

# Political statement <sup>[1]</sup>

<b>1. The role of Studenti Indipendenti Politecnico.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 University's role in the society.....	2
<b>2. Didactic.....</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1 Curriculum and teaching content.....	3
2.2 Teaching methods.....	5
2.3 Evaluation methods.....	6
2.4 Expenses and materials.....	7
<b>3. Fees, Right to Study and Facilitation.....</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1 Fees.....	7
3.2.1 Scholarships.....	9
3.2.2 Housing.....	10
3.2.3 Food and spaces.....	11
3.3 Facilities.....	12
<b>4. Traineeships and student workers.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>5. Ideas for another University.....</b>	<b>13</b>
5.1 Mental health and accessibility.....	13
5.2 Sustainability.....	15
5.3 Transfem and LGBTQIA+.....	15

## 1. The role of Studenti Indipendenti Politecnico

The goal of Studenti Indipendenti is to enhance the lives of students and young people in all its forms, starting with direct listening to the students and overcoming the idea of having all the answers by default. We believe it is necessary to have the ability to engage with students to avoid the tendency to become self-absorbed and self-referential, which is a common problem in many representation lists and student organizations. We also aim to connect and involve students from all schools and remote campuses to have a broad and comprehensive understanding of the needs of those studying at the Polytechnic.

The importance of dialogue is not only external; internally, we believe that the only way to make decisions is through synthesis. While always staying within our values, we collectively decide what to do without hierarchies, seeking to include all the diverse positions within the assembly, with no voice counting more than another, thus transcending any personalism. In addition to making decisions together, we also share responsibilities in their implementation, striving to carry them out in a concrete and organized manner, avoiding empty rhetoric, thanks to the contribution of everyone based on their various possibilities.

Studenti Indipendenti, besides being a political space for student representation, aims to be a safe environment where the community can come together, express themselves, and experience university life beyond academics and study.

A fundamental characteristic of our organization is independence from any political party and external influence. We do not rule out the possibility of collaborating with organizations and associations within and outside the Polytechnic who share our goals and can help us achieve them. Participation in broader forums beyond our university community is necessary to address regional and national issues that also impact the Polytechnic (such as the Regional Student Services, which is regionally based).

## 1.1 University's role in the society

The objective of Studenti Indipendenti is to enhance the lives of students and young individuals in all aspects. This begins with directly listening to the students and moving away from the notion of having all the answers by default. We believe it is essential to have the capacity to engage with students in order to avoid the inclination to become self-absorbed and self-referential, which is a common issue in many representation lists and student organizations. We also strive to connect and involve students from all schools and remote campuses to gain a comprehensive understanding of the needs of those studying at the Polytechnic.

The significance of dialogue is not limited to external interactions; internally, we believe that the only way to make decisions is through synthesis. While always adhering to our values, we collectively decide what to do without hierarchies, aiming to include all the diverse perspectives within the assembly, with no one voice taking precedence over another, thus transcending any form of personalism. In addition to making decisions collectively, we also share the responsibilities in their implementation, endeavoring to carry them out in a concrete and organized manner, avoiding empty rhetoric, with contributions from everyone based on their respective abilities.

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## 2. Didactic

The teaching has gradually transitioned back to the pre-pandemic instructional methods, while striving to integrate the new tools. We emphasize the importance of in-person teaching and request suitable spaces so that everyone can attend in-person educational activities and study within the campus.

This transition is leading to a reduction in the use, and in some cases, the abandonment of recordings and streaming. These technological and innovative tools within the university environment, for which the Polytechnic invested significantly during the pandemic, have proven to be a valuable resource, especially for working students or those not following the traditional course schedule, but generally for the entire university. Therefore, we are working to ensure that they are retained as a support to traditional teaching.

We advocate for moving beyond purely frontal and one-directional teaching and propose a model of collaboration and active participation by the students. We believe in an inclusive teaching approach that genuinely takes into account the needs of students with specific learning disabilities (DSA).

