

Introduction

During the year 2020/2021 the Doctoral Student Guild (DS) board has been actively representing the doctoral students in several different committees and activities within and outside Chalmers. This report will briefly highlight what has been done in the different committees, as well as summarize the internal activities. General information about the activities and committees can be found on the DS webpage (<http://www.dokt.chs.chalmers.se/>).

During the year 2020/2021 the board consisted of:

Christopher Sauer	Chair	K
Yasaman Dabirian	Vice chair	BIO
Jonathan Cohen	Board member	ACE
Jannik Theyssen	Board member	ACE
Mareddy Reddy	Board member	K
Muhammad Waqar Azhar	Board member	CSE
Mads Rönnow	Board member	CSE
Masoud Bahraini	Board member	E2
Artem Rodionov	Board member	E2
Omkar Salunke	Board member	IMS
Sigma Dolins	Board member	IMS
Gustav Lindwall	Board member	M
Elin Malmgren	Board member	M2
Jayesh Khatri	Board member	M2
Isabel Harrysson Rodrigues	Board member	MC2
Nitesh Raj Jaladurgam	Board member	F
Adriana Canales Ramos	Board member	F
Ida Karlsson	Board member	SEE
Andri Spilker	Board member	SEE
Stina Månsson	Board member	TME
Gabriella Gatenholm	Board member	TME

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Continuous activities of the DS board

DS Board Meetings

The Board has met five times for Board Meetings and two times for General Assemblies. During the Board meetings the members report from their different activities and discussion regarding strategic topics of the doctoral studies are discussed. The Vice Chair Yasaman Dabirian was responsible for the accounting for the year 2020/2021. Her experience in the board was also fundamental for a continuous support of the other board members and the chair.

Chalmers University Board (Chalmers Universitetsstyrelse)

The chair of DS is representing the voice of PhD students at Chalmers in the university board. The university board is the highest decision-making body within the university, and DS is given the right to have the chair attending and speaking, but not the right to vote. The right to vote is however given to the representative of the Student Union. For that purpose, DS and the Student Union representatives have preparatory meetings before each board meeting to

discuss the current agenda and what to bring up. The university board discusses and take decisions regarding topics of strategic value to Chalmers.

During the year 2020/2021, Christopher Sauer was the responsible for this activity. This year's focus topics were "Economy in Balance" and the Corona Pandemic. Efforts to dampen the impact on the students including doctoral students were made. This included to keep the campus open for research purposes and give support to transition to digital and remote teaching, when possible.

Research education council (FUN)

During the year 2020/2021 the DS representatives in FUN were Christopher Sauer, Jannik Theyssen and Gustav Lindwall. The representatives have taken part to the FUN meetings. This year the Corona pandemic and the Economy in Balance situation were challenging topics. Much effort was made to minimize the impact of the corona pandemic onto the PhD students. After several meetings DS has achieved that Chalmers made an official announcement in the intranet for how to apply for prolongation due to Corona in September 2021. Beside that, DS was able to work a lot with the results from the DS PhD survey.

- After the analysis of the PhD student survey, DS uncovered systematic delays of the Lic/halftime seminar at Chalmers. The data clearly shows that not even half of all PhD students can achieve the halftime milestone within the expected 2.5 years at latest. There are variations between departments, with some being concerning. Several reasons were pointed out, including supervision, health/stress and project planning. DS communicated this important topic in detail to FUN at several occasions. It is recommended to keep the energy that is currently in this topic high, to achieve some progress. Awareness needs to be brought even to the departmental level and reach every supervisor.

