. Learning to manage micro-management has been an active focus for me recently, and I believe I am in a good place with it, but I will certainly continue to develop. Similarly, taking on too many responsibilities – I have been actively working on saying “no” more and valuing my personal free time to avoid burnout and overloading myself.

Kaidrit Singh: I would say that one major issue that may arise is whether planned ideas actually reach students. I have thought about conducting satisfaction surveys to understand whether students truly want certain initiatives. I also considered using micro-surveys, which would make it easier and faster for students to respond. Another issue I considered is that tensions may arise within the Student Union, as unfortunately often happens in boards. In such cases, it is important to approach situations diplomatically, hear all parties, consider all perspectives and try to find a solution that suits everyone, while ensuring that no one is excluded.

Annemari Riisimäe: You currently have quite a lot of responsibilities, based on your CVs. How would you manage to plan all of this in your schedule, and are you willing to give up some commitments?

Kaidrit Singh: At first glance it may seem like I am active everywhere, but in reality my executive assistant job is 0.5 or 0.3 workload. The main workload as Opinion Festival coordinator is in May; after that it becomes quite light, maybe two hours per week or even less. The board of trustees meets once per quarter, so not very frequently. If priorities are set correctly and time is planned properly, it is possible to do everything one desires.

Renee Maripuu: My situation has been that I came to university and immediately became very active in student activities. I joined INSÜK right away, became a sports coordinator there, joined the Student Union, became project manager for the freshman bags, then came EuroTeQ, Juuliuse Jüngriid and all kinds of student activities I am currently involved in. When putting together my CV, I realised that although I am involved in many things, I do not do anything halfway, but it is time to start scaling back some activities where I am no longer as actively involved. I believe that becoming the Student Life Board Member is the ideal way to do that. I feel that currently I am spread too thin across the university, like a piece of rubber stretched very thin. This role would act as a unifying link that brings everything together. Therefore, I plan to significantly reduce my various commitments.

Maksim Dolinin: An abstract question – let us take a hypothetical 24 hours in your life. Please describe what that looks like. How many hours go to university, work, and if you are involved in student organisations, how much do you contribute daily? For both candidates. Thank you.

Renee Maripuu: I conducted a deep analysis of where my time goes. It has been quite relevant recently. Student activism is close to my heart, I want to finish university, and “a healthy mind in a healthy body” and all that. If we break down 24 hours, currently I aim to sleep 8+ hours, which is a significant improvement compared to previous years – likely one of the main causes of burnout.

Then about 2–3 hours per day go to training, not necessarily consecutively. Studying also takes time – I need to write my thesis and complete the remaining credits, which takes about 2 hours per day. Of course, my passion – student activism – takes 2–3 hours, though not with full intensity. The remaining time I try to dedicate to myself and spend with loved ones, avoiding overloading my mind, as recovery is also important.

Kaidrit Singh: Out of 24 hours, as mentioned earlier, definitely 8 hours go to sleep, because we cannot function without it. Around 4 hours go to studying – lectures and homework, 2 hours to other activities (volunteering or work duties), and the remaining time I spend on other things, for example visiting my grandmother, which I am doing today, or exercising. I have found a balance – if there is a lot of mental work, then physical activity is also needed to maintain balance.

Karolina Perv: A question for Kaidrit – please describe the responsibilities of this position.

Kaidrit Singh: The responsibilities include bringing the organisation closer to students, organising events, representing students and addressing their concerns. Within the Board, communication and assisting others when necessary, as well as organising various sports events.

Karolina Perv: Can you name specific events that you know are organised by the person responsible for this position in the Student Union?

Kaidrit Singh: I do not know the exact name, but there is a survey in a town-hall format where students come together and present their concerns, which takes place once a year. Also organising various sports events, although I am unfortunately not very familiar with them, as while sport is important in my life, it is not a priority.

Maksim Dolinin: A question for both candidates – how many ECTS credits are you currently taking? Renee mentioned being able to manage all studies within 2 hours per day.

Renee Maripuu: This semester I am taking 54 ECTS including my thesis.

Kaidrit Singh: I am taking 36 ECTS.

Maksim Dolinin: Kaidrit, you also mentioned working part-time as an executive assistant, while this position requires approximately 20 hours per week. Which commitments are you prepared to give up, and to what extent?

Kaidrit Singh: For example, we are currently looking for another executive assistant, because I have previously said that I want to do something that is close to my heart. For instance, volunteering is closer to my heart, as salary is not the main factor for me – if I do something, I do it with passion. So currently, communication responsibilities at work would be what I would give up.

Maksim Dolinin: I would also like to hear Renee's perspective.

Renee Maripuu: Could you clarify the question?

Maksim Dolinin: Yes – which of your current activities are you willing to give up, considering that you are taking 54 ECTS, which is already above a full workload, and you are also involved in Jügrid, INSÜK and other activities?

Renee Maripuu: I am afraid that there will not be any staff position for me in INSÜK next year, I most likely will not be a EuroTeQ ambassador next year. I will step down from the role of study consultant at the Student Counselling Office, in Jügrid I am currently already contributing as much as I can, and that has been fully acceptable from Taavi and Tom, for which I am very grateful. From the perspective of ECTS, in the master's I do not plan to take several minors in parallel. That already

drops quite a number of ECTS. I think that I can explore those limits quite well over half the summer, if my mandate were to begin, and through that see how many ECTS I am able to and can take. There is no plan to go overly crazy with it.

Ander Mägi: You mentioned earlier, Renee, that you are a hands-on person? But let us assume that you end up disagreeing with a project manager in the Student Union. How do you resolve the conflict?

Renee Maripuu: I do not think I would have disagreements in the way you imagine. I find that every project and every undertaking is essentially shaped by the person who is implementing it at the time. Therefore, I think the Student Union is a place where one can fail and no one takes your head off for it. Likewise, I am not the kind of leader who would bite someone's head off if our opinions do not align. I let people experiment, I may give direction as to why I think one or another thing might fail. But I still let them experiment and make mistakes, because from the point of view of self-development that is the most sensible. I am very oriented toward self-development and my own growth has happened through making mistakes.

