

Verksamhetsberättelse för 2020/21

Activity report for 2020/21

PhD Student Council at the Faculty of Science and Engineering -- Teknisk-naturvetenskapliga doktorandrådet (TNDR)

July 1st, 2020 to June 30th, 2021

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The board

The board consisted of:

Chair	Frauke Augstein, Organismal Biology (IOB)
Vice-chair	Philipp Grad, Chemistry BMC
Secretary	Emmanouil Tsakoumis, Organismal Biology (IOB)
Treasurer	Agne Ciuciulkaite, Physics and Astronomy
IT officer	Mahwash Jamy, Organismal Biology (IOB)
Social organizers	Ignacio Andrés Cuevas Zuviría, Chemistry Ångström - elected by the council meeting on the 16th of September 2020 Tong You, Cell and Molecular Biology (ICM) – elected by the council meeting on the 26 th of November 2020

Ten TNDR board meetings were held during the fiscal year:

- August 25th 2020, over Zoom
- September 16th 2020, EBC
- October 14th 2020, BMC
- November 11th 2020, over Zoom
- December 17th 2020, over Zoom
- January 21st 2020, over Zoom
- February 17th 2020, over Zoom
- March 11th 2020, over Zoom
- April 21st 2020, over Zoom
- May 19th 2020, over Zoom

In between, the board had discussions over a new TNDR board slack channel or email on various TNDR issues and activities. A hand-over with the members of the previous board was arranged during June 2020. Since the Chair, the Vice chair and the treasurer from the board from 2019/2020 continued on the board 2020/2021, the hand-over was quite smooth.

The election committee consisted of Jonas Steentoft, who was elected in the January council meeting. Until then the board encouraged PhD students to apply for unfilled positions for the current year. The auditor for TNDR for the financial year 2020/2021 was Anna Frost.

Council Meetings

Five TNDR council meetings were held:

1. September 16th, 2020, 12:15

Where: Zoom

Number of participants: 23

Details: The board presented the focus activities for the year 2020/2021, the TNDR grants and informed about the TNDR FAQ's. The council discussed the Equal Opportunities Day about "Internationalization of the home front".

2. November 26th, 2020, 12:15

Where: Zoom

Number of participants: 28

Details: The board informed about the new TNDR calendar and about how COVID-19 related delays in PhD studies should be included in the ISP. The council discussed suggestions for PhD courses organized by the faculty.

3. January 28th, 2020, 12:15

Where: Zoom

Number of participants: 31

Details: The board informed about a bi-weekly social event on Zoom organized by the TNDR social organizers to give PhD students a forum to meet outside work. The council discussed the "Aims and Strategies" document for TEKNAT.

4. March 19th, 2020, 12:15

Where: Zoom

Number of participants: 22

Details: UTN's Chair and International Officer joined the council meeting. The board informed about the TNDR grant and new guidelines for PhD student representation on department level. Furthermore, the board informed about what was discussed during the meeting with the PhD students at Campus Gotland. The council discussed TNDR's input in the referral on the "Aims and Strategies" document for TEKNAT.

5. May 28th, 2020 (Election meeting), 12:15

Where: Zoom

Number of participants: 31

Details: We elected the TNDR board and TNDR representatives for 2020/21.

The council meetings should be in different geographical locations within the faculty, in order to encourage students from all campuses to attend the meetings. During the last year, meeting physically on campus has been difficult because of COVID-19. Instead, all TNDR council meetings have been held digitally via Zoom. The good attendance as well as the fact that PhD students from Campus Gotland joined the council meetings, indicates that this is not necessarily a disadvantage and encourages the future boards to think about digital or hybrid council meetings even after COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted.

Representation

TNDR has elected representatives for the faculty board, the graduate education board, the doctoral board, the faculty equality board, the recruitment board, etc. All representatives are listed in the table below. People who were not elected at the annual meeting 2020 have the month they were elected indicated in parenthesis after their name.

