

## Agenda: DS Board Meeting #VT20-5, 2020-06-09

Time: 14.00 - 17.00

Place: remote, Zoom call

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14:00 Meeting commences

Election of meeting officials

Chair – Ananda Subramani Kannan  
Secretary – Tomasz  
Reviewer – Johanna

The meeting officials and the agenda were unanimously approved (§1), as well as the meeting notice (§2) and the progress of approving last meeting's notes (§3).

### §4. Ekonomi i balans

The Chair has shared information about how the EiB affects PhD students.

No extensions will be granted unless specific conditions apply. The DS could ask for a Chalmers-wide clarifications on the guidelines.

An important TODO for the newly elected board is: revisit PhD student's situation after the summer, since the survey sent out earlier didn't get much updates and it's interesting to see how things will look then. Maybe task for the Local council coordinators, to gather the information. EiB is very closely linked to the next discussion item.

### §5. Covid-19 impact on PhD population at Chalmers

It is important to convey the perspective of PhD students from technical universities into SFS-DK.

It is important so that all the impact of COVID are documented in the ISP at the next update (delays, measures taken) as per the recently updated guidelines of SFS-DK that the Chair has shared with all Chalmers PhD students. EiB and COVID impact might conflict with each other (in terms of the possibility of prolongation) and the agreement for now is that it will be handled on case-by-case basis.

### §6. Board of research education (Forskarutbildningsnämnden) FUN

- digital disputations: could it be a viable alternative to a PhD defense even after the pandemic. The DS should form an opinion on that. This might be discussed in the coming year, given the successful application of Zoom for remote defenses. Another aspect: availability of PhD level courses.

- Johanna added that a committee of "FN Forskningsnämnden - research (and research education) council" was started in the FUN and what was done: introduction and hello, discussing expectations of the committee. Members are: leader Anders Palmqvist, both vice prefekts and prefekts from other departments. It's more research oriented. Discussion: what strategies for great research are at each depts. It was clear by the discussion that these differ. Some departments have it very clear and documented but some don't have that at all. E.g. Physics included PhD education in their research strategy. This committee should be followed by the DS. Add this position to the list of activities.

- purpose of the council: How Chalmers can conduct excellent research and to share best practices

### §7. Workshop: "Coping with COVID-19"

DS efforts to address the outcome of DS Survey - work related stress.

A webinar for PhD students was organized and it was very well received. Around 100 registrations, over 70 participants "showed up". It is considered a good effort benefiting PhD students in the current reality. The next step is the workshop in the fall. Funding was applied for and the decision is awaited for.

Another important discussion point: **Rules of procedure**

- draft will be sent to the Chalmers management group for a decision next week. The Chair thanked for the contributions from the DS and local councils. The person in charge of it was very thankful. The highlights are: "financial matters do not constitute a reason to admin a doctoral students to licentiate". The document itself is intended to be used as a Living document, updated possibly every year. This will allow DS to proposed suggestions. DOMB should also be included in the process. There is awareness on the management side that the document can still be improved, even though it was already considerably included this time (last update was way back in time, 10 years?). Another highlight, clarifying "examiner different from supervisor", then "clarification of the examination goals" and "clarification for pedagogical competence". Also a part about discontinuation was completely re-written and this should be follow-up on by DS, this should be an ongoing discussion with the DOMB.

**Study follow-up (Joakim):**

- this will be introduced or pilot-tested sometime in the autumn, this should be follow-up by the new board in terms of how PhDs perceive it and whether there're things that should be improved

**Key topics from the committees and activities:**

§1. Accounting:

- no updates since last time
- if you take duties as institutional duty hours, there's an additional overhead cost varied by each department, which is additional cost for the DS, as well as taxes
- due to Chalmers increasing the overhead cost, all board members taking hours as institutional hours, we could try encouraging board members to use salary option of remuneration for the work in DS
- there might be negotiations, and the overhead cost might be asked to be canceled or waived. Joakim chimed in he'll look into it
- the accounting of this quarter will be finalized by the end of the month. Members are to report their hours by the 20th of June