Other highlights from the year 2020/2021:

- Charlotte Wiberg as Prorektor has taken over the responsibility for research education from Anders Palmqvist.
- New Rules of procedure (ROP): Anders Palmqvist and Sara Eriksson, with support from FUN (including DS and the DOMB) have drafted a new version. The document has been approved and went into action in August 2020. DS monitors the implementation of the process, pays close attention to how the 'older' PhD students would be affected (if at all) by the new changes. FUN has promised that the ROP will be a 'living' document, meaning the DS (and local councils) can continue to suggest improvements. DS will try and push for changes and make it a habit to update the ROP with involvement of the local councils.
- The research schools have been reworking their General Study plans (ASP) to harmonize their study plans, when it comes to information regarding the Arbetsordning (AO) (Rules of Procedure). Some schools have updated their requirements for courses. When the study plans are updated during PhD students education, it is important to note in the ISP which general study plan is the one that applies.
- Quality Assurance of supervision: The previous responsible for Research education Anders Palmqvist initiated a FUN workgroup that addresses the quality assurance of supervision (kvalitetsbedömning av handledare). DS gave a detailed presentation at FUN (2020-11-25) regarding this topic. One DS representative should be part of this workgroup (so far Adriana Canales Ramos).

- GTS evaluation: This past year FUN had initiated a thorough evaluation of GTS courses. An outcome of this evaluation is a report which was drafted by Michael Eriksson, and is now being considered by a FUN working group. This group is tasked with providing suggestions to improve and thus minimize the economic footprint of the GTS program. There is a risk that an excessive reduction of resources will be proposed, so it's important to ensure that the DS is firmly engaged in these negotiations. DS should try and promote a solution which doesn't drastically limit the available collection of GTS courses on offer. DS follows up the discussions in FUN and particularly engages with work groups.

Work Environment and Equal Opportunity Committee (AJK)

Stina Månsson was representing DS in this position.

Her role for this year has been to speak up for the PhD student on different issues brought up during the meetings. Moreover, the PhD student representative has reported back to the DS board and facilitated the communication between the board and the equality representative. During spring 2021, focus has been on the Covid-19 pandemic and the health and well-being of all employees (including PhD-students) and students at Chalmers. The economy in balance situation with less administrative personnel has also resulted in reorganizations of "Work Environment" and "Equal Opportunity" issues. New routines are in progress and will be added to the Intranät.

Focus equality group

Jayesh Khatri was representing DS in this position.

The focus equality group is an umbrella under which different Chalmers groups and initiatives connected to gender equality meet and synchronize their activities. In Focus Group Equality representing PhD students, the job entails finding the concern of PhD students considering inequality, presenting the said concerns in front of the central Chalmers equality group and then provide feedback/information back to the PhD students. It is an important platform where decision makers from central Chalmers, GENIE and other organizations are present, and thus the voice of the PhD students can be raised to make change. For example, during year 2020-2021, the focus group equality representative proposed and advocate that the management make optional GTS course(s) for PhD students with equality and diversity as focus.

<https://www.chalmers.se/insidan/EN/about-chalmers/equality/fokus-jamstalldhetfokus>

PhD student committee of the Swedish National Union of Students (SFS DK)

Swedish National Union of Students (Sveriges förenade studentkårer, SFS) is the collective student voice in Sweden, currently acting as an umbrella organization for 47 student unions at Swedish universities. The PhD student committee of SFS (SFS DK) works as advisors to the SFS board, on matters of both research education and research in Sweden as well as on a European level.

Every year (usually April/May), SFS holds its General Assembly, which is the highest decision-making body where all the member unions are represented. Except for electing the board and deciding on the operational plan for the upcoming year, it is also at SFSFUM the SFS DK is

elected. In the year 2020/2021, DS did not have a representative at SFS-DK. In June 2021, Christopher Sauer was elected into the board of SFS-DK for the year 2021/2022.

Supervisor of the year

The committee for the Supervisor of the year award consisted of Adriana Canales Ramos, Isabel Harrysson Rodrigues. The award is based on the initiative from Chalmers centrally. The committee posts a call for nominations, and then evaluates all nominations, followed by thorough interviews with the PhD students of the nominated supervisors. In the current years this Award has gained greatly increased popularity, with DS receiving many nominations of their supervisors from PhD students.