Sten Unt: A question for both. How would you like to develop cooperation within the Student Union and with the Student Parliament?

Kaidrit Singh: Belgium came to mind for me, where in Minos our first meeting took place over tea. We had berry-flavoured tea and it was the sort of icebreaker that made people communicate with one another. Through one tea we got to communicate with each other and found similarities and differences with different people. For example, I found differences and similarities with a person from Morocco, a person from France, a person from somewhere else in the world, which in my opinion was very, very cool. I would personally bring a small cake to the office every week, if allowed, because I really like baking. I would like to communicate with everyone personally in order to understand what their views are and how they see the organisation, how they see students. I want to understand better how communication with other organisations works, and understand what people expect and see and what their pain points are that should be dealt with.

Renee Maripuu: Could I ask for the exact wording of the question?

Sten Unt: How would you like to develop cooperation within the Student Union and with the Student Parliament in the future?

Renee Maripuu: I find that cooperation has two major cornerstones — inclusion and communication, which the current Student Life Board Member has done very well. We have field meetings and she gets us to actually talk to each other. In addition to those boring everyday matters. First of all, we may talk in depth, for example about Board elections, what that looks like, and the next moment we are talking about what was difficult for me this week in my own position. For example, I have not spoken with my supporting speaker, who is in my field, but every time I speak with someone I do not otherwise interact with. I really like that principle and I think it could certainly be expanded in certain ways to the entire Student Union. I find that right now the Student Union is segregated into its different fields. General communication would help a great deal. From the perspective of the Student Parliament, in previous years I had never once seen Student Parliament members in the Student Union office. And I am tremendously happy to see it this year, that as much as I myself go there, there is always some Student Parliament member there as well, for example Sten. Again it comes down to talking, this year I am very well aware of who we have in the Student Parliament and what kind of people they are. That is because I have gotten to speak with them in the office or at a motivation evening. I think that activities which, between the lines, force people

to become friends with each other are the key to success. In a way, that expresses inclusion and develops communication and self-expression skills with people with whom you otherwise would not interact so much.

Karolina Perv: How do you relate to micro-management and do you think it should also be applied within the Student Union?

Kaidrit Singh: I think you still have to be aware of everything, but you definitely must not take too much on yourself. You have to know how to delegate to other people who can help you when necessary. Otherwise there is a real risk of burnout, for example I had that last year because my workload was 1.0 and in addition I took on extra work, so nearly 2.0 workload. I learned from my mistakes, I learned to delegate. I learned that you do not always have to take everything on yourself. There are supportive people and a community that wants to help you.

Renee Maripuu: I agree with Kaidrit to some extent, but I find that there is a difference between “micro-management” and “micro-management.” One kind of micro-management is that you hear what is wrong and the next moment you find yourself hands-on involved in it. The other is that you share your advice and thoughts on some topic. I find that one has to find a balance between those two, and if hands-on intervention is needed, then that possibility should always be there, but to a large extent one must take one’s own workload into account, because that is not linear either. It is quite a sinusoid, it goes up and down. According to one’s capacity, one should look at what that micro-management should look like at any given moment.

Alexander Rein Robas: Student Parliament, let me ask in between. A quick temperature check? Hands up, those who are already certain in their decision. Alright. We have also received a whole bunch of public questions here. Shall we let the public ask a bit as well, okay? Alright, I will take the most popular question from Slido. For both candidates, what are the biggest concerns in TalTech student life?

Renee Maripuu: I find that one major concern is that behind some organisations and processes there is one person who does not make handover files, and as a result certain processes freeze behind those people. I find that in student activism it should not be the case that some process is left on one person’s shoulders in a way that cannot be handed over. I also see that, judging by today’s election, the problem is that the Student Union is not sufficiently transparent. Four candidates in total for the student body leadership is, in my opinion, rather depressing, because the candidacy period was not short and in my opinion there was not very little advertising either. But this is the situation where people inevitably either walk around with their nose stuck in their phones or do not know what they would be getting themselves into if they applied. And if you do not know anything about something, then you do not want to apply for it either. The general transparency of the Student Union is a topic that has gone round and round for years and years, and it should be untangled somewhere.

Kaidrit Singh: I agree with the issue of transparency. I would add that the involvement of many students is not sufficiently large. If there is an event, or like last year when that public assembly-like event was organised, then in reality it was the activists who came. Those who are the most active. But we could specifically involve those people who are the so-called average student and who do not even dare to raise their voice. I thought that more quieter people could be involved. We are all equal.

Alexander Rein Robas: Thank you! Let us take one more public question. Kaidrit, you mentioned that everyone should be equal. How do you plan to start involving the Maritime Academy and our colleges?

Kaidrit Singh: That is a very good question. For example, at Open Doors Day I got to know a girl who studies in Kohtla-Järve and she said that this is one event where she wanted to show what we do in Kohtla-Järve, which I think is very cool. And there were also people from the Maritime Academy, so I think that if events are organised in the centre, meaning Tallinn, and they are genuinely invited, then they would gladly come.

Ander Mägi: A question for Kaidrit — in your motivation letter you mentioned the following: “In the context of the funding and development capacity of student life, it is important not only to initiate ideas, but also to implement them and evaluate them consistently.” This raises the question for me, what kinds of solutions do you see?

Kaidrit Singh: There needs to be more analysis, so that when some idea arises, we do not go at it impulsively, but think it through. As an example, we want to create a new school newspaper, it seems like an okay idea and there would also be students for it, but we have to think whether it is also meaningful in the long term, whether in two years there will still be people who want to continue developing it or continue using it.

Hanna Savolainen: Question to Kaidrit – why specifically the student life field, why not the chairperson?

Kaidrit Singh: I personally feel that I would like to be closer to students. As a chairperson, I feel that yes, I would be able to meet students, but one of my core interests is young people. I know that in the future I want to be closer to youth and be more involved in civil society. I would like to be more in contact with students.

Sander Roosimäe: For both – during your student activism so far, have you made any mistakes or experienced failure, and if so, how has that influenced your further actions?

