

Minute, DS Board Meeting, 2014-02-17

Time: 13:00-16:00

Place: 2.205 Grupprum 3, Student Union Building, Johanneberg, second floor

Attendees:

Nojan Najafi, Mohammad Reza Shoaee, Viktor Andersson, Ronja Thies, Francesco Mazzotta, Ragnar Lärusson, Eskil Varenius, Erik Lindskog, Emma Qingnan Zhang, Matteo Molteni

Points on the agenda

1. Opening of meeting

Francesco Mazzotta, DS chairman opens the meeting (Time: 13:06)

2. Election of meeting officials

Chairman: Francesco Mazzotta

Secretary: Amir Malakizadi

Sealer of the minutes: Eskil Varenius

3. Approval of agenda

The agenda is approved without changes.

4. Meeting notice in due order

The agenda was sent on Monday 2014-02-10, a week before the meeting.

5. Minutes from the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting (2014-01-16) was approved.

6. Short news and information

A checkpoint list was design by applied physics which can act as a mirror tool to help both students and supervisors to evaluate their performance during the PhD studies. The board agreed to upload the list on the DS website and announce it in next Newsletter.

Some departments are not yet added in the contact list. Representatives from each department have to fill out the list

(<https://chalmersuniversity.box.com/s/hx7z2ciwv6uwi0higtj5>)

DS board agreed to sponsor the conference on gender distribution at Chalmers, suggested by a student from applied physics. The cost to invite speakers will be covered by DS.

Mohammad Reza Shoaee, DS representative at department of Signals and Systems will not join the next meetings. He will soon defend his thesis and leave Chalmers for work elsewhere.

7. Key topics from the committee

- SACO

The board was informed about two issues from the last meeting with SACO:

a) Chalmers is going to outsource the IT services. The question was: is it really a good decision to make by Chalmers? And how does it affect the PhD students?

b) Issues regarding "Arbetsordning för forskarutbildning", which was discussed in more detail (See section 8).

- National PhD council (SFS-DK)

The working plan for the next year was described by Ragnar. DK is going to follow up the issues regarding visa, employment and career paths of PhD students. A survey will be done this spring to gather more information regarding the working plan and the decision will be made based on the results for next year activities. The new SFS-DK board members will be elected during the assembly in May, the deadline for nomination is March 14th. Ragnar cannot attend the next meeting (March 14th) and Francesco checks with student union if we can nominate Ragnar for the next year from Chalmers.

- CHARM

Francesco thanked the members who participated and organised the event. It was mentioned that the CHARM was a success, around 200% increase in number of students who showed interests during the exhibition period (Feb 4th and 5th).

- REPUB

No update!

- Library council

The library organisational structure is being revised by the new leaders of the Chalmers library. We wait to see the results of this, and if it has any impact on PhD students.

- Introduction day

No update! The next even will be during April, May!

- Chalmers board AB

Chalmers will increase the fraction of the researchers salary which is paid directly from Chalmers. This will reduce the amount of money researchers have to find themselves to cover their own salary, and in the end provide a better research environment at Chalmers. This is good also for the PhD environment in the long run, that supervisors and researchers in general need to worry less about their own salary.

- AIK

No update! The next meeting will be March 7th. Ronja cannot attend the next meeting and the replacement for her will be appointed by email communication between the board members.

- Webpage

No update!

- Supervisor of the year award

Emma and Amir update the board about the issues regarding the supervisor of the year award. It was mentioned that the email list needs to be updated. The new students have not received our email, since the email list has not properly updated by Chalmers. However, it was also distributed through the other sources such as Chalmers webpage, DS webpage and Insidan. 13 nomination letters were received in total, and the

screening procedure was started after reading each nomination letter. It was discussed that the nomination procedure doesn't necessarily reflect the competence of nominated supervisors, but it also indirectly involves the capability of the students who nominated their supervisors. Therefore, it was decided to work on a more standard procedure for the next year nomination. The supervisor of the year will be selected by the working group by mid-March.