The committee for the SotY award has nominated David Pallarés as supervisor of the year for the academic year of 2020/2021.

Chalmers research foundation

The foundation (Chalmerska forskningsfonden) aims to financially support young scientists. The fund is one of several administrated by Chalmerska stiftelsen. A working group consisting of two representatives from the DS (this year: Mursalin Sajib, Ananda S. Kannan) and a senior researcher is appointed to provide suggestions for how the fund should be distributed.

Ethics and Research Misconduct Committee (Etik- och oredighetsnämnd)

Stina Månsson was responsible for this task. Chalmers' Ethics and Misconduct Committee addresses ethical issues related to research and education, as well as misconduct in research. The Committee offers support and advice on ethical issues related to research, education and utility, and it is available to all employees. The Committee also addresses cases pertaining to misconduct in research. When tasked by the president to do so, the Committee will investigate suspected misconduct in scientific activities that are or were conducted at Chalmers, and in single cases determine whether scientific misconduct has taken place. An increasing role in education for researchers is forecasted for the upcoming years. Chalmers' Committee on ethics and research integrity has been mandated by the president to investigate whether suspected misconduct within scientific activities takes place or has taken place at Chalmers. No "ärenden" was submitted to the committee in 2020-2021. A webpage at Insidan was created.

SACO and wage negotiations

DS representative was Gabriella Gatenholm. The Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations, is a trade union confederation of 23 affiliated associations out of which six are represented at Chalmers. SACO represents trade union members in issues like job security, rights, salaries and the working environment. The most important task for DS representative is to take part in the wage negotiation, which is held between Chalmers and the trade union organizations SACO and ST in the beginning of every autumn. The DS member is responsible for the views and opinions of the DS board and members in this negotiation. There are about six meetings per year. The DS representative also has opportunity to take part in education

programs organized by SACO. The negotiations were particularly tough due to the Economy in Balance situation. The new agreement came in place in May 2021 and DS achieved a minor increase in wages for the next 3 years.

Faculty Council

Elin Malmgren was DS' representative. The faculty council is the representative body for Chalmers' teaching staff (i.e. Docent, associate professor, and full professors) and acts as an advisory body to the president and management of Chalmers.

It consists of 2 members elected from each of the 13 departments, one PhD students representative, one undergraduate student representative, and the president and/or vice president of Chalmers attends the meetings. The Faculty Council should be a forum where questions of long term and strategic character, with importance to the development of Chalmers, can be initiated and handle. These can be raised both by the members but also by external parties wanting input.

<http://www.chalmers.se/insidan/SV/om-chalmers/moten/fakultetsradet>

CHARM

To present PhD education as a potential career, DS is responsible for a booth at the Chalmers work fair CHARM. This year's event was held digitally and remote. DS representatives present and talk to students and answer questions. The PhD representatives explain about what PhD education is, that you are employed by Chalmers etc., and there are usually many students coming to talk to us. Jayesh Khatri and Azhar Waqar were responsible for organizing the DS contribution to Charm this year.

Pre-CHARM PhD alumni event

Although this event has gained great popularity within the doctoral student population during the last years (ca. 100 participants), the event had to be canceled due to the corona pandemic.

DOMB

The Doctoral Student's Representative (DOMB) has been contracted by the board of DS to advise, support and/or represent doctoral students at Chalmers. In any situation the progression of the DOMB's actions, from remaining in the background to active intervention, is guided by the doctoral student. The DOMB is neutral with respect to the rules but acts in the interests of the doctoral student. The DOMB's communications with doctoral students and all case files are confidential.

The annual commitment in Year 5 of employment was consistent with previous years. The DOMB annual report can be found here: <https://www.dokt.chs.chalmers.se/public/#DOMBAR> The contact person from DS for the DOMB has been the DS Chair Christopher Sauer. The DOMB and DS have been working closely together e.g. on implementing the new rules of procedure. The DOMB has also been invited for several meetings of Chalmers councils (like FUN) to report highlights of her work, in the frame of confidentiality as well as been introduced to all new PhD students during introduction days. The DOMBs contract is due to end in Nov 2021 and the current DOMB Moyra McDill is ready for other tasks. The DS board is thus to hire a new DOMB.