Renee Maripuu: By now, towards the end of my bachelor's studies, I have organized quite a number of events, such as social events and sports events. All of them have their own niches that can be seriously messed up. I believe I haven't managed to set anything on fire, I have put out all fires, and there hasn't been any fundamentally major failure. I consider all those moments of failure as learning experiences. It is also a lesson when you organize a social event in a student bar and people are in a heightened mood and suddenly you discover that a restroom door has been broken down at the IT College, then it makes you think that next time you might not want to lead that event. I haven't had any failures with irreversible consequences. Everything has been rather mild, something to learn and develop from. My first year as an indoor sports coordinator was purely trial and error. The second year followed, and I categorically know that I will not continue in that position, because over the academic year I have refined the rough edges and feel that I am in a good place and know my weaknesses. This year it is specifically so that not all teams can participate, because I simply cannot handle or fit everything in, as walls are not made of rubber.

Kaidrit Singh: My mistakes have generally been milder. And I have learned from them, because if we do not experiment, we cannot learn. The biggest mistake I have made was in volunteer work. I was responsible in the operations team at the Opinion Festival. A situation occurred where a man came to me asking for parking tickets. We had run out of tickets. Another person was responsible for

them. I should have ensured that they were available, and a small problem arose from that, but fortunately it was resolved through communication. I called the person responsible for the parking tickets, they came on site, and we resolved it.

Ander Mägi: Returning to the fact that both of you have applied for a leadership position. It is important to know your weaknesses. Please name one major weakness as a leader.

Renee Maripuu: I have a real-life example, I worked as the head of the electrical installation department at Enefit in the summer. I made the mistake of letting higher-level people walk over me, in the sense that in the end I accumulated a huge amount of overtime because higher-level people directed that overtime and additional project fees had to be done that way. There was a lot of overtime, and I also received performance pay, but at the same time they cut all overtime pay from the project fees. On average, there were about 10 hours of overtime per week during the summer. Perhaps not giving in to pressure in the future is something to consider. Here as well, deans, faculties and the rectorate have a very significant role in decision-making. Their advice does not always have to be taken with absolute seriousness.

Kaidrit Singh: Taking on too many tasks is also a minor issue for me. I learned from last year and started saying “no” to things that did not nourish me. A bigger issue that I have and cannot get rid of is that I am a helpful person, sometimes too helpful. For example, if someone writes to me and asks whether I can help them within two hours, I do not say “no”, because it is in my nature. I want to help people, especially if it is related to relationships or school. That is indeed my weakness.

Karolina Perv: Question to both – do you plan to run for the university senate or another decision-making body if you become the student life board member?

Kaidrit Singh: I believe that if you are the student life board member, you should be aware of what is happening elsewhere. And I believe that I would run for the senate, but at the expense of some volunteer work. For example, I would no longer be a volunteer at the Song and Dance Festival.

Renee Maripuu: I cannot make such a decision off the top of my head. I am not sufficiently familiar with the work of the senate, I would first need to get a clearer understanding of the workload, responsibilities, how it would affect my day-to-day life and my role as the student life board member. At the moment I would rather say no, I simply cannot assess the workload.

Maksim Dolinin: For both candidates – what is one activity or project that the Student Union is currently doing that should be discontinued and why?

Renee Maripuu: As is known, there is a board retreat in the summer, and I think its purpose has become somewhat diluted. As far as I am aware of the boards, they do not understand its direct purpose or rationale. People are not sent there in a unified structure, just a certain number of people per organization attend. There are leaders, marketing people, etc. If the topic being discussed does not concern that person’s field, they do not grasp it, issues arise and communication breaks down. Not necessarily to eliminate it entirely, but to shift the focus and structure it more clearly.

Kaidrit Singh: I would say that as far as I am aware of the events, I think every event is important, because they have been created for a reason. They would not exist without a purpose. As Renee

pointed out, for some events the purpose could be adjusted and made more precise. In my opinion, they should not be discontinued.

Hanna Savolainen: How do you handle criticism?

Renee Maripuu: I want to be told directly and clearly when something is wrong. On the other hand, there are two approaches: either you tell someone directly in a negative way, or you provide something concrete and useful that they can take with them. I would like to believe that I am calm enough to listen to a person, I do not immediately respond negatively if something unpleasant is said. And I do not think that everything is always one hundred percent good if there is only positive feedback. There are always areas for improvement.

Kaidrit Singh: I fully agree. Criticism exists so that we can learn from it. If there were no criticism, how could we develop further? We could not. If something negative is said, then there is a reason for it. I would say “thank you”, accept those words and reflect on them. One should not respond immediately out of emotion, otherwise the response will simply be emotional. It must be analyzed.

Alexander Rein Robas: Representative Council, a quick temperature check. Raise your hand if you have already made up your mind. Clear. Let’s take a few more audience questions. For Renee – which positions will you definitely give up if you are elected as the student life board member?

Renee Maripuu: I have already answered, but repetition is the mother of learning. One thing I will give up is EuroTeQ, another is peer-to-peer student counselling, and considering the student life board member position and its responsibilities already in the preparatory period, I will also have to step down as a tutor. I will remain a member of INSÜK, but I cannot take on a position of responsibility, already because the student life board member must be impartial towards all student organizations. Also, in terms of ECTS, in my master’s studies, for my own well-being, I do not plan to take excessive semesters.

Alexander Rein Robas: Question for both, how do you handle emotions?

Kaidrit Singh: I might be a bit of a strange person, but I like stressful situations. I like to challenge myself and genuinely reach a solution. As an assistant, I have learned to cope in very stressful situations, and they have built a thick skin. I believe my stress tolerance is good.

Renee Maripuu: I would dare to say that people who know me have, I hope, never seen me explode in a stressful situation. Generally, when stress peaks, I still remain calm, and later I draw my conclusions and summaries, where I might be a bit more emotional. In fact, I have quite good stress tolerance. I can give an example that my fellow sports coordinator witnessed. There was an event called Slip n flip in November. One might initially assume that if you organize an outdoor event in a “warm” season, then the weather would play a marginal role, but I could not predict how many meters per second the wind was or how much rain fell. Saunas arrived late, prizes arrived late, medals arrived late. The schedule went completely off track. Moreover, I started setting up the event 8 hours before it began. I had also hoped to have volunteers to fill cups, etc. The IT department did not provide the rented equipment either, because the weather was simply so bad. During all this, Laur came to help me and saw how I ran from one place to another, but I would like to believe that I did not send away any volunteer or participant in a negative way. Somehow everything still worked out, and if I had lost control at that moment, the event might as well not have taken place.