8. Rules of procedures for the PhD studies (Arbetsordning)

Ronja provided the new version of "*Arbetsordning för forskarutbildning*" to discuss the terms with the committee during the board meeting. Only the terms which have been changed compared to the old version were highlighted during the meeting, as follows:

- Individuell studieplan och studieuppföljning (6.5)

The discussion went around the term "efter 50% av doktorandtiden". It was initially suggested to clarify the 50% of PhD studies in terms of the number of papers (at least two papers). However, the board disagreed. It was argued that in some departments, publication of two papers means more than half of PhD studies.

It was also suggested and agreed that the student, study rector as well as the supervisor should all receive the notification of delay of a licentiate presentation or mid-seminar after 2 years and 6 month.

- Handledare (6.9)

The discussion went around the student rights to change their supervisor. The new version of Arbetsordning limits the rights of students. In the new formulation, the student who wants to change the supervisor should write a request to the head of department (proprefekt/ prefekt) and motivate the reasoning for his/her request. Supervisor also has the right to terminate the supervision of the students; however a request including the background information has to be provided for the head of department. In both cases, the decision has been made in departmental level. The final decision may be made by the vice rector responsible for graduate education.

The board for research education expressed a positive judgement regarding the changes. However, the DS board agreed that these changes are not satisfactory and raises the following points:

1. It argued that the new version of Arbetsordningen makes it harder for a PhD student to change supervisor.
2. The head of department's right to decide on this case is considerably extended. We would like the PhD student to be able to actively choose between the available choices, if not just the change of supervisor is offered.
3. It was not stated clearly in the text that the request written by the student would be remained confidential during the process. This can affect the relation between the student and the supervisor.

The DS board decided to support the change in current (new) version of Arbetsordningen. It was decided that DS board and the union have to agree on a similar formulation and argue for it during the meeting (FUN). If we are unable to find a satisfactory compromise, DS will vote against the proposed text. If this is the case, we should publish the final text and our view on why we do not approve of it on our webpage, for all the PhD students to see. However, this action will be decided after the meeting with FUN, accordingly.

9. Self- administration

Ronja updated the board about the self-administration issues:

- a) Ladok: the database system for PhD students will be released in Insidan in June. PhD students will then be able to track progress in courses to some degree, such as checking if courses are reported and the credits available to count for a Licentiate or PhD degree. This will reduce the workload of self-administration by PhD students, which is good.
- b) Course and exam registration by PhD students are still not possible. The main reason is the some PhD courses do not have course code/number and PhD students are not counted financially for the courses.

10. DS colour and mascot

Eskil updated the board about the DS colour and mascot. The DS colour is rainbow and the mascot is the doctor Snuggles (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doctor_Snuggles). It was decided that we can use the mascot in the DS webpage.

11. Other issues

- Swedish course

Ragnar shared his colleagues' feedback regarding the Swedish course. Students believe that the current Swedish courses are slow and not sufficient to help students in their carrier and departmental duties (teaching activities for instance). The current course is designed to provide students with general proficiency in Swedish language. It was discussed that it might be better to promote that Chalmers designs its own Swedish courses, organised for its own staff. Ronja tries to find the responsible person to share this feedback with and update the board later about this issue. However, it was mentioned that if FUN plays the key role about this issue, we need to wait until the next meetings.

- Visa issues for international students

Nojan mentioned that the students in Göteborg and Stockholm are going to run a protest in relation to the Non-EU PhD visa. It was discussed how the DS can contribute in this case. It was pointed out that we need to have more information regarding the permission to run the rally/protest. DS can take part formally in this issue only if the rally is proven legal.

12. Closing the meeting

The meeting was officially closed at 15:55 by the chairman.

Signature and date: 2014-03-10

Francesco Mazzotta, DS chairman.

Signature and date: 2014-03-10

Amir Malakizadi, secretary.

Signature and date: 2014-03-18

Eskil Varenius, sealer of minutes.