§2. AJK:

- the meeting was set to 2nd of June but rescheduled to Thursday so no new updates yet
- clarification of guidelines wrt EiB vs COVID, could the vicerektor be asked about his opinion about this during the coming meeting? We could ask for an opinion if there'll be a possibility for that

§3. Chalmers AB board:

- Chair's time in the board ended and Chris was officially elected for an adjunct to the board and he'll represent DS in these meetings at the next meetings
- the document created by the HR Chief, the "code of conduct", will dictate how should one behave and speak socially and professionally. Preliminary discussions were critical, since problems were merely mention but did not provide any specific code of conduct. This will be continued by the HR most probably. This might be even more important with the ongoing pandemic
- the Chair suggests that the Student union should be involved in conveying PhD students perspective on that

- the max of people in a room will be 50 after the summer, there's a preparation between distance education and on-campus teaching, e.g. laboratory classes. This will be additional work for the PhD students that teach. There should be briefings about e.g. max 50% occupancy during labs
- 180 people are going to be laid off (which is the recommendation from the rector and the relevant committee), the negotiations with the Unions and the process are ongoing. It mainly affects a huge section of the support staff (120M cost savings is targeted by this package). Around 230M is to be recuperated in total to get a Economy in balance by 2022. The overhead of having PhD students and Postdocs will go up as a result. Many EU projects might be out of reach if those costs go up. This should be discussed by the DS and communicated through the Student union. There are also other discussions that will be ongoing, e.g. about premises
- the issue of prolongation of PhD studies was brought up in the board
- Chalmers Professional Education company was now decided to be dissolve

§4. Chalmers research foundation:

Finished for this year, no more updates.

§5. CHARM:

- worked well, easily done by one person with available help
- however, if the responsible is not familiar with Chalmers yet, more time or responsibilities might be needed

§6. PhD alumni event:

- successful, bigger audience, more speakers, people engaged, should be repeated, extended - the format should be reconsidered in that case, since if there'll be more people, interactions should still be possible (between attendants and the presenters)

§7. DS communication:

- no specific updates
- maybe an update for PhD students could be sent before the summer to let PhD students know we're working for them, the Chair proposed specific updates and the new Chair has agreed. Time is a constraint about that

§8. DS IT:

- things run as expected, fully unplugged from student union's infrastructure and services. Overall, the backup server was put in place and the mail service was established (since the Student union stopped providing it).
- recommendation: new responsibilities should have CS background

§9. Nomination committee:

- nominations and GA went fine
- for next year, there should be at least three people in the nomination committee due to the workload
- the committee might send a "thank you" email to the local councils that helped
- the number of board members, i.e. number of representatives from each dept, should be considered wrt the number of DS activities and the available budget
- work groups working on similar/related topics could be something to consider for the board operations next year, especially if there board is big in terms of the number of representatives. This requires careful upfront planning as well

§10. Faculty council:

- mostly handover meeting content, not relevant for PhD students

#### §11. ESP:

- Nadja has sent a summary: design print and testing is finished over the last 6 to 8 months, there was a workshop for testing the platform
- the budget restrictions caused the person building the software to build the Minimum Viable Product
- the Chair has presented the current MVP prototype
- now the last stage of the decision making process is ongoing, in the fall there might be a test and a pilot might happen next summer
- ESP was entirely initiated by the DS a few years ago and is now reaching it's desirable conclusion. The DS is looking forward to the finished product
- Nadja has met the ESP project group last week, there were 3 committee meetings so far
- list of things to be implemented or developed was assembled
- depending on the funding, the wishlist will be implemented
- one of major concerns voiced by one of the members: little clarity on the national goals/objectives for the research education and how they connect
- timeframe: Chalmers IT will start programming this fall, the completion depends on how much funding will be allocated, the original time plan should be kept by reducing the MVP contents. There'll be trials next year in Spring and should be implemented next autumn for all PhDs though there are uncertainties due to the Economy in Balance
- major feedback given: dept duty info should be included on the overview page, overview should be there, there should also be credit requirements for the Lic degree and then per-module comments