Organ	PhD-student representative/-s
Doctoral board	Christoffer Fjellstedt and Erik Bowall (January) Deputies: Christopher Robin Samuelsson (January) and Hassan Muhammad (January)
Faculty board	Frauke Augstein Deputy: Philipp Grad (September)
Advisory committee for Research	Viktor Djurberg and Christoffer Fjellstedt
Advisory committee for Education	Christopher Robin Samuelsson (January)
Advisory committee for Collaboration	Jana Grüttner
Graduate education board	Georgii Shamnilov and Agne Ciuciulkaite (September)
Faculty scholarship board	Karla Münzner
Library council	Anar Ibrayeva
Recruitment committee	Mohsen Bazargan Deputy: vacant
Docentship committee	Anna Frost
Board for the appointment of excellent teachers	Sribalaji Coimbatore Anand (November)
Equality committee	Anke Stüber
International Science Program (ISP)	Anar Ibrayeva
Centre for Discipline-Based Education Research (MINT)	Jennifer Leijon (until October) Carl Flygare (November)
Centre for Interdisciplinary Mathematics (CIM)	Elizabeth Wetzler and Esteban Vélez Ramírez (November) – on demand of the board we were asked to elect a second representative
Centre for National Hazards and Disaster Science (CNDS)	Maximilian Wanner
UPPMAX board	Chisom Ekweoba
Tandem board	Kristina Komander (November)

The Upptech board is not really existing any longer; if they meet again we will have the possibility to send a PhD student representative.

The chair of the election committee stayed vacant until January 2020, since it was difficult to find a candidate.

The deputy position of the recruitment committee was vacant the whole year; all other positions were filled. TNDR continued the trend from last year of filling most positions.

Report from the doctoral board (DN)

During the fall of 2020 and the spring of 2021, the reoccurring topic at DN has been the Covid-19 situation. Beyond just keeping the board informed with information from delegates to DN from the different sections, the board during the fall of 2020 sent out an online form to all PhD students at Uppsala University. In this form, the PhD students could answer questions on how the Covid-19 situation had affected their doctoral studies. The form could then be attached to the individual study plan. Anonymous information from the form has also been collecting in order to give DN a better insight into in which ways the PhD students are affected by the Covid-19 situation.

DN has had three working groups during the year. One working group has worked with the question of prolongation due to teaching, representation or other departmental duties. The aim of this working group has been to investigate the current status of prolongation at the university and present a report/policy document on DN's views on prolongation. One working group has been working with questions regarding language and internationalization and the last group has been working with sustainability and equality.

In the spring of 2021 DN has had a meeting with the new deputy vice chancellor Coco Norén. Topics discussed at this meeting were digitalization of the individual study plan, general prolongation concerns and Covid-19 related prolongations issues and language courses.

DN has also launched a new webpage. Work is also ongoing with updating the DN by-laws.

Report from the faculty board (FN)

In September 2020, a new faculty board started its mandate period. Due to changes in the bylaws of the faculty, the new board consists of fewer members than previously. PhD students are now represented with one ordinary and one deputy representative.

Throughout the year, the faculty board has monitored the impact of covid-19 restrictions on TEKNAT. Surprisingly, the amount of students even from abroad starting at Uppsala University during the autumn term was not highly affected by covid-19. Not surprisingly, traveling costs have decreased substantially compared to previous years. To compensate for covid-19 effects, the faculty got extra funding from the state that was mainly directly distributed to the departments. Among others, this money should be used to pay PhD student's prolongation, in case PhD studies have been delayed by covid-19 restrictions. The faculty did not decide about a general scheme for this prolongation, but instead prolongation should be discussed with the supervisor and head of department in connection to the ISP.

As usually, the faculty board decided to allocate funding for PhD representation and education. TNDR got 71 000 SEK from the faculty, 150 000 SEK will be used to finance

prolongation for representatives and 2 000 000 SEK for faculty PhD courses. In addition, the faculty board decided to finance a student liaison officer for international students within UTN that will also be a contact person for PhD students.

One of the faculty boards focus areas has been “Life-long-learning”, so TEKNAT will start giving “Life-long-learning”-courses during the autumn semester 2021.

Another focus area has been the development of a new “Aims and Strategies” document for TEKNAT. TNDR and our representative in the faculty board have been actively involved in this work.

During 2020 and 2021 many PhD program evaluations took and still take place. The evaluation of the Mathematics program was the first to be finished and the faculty board accepted the proposed action plan.

A working group from the faculty board has also worked with questions related to TEKNAT’s activity on Campus Gotland. After the suggestion of students and PhD student representatives, this group will also look into the question on how PhD students are represented on Campus Gotland, but also how they can get the chance to participate as representatives on TEKNAT level.