Markus Käpp: For Kaidrit – did you consider running for the chairperson position?

Kaidrit Singh: As mentioned earlier, repetition is the mother of learning. I want to be closer to students. I feel that as a chairperson I cannot be as close, and my core interest is standing up for students, providing them with better opportunities and caring for them.

Iiris Aljes: Do you think that bringing activities and events to the Maritime Academy is feasible? So far, people have been invited, but it is not motivating or coordinated, as many activities take place during lectures.

Renee Maripuu: I also occasionally organize events during lecture times, particularly in the sports club. The reason is very simple, it is not possible to get time slots otherwise. From an event organization perspective, I try to schedule events after the working day. But that is not always possible. Sometimes, in order to improve or maintain the quality of my event, I get time slots in the sports club during physical activity classes, which is why events take place during lectures. However, I believe that based on the example of Juuliuse Jügrid trips, if these different TalTech sub-units are used well, there are quite a lot of benefits. For example, JJ organized last year's season trip to a nature house somewhere near Pärnu, which offered quite good quality for the price. I believe the Maritime Academy is also quite a nice building, there is potential there. For example, bringing dartboards, rally simulators, etc., it is clear that activity immediately increases. It is entirely justified that more events could take place there. This is definitely something worth trying if I were to be elected to this position.

Kaidrit Singh: I think it would be feasible. Although, of course, we cannot take everyone into account, so we have to think about the majority, whose eyes light up when they hear they can go to the Maritime Academy. Perhaps consider whether subjects can be arranged differently, although I doubt it is possible. So that the most enthusiastic and motivated students could attend.

Sander Roosimäe: Renee, I understand that you are participating in IRONMAN?

Renee Maripuu: Yes.

Sander Roosimäe: The opening orientation event and IRONMAN fall at exactly the same time. How do you plan to handle that?

Renee Maripuu: I have thought about it quite a bit. I would say that I am not a professional athlete with a fixed training schedule. I can manage my own time as needed. Meetings can be held during the day. Training can be done early in the morning or in the evening. I know that on the day of the opening event, it takes the whole day and it is after IRONMAN. I can arrange my training myself. Days are not identical. The human body is not a machine.

Sander Roosimäe: To follow up, yes training, but IRONMAN itself takes place on the preparation day, how do you see that?

Renee Maripuu: I will not participate on Sunday, August 23, as that is the half IRONMAN. I do not do things halfway, I do them fully, so I will do the full distance on Saturday. I definitely will not organize such a large event alone, so delegating urgent matters for one day to a colleague is completely fine if agreed upon. Then on Sunday and Monday I will fully shift into the opening event mode.

Ander Mägi: Renee, we know that you are a passionate athlete. Since you are closely involved in the sports field, if you were to become the student life board member, would you focus more on the sports field?

Renee Maripuu: Look, I have previously pointed out one issue at my field meeting, which in itself is already a problem. When an average student looks at the Student Union, there is a high probability that they have noticed that there are so many sports events happening around campus, and they start to think that the Student Union only organizes sports events. Or if not the Student Union as a whole, then the student life field. I have spoken to several first-year students or students who are more distant, and I have received feedback that the reality is that it seems student life only does sports. But that is not the case, student life is also involved in funding, communication with organizations, and everything else that is not sports. This is something that needs to be improved in terms of transparency. If I myself had the mindset of pushing even more sports, I would burn out, because it is an additional responsibility and it would not improve the situation I just described. I will try to remain impartial and not pick favorites.

Alexander Rein Robas: Representative Council? Anyone online? Let's take five final questions. Then we will reassess.

Sander Roosimäe: I would ask Kaidrit, how would you involve those passive students if they do not want to come anyway?

Kaidrit Singh: This year, throughout January, an event called Rahvakogu was held, where a good acquaintance of mine, a civic activist, was one of the organizers. The event worked in such a way that in December, people were randomly selected from the population register to come and represent their views. We could use a similar method, but based on the student list, selecting people through random sampling. Some might not dare to come, but we could offer something to motivate them. This way, a representative cross-section of the university would be ensured.

Ander Mägi: Question to Kaidrit on the same topic. This raises the question: the Representative Council is elected, they should actually be able to represent the quieter side. My question is whether you see the role of the Representative Council in the Student Voice as representing those students who are usually not heard?

Kaidrit Singh: I would say that strength lies in cooperation. This should be done together, not by one motivated individual. We are all members of the organization and care about the well-being of the student body. I hope that answered your question.

Maksim Dolinin: What will you do if things go sour with the university? Will you take an academic leave or step down?

Renee Maripuu: I have worked a significant part of my life in the catering sector, and one colleague chef once said that if you start something, you finish it. I do not leave things unfinished. As a general rule, I do not plan to step down from the position just like that, nor take academic leave without reason. There are always ways to stay afloat. But if I had to choose between the two, then rather academic leave.

Kaidrit Singh: If things are planned properly several months in advance, such a situation should not arise. I am the kind of person who plans several months ahead so that I know when there are more

flexible days. If things were to go wrong, I would take academic leave. It is not good to be in an uncertain environment. One must see things through, put in effort and work hard.

Alexander Rein Robas: A couple of audience questions. Question for both – what feedback have you previously received that was difficult to hear?

Kaidrit Singh: Last year I applied for a position that required a lot of knowledge about the UN, and unfortunately I did not get it. I made it to the final two candidates. The feedback was that although both candidates were strong, the other person was better in some respects because they had experience within the UN. That was difficult to accept. When you go into something unfamiliar, you fear getting hurt. Sometimes it is good to take risks, and new perspectives are also valuable. The safest option is not always the best one. It taught me something and I moved on. Other opportunities came and helped shape me into the person I am today.

