

The PhD students' council of the faculty of science and technology Teknisk-naturvetenskapliga doktorandrådet

Minutes for TNRD Council Meeting, Wednesday September 16th 2020, 12:15 - 14:00
Zoom (Meeting ID: 694 5940 1026, Passcode: 947851)

Participants

Agne Ciuciulkaite	Physics and Astronomy
Anastasia Golubova	Chemistry - BMC
Anke Stüber	Information Technology
Anna Frost	Electrical Engineering
Chisom Ekweoba	Electrical Engineering
Colin Desmarais	Mathematics
Elin Persson Westin	Mathematics
Emmanouil Tsakoumis	Organismal Biology
Erika Åkerfeldt	Materials Science and Engineering
Frauke Augstein	Organismal Biology
Ignacio Andrés Cuevas Zuviría	Chemistry - Ångström
Jakob Thyr	Materials Science and Engineering
Jana Riegerat	Physics and Astronomy
Jonas Steentoft	Physics and Astronomy
Karla Münzner	Ecology and Genetics
Mahwash Jamy	Organismal Biology
Mohsen Bazargan	Earth Sciences
Philipp Grad	Chemistry - BMC
Philipp Pilar	Information Technology
Roberto Felicetti	Electrical Engineering
Robin Eriksson	Information Technology
Ruoqi Zhang	Information Technology
Viktor Djurberg	Electrical Engineering

Minutes

1. **Opening of the meeting**

Chair Frauke Augstein greeted all attending and opened the meeting at 12:20.

2. **Co-optations**

There were no co-optations.

3. **Election of attestant and teller**

Mahwash Jamy was elected as attestant and teller.

4. **Approval of call procedure**

The call for the meeting was sent by Frauke Augstein on August 31st.

The call for the meeting was approved.

5. **Approval of agenda**

The agenda was sent by Frauke Augstein on August 31st.

The agenda for the meeting was approved.

6. Approval of minutes from previous council meeting

The minutes from the previous council meeting (May 28th, 2020) were included in the email for the call for the meeting and are also uploaded on the TNRD webpage.

The minutes from the previous council meeting were approved.

7. Auditor's report

Frauke Augstein explained the Auditor's report of the year 2019-2020.

Svenja Lohmann, elected Auditor for TNRD (2019-2020) reviewed the financial report of TNRD during the period from July 1st, 2019 to June 30th, 2020, as well as the supporting documents and receipts. Svenja found everything in order and did not have any complaints. Svenja's report is attached.

Auditor's report was approved.

8. Relief of responsibility for the previous board (Ansvarsfrihet)

The previous board was relieved of responsibility.

9. Election of additional board members

Frauke Augstein created breakout rooms, one for each Department, so people from the same Department can use for discussions on the upcoming election points. One person from each Department was attributed as their voting representative. Mahwash Jamy kept track of the votes for all the upcoming election points.

(a) Social organizers, 2 regular

Jonas Steentoft asked for a better description of the position. Frauke Augstein described in details the position and explained the duties of the Social organizer position. Mahwash Jamy added that there is also a time compensation and Frauke Augstein pointed out that the time compensation is a 5 days prolongation. Agne Ciuciulkaite took over the discussion and explained that TNRD has a specific financial budget to use for social activities and that it is essential to keep track of the money use in social events.

Ignacio Cuevas asked for some information about the PhD days, since organizing this event is part of the Social organizer's duties. Frauke Augstein explained what PhD days is and gave some examples from past events.

Ignacio Cuevas volunteered himself as candidate for the position and was elected unanimously by the meeting (9/9 votes) as Social organizer.

10. Election of representatives for boards and committees

(a) Doctoral board, 1 regular and 2 deputy

There were no candidates for these positions. Therefore, one regular and two deputy positions in the Doctoral board are still vacant.

(b) Faculty board, 1 deputy

Philipp Grad volunteered himself as candidate for the position and was elected unanimously by the meeting (9/9 votes).

(c) Advisory committee for Education, 1 regular

There were no candidates for this position. Therefore, one regular position in the Advisory committee for Education is still vacant.

(d) **Graduate education board, 1 regular**

Agne Ciuciulkaite volunteered herself as candidate for the position and was elected unanimously by the meeting (9/9 votes).

