

Minutes, DS Board Meeting #VT13-2, 2013-03-11

Time: 13.00-16.00

Place: 10:an, at the top of the Chemistry Building.

Attending: Ronja Thies, Erik Lindskog, Richard Hedman, Francesco Mazzotta, Stig Anton Nielsen, Emma Qingnan Zhang, Sadegh Seddeghi, Steven Mallam, Matteo Molteni, Karin Jonsson, Viktor Andersson

Point on the agenda

Rapporteur

- §1. Opening of meeting, *Viktor Andersson opened the meeting.*
- §2. Election of meeting officials
- Chairman: *Victor Andersson*
 - Secretary: *Ronja Thies*
 - Someone to adopt the minutes: *Francesco Mazzotta*
- §3. Approval of agenda, *the agenda was approved.*
- §4. Meeting notice in due order
Invitation and agenda should be sent out no later than 1 week before the meeting. *The meeting notice was approved to be in due order.*
- §5. Visit from Ulf Jäglid, Union representative, and Rickard Ylmén, Karin PhD student
- Ulf Jäglid pointed out the importance of individual study plans, stating that this is the only thing you can point at if things go wrong, and whose absence in the present case makes it more difficult to resolve it.*
- Rickard briefed us about the case, a PhD student at KB who got fired. The student had problems with his first supervisor and wanted to change. It took six months to find a new supervisor. After about nine months with the second supervisor the student got fired, and the only reason named is that the student is not competent enough. It was the second supervisor who wanted the student fired. The director of studies (studierektor) was not even informed,*

neither about the change of supervisor nor about the suspension. "arbetsordningen" says that there needs to be an evaluation of both supervisor and student if the PhD student is to be fired. This is not possible now, as the student does not have an individual study plan. Also the general "högskoleförordningen" says that there has to be an individual study plan. According to "arbetsordningen" this is the responsibility of the main supervisor (huvudhandledare).

The head of KB (prefekt, Ulf Carlsson) takes the final decision and the Union is having discussions with him.

There were questions by the DS-board:

What did the student do during the six months of searching a new supervisor? - He continued research and read courses (what KB's student council advised him to do).

How can we as DS support the person/case? A meeting or a statement? - Ulf will report to Karin after the meeting with the head of KB, and might be able to answer the question then.

Discussion afterwards:

- there should be more documentation about the supervisor
- nothing happens to you if you do not follow the rules as a supervisor
- people in the responsible committees (e.g. FUN) usually do not see the problems
- How do we get the directors of studies to enforce the writing of individual study plans and follow-ups?
- How do we make the study plan and its importance more culturally accepted?
- The director of studies should be more responsible that milestones are met.
- How do we make sure that it is not only talked about this, but that something is done?
- FUN already tries to develop a frame.
- Viktor will invite Alf-Erik Almstedt (Vice president of Chalmers, responsible for research and research education) to talk about the individual study plan and responsibilities.
- We will not get through to FUN if we come with suggestions. Try to be asked by FUN for help/opinion.

The working group "excellence in PhD studies" has already good material.

- *We can have very good rules, but we cannot enforce that they are followed. Discussions are thus important.*

§6. Minutes from previous meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting had been sent out and were accepted. They still need to be sealed.

§7. Newsletter for PhD students

Nojan

The frequency of the newsletter was decided to be c.a. 3 times a year. Around 1st of March, around 1st October and one flexible in between. For the first one we aim for the 1st April. The contents of the first one will consist of a description of the different areas in which we are active and an overview of the structures of PhD representatives (DS-board, PhD councils at departments). Reminder to everyone: sent information about PhD council representative to Viktor.

§8. Information from the different organs within Chalmers

Viktor

- *AJK: Ronja took over from Joel; nothing new.*
- *Accounting: Francesco will fix a list of deadlines for his successor. The paperwork for the taxes is done. The requests for accounting the time spent on DS board activities as departmental duty is larger than the limit. After the Budget discussion of Francesco and Viktor there might be more funding for departmental duty. There is probably also money left for activities benefiting all PhD students.*
- *Chalmers AB board: The board discussed course evaluations. The last meeting focused on the campaign to attract new students. The yearly report concerning economics was presented, and people seemed happy with it. There was the decision taken that the science park will be built.*
- *Research Fund: nothing new*
- *CHARM: The responsible person at Chalmers Communication Office has not been found yet.*
- *Faculty Council: The point was made that the faculty should not only grow at all costs just because*

Chalmers has received a lot of money, but should also focus on quality. In order to measure the quality of Universities the best method was suggested by one member to be external peer review using indicators. The new Plan of Actions for environment and equality was introduced. Karin brought up the language problem (that PhD students preferably should be able to teach in Swedish after two years, but only get a very basic Swedish course which is considered not to help learning). There was a discussion about this and also research assistants and other employees have the same problem but no conclusion yet.

- *FUN: The suggestion (not from DS) to punish supervisors who do not take the HAL course caused strong opposition. The decision on the DS proposition on time based salaries and a licentiate registration system was postponed. - Suggestion: discuss this also internally in the different departments.*
- *Verksamhetsetiska Kommitén: Mailed to Victor concerning a meeting on the course "Research Ethics and Sustainable Development". - Matteo or Victor will be going to the meeting. Emails with opinions to them are welcome.*
- *Home page: nothing new*
- *Introductory Day: The Introductory Day will be on 7th May, we are welcome to give suggestions on topics. - Suggestions are to stress the importance of the study plan more, to introduce "Forskarhandboken" and to talk about more administrative stuff.*
- *Board for investigating research misconduct: nothing to report - Discussion once more how to reach out to those who do not want to register cases of misconduct.*
- *SFS-dk: nothing new*
- *Generic Skills-courses: nothing new*
- *Supervisor of the year: Viktor will contact Anna (previous Chairman) to ask who announces the supervisor of the year, since none in the board knows.*
- *Library council: nothing new*
- *RePub: next meeting in April*
- *SACO: Viktor has to be the representative because he already is in the board and they want to keep salary costs down. Salary negotiations were discussed but*

not those of PhD students.

§9. Other issues

- Statistics from the DOMB shows that almost 50% of the complaints that comes to him are made by female PhD students. As the percentage of female PhD students at Chalmers is around 30%, this need to be looked into.

Victor has the same impression from the people who have problems and contact him. The board would like to hear (anonymized) from the cases Viktor knows about; he will in the future ask the people whether he can share their problems anonymized with the board.

Viktor will send out the statistics he got from the DOMB.

Since there seems to be a gender problem Ronja will take it up in AJK.

There was also a study showing that the ethnics problem is larger than the gender problem at Chalmers, that does not fit completely. Are there correlations between the 30% unhappy with their PhD studies and minorities? We would like to see gender separated statistics of what problems PhD students have who go to the DOMB and also know the fraction of foreigners. Ronja will mail Bengt and ask him whether it is possible that he gives us this information.

- Recruitment of new DS board.

Nobody expressed interest in becoming Chairman or Vice Chairman yet. We will advertise these positions on the web page and in the newsletter. We will also give job descriptions (Viktor and Francesco) and inform about the extent of Swedish required. Viktor and Erik are the election committee. All should mail Viktor to inform him whether they are interested in continuing being on the board or not.

§10. Dates for upcoming meetings


General Assembly: should be after the Introductory Day, thus week 20

Board meeting: week 17

Viktor will send out Doodles for both dates.

§11. Closing of the meeting

The meeting was closed.



Victor Andersson (Chairman)



Ronja Thies (Secretary of the meeting)



Francesco Mazzotta (Sealer of the minutes)