### 2.1 Curriculum and teaching content

Currently, the process of designing the study plan is highly structured and lacks personalization, making it very challenging for some students to pursue the course of study that interests them the most and specialize in their preferred field through customization of the curriculum.

The deadline for submitting the study plan is set on a date that, at times, doesn't allow all students to have a full understanding of their academic situation, particularly when the results of some exams from the September session are not published in time for the study plan submission deadline. This rigid deadline, used by some schools to form study groups from the beginning, poses an obstacle to student awareness, as students are forced to enroll without having the opportunity to evaluate more courses. To address this issue, we will work within various bodies to ensure that every professor respects the deadlines for publishing exam results and that the study plan submission deadlines allow students to attend some classes before selecting their courses.

Students who are unable to compile and submit their study plan on time (due to forgetfulness, academic prerequisites, etc.) are subject to a fine of €100 in addition to the already substantial tuition fees. This is unacceptable because not all students have the means to pay this additional fee.

Historically, there has existed what we refer to as the "CFU supermarket," where students have to "buy" credits to include in their study plan each year. The practice of paying for exams that were not passed in previous years and must be included in the study plan is

unacceptable. We believe that the "CFU supermarket" is an inadequate system for constructing an academic path and should be entirely revised to allow for more customization without penalizing students with past due exams.

Concerning the content of various courses, it is important to note that these are selected by departments based on market-driven logic. This poses a significant problem for students in certain degree programs who would prefer different course offerings. Therefore, we believe that each degree program, through the Course Study Committee (CCS), should have the autonomy to decide the content of its own courses, involving the opinions of students who are often not heard in the decision-making process. In selecting these courses, we also believe it is important to consider social and environmental sustainability themes to ensure that the future professionals are agents of change in the market rather than being solely market-driven.

An additional obstacle to freely choosing one's academic path is the bureaucratic challenges related to course transfers and transitions from bachelor's to master's programs. The main issues are twofold. The first is the lack of clear information regarding which courses will be assigned as curricular integrations; having this information in advance would allow students to address gaps proactively. The second issue is that often, the assigned courses are not highly relevant to one's degree program. Especially during the transition to the master's program, it would be beneficial to complete these requirements as part of the study plan, preferably at the beginning of the program. We propose offering a selection of supplementary courses that students can choose based on their academic path, and to avoid enrolling in individual courses, there should be the option of reserved enrollment.

The concept of Additional Educational Obligations (OFA) can be divided into OFA test and OFA eng. The first applies when a student has not achieved a score of 60 or higher on the entrance exam, and the second applies when a student does not pass the English language part of the entrance exam. OFA test prevents the student from enrolling and taking exams until it is passed, while OFA eng prevents the inclusion of exams from the following year in the study plan. Information provided by the Polytechnic regarding both these Additional Educational Obligations is not easily accessible on the website, and the limitations are not explained in the most effective and clear manner. We believe that these OFAs should not be so limiting, and the information should be more readily available to all students through the website and online services.

Specifically, we do not consider OFA eng to be crucial for degree programs taught entirely in Italian and believe that it should not be mandatory, especially since it is an additional expense for the student. Furthermore, regarding OFA ita for international students, which are currently exclusively online, mandatory, and overcrowded, they are equally unnecessary for those who plan to attend lectures in English and do not significantly contribute to learning. Therefore, we propose removing the attendance requirement to make the courses more accessible to those who are genuinely interested and reviewing the delivery methods.

## 2.2 Teaching methods

With the end of the health emergency, the university's top priority has been the safe return to in-person teaching methods. This transition is crucial for maintaining the university community's vitality and making lessons more engaging and effective. However, the return to the classroom has highlighted the real value and demand for the new digital tools used during the pandemic. This is important for ensuring that all students have an equal right to education.