Report from the graduate education board (FUN)

During the year 2020/21, the Graduate Education Board had nine meetings (the ninth is yet to be on the 9th of June), including two meetings devoted to admission matters solely (“antagningsberedning”).

There was at least one teknat PhD student representative attending each meeting, and most often the two PhD student representatives elected by TNDR.

The Evaluation of PhD education (“Utbildningsutvärderingar på forskarnivå”) is ongoing in several domains of TekNat.

Several programs within Physics and Astronomy department were evaluated. The programs currently open for new PhDs: Fysik(TNFYSI00), Fysik med inriktning mot astrofysik, Fysik med inriktning mot fysikens didaktik, Fysik med inriktning mot rymd- och plasmafysik, teoretisk fysik, astronomi, astronomi med inriktning mot astrofysik. Six programs do not accept new PhD students anymore (Atom- molecular and condensed matter physics, elementarpartikelfysik, kärnfysik, tillämpad kärnfysik, biofysik och jonfysik). These programs will exist as long as they still have current PhD students, and education is still ongoing within these programs but now they belong to a joint subject/program of Fysik (TNFYSI00).

FUN is working on the guidelines for graduate education (Riktlinjer för forskarutbildning), where they look into such aspects as PhD students’ funding, general and individual study plans (allmän studie plan, individuell studie plan), supervision, thesis and defence (avhandling, disputation).

FUN is looking and modifying guidelines for faculty common courses (for PhD students) criteria and financing, i.e. what kind of courses are needed for post-graduate education, what

is the reasonable extent of a course (in hp), how do they meet examination goals, and what kind of budget is needed and how it is motivated.

Proposal for decision about the digital participation of opponent and committee in a defence for after the pandemic situation is being prepared.

Besides the already mentioned work areas, FUN is currently continuing work on: goals and strategies within Teknat (FUN reply sent in); strengthening work and connection with Teknat alumni; how to establish and start with digitalizing ISPs.

Social Activities

Because of covid-19 restrictions, it was difficult to organize social events this year. However, TNDR has organized the following social activities:

- Minigolf and Barbeque, 18th September, Minigolf Uppsala and Ångström campus area
- Internal mail Secret Santa and digital unwrapping, 11th December, Zoom
- TNDR after-work hangouts, 19th February, 5th March, 19th March, 23rd April, Zoom

PhD days

Because of the Covid-19 situation, the PhD days were held again over Zoom this year, in May (11th and 12th) during the afternoons (13:15-17:00). The program included lectures and seminars about stress management, how to target the CV and find jobs outside of academia, how to start a business, master suppression techniques and start-ups.

Between 11 and 60 PhD students participated at the different sessions. Participation on the first day was higher than on the second.

Information and website

The website of TNDR has undergone continuous updates concerning its content during 2020/2021. The information on board members was updated at the website together with the corresponding contacts. Information about events, such as board and council meetings, has been continuously posted on the website, with a brief overview of the agenda. To make this information easier accessible, a google calendar, which PhD students can subscribe to, has also been installed. Signed minutes from board and council meetings were uploaded shortly after the meetings. The “PhD FAQs” have been continuously updated.

There are two different introduction courses for PhD students at the faculty; one at EBC and one at Ångström, BMC, and Geocentrum (both held over Zoom 2020/2021). TNDR visited both in the autumn semester and held a 45-minute presentation about rights, obligations, and representation of PhD students. TNDR visited the introduction courses again during the spring semester.

Several times during the year information emails were sent out to all PhD students at the faculty with information about TNDR, council meetings, social activities, election for PhD student representatives for the evaluation of post-graduate studies by UKÄ and for recruitment of a chair for the election committee, as well as PhD students opinions about referrals.

Summary of focus areas of TNDR in 2020/2021

In the activity plan decided upon at the annual meeting in June 2020, some specific points were suggested about what TNDR should focus on during 2020/21.

Increase PhD representation on the department level

The work on PhD representation that started during 2019/2020 was continued. Again, TNDR invited the PhD representatives at the department boards to a meeting, where problems and needs for PhD representatives at the department level were discussed. This meeting resulted in a draft of guidelines for how PhD representation at the department level should be organized. Together with UTN, TNDR sent this draft to the faculty administration and got the opportunity to discuss our proposition with the head of departments, during a meeting in February. The head of departments agreed on the document with minor changes and the guidelines were distributed to all departments, aiming to strengthen the communication between the PhD representatives on the department level and TNDR. The financial support for PhD student councils at the department level, that TNDR started this year was, not used, most likely due to that physical meetings at the departments were prohibited by the COVID-19 restrictions.