Renee Maripuu: I have a more recent example from January. As already mentioned, I am taking quite a lot of courses. Until this winter, I had never failed an exam before. But there was one interesting course, like short circuits. I managed to fail that course three times, which really brought me back down to earth. It showed that even I have moments where, even if I give my best and study intensely, unexpected things can still happen, and you cannot fully prepare for them. In the end, through discussions and negotiations, I managed to pass the course.

Alexander Rein Robas: Question for Renee, and this is the last question of this block. In your motivation letter, you outlined goals but not solutions. What would be the solutions?

Renee Maripuu: The first point would be to make life easier for organizations, so that their boards can focus more on their activities and less on bureaucracy. I plan to address this by making handovers more structured within organizations. I have the impression that this varies greatly between organizations. Some boards start from scratch, while others receive very good handovers. I believe this can be addressed through board meetings. I also pointed out that visibility needs to be improved, which is a long-standing issue. We need to start untangling where the problem originates. I have the feeling that during Representative Council elections there has not been a single candidate who has not brought up transparency. I believe this should be addressed at the board level, whether they understand the activities of the Student Union, how they explain it to their members, and how the hierarchy between our organizations and the Student Union functions. I also pointed out that currently certain roles become dependent on a single individual. This should definitely not be the case. It must be easily transferable to the next person, otherwise processes cannot be carried out. I want to continue prioritizing the development of new student activists. First-year students should genuinely join organizations and be actively involved, because unfortunately or fortunately, passive participants do not reach positions like the one I am in. We need to focus on pre-events and on how to make the flow of information more manageable for students. Right now, it feels like information is delivered, but nothing is retained.

Alexander Rein Robas: Thank you. Representative Council, temperature check. I propose taking a break and continuing at 19:45. With that, the student life board member block is concluded.

Pause 19.30-19.45

Alexander Rein Robas: Welcome back! We will continue with the second part. First, a self-introduction, then supporting speeches and a Q&A session. First, I invite Rain Samarüütel for a self-introduction.

Rain Samarüütel: Good evening everyone! Esteemed Representative Council, esteemed Student Union family, and all other listeners. My name is Rain Samarüütel, I am a second-year student of Applied Economics at TalTech. At the same time, I am also the chair of the School of Business and Governance Student Council (hereinafter MTÜK), a member of the Student Fund, as well as the bachelor's degree representative in the council of the School of Business and Governance. I am standing here today because I have applied for the position of President of the Student Union. I see that I am the right person who is able, capable, and willing to take TalTech students to the next level. As time is quite limited, I will talk about what I have done before and what my visions and plans are for the Student Union. As the chair of MTÜK, over the past year I have managed to increase the budget, I have kept the MTÜK board united so that no one operates alone in their field, but we stand and act together towards common goals. For the first time, I have also managed to involve students from international curricula in our activities, events, and our upcoming trip to Madrid. I have maintained very good relations with the dean's office of the School of Business and Governance. I have personally taken part in every single MTÜK event during this academic year. My term as MTÜK chair has a little under three months remaining, but I am already very proud of what we have achieved with our board, and here I would like to thank my board members, because without each and every one of them the result would not be what it is. I would also like to thank my supporters today and the rest of the audience for coming here to support me. Let's give them a quick round of applause. Let me briefly talk about my plans and visions for the Student Union. TalTech students can broadly be divided into two groups. We have student activists and so-called regular students. Both groups need support and want to be seen. The Student Union must be there for both. From the perspective of student activists, I see and would like that the Student Union should interact more with faculty student councils, not be a governing body somewhere far away that simply exists. I would like to create a more regular meeting format for this, for example monthly meetings. Now I can quite well respond to Renee, who said he does not like those retreats, but I would say that I really liked them and I believe they are necessary. This way we would know what is happening where and who the board members are in other student councils or organizations and what they are doing. This would help create new collaborative projects. Secondly, I would like to make the project funding process faster and clearer. Currently, students and project managers have to deal with reporting issues for several months after the project, which no one wants to deal with afterwards. Turning to regular students, my approach would be more practical. I see that for regular students two things are important: where to get food and how to complete their studies. I would start with completing studies. As in the School of Business and Governance, final exams are currently being developed as an alternative to theses. I see that this could be applied in other faculties as well, as it would make the graduation process easier, since many struggle with completing their thesis. Secondly – food. I really dream that TalTech could have student kitchens like I have seen at universities abroad. Places where there are stoves, pans, pots, ovens, etc., but with the principle that each student cleans up after themselves. This may be difficult to implement, but I believe everything is possible. I have talked about all my visions and plans, but I will honestly say that not everything yet has a concrete solution on how to achieve it, but I know I am full of motivation and believe everything is possible.

I would like to end by quoting the British writer George Herbert: "Where there is a will, there's a way."

Alexander Rein Robas: Next, we invite our second candidate today – Sten Unt.

Sten Unt: Hello, I am Sten! I am a second-year Cyber Security student. As you probably know, I have also been a member of the Representative Council for a year. I have familiarized myself with TalTech, how the Representative Council works, and I have also noticed a few problem areas that I would like to improve. I want to help the Representative Council be in more continuous contact with the Student Union. I want to create systems that would amplify the Representative Council's independent pursuit of ideas and problem-solving. As a person, I value emotional intelligence. I value... sorry... it seems that I was not fully prepared to speak here. Sass, how should we proceed?

Alexander Rein Robas: Would you like a break?

Sten Unt: If possible, I will continue speaking in a slightly more informal way. As a person, I want to support others. When I rise, I want to lift others up with me. Sometimes I fall, I get back up and move forward. I do not have experience in leading a student council, but I do have experience in managing projects on a smaller scale. I am a bit nervous right now, but I will continue regardless. If I become president, I want to support a few projects that current and previous Student Union presidents have started. One would be the ÜHIS index, a concrete way to measure how students are doing at this university. This is a delicate issue, as it requires balance, a clear understanding of how we reflect students' concerns, whether we overrepresent a few individuals with major concerns or represent people with smaller concerns. What should be clearly reflected in the index. I have spoken with the current president and also with Karoliine. I am aware of what the president's role is. I want to develop cooperation within the Student Union, with the Representative Council and different student councils. For example, Sass has been pursuing a project to create a shared platform where students could communicate, for example in Discord. The role of the president is to be transparent and to have a smile. Thank you!