Among these tools, we find the introduction of online lectures, which enable students with difficulties in attending regularly (e.g., out-of-town students, working students) to participate in lessons. Recordings, on the other hand, offer the opportunity to catch up later and provide additional support for students, as they are useful for review and deeper understanding. Despite the various positive applications of these tools, many professors view them as a threat to in-person attendance and are therefore reluctant to stream or record their lectures. However, this attitude clashes with significant overcrowding issues, especially in larger classrooms, making active engagement and participation challenging. To address these problems, we call for more investments in the expansion of the university, which, as it grows in the number of enrolled students, should also expand study spaces or increase faculty-to-student ratios. Recordings and streaming continue to be tools that can alleviate this problem, allowing for the recovery of missed classes in cases of overcrowding, scheduling conflicts, or difficulties in moving between different locations. We request that access to these tools be guaranteed to improve university accessibility.

However, we recognize that this type of teaching can amplify some disparities among students. For example, there are non-uniformities in internet connectivity across the national territory, and technical difficulties arise from the lack of suitable equipment. Therefore, we propose the establishment of a "PC bonus" to mitigate the effects of the digital divide, which has already been introduced in several other Milanese universities.

With the return to traditional teaching methods, long-standing issues related to education at the Polytechnic resurface. Students have been complaining about the need to renew teaching methods for years. Tools like Blended Learning and Flipped Classroom are almost never implemented in practice, and there has been a longstanding request for a change in the organization of educational laboratories. Therefore, we propose an increase in the hours dedicated to laboratories, moving away from the usual experiences for a more practical approach. Additionally, we will work to substantially increase the extracurricular educational offerings by expanding the Passion in Action packages. Lastly, we highlight disparities in teaching quality among different faculties or levels of education.

## 2.3 Evaluation methods

The general organization of exam sessions is not favoring students. The number of exam sessions (currently set at 5 or 6) is insufficient. Many Italian universities offer 7 or more exam sessions, significantly reducing stress and ensuring greater autonomy and study organization for students. With so few exam sessions, it is inevitable that the number of students falling behind (*fuoricorso*) will increase, making it increasingly challenging for them to keep up with their studies. Due to these difficulties, many students decide to interrupt their educational path. Having such a limited number of exam sessions creates a "suffocating" atmosphere for students, who are forced to study mainly with a focus on exams and rarely at their own pace. Furthermore, this system leaves behind those who risk exiting their academic path prematurely and potentially having to pay higher tuition fees for being out of the standard timeline. Having more exam sessions during the academic year does not negatively impact the quality of education; on the contrary, it can improve it by providing more opportunities to take exams. We, therefore, request an increase in the number of exam sessions in an academic year to at least 7. Additionally, we would like the Polytechnic to actively support students who are out of the standard timeline or retaking exams by instituting dedicated extraordinary exam sessions, for example, in conjunction with mid-semester interim tests.

Some professors still use the outdated practice of "*riprovato*" as one of the possible correction options for an exam. This practice forces students to retake an exam at the next session if they didn't pass it with a low score. It is unacceptable, in this case or any other, for a professor to prevent a student from taking an exam based on the outcome of previous sessions. This not only penalizes the student but also jeopardizes their academic career. Missing just one exam session can hinder a student's progress, forcing them to slow down their path and consequently spend more on tuition fees. We request that "*riprovato*" is explicitly described and prohibited in the university's academic regulations to avoid misunderstandings between professors and students.

Currently, the organization of exam sessions involves a manual scheduling of each course's exams. This management method can lead to disparities in the distribution of exam sessions throughout the session, causing issues for students in organizing their study. Therefore, we consider it essential for the Polytechnic to adopt a computerized scheduling system for exam sessions to ensure greater fairness and better study organization.

It is also necessary to reconsider evaluation methods that do not always have to rely on traditional exams. Continuous assessment through project assignments can be an excellent alternative if well-structured. Projects should not solely serve as a gateway to the written exam to prevent students from being overwhelmed.

Evaluations of labs and projects should always be accompanied by written feedback to help students identify strengths and weaknesses in their work.

Different groups within the same course can end up taking very different exams, ultimately penalizing some students. We commit to engaging in dialogue with all professors from various course groups to jointly prepare exams, ensuring uniformity.