The chair and vicechair have started preparations for this task and a recruitment team is to be formed in summer 2021 to interview possible candidates.

Web page

DS IT was handled by Mads Rönnow and later taken over by Masoud Bahraini. This task involved updating and maintaining the DS webpage based on content supplied by other board members and occasionally the DOMB. This involved e.g. updating links, updating the website security, updating the process of obtaining the PhD student emailing list to include also non-student union associated PhD students.

DS migrated to its own webserver with a new and fully independent setup, allowing for the addition of services such as DScloud, DSoffice, DSchat. Task specific emails have been created and assigned to those responsible. This greatly facilitates consistency and makes the communication available to the ones who take over the task.

Newsletter

For the current year, Masoud Bahraini and Nitesh Raj Jaladurgam were responsible for the newsletter. The Newsletter is the platform for sharing information to all PhD students in Chalmers. It covers information from legalities, activities of various student councils, social activities. The contents of the newsletter were document with comments and approval from the Board members.

Two newsletters were published one in November 2020, one in April 2021.

Topics covered in Nov 2020 newsletter were

- New rules of Procedure
- Covid19 Impact on PhD students
- Genie – Gender Equality for Excellence including a seminar invitation
- Introduction day
- Best practices in publishing
- Social activity by DS – hike
- Call for Supervisor of the Year

Topics covered in April 2021 newsletter were

- DS survey results of 2020
- PhD student Guide developed by DS local PhD council coordinator and the local councils
- DOMB
- DS General Assembly
- Interview with DS Chair Christopher Sauer
- Social activity by DS – hike
- Supervisor of the Year
- Delays of doctoral education due to COVID-19
- DS Movie
- Stress management
- Parental leave
- Formation of Chalmers Womens association

All newsletters can be found in DS Website: <https://www.dokt.chs.chalmers.se/newsletters/>

Introduction Day

DS representative during the 2020/2021 academic year was Andri Spilker. Due to the ongoing pandemic the introduction days had to be held online. There were two introduction days (mandatory GTS task for PhD students). Due to the format adaptations had to be made with both positive and negative effects. With the evaluation of the GTS package the role of the introduction day in the future is unclear. At the introduction day, DS has a 35 mins presentation to reach out to all new PhD students and introduce the DOMB. The material has been made online and can be found on DS websites/documents.

Social Activities

This year's representative was Andri Spilker. The activity is meant to organize social events for both the DS board members only, to improve the cooperation of the board members with each other, as well as for all PhD students at Chalmers, to get more PhD students involved in the work of DS. In this corona year, social activities were harder and riskier to organise, but in my opinion also especially needed because of the risk of isolation and loneliness with PhD students working from home. Social activities organised:

- Phd hikes. This was the only social activity organised in person, due to less risk of virus spreading outdoors. It also seemed to be very appreciated by some people, and I hope that hikes can continue also in the future. It should be much easier to organise without corona restrictions. For all hikes I made facebook events and sent out email to all phd students, and we got between 20-50 participants on each hike. The participants were split into groups, on the first hike we were two groups of ca 15 people, while on the two later hikes the restrictions said max 8 people could meet, so we were 6-8 groups of max 8 people. We then started at different times and assigned group leaders to each group. For more information, check past facebook events by DS.
 - October 2020: In Vättlefjäll, ca 7 km hike, ca 30 people. On this hike one participant twisted her ankle and had to be picked up from the hike by an ambulance team. For future hikes: bring a first aid kit, have a charged phone and be prepared to call for help!
 - January 2021: At Sisjön-Oxsjön, ca 9 km hike, ca 50 people. Cold and sunny day, no problems.
 - May 2021: In Vättlefjäll, ca 7 km hike, ca 50 signed up but only ca 20 ended up coming because of rain. Got positive feedback from the ones who came.
- Phd fika room in gathertown: <https://gather.town/app/2WkQiJerOCJFqfAL/chalmersphdhangout>

password: chalmers. This is open at all times and has been advertised on the DS facebook page. Would probably be a good idea to have a monthly/weekly/regular set time, so that people know when other people will be there.

