PRESENTATION OF ALTUND
THE STUDENT GROUP FOR ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION AT THE
NORWEGIAN UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract — The student board for alternative education has been a think-tank for alternative education at NTNU since 1987. Main topics for this presentation will be facts and history about the board and current projects of interest.

Index Terms — Alternative education, AltUnd, NTNU, students, portfolio evaluation.

ALTUND

AltUnd – the student board for alternative education, was established by a group of engineering-students in 1987 to promote alternative ways of teaching, learning and cooperating while studying at what was then the Norwegian Institute of Technology (NTH). Welcomed by the rectorate, AltUnd received not just a mandate – but also funding to pursue its goals. While originally focusing solely on the engineering-studies – the integration of these studies into the wider range of courses of the new Norwegian University of Science and Technology expanded our horizons, and today AltUnd is concerned with all courses and studies at NTNU.

The group consists of seven members - backgrounds ranging from various faculties on campus, we seek to keep our common focus on the general qualities of NTNU as a teaching institution.

Our primary objective is to investigate and improve the methods of teaching and evaluating used on campus. This is greatly facilitated by the broad network of staff members and professionals cooperating with AltUnd at NTNU, and because we are allowed to work independent of the student-democracy structures. Our role is to propose, initiate, and contribute to projects aimed at improving the quality of the teachings and studies at NTNU.

We are constantly on the outlook for new areas of interest, and especially relevant for our work seems to be the change in industry from traditional production and manufacturing to knowledge-based businesses. This change is of course redefining the standards for what is expected from a modern university.

AltUnd is recognized for its independent role in advocating students rights and interests in the educational qualities of courses offered at NTNU. Due to a flat organizational structure, members of AltUnd are allowed to work freely and creatively, in investigating the matters of alternative education.

CURRENT PROJECTS OF INTEREST

Portfolio evaluation

This fall portfolio-evaluation will be tested as an alternative method of providing grades and feedback for the Geography course at NTNU–Trondheim. Based on the foundations of problem-based learning, the intentions are to establish discussion-groups consisting of approximately eight students, aided by a senior student able to answer questions and provide guidance when necessary. AltUnd has taken the initiative, and provided the extra staff and funds needed to get the portfolio-evaluation going.

Examination will differ significantly from the traditional written exams used until now. Instead of answering given questions, students are to present their portfolio orally and engage in discussions on the subject. Portfolio-evaluations will be the main area of interest in our presentation at ICEE 01 in Oslo.

Introduction week

The last years AltUnd has welcomed the new engineering students with seminars aimed at inspiring the students to make reflections on their own learning environment. In addition to focusing on personal study- and communications skills, we also discuss the expectations awaiting in the real world following graduation from NTNU.