Finally, we would like to explore the possibility of self-assessment, to be compared with the professor's evaluation, in order to highlight any areas that need improvement.

## 2.4 Expenses and materials

The cost of educational materials is a fundamental issue for all students in the AUIC and Design schools, as it has both economic and qualitative implications for each student's educational career.

Every year, students are required to not only pay hefty tuition fees but also purchase educational materials out of their own pockets to complete various required projects. This problem, which has persisted for many years, shows no signs of resolution, primarily due to the Polytechnic's neglect of this issue. The university has never allocated a fund for educational materials or provided the required materials. The extensive use of materials not only burdens the finances of students in the AUIC and Design schools but also contributes to significant environmental waste, including paper and other materials like plywood, fabric, metal, etc., which has a notable long-term environmental impact.

Our goal is to work towards the Polytechnic taking action to create a dedicated fund for educational materials or incorporate the cost of materials into the annual tuition fees, thereby providing the materials to all students who need them.

Another important issue concerns the various software provided by the Polytechnic free of charge, which is usually limited to certain courses of study. We believe that this software should be made available to all students, regardless of their course of study.

## 3. Fees, Right to Study and Facilitation

### 3.1 Fees

We conceive of university education as a right that cannot be denied to those facing significant economic hardships. The Politecnico di Milano is the most expensive public university in Italy, located in one of the most expensive cities in the country. Therefore, pursuing higher education becomes almost a luxury.

According to the ISEE (Equivalent Economic Situation Indicator) monitoring report published by the Ministry of Labor (for 2021), the distribution of university ISEE values is significantly different from that of the general population. In households without university students, there is a high frequency of low ISEE values (< €20,000), but among university students, the

distribution of ISEE values is flatter, indicating that the university environment still has an elitist composition, and access to education faces numerous economic obstacles.

In the pursuit of ensuring the right to education, we would like to raise the "no tax area," which is the ISEE threshold below which students are exempt from paying tuition fees, to at least €30,000. Nationally, the limit is set at €22,000, but the Politecnico di Milano could independently choose to raise the threshold to a different value (for example, the University of Milano-Bicocca has the "no tax area" at €25,000). Additionally, in many cases, the tuition fees are even higher due to study plans that exceed 74 CFUs (see the academic section).

We would like to reform the taxation system by eliminating the income tiers and introducing a downward linearization. The current tiered method poses issues at the edges, as small changes in ISEE can lead to significant differences in the amount of tuition fees to be paid. In this regard, we could aim for a fair and progressive taxation system, where a specific fee corresponds to each ISEE value, a system that is already employed by some Italian universities.

### 3.2 Right to study

"Right to Study" refers to all the tools introduced by the government (State, Region, University) to facilitate access to education for students. These tools come in various forms and are provided by the different entities responsible for managing the right to study, which in the Lombardy region, following the dissolution of the regional umbrella organization, are now the individual universities.

For us, the Right to Study should be the driving force to ensure access to education for everyone. Our country is second to last in Europe in terms of the percentage of young graduates, primarily due to the decline and underfunding of the Education and University system by all institutions. Our goal is to bring this issue to the attention of governments and advocate for funding policies aimed at young people and students.

For example, during the pandemic, we observed that support measures for low-income families and students were very limited compared to the actual number of people who should have been eligible, leaving a large group of students excluded.

Politically, the Right to Study for us is only true if it is inclusive, easily accessible, and based solely on the initial economic conditions. This is why the Right to Study should be disconnected from any meritocratic logic. Otherwise, it would equate merit (always understood as grades) with the right to study.

In general, we believe that to ensure a real Right to Study and the creation of an effective student welfare system, action should be taken on three main fronts: controlling prices (with the most illustrative case being rent costs), creating agreements, and expanding the pool of beneficiaries for scholarships.



### 3.2.1 Scholarships

The scholarships provided by the DSU (Diritto allo Studio Universitario) represent the primary tool of support for students to help them overcome their economic challenges and pursue higher education. As *Studenti Indipendenti*, *Link - Coordinamento Universitario*, and *Rete della Conoscenza*, we have been advocating for increased funding for public universities and expanded student support measures for years, both through demonstrations and participation in technical discussions with universities, the Lombardy Region, and the Ministry of Education. Our goal is to highlight the need for more substantial investments in public universities.

