

Meeting Minutes – Meeting of the Doctoral Board, 31st October 2023 15:15 – Hybrid meeting on Zoom and Tuvstarren, Segerstedthuset

Attendees

Lux Miranda, *Chair*

Lennart Spode, *Vice-chair*

Jila Shams-Latifi, *Vice-chair and TNDR representative*

Ayesha-Mae Bilal, *Secretary*

Ceren Incedal, *Event Manager*

Carolina de Barros Vidor, *UDR representative*

Qinya Feng, *SDR representative*

Marko Tjakra, *FDR representative*

Philipp Rönchen, *HDR representative*

Hassan Muhammad, *TNDR representative*

Evelina Edfors, *TDR representative*

Mar Ourodelolmo, *JDR representative*

Tim Nedergård, *UTN representative*

Ivy Weber, *representative for Gender Mainstreaming group*

Lilli Hölzlhammer, *representative for Reference group and Steering Committee for the Language Workshop*

Sergio Flores, *Scholarship Board alternate representative*

Ensieh Mahi, *Board of Research Infrastructure representative*

Coco Norén, *Prorektor*

§1 The meeting was declared open by the chair

§2 Jila Shams-Latifi was elected as the adjuster for the meeting minutes

§3 The board approved the agenda

§4 The board approved the call procedure

§5 The board approved the previous meeting minutes

§6 Introduction, brief updates from DN presidium, members & representatives (information)

UTN: discussed a regulation for DN board which has not been updated in a while and is not accurate anymore. The board is looking into updating the regulation. Lux recommends having an English version for such documents created as well.

FDR: have created a slack channel for FDR which is functioning well so far to establish a means of communicating for events, resources etc.. There has been requests for TEKNAT and

MEDFARM to have a joint slack channel. Marco volunteers to create a slack channel, and Lux offers to send the link out to invite PhD students. Other than that, renovation for several lab and office are still going on, the board organized a successful Halloween party, and FDR is still looking for PhD student representatives for several boards.

Lennart Spode: will talk tomorrow to PhD students at campus Gotland, and will aim to establish some sort of position within the DN for a representative from Gotland. Will report back.

TDR: ongoing discussions about the issue with Swedish degrees what kind of doctorate degree students will get. Evelina requests from the DN members information about how doctorate degree titles are decided in other faculties, if there are any protocols and procedures in place, and if there are established guidelines. If so, Evelina requests DN members to send such guidelines or other helpful information to her so that TDR can prepare a strong case to present to their faculty.

Lilli Hölzlhammer: the language workshop is experiencing a slight problem because there are many people requesting assistance, and while there is enough money to hire another person to support the team, the language workshop group is being restricted from hiring another employee.

Ebba Ahlgren Cederlöf (AMC Board): The 2024 cross-disciplinary conference Reinvigorating Nuclear Disarmament is Scheduled for June 18-19 2024. Registration opens in January 2024. Call for proposals is open, and closes on Sunday 3 December 2023. Please help spread to students who you think might be interested in participating, or anyone who is interested in learning more about issues pertaining to nuclear weapons and disarmament.

Martina Wallberg (CMH): The meeting discussion mainly concerned the financing of both the Center and the graduate program from MedFarm and HistFil which is currently under negotiation. The Center wants to reach out and get in contact with departments that might be interested in knowing more about the field of Medical Humanities at large and the work at the Center more specifically. This is part of the Center's new communications plan, and they are currently searching for a Ph.D. student who would be interested in working with the communication of the Center as part of their departmental work. The next meeting will be held on the 23rd of October.

§7 Discussions with Prorektor Coco Norén

Prorektor Coco Norén joins the meeting in person. The following topics are discussed:

1. Changes in the management council of the university without student reps.

Jila: Recently, there has been the formation of a “management team” formed within the management council (ledningsråd) without any student representation. Why is this the case and what is the need for such a group? Why can't its functions be carried out within the management council?

Coco Norén: the prorektor first clarifies a misunderstanding: the management team is not, in fact, a recently formed group. The university management council (ledningsråd) consists of the rector, prorektor, university director, 3 vice rectors, heads from various faculties and units, and 3 student representatives. A PhD student was recommended by the management council to be part of the board meetings, which are held in Swedish. The PhD representative is usually the DN Chair, but the management council was told that this time there is no representative from the DN, and that a representative would be elected, but so far, there has been no PhD representation at the management council this term. The management team is not a recently formed group, rather it's a smaller group within the management council that meets every Monday. The management team is more involved in making higher level, administrative decisions, but all such decisions are passed through the management council beforehand.

The reason for the team is to make the decision-making process more strategic and efficient. If all processes were to be started and handled from scratch in the management council, it would take a long time. What the management team has changed, in response to recent criticism, is at what stage matters are brought to the management council. Representatives felt that the matters were too much in the final stages when first brought to the council, and so representatives felt they had little room for influence in the decision-making process. Now, the management team discusses all issues in three stages, and brings the matter to the management council in each stage so there is more of an opportunity for discussions and influence related to the decisions made.

Lux Miranda: why can't student representatives sit in on the management team meetings to have a presence? There is some concern about decisions being made behind closed doors, and to build more accountability.

Coco: the management team deals more with administrative decisions, which are separate from educational decisions. It would not be valuable to have input from student representatives at such a fundamental stage of the decision-making process. Furthermore, there are some discussions that students are not privy to. However, there is a lot of effort put in the management council to ensure input and influence from the students.

Jila brings up cases where decisions were made without any influence or input from students, such as the changes in the thesis covers. *Philipp Rönchen* also brings up the climate issue, which has not been handled adequately.

