

Meeting Minutes – Meeting of the Doctoral Board, 25th April 2023 15:15 – Hybrid meeting in Tuvstarren, Segerstedthus and Zoom

Attendees

Topias Tolonen, *Chair (left meeting at 16.00)*

Irene Muli, *Vice-chair*

Elena Prats, *Vice-chair, representative for HDR, Advisory Board for External Collaboration, and Centre for Research Ethics and Bioethics Board*

Ayesha Mae Bilal, *Secretary*

Oreste Affatato, *Event Manager*

Fabiola Stein, *UDR representative*

Endrina Mujica, *MDR representative*

Qinya Feng, *SDR representative*

Matthew Rosenberg, *FDR representative*

Philipp Rönchen, *HDR representative*

Gabriel Echazu, *TDR representative*

Jila Shamslatifi, *TNDR representative*

Lennart Spode, *TNDR and Advisory Board for Internationalization representative*

Anna Hallberg, *Advisory Board for Research representative*

Johan Hagelin, *Scholarship Board representative*

§1 The meeting was declared open by the chair at 15:20

The board is informed that Chair Topias Tolonen will chair the meeting until 16.00, after which Vice-Chair Elena Prats takes over.

§2 Jila Shamslatifi was elected as the adjuster for the meeting minutes

§3 The board approved the agenda

§4 The board approved the call procedure

§6 Selection for the Election committee for the May Elections (decision)

DN must elect an election committee to prepare and oversee the upcoming May elections of student representatives. Committee members should not plan to apply for any of the advertised positions and are responsible for announcing all vacant positions and preparing candidates for the Presidium and student representative positions for the upcoming term, and advertising vacant positions during the financial year. The current elected election committee consists only of the chair, as has been the case previously.

The DN Presidium proposes to elect the current chair, Topias Tolonen, to act as the election committee for the May elections. If election concerns the position of the DN Chair, an alternative member will be chosen to replace Topias in the election committee regarding the election of the chair.

The board approves the proposal.

§7 Visual Guidelines for Compilation theses (discussion and decision)

DN has been informed about concerns from some PhD students about new visual guidelines for compilation theses (see: <https://libguides-en.uu.se/c.php?g=668426&p=5088734>) that follow the University's visual guidelines (see: <https://mp.uu.se/en/web/info/stod/kommunikation-riktlinjer/visuellariktlinjer>).

Although concerns center around limitations put towards personalization and design freedom, UU's reasons that the newly adapted guidelines are implemented to increase consistency and a professional appearance across covers, and that other leading universities, both domestically and internationally, have similar protocols.

The DN Presidium has considered the options of sending a signed petition or a letter to the vice chancellor protesting this change, or to support local PhD faculty councils in doing so.

Board members discuss and agree that a primary aim of the DN should be to investigate what issues precisely exist at the core of this complaint, and for whom. In some departments, this may overstep a valued tradition, but it is important to figure out if this is a university-wide issue or limited to certain departments or faculties. If it is the latter case, then the DN can support those respective faculty boards in handling this issue.

The board discusses how it appears that a major underlying reason for contention is the lack of student involvement in the change and decision-making process, as well as poor communication of this change to students which has led to misunderstandings about what the change in guidelines entails exactly.

The board decides that the best course of action is to have all PhD faculty board representatives discuss and investigate in their next faculty board meeting if this issue exists in their faculty, who it impacts, and what are the exact complaints held by those students. The representatives will then report back to the DN board in the next meeting, and based on their findings, a letter or a signed petition can be submitted by the DN Chair to the Vice Chancellor to make a statement. If the issue is not wide-spread, board members suggest an alternative solution may for individual students who wish to have personalized covers send them in for review and approval to the communications department at the university, who handle this on a case-by-case basis.

§8 Gotland Representative to DN Board (discussion)

The Chair discussed with the chair of Rindi, the Student Union for UU students in Campus Gotland, the possibility of having a PhD student representative from Gotland in the DN. Rindi appears to have a permanent position for a PhD student in their board, who has previously also sat in the DN (with no official mandate). Rindi is considering a formal election amongst the PhD students in Gotland and will discuss this further. Having reviewed the regulations for DN, the chair argues that any formal position of a PhD student from Gotland needs changes in the DN regulations.

The board discusses the implications of having a PhD student representative from Gotland, more specifically, the need for hybrid meetings (that is, with the option to attend

virtually). Board members agree that it is important to keep meetings in a hybrid format to allow people based outside of Uppsala, not limited to those from Gotland, to have the opportunity to participate.

Another matter is related to logistics of electing a representative from Gotland, that is, prolongation, the need of a board in Gotland to elect, financial needs etc.

The board agrees that it is a good idea to have Rindi promote the vacation PhD position on their board more, which can be a good starting point to establish communication between the two campuses, and in the meanwhile, the DN and presidium can discuss any changes need in the DN regulations to support having such a representative.

§9 Communications of DN (discussion)

Currently, the DN only have one proactive channel to communicate to PhD students at UU, that is, via email. Communicating via one channel alone leads to information cluttering, which increases the risk of recipients missing important information. There also lacks a channel that would allow students to communicate with each other on matters related to the PhD or university. The DN currently also has an inactive Facebook group and page, a Twitter account, an Instagram page, and a website.

One possibility is to reactivate the Facebook page for communications/announcements, and the Facebook group for discussions, and to keep the website active and up-to-date. Other channels, such as WhatsApp, Slack, Discord, Instagram, Telegram etc. can also be considered.

The board brings up a key issue, that is, who to make responsible for the management of social media and communication channels. Board members offer the suggestion of creating a social media manager or communications officer position to manage this task and including this a position in the upcoming elections. Some board members also consider the possibility of combining this position with the event manager role.