- DS board BBQ 5th of June 2021. Many of this year's board members have not met due to the pandemic, but now that restrictions are less strict we will meet in Näckrossparken and get a free pizza and socialise outdoors.

A Chalmers phd student facebook group was also created: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/133805915231631>. This was created during an introduction day, and can help Phd students finding each other and answer each other's questions.

Election Committee

Stina Månsson, Artem Rodionov, and Isabel Harrysson Rodrigues were the representatives for the committee. The organization and the responsibilities of the committee are stated in the DS statutes. Article 2.7 of the statutes reads:

"The nomination committee prepares elections of board members and auditor by nominating candidates for these positions. At the meeting, free nomination is applied. If multiple general assemblies are held within one year of activity, by-elections can be held until all positions are filled."

The committee members started enquiring the current board members on whether they were interested in continuing as a board member for the next term. Depending on the responses, a chart was prepared highlighting the number of board members required for the next term. According to the statutes, the board can have maximum 2 members from each department. There was a requirement to search for a new chair and vice-chair, which is typically more intensive. The committee started by asking the board members who were planning to continue for the next term whether they were interested in being chair or vice-chair. This is mainly because the chair and vice-chair hold more responsibilities and a knowledge of the working of DS would be very useful.

No chair nominations could be found before the GA, but during the GA three nominations were made among the participants: Elin Malmgren, Andri Spilker and Ritukesh Bharali. Masoud Bahraini was nominated as vicechair.

The general assembly was held on May 19th 2021. The GA assembly elected Elin Malmgren as chair and Masoud Bahraini as vicechair. All nominations of ordinary board members were approved by the GA, including a self-nomination of Irene Lobo Valbuena from CSE.

Local PhD student council reach out

DS representative during the 2020/2021 academic year was Mareddy Reddy. According to point 1.1 of the DS statutes, DS should "[...] provide a forum for contacts between doctoral students at Chalmers". We interpret this as both social activities (see the social activities committee), as well as facilitating excellent liaison between local PhD student councils of departments and the DS board. This is an activity which we call "local PhD student council coordinator". The goal of this activity is to provide a platform in its various forms for the PhD councils to exchange information while necessary, and at the same time to make DS's work more visible to them. Different departments have very different setups regarding the local PhD student council. Some departments do not have a local council yet, due to the department restructuring in 2017 (from 17 departments down to 12), while a few new councils are formed based on some newly founded departments. In general, the local councils should represent the PhD students of those departments and serve as a platform of regular meeting and useful information.

On the initiative of the local PhD council coordinator a PhD student guide with lots of useful information was launched.

<https://www.notion.so/Unofficial-PhD-Student-Guide-370f7fdc63ef42c8bbfd1bc9b1bb878e>

Electronic Study Plan, ESP

Upon request from FUN, a committee has been working with an electronic version of the individual study plan (ISP), harmonized for all PhD students. The platform would be called ESP, connected to the PhD student portal and to e.g. Ladok. A detailed proposal of the functions and the overall framework (for such a platform) had been put forward by the committee with a big part of the design developed by the DS Board of 2015/2016 (<https://chalmersuniversity.box.com/s/1kns6g2r4gtwklf0lacszroi32d6da3>)

Finally, in 2018 Chalmers centrally has decided to implement the ESP. In relation to this, the project manager (for the ESP) and the DS chair proposed the formation of an ESP committee, that would help in incorporating PhD student feedback at every stage of the implementation. This committee would be composed of one representative from each local council and will be chaired by a member from DS, who would be also an adjunct member of the ESP steering committee. Furthermore a PhD will be hired to be part of the ESP project development committee. A platform for PhD students, from PhD students!