Coco responds by asking to be invited back at a later time for more detailed discussion on this issue, allowing her to be more prepared to discuss and answer questions.

2. Aliens ACT

Jila: regarding the ongoing issue for PhD students regarding permanent residency, long waiting time for migration agency decisions, Swedish language requirements for permanent residency, what is the university doing in this regard? Are there any updates on the Plattform för Internationalisering from UHR (Swedish Council for Higher Education)?

Coco: The university's action has been two-fold. At division of internationalization, Leif Eriksson is one of the leading experts on the migration issue. The university has been actively pushing migration authorities since September 2023 on different levels. For example, one attempt the university is making is to work with the migration agency for screening incoming students for masters and bachelors to expedite the process for the migration agency. Another effort being made by the university to support PhD students is related to extending contracts. Previously, contracts were given only for 1 year at a time, but soon, UU along with all other universities will start giving out 2-year contracts by default.

Marko: brings up issue of possible racism, discrimination, and misconduct by migration agency.

Coco: suggests taking such issues to Leif, who can support students in dealing with such matters. Leif is also able to help PhD students and all faculty and staff members. To deal with the migration issues in general, the university has drawn out a timeline for all steps involved in the migration process for incoming students, and outlined all the areas where the university plays a role and how to control and expedite those parts. For example, for bachelors and masters, opening early admissions and acceptances.

Jila: What is university doing about the new requirements from aliens act? How is the university addressing the new language requirements, and have there been any further discussion on Swedish courses? Is it a priority for UU? Can the credits be included in the ISP?

Coco: Leif is in direct contact with migration agency in Örebro, with whom the university is trying to establish trust in our own selection process so that when there is an acceptance from the university, the migration agency doesn't sit for weeks to examine the application. This involves being transparent with our selection process. The other action being taken is the Plattform för Internationalisering by UHR, together with the Swedish Institution for Education, and some top-level contacts at the migration agency concerned with student and faculty applications.

When it comes to 18-month contract rule, the university has protested very loudly and considers it an unwise decision for a nation to educate people at the highest level and then not welcome them into the labor force when the country also has a strong need for highly educated people like engineers, doctors and teachers. However, the university doesn't have unlimited capacity to do something about this.

When it comes to language requirement, the university hasn't been very active. For example, with language courses, limited funding for these courses is a major problem, as well as lack of quotas and limited availability. When the budget for the university is decided upon by the Konsistoriet, it is the result of a lot of negotiations between different units at the university. *Coco* agrees that while it is needed and valuable for those attending these courses, when it comes to negotiating money, these courses aren't allocated enough. It's also a struggle that the language unit was allocated money one year at a time. If we could get an allocation of funds for a longer period, that would be a victory.

Jila: suggests if credits from language courses could go to ISP, it would be more motivating for supervisors to also support it and allow us to take it.

Coco: the university would have no issues with it, but it's up to each individual faculty. As such, some faculties may agree to include credits from SFA, and some might not. Another way to go about it is to re-write the university delegation order, but less efficient method. *Coco* recommends that the best way to go about it is to use the language survey reports, and as a unified student body, make demands from the faculties to implement this change.

3. Climate crisis

Lux: How is the university planning on reducing greenhouse gas emissions? The biggest concern is that the timeline for carbon-neutrality by 2045 seems too long, especially when compared to the timeline for the kommun to be carbon-neutral by 2030. Does the university have plans to have our climate goals match that of the kommun?

Philip: The most concrete thing in the university's climate plan is to reduce the emissions by 30%. This would be a good aim if it wasn't already nearly achieved during the pandemic. It doesn't feel very ambitious and the university should be aiming for achieving more than what they could just by coincidence. University should start from now doing more concrete steps, especially regarding buildings in addition to travels (which makes up most of the plan).

Coco: admits that she's not very well-informed on what the university is doing, although she is aware of the climate plan and other initiatives like the sustainability forum and research center for sustainability. She was not aware that the university's ambition was to reduce only half of its emissions by 2030. *Coco* was not aware that most of the climate plan focused on travels, and not buildings. A consultant was hired to help develop this plan. It took a long time for DN to even become aware of it, and it does not seem like it was a very open process as even the management council was not very involved in it.

Coco concludes that it has become apparent that the DN is not always in the know for everything going on in the university, which may have a lot to do with a feeling of lack of transparency and trust between the administrative level and the students. *Coco* offers the DN to have an adjunct to

represent them within the management council to take information back to the DN board so that board members are up-to-date and aware of the ongoings at the management council. Coco also proposes being invited to the DN board meetings more often so she can support the DN board in navigating through the organization and getting things done.

Lux agrees with that proposal and proposes the DN board elects an adjunct to represent the board at the management council. *Lux* also requests the management council to send the meeting agendas to be more aware of what is being discussed.

§8 Other comments or issues

Topics on the agenda that were not able to be discussed in this meeting:

Talking points with Coco: following up on contracts in English, covid related prolongation, Wi-Fi issues.

For the board: Suggestion to have a shared document to keep track of ongoing activities and projects, their status, any related documents we have prepared etc. so that new members and chairs can be aware of what has been going on, and what to prioritize.

Suggestion to give a brief outline of vacant positions in vacancy announcements about how many hours of work is required and indicate language requirements to increase applications.

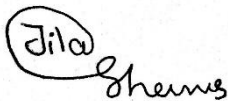
§9 Closing of the meeting



Lux Miranda, Chair



Ayesha-Mae Bilal, Secretary



Jila Shams-Latifi, Attestant