



Speech by the AStA during the central reception of first-year students on 23 October 2023

Dear first-year students,

a warm welcome to the TU Braunschweig from us as well. I am Nele. These are Amro, Steffen, Timon and Adrian and together we stand before you today as representatives of the AStA. The AStA is the "General Student Committee" and we represent the interests of all students at the TU Braunschweig. That now includes you, too! Representation of interests is a vague term at first. We will try to make it more tangible for you in the course of our speech.

You are now at the beginning of your studies. You will soon realise that studying is more than just sitting in lectures and studying for exams. You will be sharing ideas with strangers at parties and philosophise about the sense and nonsense of the world in shared kitchens. Gather new experiences, broaden your horizons and support each other. Student life and studies thrive on this exchange and mutual support. It is easier to celebrate successes in a community, and the challenges and difficulties of studying seem half as great when you are not alone. This solidarity among students is the greatest asset we have.

It also drives us in our daily work and is the central anchor for our actions. Solidarity is also expressed in the services we offer you. Amro would now like to tell you what exactly these are.

Amro:

Hello everyone, I too would like to welcome you to TU Braunschweig. The guiding principle of solidarity is expressed in our work above all in the fact that we try to enable all students to participate in society and in student life. Mobility plays an important role in this. We want to make sure that you get around quickly and cheaply, both in Braunschweig and in Lower Saxony. For this purpose, we are responsible for the semester ticket, which allows you to use local and regional transport free of charge. We also run a bicycle repair shop, where you can repair your bicycles with guidance. And if you don't have a bike, we have a bike sharing service where you can borrow a bike for up to 30 minutes free of charge.

But participation means much more than the opportunity for mobility. Participation also means cultural participation, for example attending cultural events. Your student ID card, for instance, gives you free admission to three theatres in the city, including the Staatstheater, and you can watch as many movies as you like for a week at the Braunschweig International Film Festival in November. We also organise a variety of events, such as flea markets and parties, which you can attend free of charge.

But we don't just want to be there for fun questions, we also want to be there for you when things aren't going so well. Our idea of solidarity also extends to the area where your study progress could be

threatened by financial or psychological hurdles. We have developed a range of services to help you in emergencies. For example, if you are unable to pay your semester fees or have a problem with your landlord, we can provide legal or financial advice. If you cannot afford a laptop, you can borrow one from us. And we offer open office hours for international students and first-generation students (those who do not come from an academic household). We hope that you will not find yourself in a situation where you need any of these services during your studies. But if you do, we want you to know that you are not alone with your problems and that you can always come to us and we will support you!

If you would like to contact us there are several ways to do so. Write to us via E-mail or on Instagram, give us a call or drop by our office. You can find us on the main campus right next to Mensa 1.

Nele:

As you can see, we are very keen to address structural barriers to the smooth running of your studies. At the same time, we would like to encourage you not to view your studies as purely bulimic learning. We students are part of a society that will face great challenges in the coming years and decades. The Climate Catastrophe and growing global inequalities are examples of the complex problems we face today. It is up to us to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to face these challenges, to develop solutions and to build a liberated and solidary society. To do this, it is important that we learn to place ourselves in a global context and understand the impact of our actions on society. What role do we play in social processes and what role do we want to play? You can learn to actively decide this.

That's why we encourage you to think outside the box in the coming semesters. Attend a lecture series or get involved in one of the countless student initiatives. Network with people from different backgrounds so that you can learn from each other and help each other with the challenges you will undoubtedly face.

That's a lot of information for now. We hope we've shown you why it is important to have elected student representatives. The great thing is that you can be one yourself. If you want to get a taste of the AStA and dive into university politics, then come and visit us. We have many different projects and areas in which you can get involved, and together we will find the right place for you to put your ideas and projects into practice. We believe that together, as students, we can shape this university and the society of tomorrow. But before we do, we wish you all the best with your studies, a smooth arrival in the city and we look forward to seeing you again tonight at the Freshers' Party or in the coming weeks and months.

See you soon and be in solidarity. Thank you!