Alexander Rein Robas: Candidates, you may take a seat. Does anyone wish to give a supporting speech? Please.

Carolyn Rõuk: I am Carolyn, I am on the MTÜK board together with Rain. Since Rain is currently my and MTÜK's chair, I think I am a good person to speak about what kind of chair Rain is. For me, a person in such a position solves problems and finds solutions, takes responsibility, supports others, and is present, and Rain is one hundred percent that and even more. I have gone to Rain first with absolutely all internal and external MTÜK problems, and every time he has solved them and unrealistically fast. In addition to solving problems, he is willing to take responsibility for everything himself. Rain already mentioned this, but I can confirm one hundred percent that he is always present. I think there is not a single MTÜK member who does not know who Rain is. He really shows up everywhere, not only in MTÜK but also at general TalTech events. He has managed to do this while being in a full-time internship. Rain always listens but also expresses his own opinion. He is very innovative and not afraid to stand up for it. Since Rain has probably had the most disagreements with me, I can confidently say that he is exactly the one who always resolves those disagreements. For me, Rain fulfills all the criteria of being a chair. Rain is the heart of our MTÜK and keeps and

motivates the entire board and is always there for everyone. And he would be just as good as the Student Union president. Thank you!

Alexander Rein Robas: So, are there any other supporting speakers?

Anders Brandmeister: Esteemed Representative Council, I am Anders, the Head of Investments at the TalTech Student Fund. As Rain mentioned, he is also a member of the Student Fund, and I must say he is a damn good member, because he is not just a member, he actively shows up, contributes ideas, and does not see it as a problem to contribute more than an average member. So Rain shows up, contributes ideas, not only through analysis but also by contributing to the market strategy working group, which is entirely voluntary. As is characteristic of the Student Fund, we deal with economic activities, which means that most of our members are from the School of Business and Governance Student Council. I am not personally a member there, but inevitably we receive constant feedback that what is happening there is very positive and the leadership style is very well organized, which clearly indicates that Rain is a very good leader and capable of taking on the next responsibility as president here. Lastly, I would point out that Rain is not only a leader at the university but also outside in other activities, such as basketball, volleyball, sock wrestling. What doesn't this guy do. I believe Rain is a good leader to represent all of us and to advance life both outside the university and in student life in general. Thank you!

Alexander Rein Robas: Taavi, your chance to shine.

Taavi Tamm: Hello from me as well, dear members of the Representative Council and attendees. Unfortunately, I had to go carry dartboards. I will give my supporting speech for Rain. From a student life perspective, I am in a fossil status, I have seen five different presidents and there is no denying that over time you develop a good intuition and sense of who is a good leader. Rain is not only a good leader, but he is also humane, someone who cares about everything, wants to include everyone, listen to everyone, and always find solutions. Whenever there has been a problem or concern with Tomi, Rain has always found a solution. A leader's inherent seventh sense or the ability to read the room and the audience is a natural leadership trait that Rain definitely has. I wish the other candidates success. I believe our student life and Student Union are in safe hands. Thank you for your attention! Come to the darts game tomorrow as well.

Alexander Rein Robas: Does anyone else wish to give a supporting speech?

Mark Toomsalu: Hello! Esteemed Representative Council, esteemed audience. I will give a supporting speech for Rain. Why am I doing this? I have seen how Rain came to the university, initially my first thought was that he would be quite good in sports. He could be an amazing internal or external sports coordinator in the future, that was my initial vision of him and the feeling I had when I saw him. Over time, being a member of MTÜK and seeing what he has accomplished and done, I increasingly felt how leadership flows in him. It is a funny quality that does not come at birth but develops over time. It is a kind of charisma and aura that he has when he speaks or presents. That was also very noticeable today. What I have felt with Rain is that he leaves a calm and positive feeling, regardless of where he is or what he leads. This has been visible in MTÜK. When I have seen nervousness in different boards, when things do not go as planned, when a project fails, under his leadership and MTÜK board this year, everything has been very calm. As a member who was once also on a board, I have seen that there is no stress, and I believe that is also needed in the Student

Union board, because the Student Union board determines the overall outlook of the university and student life. If we had a board president like Rain, I believe the outlook for the next two years would be very good. That is all from me, thank you for listening and good luck with the elections!

Alexander Rein Robas: Are there any more supporting speakers? From online? Alright, then we move on. Please, both candidates come forward. Representative Council, the floor is yours.

Maksim Dolinin: To both candidates – how do you see the day-to-day work of the president of the board and what powers and responsibilities come with this role?

Sten Unt: I can start. As I mentioned earlier, I have also spoken with the current president. In the role of president, it is important to communicate with TalTech's partners. Planning the action plan together with the Student Union, cooperating with the Representative Council, attending meetings, and implementing that action plan. In the day-to-day role, there is more event management.

Rain Samarüütel: I do not know what to add, I agree. Maybe I would add that it is important to be visible and present around the university, so that 80% of the time when you go to the Student Union, I exist there.

Hanna Savolainen: What is your daily workload? How do you see the president's position fitting into that?

Rain Samarüütel: I am currently doing an internship. MTÜK chair responsibilities, studying, and the Student Fund. Not much else. But the MTÜK board term is ending, the internship ends in March, I was offered a contract, but I know that if I get into the Student Union, I do not plan to continue. The reason I applied is actually simple – at the moment, I can have much more impact at the university than in the labor market. I see that I can stand for more things here than elsewhere. In ten years, I would not come back to be the Student Union president.

Sten Unt: I also currently have an internship, in addition to that 33 ECTS. Last semester it was 49. The internship itself ends before the start of the mandate, so there would be no conflict. I have the opportunity to properly dedicate time to settling into the role and familiarizing myself with the work done by my predecessor. Also, the reason to run for president is that it is a rare opportunity. An opportunity to serve people, which in my opinion is one of the most important things a person can do with their life. Being in the Representative Council, I realized I want to do something more active. The responsibility and honor of fulfilling this role are things I would not take lightly. Thank you!

Ander Mägi: To both, as I asked earlier from the student life candidates – have you experienced failures or made mistakes during your student activism? I would like to ask you both the same question. What mistakes have you made?