(e) **Appointment committee, 1 deputy**

There were no candidates for this position. Therefore, one deputy position in the Appointment committee is still vacant.

(f) **Board for appointment of excellent teachers, 1 regular**

There were no candidates for this position. Therefore, one regular position in the Board for appointment of excellent teachers is still vacant.

(g) **TANDEM board, 1 regular**

There were no candidates for this position. Therefore, one regular position in the TANDEM board is still vacant.

11. **Election of the chair of the election committee**

Emmanouil Tsakoumis, the previous chair of the election committee, gave a description and pointed out the duties of the position.

There were no candidates for this position. Therefore, the chair of the election committee position is still vacant.

12. **Information from the TNDR board**

(a) **General information for PhD students**

Frauke Augstein, Chair of TNDR, informed the participants about the importance of registering to the labor unions (for example Saco, Sulf, Naturveterna, Sverieges Ingenjörer) and A-kassa at least one year before their contract ends, so they can have the unemployment insurance, in case they do not have a job after their PhD. Frauke suggested also to all PhD students to keep track of how COVID-19 affected their work and discuss with their Supervisors for possible solutions, in case of an issue. At last, Frauke reminded that PhD students can find more information about their education on the FAQs part on TNDR's homepage.

(b) **Activity plan 2020-2021**

Frauke Augstein, Chair of TNDR, presented the activity plan of TNDR for the period 2020-2021.

Representation: TNDR is currently looking for more representatives in the boards and committees of the Faculty, aiming to a better representation of the PhD students at Faculty level. Moreover, TNDR aims to strengthen the representation of PhD students at Department level. Therefore, TNDR will meet the PhD representatives of the several Departments of the Faculty on September 24th, in order to get updates about the actions of the PhD students in all Departments.

Information/homepage: The minutes from board and council meetings, as well as the agenda of the council meetings will be uploaded to TNDR's homepage. Contact information and pictures of the board members are already updated. An updated list of the PhD representatives will also be available on TNDR's webpage.

Social events: This year TNDR will organize mostly COVID-19 adjusted social events. The first social event is going to be on Friday, September 18th. Customized in the current situation, it will be an outdoor activity, a mini golf tournament followed by a BBQ. The

BBQ will be held outside from Ångström and TNDR will provide vegetarian food and non alcoholic drinks.

TNDR grant: This year, TNDR grants will be done in two rounds: one in the fall and one in the spring semester. The deadline of the TNDR grants for this semester is on October 15th, 2020. More information will be given later by the Treasurer of TNDR.

Main focus areas 2020-21: TNDR will focus on any type of support (also financial) of the Department PhD councils and in general the representation of the PhD students at the department level. Moreover, TNDR, in close collaboration with DN and UTN, will focus on several language issues that PhD students might face during their studies, in the context of internationalization of the work environment of the University. If time allows, TNDR will also try to strengthen its contacts with the PhD students on Campus Gotland, as well as the post doc association UUPA. Last but not least, TNDR will soon start planning the PhD days event, which will be held in Spring 2021, but first would like to hear from the PhD students their suggestions, based on their interests and needs.

(c) **TNDR grants**

Agne Ciuciulkaite, Treasurer of TNDR, presented the TNDR grants for 2020-2021.

TNDR offers a small financial support for PhD students of the Faculty of Science and Technology, who wish to organize some special events. This year, TNDR grants will be done in two rounds: one in the fall and one in the spring semester. The total cost of the projects (depending on the number of applications) could be divided around 5,000 SEK per semester (maximum 10,000 SEK in total for the whole period 2020-2021) and therefore the maximum amount of money for each project is 1,000 SEK. The funded projects should: involve PhD students from various departments; involve a large number of students; promote interaction and exchange between PhD students; be creative; have a realistic budget. Agne mentioned some funded projects from previous years, such as: Kubb tournament, fika during shut-up-and-writesessions at EBC and seminars about non-academic career options at BMC and EBC.

The deadline for the grants of this semester is October 15th. Applications (max 1 page) can be sent to Frauke Augstein (frauke.augstein@ebc.uu.se).

Agne mentioned also that if someone received a TNDR grant last year, but could not organize the event, due to the covid-19 pandemic can still use it this semester, as long as they mention when the grant was awarded and of course it meets University's recommendations for social distancing.