The Polytechnic University of Milan has consistently aimed to eliminate the figure of "eligible but non-beneficiary" by covering the group with its own funds, which would have otherwise been excluded from state funding. While this approach is positive in ensuring that eligible students receive scholarships, it also underscores the inadequacy of funds provided by state and regional institutions to meet the growing demand for scholarships.

The application deadlines for scholarships are very tight, starting from the first week of June (for new students) until August 15, and from June to August 5 for enrolled students. These deadlines act as a barrier to accessing the right to study. They should be more aligned with other state universities in Milan, which have deadlines in September, and should take into account the limited availability of information sources regarding the application process. The same applies to the deadline for recognizing the "out-of-town" status, which involves presenting a lease contract by October 10. In reality, many students do not have a regular lease contract by that date, especially international students. It is also necessary to revise scholarship amounts to align them with Milan's rent prices and living costs.

In Lombardy, the merit criteria, such as the minimum number of earned CFUs required to obtain or maintain scholarships, are among the highest in Italy. This represents a significant barrier, as more than a third of the awarded scholarships are granted to first-year students, implying that many students lose their scholarships due to failing to meet the imposed requirements.

Given the analysis of the situation, it is clear that our university has not yet addressed this issue politically and only does the minimum to address the issue of the right to study. Our fundamental idea regarding scholarship allocation is that it should be entirely detached from merit-based criteria, as scholarships are based on a constitutional right and are non-negotiable. Scholarships should be considered as grants, not rewards tied to pseudo-merit criteria like GPA or earned CFUs.

Linked to this issue is the important point that the Polytechnic promotes various forms of income support for students, funded by private foundations or banks, in parallel with DSU scholarships but primarily based on meritocratic criteria. The most significant concern – and we believe it is a political mistake by our university – is the promotion of certain loan-based financing options offered by banks or private foundations. These loans are linked solely to

merit criteria and involve repayment of the principal plus interest at a fixed rate. For us, this practice (honor loans) represents the greatest devaluation of the Italian public academic system. It is paradoxical that a public university would accept and encourage practices like these, which devalue the importance of public education and create precarity in the job market.

### 3.2.2 Housing

The Polytechnic of Milan has seven residences in the main campus (one of which is temporarily unavailable for restoration), one in Como, and one in Lecco, with plans to build four more in the coming years. Although this may already seem like a lot, in reality, only about 3% of the students have the guarantee of independent housing apart from their family nucleus.

Access to these residences is divided between DSU (Right to University Study) students, who are offered a reduced rate, and all other students. Approximately 60% of the available spaces are reserved for DSU students, but the distribution is far from equitable. We believe that the number of residence spaces should be increased, with a higher percentage reserved for DSU students.

The remaining spaces in the residences are available to all other students. The only criterion for allocation is the date of reservation, and income is not taken into account. Since the number of available spaces is limited, they are often booked very quickly, leaving little room for students to secure university housing, and this process relies on mostly random factors without considering the diverse needs of students. The cost of these spaces varies depending on the type of accommodation and the chosen residence.

We believe that the allocation based solely on the reservation date is fundamentally flawed, and we propose that a reduction in fees based on income should also apply to non-DSU students proportionally, favoring those with lower incomes in the allocation rankings.

In some cases, the limited number of installment payments can force students to pay substantial sums all at once, which can be challenging for those with limited economic resources. Therefore, we consider it essential to be able to request a greater number of installment payments.

In recent years, there has been a further increase in fees in the residences, partly justified by services like weekly linen changes. We believe that the primary purpose of these facilities should not be to provide hotel-like services. While maintaining a minimum overall quality standard, the main priority should be maintaining affordable prices. Therefore, we think that such services should be optional.