Rain Samarüütel: I thought the same when this question came up in the student life section. I thought about it, I do not know if it is bad or good to say, but no specific mistake comes to mind. Maybe a general mistake is always emphasizing how important communication is. I cannot point out any specific major mistakes.

Sten Unt: In my case, you have already seen one failure or setback. In addition to that, I organized a concert for a friend. It was done and then also turned into an ITÜK event. I tried to promote it, but I could have talked to people face-to-face more and invited them to the concert. People did come,

the performers were happy, but I believe it would have gone better with more promotion. When I fail at something, I get back up, look at what the issue was, and try to learn. It may sound funny, but I love criticism. If someone has something to say, good or bad, I look at it and enjoy the development process.

Maksim Dolinin: During your long journey in student activism, you have seen the activities of the Student Union board. What is one thing that the previous or current board has done wrong in your opinion? What would you do differently or improve?

Rain Samarüütel: I cannot say about last year, as I was not that active then. About this year, I would point out something I have seen as the chair of MTÜK, which is missing from the Student Union – consistent communication between the Student Union and the chairs of student councils. Right now, it feels like the Student Union exists somewhere, but does not really care what we are doing. At some point there is reporting, but no continuous interaction. That is the main point.

Sten Unt: From my experience, the Student Union has not made many mistakes in my view. But I would invest more in communication with student councils so that there are no issues with funding. I would increase support for the Representative Council and support their proactiveness.

Annemari Riisimäe: What is your biggest weakness as a leader and how would it affect your board's work?

Sten Unt: It seems that sometimes I get nervous with public speaking, which has not happened in a while. That could be a minor concern. I would also say that I do not have as much experience as the other candidate, but that does not prevent me from using the time before the mandate to ask questions and develop myself.

Rain Samarüütel: I would point out that sometimes I do not prepare myself sufficiently. It does not matter what it is, whether giving a speech or organizing something. Everything, whether big or small, requires focus and effort.

Maksim Dolinin: Question for Rain – in your motivation speech you mentioned the funding process. How do you plan to reduce bureaucracy, considering that this involves taxpayer money, which is mediated by the Student Union, and the Student Union itself must provide various reports to the university?

Rain Samarüütel: This is the point where I do not have an exact solution yet, as I am not entirely sure how it works from the Student Union's side. The problem statement came from how it appeared in MTÜK. From the students' perspective, it is very bureaucratic. This is definitely something that can be discussed with the head of the funding committee.

Ander Mägi: Rain, you mentioned final exams in your motivation speech. My question is, do you believe that a final exam is essentially an equivalent outcome compared to gathering material for a thesis and applying learned knowledge to real-life problems? I will give you an example from the School of Science, our work is very closely tied to practical independent work and interpreting and describing results is a very important part. From my own experience, I would say that a final exam does not replace the experience I gain in the lab and in defending my thesis.

Rain Samarüütel: I definitely agree. It has not been exactly defined yet what and how the final exam format should look like, I myself was at times against it. I see that the thesis format definitely provides more than a final exam, but in the School of Science it may be less feasible than in the School of Business and Governance. Since I do not have as much contact with other faculties, I cannot answer very precisely at the moment. But I think that if there is enough will, everything is possible.

Alexander Rein Robas: Representative Council, shall we take a question from the audience? Sten, you ran for ITÜK chair but received fewer votes. What do you think has changed now that would make you suitable to lead an even larger organization?

Sten Unt: Again, I have now been in the Representative Council for a year and much closer to the Student Union's work. I know more about the university, its processes, and I have also participated in two discussion panels in the meantime. The time since running for ITÜK chair has been active. There have been ups and downs, and I feel that I have changed as a person during that time.

Alexander Rein Robas: Thank you! To both candidates – do you see yourself more as a manager or as a leader? And why?

Sten Unt: As a leader. The president's position requires being a role model, giving your best, and motivating others. In my personal and academic life, I try to do exactly that and hope to improve every day.

Rain Samarüütel: It depends. Being a manager is not about doing things alone, but about knowing when to be a supporting player in the background. For example, in the Student Union board, I may be the president, but everyone is equal. It depends on the situation. When needed, I am a leader; when needed, I am a supportive person.

Alexander Rein Robas: Thank you! Representative Council?

Ketter Aljes: Sten – how might your limited leadership experience affect you in the position of board president?

Sten Unt: I do have teamwork experience. In the long term, I would already now focus on developing my skills – by talking with Sass and asking questions. I believe the biggest difference would be that in the beginning I would ask more questions than I otherwise would.

Ander Mägi: How would you act in a situation where a board member announces before the end of the mandate that they wish to step down from their position?

Rain Samarüütel: I would clarify the question – does this mean one board member resigns?

Ander Mägi: Yes, one of the three. How would you act in that situation?

Sten Unt: The most important thing would be to ask questions. What are the reasons behind the decision? Does it stem from personal life difficulties, issues with the position, or a change in opinion? Depending on that, if they cannot continue, then a replacement must definitely be found, most likely through some form of voting. If the issues are solvable and the person still has the desire and passion for the position, I would try to find ways to reduce those concerns and then evaluate whether they

can continue. And if the unfortunate moment comes where they cannot continue, then preserve their dignity and move forward by finding a replacement.

Rain Samarüütel: I would add that I agree with some of those points. It very much depends on whether the departure is due to life circumstances or role-specific reasons. If it is role-related, I would try to fix it by discussing with them, asking what is wrong and whether they would be willing to continue under certain conditions, and steer in that direction. But if the person does not want to continue, you cannot force them. That aligns with the idea that if it is a life decision, then you must move forward quickly and find a solution.

Alexander Rein Robas: Does the Representative Council have more questions or shall we move on? Yes, Karolina please.

Karolina Perv: Everyone goes through difficult times in life, like we did a bit less than a year ago when there was a recall of the president in the Student Union for various reasons. If either of you were in that position and the mandate is long with many responsibilities, and you are supposed to support others, what if you are the one who needs support? Who would you turn to? How would you actually handle that situation so things do not fall apart and you do not disappear?