13. Messages

(a) **Faculty board**

Frauke Augstein, TNDR representative at the Faculty board, announced the messages from the Faculty board. Frauke informed the audience that a new faculty board is now elected and that the new faculty bylaws have come into effect. Frauke mentioned that in the Faculty board it was discussed that covid-19 did not had a big impact on the amount of PhD students who started their studies this autumn (both national and international). Moreover, Frauke said also that the Faculty is aiming to hire more international students, so that by 2025 for every 5th student, one should be someone coming outside from Europe. Frauke included also in her talk that the Faculty board decided their activity plan for 2021, including the budget, and as usually TNDR will receive 71,000 SEK from the Faculty, 150,000 SEK will be used to finance prolongation for the PhD students representatives and 2,000,000 SEK for PhD courses organized by the Faculty.

(b) **Graduate education board**

Georgii Shamuilov, TNRD representative at the Graduate education board (FUN), could not attend the meeting. However, Georgii sent to Frauke Augstein some messages, so Frauke shares them with the audience.

In his messages, Georgii included Rector's decision about delays in PhD studies during covid19-pandemic, saying that all delays should be included into the revised individual study plans (ISP) during this year. If ISP was updated earlier than the start of the pandemic, a separate document can also be submitted, stating the problem and specifying all the reasons of the delays. Georgii mentioned also that the revision of the general study plan (allmän studieplan) soon will be completed and that this document will hopefully bring more clarity into the organisation of PhD studies, both for supervisors and students. Last but not least, Georgii messaged that there were discussions about reducing the minimum thesis printing requirement of 80 copies. However, a final decision on that has not been made yet.

(c) **Doctoral board**

Christoffer Fjellstedt, TNRD representative at the Doctoral board (DN), could not attend the meeting. However, Christoffer sent to Frauke Augstein some messages, so Frauke shares them with the audience. The detailed messages from DN that Christoffer sent are attached.

Christoffer mentioned that on the Doctoral board there was a discussion about the prolongation the PhD students deserve from teaching duties, especially on how the situation is between the different Faculties and if there is a common norm among them. Christoffer wrote also that there is a working group trying to increase the number of Swedish courses for PhD students and post docs and asked the opinion on TNRD on that. Frauke Augsten said that we will discuss this point in details later, under point 14. The effect of covid-19 to PhD studies was discussed also at the Doctoral board. DN suggests to report any delays or problems to the Head of the Department head and the Supervisor, in case a prolongation is needed, as well as to report any issues might come up either to DN or TNRD.

(d) **Other boards**

Karla Münzner, TNRD representative at the Faculty scholarship board, had no messages to share.

Viktor Djurberg, TNRD representative at the Advisory committee for Research, mentioned that due to covid-19, the money for funding projects were delayed and therefore they could not fund many projects.

Anke Stüber, TNRD representative at the Equal opportunities Committee, mentioned that she has some updates about the Equal opportunities Day, but Anke will share them later, under point 14.

14. **Equal Opportunities Day Nov. 3 "Internationalisation on the home front"**

There was a discussion over a debate article by DN, in which it was supported that the use of English should be equally important as Swedish, as well as legally binding, since Uppsala University aims to have an international profile and there are many employees who do not speak and/or understand Swedish. However, the other side claims that since the University is a Swedish authority, therefore by law some things should still be done in Swedish.

During the meeting, several opinions were heard. Anke Stüber mentioned that on Medarbetarportalen many services are only available in Swedish and not in English, making it thus

difficult to use for people who cannot speak Swedish. Jakob Thyr mentioned that, by law, at least the description of the course syllabus should be in Swedish in order for the course to be legal. Agne Ciuciulkaite was in favor of the international work environment of Uppsala University. However, since the University is a Swedish authority and we live in Sweden, Agne believes that it will be good if people can learn Swedish, so they can use both languages in their work places. Agne mentioned that learning Swedish will be beneficial, especially for teaching purposes. Emmanouil Tsakoumis then asked if PhD students can get credits for their PhD education by taking language courses in Swedish and Frauke Augstein replied that it is possible, if the Supervisor also agrees. However, Anke Stüber argued that some people from her Department found this option discriminating for Swedish people, since they, as native Swedish speakers, cannot take these courses.