To compensate for the lack of spaces, the university relies on a system of private residences, resulting in unequal service in terms of prices and guarantees.

Furthermore, those who cannot access the university residences find themselves facing the high rental prices in Italian cities, which do not guarantee the right to housing as a form of self-determination. This is why we believe that taking action within the Polytechnic is not sufficient, and there should be ongoing discussions at the city and national levels. These discussions should aim to increase funding for public residence spaces, as well as to implement policies with the municipality, region, and state to control rental prices (for example, by genuinely promoting affordable agreed-upon rents), recover unused and renovatable buildings, and introduce regulations to limit short-term rentals and encourage long-term ones.

### 3.2.3 Food and spaces

For us at Studenti Indipendenti, the university is not just a place for teaching and education but also a venue for student engagement and participation. In this context, the cafeterias and spaces provided by the Polytechnic are of significant importance. We believe that every student should have access to a space for studying, working on their projects, and having a meal. However, this model of an open and accessible university is not currently guaranteed by the Polytechnic's cafeterias.

The university cafeterias are still too expensive, especially for DSU (Right to University Study) students, and there are notable price differences and menu variations among the campus cafeterias, leaving some students behind. We have concerns about the allocation of bar and cafeteria spaces to different operators and request more transparency about the contracts. There are still several barriers that make the cafeterias an inaccessible space, such as the inability to accumulate meal vouchers (which would require an increase in financial resources), the fact that meal costs are not calculated based on ISEE brackets, limited opening hours, and the lack of space for everyone in need.

The type of university we envision provides sufficient spaces for the student community so that campuses can be used beyond lecture hours. It offers well-equipped study spaces that are open 24/7 in all campuses and even outside them, through agreements and partnerships with the city.

To make the university accessible throughout the day, we believe it's crucial to extend cafeteria opening hours and provide evening service, as already practiced in many other universities. These spaces should also be safe and inclusive, free from any form of discrimination or violence.

The university should not only be a place for education but also a hub for social interaction and the creation of a student community. Therefore, spaces should be designed to meet the needs and requirements of the students in the city. To build this community, we need to think about a campus model that is open to the city and the public, with free access and no barriers.

### 3.3 Facilities

When it comes to benefits, a distinction needs to be made between those provided internally by the University and those established through agreements with external companies/public entities.

Internal benefits primarily involve discounts on tuition fees. Currently, these are offered to students who work or engage in professional-level sports alongside their studies, have dependents (e.g., children), have a disability rating of over 66%, or have siblings enrolled at the Polytechnic. There are also merit-based discounts, such as for students with a GPA of  $\geq 27$ .

In the spirit of ensuring the right to education and allowing students in more economically disadvantaged situations to study, we aim to broaden the pool of potential beneficiaries of these discounts.

External benefits are not as numerous and often do not address the real needs of students. To improve this, we could establish agreements with transport operators, such as Trenord and ATM (the Trenitalia discount is widely used), to assist commuters who are required to pay hundreds of euros for transportation subscriptions. In addition to transportation, similar agreements could be extended to supermarkets, gyms, pools, libraries, and cultural venues (like the recent addition of the Triennale).

We also propose the introduction of a "PC bonus" to mitigate the effects of the digital divide, a measure that has already been implemented in several other Milanese universities.

## 4. Traineeships and student workers

In an elitist university, we must not forget about working students, individuals who are at a disadvantage due to their need to work while navigating an educational system that places them in an inferior position.

For working students, having an employment contract at the university means losing the opportunity to apply for university scholarships, one of the main tools for ensuring every student's right to education. Although the Polytechnic offers these individuals the option of part-time status, allowing them to earn their degrees over an extended period compared to the standard duration of their courses, we must acknowledge the fact that if the university didn't penalize students for falling behind by increasing fees for those with an ISEE below €30,000 or for academic disenrollment, it wouldn't be a problem to take more time to complete their studies in any case. Therefore, this solution primarily addresses a problem created by the university system itself.

Furthermore, balancing study and work responsibilities isn't solely about the overall time needed to obtain a degree. It also involves attending courses with mandatory attendance, making it challenging to obtain work permits or exceptions from professors.