Progress has been made with the ESP but due to the corona pandemic and economy in balance drastically slowed down. The budget was reduced and for now only a minimal working system will be available at the start which should be implemented in late 2021.

PhD Survey

For the year 2020/2021, Jannik Theyssen, Stina Månsson and Jonathan Cohen were responsible for the DS PhD survey. The survey was conducted in spring 2020 and evaluated in detail thereafter. The results helped to identify key issues in the doctoral student education. Thanks to the survey, many problems could be brought up by DS and local council representatives in their working groups with a solid foundation. With a response rate of ca. 50% the importance of the PHD survey is evident and absolutely necessary to help DS identify and raise problems. The results have been compiled in a website and an extensive survey report that has been shared with many stakeholders at Chalmers, including FUN, the directors of studies, vice-heads of departments, local councils and the general PhD student population. The identification of stress related problems also lead to DS financing and organizing a 4 week workshop on how to Navigate Academia.

https://www.dokt.chs.chalmers.se/media/DS-Survey-report-2020.pdf?utm_source=mailpoet&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=ds-newsletter-issue-march-2020_36

https://www.dokt.chs.chalmers.se/?mailpoet_router&endpoint=track&action=click&data=WyI0NyIsIjE2YTQkZHZhZGZjR3OGdhd2N3a3M4azRrIiwIMjliLClyYmU4NWQ4YzcmQmQilGZhbHNIXQ

Navigate Academia workshop

Based on the results of the survey and after the successful Coping under Covid19 webinar, DS organized a 4 week workshop “Navigate Academia and maximize your potential – Workshop for PhDs”.

The workshops was given by 3 experts: Déborah Rupert, Frida Rångtall, and Mette Sjöberg Anthonsen. Déborah Rupert is a Coach for science community certified by the International Coaching Federation (www.deborahrupert.com)and, holds PhD in Biological Physics from Chalmers University of Technology. Frida Rångtall is a sleep educator who obtained her PhD in Sleep and memory from Uppsala University(www.slumra.nu). Mette Sjöberg Anthonsen is an Executive coach with a PhD in Political Science from Gothenburg University; she is also certified by the International Coaching Federation (www.imparo.se).The first workshop took place on June 1st. Our goal is to target the needs of PhDs during COVID-19 covering tools for stress and sleep management. Additionally, it had an introduction of the topics that were covered later in the interactive workshop. The workshop was free for participants to join. This workshop included a preparation package for the participants, consisting of an online survey and on-boarding homework. Additionally, a workbook for each participant with hands-on exercises and references was provided. After the second workshop the participants should be able to:

- Navigate academia & well-being
 - Understand the academic system and learn to reduce the pressure
 - Explore their wellbeing definition
 - Learn tools to slow down the mind and increase creativity
- Develop self-leadership
 - Identify their values and motivation
 - Start working on their strategy forward
- Build healthy habits and improve sleep
 - Dive into sleep science and its benefits
 - Explore their definition of a good night’s sleep and learn how to achieve it
 - Create a toolbox of tips and habits to promote healthy sleep

The workshop was considered highly successful and was funded by DS/Chalmers student union.

Final remark

This report presents briefly the work performed by the DS board during the activity year of 2020/2021. Due to the corona pandemic DS had to quickly adapt to remote working. Meetings were held digitally and made certain communication challenging. While some activities and projects are mandatory for the board to perform, as defined by the frame work agreement from Chalmers, others are electable for the board. Each new year, the new board decides on a Plan of Operations document, which more specifically decides which activities to work on for that year. Some years it is not possible to perform all projects that we have, mainly due to time constraints and a tight budget for the working hours for DS. In the current year, DS was able to achieve most of its goals stated in the Plan of Operation, while working adapted to the corona pandemic.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'C. Sauer', is positioned above a horizontal line.

DS Chair 2020/2021, Christopher Sauer