Internationalization

Internationalization is a topic that concerns the PhD student body of TEKNAT a lot, as many PhD students are not coming from Sweden or teaching in international classrooms. Internationalization has been discussed at many TEKNAT boards, including the Equality committee, FUN and the faculty board. TNDR has raised PhD student opinions and needs, as for example easy accessible language courses or equal opportunities in representing PhD students in different boards. However, questions are not solved yet and this topic needs to be monitored even in future. Furthermore, UTN got funding from TEKNAT for an international officer, that will also act as an additional contact for TNDR and PhD students. The international officer joined the council meeting to present themselves.

Work with the problems mentioned in DN's survey on doctoral student ship specific for TEKNAT

The main issues that were identified from the DN survey specific for TEKNAT were mainly related to that PhD students found it difficult to access different information, as for example how to report sick leave. The TNDR board has gathered this information and included it in the FAQ's on the TNDR homepage.

Contact to PhD students on Campus Gotland

TNDR is an organization for PhD students throughout TEKNAT, including PhD students located on Campus Gotland. However, the contact between PhD students from Campus Uppsala and Campus Gotland has been poorly. TNDR initiated a meeting with the PhD

students on Campus Gotland, to hear about their situation and their thoughts about future improvements. This meeting was highly appreciated by the PhD students on Campus Gotland. As a first measure, TNDR created an e-mail list, which TEKNAT PhD students on Campus Gotland can use to communicate with each other. With this tool, they will try to organize a local PhD student board on Campus Gotland, potentially in cooperation with PhD students from other faculties, to lift questions specific for PhD students on Campus Gotland. TNDR also encouraged PhD students from Campus Gotland to attend the council meetings and so far it seems that they respond to TNDR's suggestion.

Concept of PhD days

The TNDR board has discussed the concept of PhD days. The good attendance at the PhD days 2020 that were held over Zoom is indicating that having the PhD days digitally can be an advantage. Due to remaining restrictions due to COVID-19, in 2021, the PhD days had to be held solely digitally again, but the board suggests to provide a mix of digital and on-campus activities for the next years. The board also concluded that full days might be too time intensive for PhD students and therefore tested the concept of two half-days in 2021, which was proves successful.

TNDR financial support

In order to increase TNDR's visibility across the faculty and to strengthen initiatives to create representation structures at the departments, TNDR established the TNDR financial support ("TNDR grant") during 2017. TNDR financial support continued this fiscal year to support initiatives which connect PhD students within and between departments. This year, TNDR only received a few applications, probably due to social distancing restrictions. Two different initiatives were supported with SEK1000 each during HT20 and two more initiatives have been approved for VT21, granted again the same amount. With this, all applications have been approved.

The initiatives were distributed among different departments. The financial support was mainly dedicated to fika or food for small events or prizes for a bigger digital event. Information about the TNDR financial support were provided on the TNDR website and via the teknat-doktorander mailing list. Recipients of the TNDR grant have also been asked to state that they have been funded by TNDR in the invitation to the event.

Initiatives for HT20:

- Improvisation course for PhD students
- Uppsala Mockference

Initiatives for VT21:

- PhD and Parenthood
- Summer BBQ

Miscellaneous activities

- Frauke Augstein represented PhD students in steering group for TEKNAT's "Aims and Strategies" document
- Together with UTN, TNR took part in several referrals

Financial report

Income:

Union

Operating grant from the Doctoral board AS21	2'000
Operating grant from the Doctoral board SS22	2'000
Operating grant from the faculty for PhD student representation	71'000

Sum income: **75'000**

Expenses:

Board salary	after-tax (-32%)	pre-tax	pre-tax+empl
SUM board salaries			30'588.00

Events and others

Social events	1'720.31
Meeting expenses	0
Administrative expenses	1'376.25
TNDR financial support (TNDR grant)	0 (4'000)
TNDR operating grant for PhD student representation on department level	0
PhD days	13'000
SUM expenses for events and others	16'096.56 (20'096.56)

Sum expenses: **46'684.56 (50'684.56)**

Result: **28'315.44 (24'315.44)**