In addition, there are issues related to curricular internships. These internships lack any oversight by the Career Service, leaving the Polytechnic to suggest companies or practices that offer unpaid internships. These internships often do not cover expenses, despite frequently requiring more hours than initially declared and often extending beyond regular working hours. Additionally, these extra hours are not included in the total hour count, leading to degrading conditions that approach the limits of legality.

Finally, we have identified that the situation is even more critical for international students who, on one hand, are subject to further discrimination and, on the other, are less aware of their rights.

## 5. Ideas for another University

As *Studenti Indipendenti*, we see representation as a means to effectively address and resolve challenges both within and beyond our university. In the past, we have used collective actions supported by petitions and engagement through social media. We believe it's crucial that every proposal is discussed in an assembly, shared, and supported by a large number of students.

Within the context of the Polytechnic of Milan, student representation has primarily focused on issues related to teaching, with limited opportunities to address environmental and social aspects. The Joint Guarantee Committee (CUG) is one of the cross-cutting bodies of the university that deals with social issues such as gender equality and LGBTQIA+ matters, but it has limited resources and receives little attention. On the contrary, its counterpart, POP (*Pari Opportunità Politecniche*), which addresses equal opportunities, does not include student representatives and is better funded.

*Studenti Indipendenti* is committed to creating spaces for dialogue within the university to promote the concerns of Polytechnic students. When such spaces are lacking or denied, we commit to serving as a guarantee to bring forward students' proposals and criticisms, even through engagement with the university or institutions. This is done to support participation and prevent socially and environmentally unsustainable behaviors by the university.

### 5.1 Mental health and accessibility

The issues related to psychological and social conditions are becoming more common among young people. Psychological well-being is now a privilege for a few, as are the tools necessary to pursue it.

Specific learning disabilities (DSA) and special educational needs (BES) are all too often considered excuses for laziness and a lack of willingness to "commit" to studying.

In a purely performance-oriented perspective, the two entities at the university for psychological support and disabilities support (Polipsi and Multichance, respectively) focus all their services on helping students pass exams and do not address the underlying causes of distress. Moreover, being underfunded, their waiting times are long, and the lack of a precise protocol risks leaving many students in a legal vacuum, exacerbating their difficulties.

As a student association, we believe it's essential to draw attention to the needs of all students and the value of each individual, not as "different" from an imposed standard, but as individuals with their own peculiarities and the same right to access higher education and pursue their own academic path.

We seek support that goes beyond uniformity and allows students to pass exams even when they are facing personal challenges. We aim for faculty training on neurodiversity, including DSA and neuropsychiatric disorders, to combat the stigma that tends to attribute everything to merit rather than well-being.

Given the diversity of these disorders, using the same tools for everyone is unacceptable. We propose a more personalized approach to accommodations, tailored to each student's specific needs, to avoid creating further discrimination. We also aim to obtain the possibility of a more customizable study plan and access to a tutor who can support students for as long as necessary, in all aspects of their university life, not just during exams.

Multichance's support should sustain and follow the student's educational path, involving continuous dialogue to define the best strategies for improving education. Furthermore, as the entity responsible for managing neurodiversity, we believe Multichance should improve its reception of students, providing not only technical support but also moral support and encouragement, and acknowledging their abilities and talents.

We see value in creating a dialogue among students to facilitate mutual enrichment. We also believe it's essential to include students with chronic and debilitating conditions that are not officially recognized as disabilities in Multichance's support.

The psychological counseling service should primarily focus on analyzing and addressing the causes of distress, rather than directly aiming for performance and the continued success of an academic career. We propose restructuring Polipsi to offer more numerous and diversified paths that better adapt to students' needs.

Viewing psychological distress as an individual rather than a social problem would be overly reductionist and wouldn't resolve many of its underlying causes. We believe that, although support services during difficult times are helpful, they are just a patch, not a solution. To address the issue, we need to start with education on these topics for both faculty members

who interact with students and the students themselves. This way, they can recognize the problem in time and seek the most suitable tools to address it.

Returning to the theme of innovative teaching, which includes recordings and streaming, we emphasize that the lack of these tools results in discrimination against anyone. Health issues, family emergencies, work, transport strikes, and various other commitments can occur in the life of any student, making it difficult to keep up with classes, even though there are means to overcome these challenges. Therefore, we believe that these resources should be made mandatory in the interest of all students.

## 5.2 Sustainability

Among the main pillars of our activity within the university, the theme of environmental sustainability undoubtedly plays a central role. We believe that the Polytechnic of Milan, as an educational institution, should take responsibility for advancing in this direction.

We aim to increase student participation in decision-making bodies that address environmental issues, focusing not only on internal dynamics within the university but also on city-wide and global issues. Furthermore, we hope for an improvement in the management of waste separation to promote recycling, reduce mixed waste, and contribute to the adoption of a circular economy. Attention should be given to the materials used in the packaging of vending machines.

It is essential that the Polytechnic encourages sustainable behaviors, for example, through the free or low-cost distribution of reusable bottles and bags to limit the use of plastic products. Additionally, we call for the establishment of a Sustainability Office, responsible for monitoring and evaluating the university's consumption and environmental impact, with the goal of achieving carbon neutrality.

It appears that this year, more structured work on the topic has begun, and we want to be at the center of the discussion. We want to bring our ideas and finally see concrete actions implemented within the university.

We believe that the Polytechnic of Milan, given its leadership position in technological research, should focus on investing in environmental sustainability. This commitment should be addressed both culturally, through the creation of specific courses for students, and within the local community through the previously mentioned initiatives. As *Studenti Indipendenti*, we believe that the Polytechnic of Milan, as an institution of academic excellence, should take on a leading role in promoting environmentally sustainable behaviors, thus dissociating itself from profit-driven logic.

## 5.3 Transfem and LGBTQIA+

Themes related to combating discrimination, particularly gender-based, homophobic, and transphobic discrimination, are of fundamental importance to us. The Politecnico already has

tools to report and combat discrimination, but these tools are often not well known. Therefore, we aim to increase awareness and understanding of these tools and to improve them. Furthermore, we believe it is necessary for the university to adopt an anti-harassment policy that provides clear guidelines on how to act in case of discrimination, whom to contact, and defines consequences. This is not only for punitive purposes but also to ensure additional levels of protection for potential victims.

In the context of the Student Ombudsman and the Trustee figure, we would like to introduce a monitoring role for their activities. We are committed to creating an inclusive university environment, free from competitive dynamics and safe for all individuals, including through our involvement in bodies like the Unique Guarantee Committee (CUG), which is working on revising the Alias Careers protocol. We not only want to increase awareness of gender inequalities within our university, but we also want to address them with concrete measures. These measures include raising awareness, providing free sanitary products and condoms in university spaces, creating regulations against violence, and establishing on-campus anti-violence services.

We believe that student representation in bodies related to these issues, such as the CUG, should carry more weight, and there should be greater student participation on matters of such importance. We systematically combat gender-based and LGBTQIA+ discrimination because we believe it is rooted in a cis-hetero-patriarchal framework present in the decisions and structures of the places we frequent, including educational institutions. Within the Politecnico, there are already associations and groups that address LGBTQIA+ issues and are helpful in organizing initiatives and involving more students. However, it is essential to avoid using queer identities solely to enhance the institution's reputation or for purely capitalist purposes.

For us, fighting discrimination means taking a systematic approach, not just superficial interventions. We believe in education and awareness to recognize problems early and seek appropriate solutions. Other initiatives we want to promote include integrating LGBTQIA+ themes into gender budgets, distributing free contraceptives, and providing informational support for STD testing. We participate in mobilizations with other university and city communities to deconstruct spaces and make them safer.

*[1] informative note: the text was translated with the help of an artificial intelligence software, we tried to revise and correct every mistranslation, we are sorry if not all the errors have been corrected*