In the end, Frauke Augstein summarized what was heard. We all agreed that the University should motivate PhD students to learn and use Swedish in their work, rather than using only English. Our opinion was opposite to what DN defends in their debate article, in which is stated that English should be the only language used at the University. Anke Stüber, TNRD representative at the Equal opportunities Committee, will take all these message to the next meeting of the Equal opportunities committee.

15. Other issues / questions

Agne Ciuciulkaite gave a short reminder about the upcoming social event of TNRD. Agne mentioned that the event starts at 17.00 at the mini golf place and then will be followed by a BBQ at Ångström campus, where TNRD will provide vegetarian food and non alcoholic drinks. Agne pointed out how important is to keep distance among us, do not exceed the number of 50 participants and in general follow the recommendations of the University about public events. Moreover, Agne asked in case someone cannot attend the event to inform TNRD, so we can keep track of the number of people attending the event.

Frauke Augstein announced that the next TNRD Council meeting will be held on Thursday, November 26th, 12:00-14:00. The location of the meeting will be announced later.

Frauke Augstein created also a poll, asking the participants of the meeting if they prefer the TNRD Council meetings to be online via zoom or on campus. The majority of the participants (61 per cent of the total votes) are fine with both options. Some of the participants asked only for online meetings via zoom (30 per cent of the total votes), whereas physical meetings were not that popular among the participants (9 per cent of the total votes).

16. Closing of the meeting

Chair Frauke Augstein thanked all participants and closed the meeting at 13:32.

Emmanouil Tsakoumis, secretary



Frauke Augstein, chair




Mahwash Jamy, attestant



Auditor's report fiscal year 2019-2020 for the PhD students' council of
the faculty of science and technology (TNRD)

I have reviewed the financial report of TNRD on financial activities during the period from July 01, 2019 to June 30, 2020, as presented to me by the treasurer. I have found the report to be in order with no complaints. All expenses are supported by appropriate documents. Discrepancies between the budget and the actual amount spent can be attributed to the Covid-19 situation in 2020 and less money spent on events as a consequence. As the elected auditor for the given period, I, therefore, propose that the TNRD board for the fiscal year 2019-2020 shall be relieved of their duties at the next TNRD council meeting.



Svenja Lohmann, elected auditor for TNRD (term 2019/20)

Uppsala, August 03, 2020

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Messages from the Doctoral board (DN)

DN identified some focus areas:

- **Prolongation for teaching duties.** As you know, this is not standardized throughout the university. Meaning that different departments has different approaches to how this is handled. The discussions mainly covered the question of what approach the DN should take to the question. Should the DN work for a standardized lowest level, be more ambitious et cetera. On this question DN want input from the different sections. Both on how the situation is now, good, bad, unclear and so on, and also what the sections want TNRD to work towards. Therefore, I think this can be a good discussion to have at the TNRD council meeting. DN has started a working group that will start working with this question.
- **Language issues, i.e. Swedish or English.** I know that this question has been discussed in TNRD. DN want to continue working with the question (they had the debate article in the local paper earlier this year). This is an extremely difficult question and here I think DN also want to find the common lowest denominator and start working from it. But for now a working group has been put together that among things will try to increase the number of Swedish courses offered to PhD students and post docs. I think this question also should be discussed further by TNRD. The other sections are working with the question and I believe it would be good if TNRD could be part of this work. What is needed is a clear formulation of what we want to achieve. With the starting point that the university is a Swedish authority and therefore by law need to do some things in Swedish how do we handle the fact that we employ a very large fraction of English speaking PhD students and post docs?
- **Effects of COVID-19.** This is of course a topic for all departments. The question was discussed and since we are still in the middle of the crises, no clear conclusion was reached. However, the following two points would be good if you could mention on the TNRD meeting:
 - If you are affected negatively by COVID-19, so that a prolongation would be necessary it is extremely important that you report it to the department head, supervisor et cetera. If you are affected by it now and then turn up in a couple of years at the end of you PhD studies and say that you need prolongation it will probably be very difficult to prove that this depend on the COVID crises and therefore you can be left without any possibility to receive prolongation.
 - We (DN, the sections, the unions et cetera) need to get information in what ways and to which level the PhD students are affected by the crises. It is therefore important that you report eventual problems to your representatives.
- Vice-chair of DN Haro de Grauw will write a template that can be used by PhD students at department level to raise issues they have encountered due to COVID-19.

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