The board agrees that WhatsApp would not be ideal to the high volume of messages that people may start receiving, and the inability to differentiate channels by topics. Discord or Slack may be better suited, but there concerns due to these channels not being very popular.

The board agrees at this point to start with Facebook and the DN website, and focus on growing and activating those channels. Other supporting channels can be considered once a big enough audience has been collected and there is a possibility of effective outreach.

§10 Guidelines for PhD Student Representatives and how to attract student representatives? (discussion)

The chair has drafted a document that could inform all PhD student representatives about the expectations of the roll, and that can be send alongside the position advertisements for the May elections:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1V3cqIGcVAG4FY2hIQagNUWU4Fcu6yKGz82QMnpOARso/edit?usp=sharing>

The board members all agree that it is important to have such a description of what applicants and elected members should expect from their rolls. Some board members suggest having more specific descriptions for individual positions, and having the current elected position holders write a brief description about the work and requirements for that position (eg. Time, language, and meeting requirements).

Board members suggest that information provided to applicants should be much shorter and simpler, and the more detailed version be available via link or on the website for each position for those who are more interested or have been elected. Having too much information in the document sent to applicants may deter people from reading and subsequently applying. The board also considers an alternative to the word “guidelines” as it may sound too formal/intimidating. The board also agrees that the tone of the email sent out for elections should be casual and eye-catching to draw people into the idea of being on the board

Fabiola suggests having information about what students gain and benefit by being part of the DN to be more centralized and focused on in the advertisement. Irene suggests including the [university’s guidelines on student representation](#) in the formal document.

§11 Doktorandnämnden 2023 Spring Survey report (information)

Lennart briefly went over the draft of the Spring Survey report and give the timeline regarding its finalization. The report will be ready before the May meeting, and it will be published as soon as it is ready.

Link to the draft version of the material:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aLTiJJQmcTvLTg9-u344MN7DvZQ3ZLIQ/view?usp=sharing>

§12 Updates from the Board Members, Student Representatives and other participants (discussion)

Topias Tolonen: The UUFS has [drafted a comment on UU’s comment](#) regarding the Swedish Government’s Research and Innovations proposition. The proposal reflects DN’s suggestions very well. Topias also contacted Oliver (former DN chair) regarding the digital ISP and it does not appear that Oliver has been involved in the project. Topias has instead messaged Patrik Wallin (UU responsible for the project) for a status update. UU discussed this in the Rektor’s management council meeting, where the management thought that before deciding between Ladok and GU, it is necessary to get a realistic timeline from them regarding the suggestions of UU, namely the tailoring of the system for each disciplinary area. Finally, Topias reminds student representatives to tell their faculty councils to apply for DN operational grants.

Cecilia Whiteley (University Board): The konsistorium had a 2-day meeting from 19-20 April mostly concerning annual reports and statements from the university and the university’s foundation management (UAF). UAF is performing well in spite of the general financial situation. Work has begun on the new forestry management program. Reports from the internal revision and risk management departments identified a need to bolster IT security and risk management. There was also an extended discussion of academic freedom, which pointed out that Sweden has less than resilient structures on an institutional level. Formally and legally speaking, there is a lack of recognition of universities' special position within society.

Galyna Kutsovska (CEMFOR): CEMFOR held two meetings this semester so far, primarily focused on the Evaluation of the Center (Utvärdering) which will take place in Fall 2023, and the reports will be prepared by the beginning of 2024. In this context, the board discussed how to contribute to the process of the evaluation, how CEMFOR can prepare for this, and who can be potential evaluators. The evaluation will be done by a panel of three or four representatives, including one researcher from another Swedish

university, one from another Nordic university, and one student representative from Vetenskapsområdet för humaniora och samhällsvetenskap. In the proposal, it is specified that a student representative is appointed according to regulations in the Studentkårsförordningen (2009:769). For CEMFOR it is important that the evaluation has an international look and sees Center's productive research and educational results. Some problems around the evaluation include costs and skills in Swedish of potential evaluators.

Jila Shamslatifi (Internationalisation): had a very productive meeting with Leif Eriksson and three members of the junior faculty representing each domain at the university. Junior faculty is an association for all the academic positions from postdocs to lecturers including researchers, not professors and associate professors. We discussed and prepared the first draft of the survey regarding the migrational issues. The draft will be shared with the university HR and IFSS (international faculty staff services) to get their feedback. If things go well, we'll launch the survey close to the end of May and close it before midsummer.

Moa Inge (UUFS): has been seeing an issue in PhD cases at the moment with supervisors and within the research group. There have also been some questions about the extent of supervision, how many hours or how much support a PhD student has the right to.

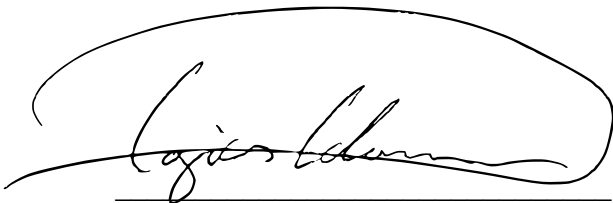
§13 Remaining meetings of the academic year

Tuesday 23.5. kl 15:15 (Election meeting) Tuvstarren

Monday 12.6. kl. 15:15 Tuvstarren

§14 Other comments or issues

§15 Closing of the meeting



Topias Tolonen, Chair 7.5. 8/5/2023



07-05-2023

Elena Prats, Acting chair (§8-§15)



Jila Shamslatifi, Attestant



Ayesha-Mae Bilal, Secretary