#### §12. Introduction day:

- information given during the Intro day were improved and it is considered successful
- the number of participants on one of the Intro day was also decreased to allow more PhD students to participate and ask questions
- COVID made the last of 4 planned to be cancelled and the next day will be on 30th of September

#### §13. Institutional council:

- Inst councils: strategies priorities, CLS is discussing ways to improve their facilities, no more updated
- Chalmers climate strategy was approved by the rector on the last Board meeting, though there's still room for improvements, e.g. to develop competences for climate transition, there should be a form of sustainability check in examination goals
- not much of updates in those tasks

#### §14. Local PhD council coordinator:

- there was a good response, should be getting closer to each council
- communication during COVID worked well
- recommendation: this activity should be continued
- set of guidelines for next year's responsible was established and will be available in the best practice document

#### §15. Chalmers ethics committee:

- the policy document was supposed to be decided on but the process was postponed and is still ongoing
- last update of the document was 5 years ago
- the decision was to accept EU code of conduct for research integrity

- the document is to be discussed with comments and add-ons for Chalmers and Chalmers history
- document is drafted, feedback is sent, there is no response yet
- there is not section specific to PhD students, it's only general
- next meeting is planned to September
- work in the committee is a low workload, the activity is at a low pace and not much initiatives are taken
- representation is important
- less time than planned was spent this year

§16. PhD survey:

- no new updates
- a report summarizing the survey will be written either before the summer or next board-year since the members currently responsible for the survey will continue next year

§17. SACO:

- Gabriella will be the next representative
- rules of procedures were briefly discussed during the last meeting, no information about specific comments
- otherwise mostly dealing with fallouts of the Economy in Balance and the Coronavirus crisis

§18. Social activities/ PhD student outreach:

- there was one when available, before the pandemic, it was successful
- this should be picked up next year

§19. FUM – Student union:

- there was a handover meeting since the last Board meeting, no new PhD-important updates
- Gustav will continue next year
- the presence could be limited to every other meeting unless specific matters will be discussed
- a new format for time allotted per each section of the student union was brought up, this will be discussed for the next year
- DS representation there is important, since the DS is the biggest Student union section (10%)

§20. Supervisor of the year:

- finished for the year, thus no new updates.

§21. SFS-DK:

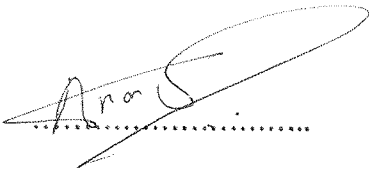
- discussion about the impacts of the pandemic on PhD students across various domains in the country
- single parents are the hardest hit under those circumstances, there's a higher pressure regarding financing etc.
- there was a part of the election committee work included: one has to be nominated and elected during the General assembly, next year there will be no DS representative in SFS-DK since there was no candidacy this year. The recruitment procedure is very strict. Only the former SFS-DK member or Student union (SFS-FK member) can be nominated. Then there's a series of interviews. The recommendation is to have a DS representation. Solid proficiency of Swedish and interest in the work on higher abstraction level is recommended for this position.

§22. Focus group equality:

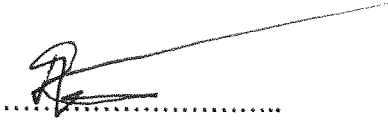
- no updates available at the time of the meeting



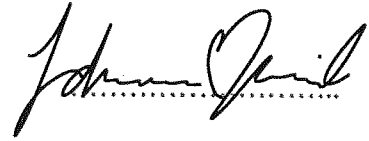
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Ananda S. Kamman  
(Chair)



Tomasz Kosinski  
(Secretary)



Johanna Merisalu  
(Reviewer)