Rain Samarüütel: I would like to highlight one of my strengths – I am not afraid to ask for help. Whenever I cannot decide or do not know something, I am not afraid to turn to someone who can help. For example, I have asked previous MTÜK chairs for advice. If such a situation arose, I would ask previous chairs for guidance.

Sten Unt: If I start to feel overwhelmed or approaching burnout, I would definitely reduce my other commitments, which I already have relatively few of. The responsibility and honor of being the Student Union president would take priority. If necessary, I would of course ask for help, whether from my colleagues in the Student Union or other people I know I can rely on. Regardless of where the problem comes from, I must be open with my teammates to the extent that there are no unexpected surprises. People should be able to prepare.

Karolina Perv: How do you view micromanagement? Do you think it should be applied in the Student Union?

Sten Unt: I believe that as a president it is necessary to check in with people, ask if they are doing well and if they need help, whether there are any problems. But people still have their own responsibilities and they have the opportunity to come forward with those issues themselves. I do not plan to put my fingers too deeply into other people's pies. You have to respect others and trust that they have the skills and capabilities to manage.

Rain Samarüütel: Here I would agree with Renee's perspective, that if it is micromanagement in the sense of explaining what needs to be done, then I support that kind of micromanagement, because generally in the Student Union I believe everyone is very competent and capable of handling things themselves. But if it is the kind where I end up doing everything myself, then I do not support that.

Ander Mägi: You brought out quite a few different goals in your motivation letter. If you were selected, I would ask you to name your three top priorities. Inevitably, two years will pass very quickly.

Rain Samarüütel: Three out of five then. The most important, something that has personally affected me a lot, is communication between student councils and the Student Union. Secondly, flexibility in graduation for regular students, we want them to be visible as well and that they would not fail to graduate because of the thesis. That is definitely important and needs to be addressed. Thirdly, my vision of a student kitchen.

Alexander Rein Robas: Thank you! Representative Council? I will take a question from the audience. Question directed to Rain – what additional solutions should the Student Union offer to the 80% mentioned in your motivation letter who do not participate in student activism? What do they lack?

Rain Samarüütel: I pointed out that based on informal surveying among regular students and my friends, they said they are only interested in two things – where to eat and how to graduate. At the moment, I cannot add anything more.

Alexander Rein Robas: Question for Sten – the Representative Council adopted a position that awareness of students' rights should be increased. How do you see this being implemented?

Sten Unt: Of course, first you need to familiarize yourself with what those rights, regulations, and needs are. Then it is possible to create different events or surveys that would provide information. One idea, for example, could be a small game-show-type event where students have to research at home and then participate on-site for some kind of reward.

Alexander Rein Robas: Representative Council? I will take one more audience question. Why did you run for president instead of a field-specific leadership role?

Rain Samarüütel: Simply because of personality traits. For me, the president is someone who is involved in everything. The student life field is too separate. I like to be involved in a bit of everything.

Sten Unt: I ran specifically for the president's role for a couple of reasons. One of them is that I actually have quite a lot of public speaking experience, regardless of what today might suggest. The president is not only someone who brings the team together and leads it, but also someone whom partners think of when they think "TalTech." I like people, I like talking to them, understanding their real desires, needs, and problems. Seeing the humanity in them. I believe I could bring that balance to the president's role that is necessary.

Alexander Rein Robas: I will ask once more for the Representative Council. Signal with your hand if you have made your decision. Let us proceed to the vote. You will receive a link. For others, the candidate is elected if a quorum is achieved, meaning over 50% of the votes.

IT WAS DECIDED:

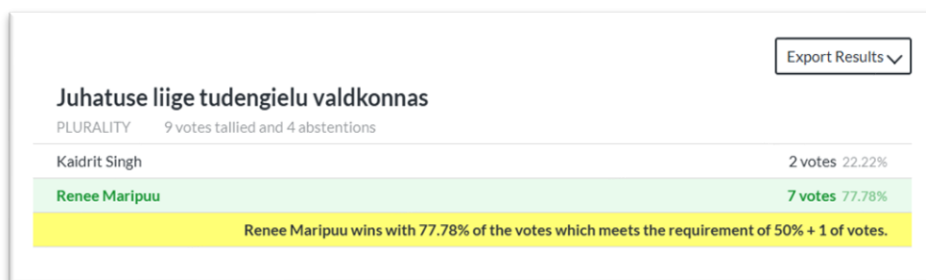
1.1 To appoint Renee Maripuu as a member of the Student Union board in the field of student life with a mandate 01.07.2026 – 30.06.2028.

1.2 The decision takes effect upon adoption.

VOTING RESULT: Renee Maripuu – 7 votes in favour, Kaidrit Singh – 2 votes in favour

In total there were 13 voters, 9 voted, 4 were impartial.

Outtake of the ElectionBuddy platform:



IT WAS DECIDED:

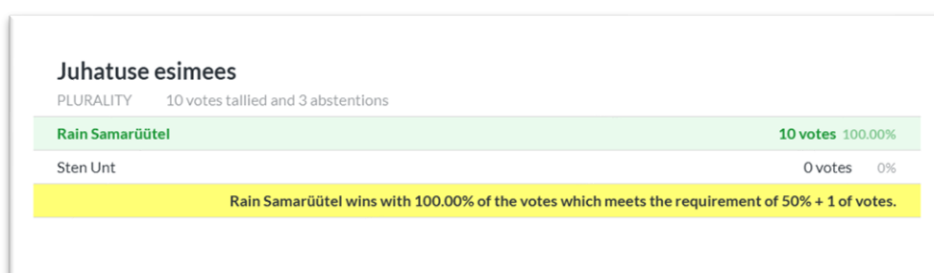
2.1 To appoint Rain Samarüütel as the Chairman of the Student Body Board with a mandate 01.07.2026 – 30.06.2028.

2.2 The decision takes effect upon adoption.

VOTING RESULT: Rain Samarüütel – 10 votes in favour, Sten Unt – 0 votes in favour

In total there were 13 voters, 10 voted, 3 were impartial.

Outtake of the ElectionBuddy platform:



Chairman
Alexander Rein Robas

Minutes secretary
Kirke Piiskoppel

Lisad: