

MC2 PhD Student Council

Minutes for council meeting on April 17, 2019

Present: Filip Hjort, Stavros Giannakopoulos, Hafid Zehri, Andreas Ask, Nooshien Laderian, Martí Gutierrez Latorre, Josef Hansson

Opening the meeting

The meeting started at 12:00 in room A504 of MC2

Election of meeting officials

Josef was the regular chair and Stavros the appointed secretary. Hafid was elected to adopt the minutes.

Approval of agenda

Agenda was approved

Meeting notice in due order

Meeting notice was determined to be sent out in due order.

Updates from other boards and committees

The executive board (Ledningsgruppen, LG)

Martí reported that the Genie program for gender equality across Chalmers is in recruitment phase and they have plans to make workshops. There are plans for leadership and equality courses that all bosses are expected to take. These courses will also cover other work environment issues. Similar education will be implemented for employees.

An issue was brought up that MC2 has no data usage policy. Apparently the central Chalmers data usage policy is no de-facto used by all departments and they must specifically adopt and modify it. Technically MC2 is in grey legal areas due to that.

The department advisory board (Institutionsrådet)

Andreas went with the advisory board to Sahlgrenska hospital on a visit. The hospital had expressed the interest for PhD students getting involved with them in research and possibilities of research cooperation between them and MC2. There were discussions of holding a joint poster session. FFF might be interested about this unique opportunity.

There was discussion regarding Camp Vera, a directed recruitment movement to get highschool students to join IT+Electro and how MC2 can take part in these motions.

Chalmers PhD student guild (Doktorandsektionen, DS)

Agin was missing to give us updates.

The union of research student in physics (Foreningen för Forskarstuderande i Fysik, FFF)

Filip informed the council that the FFF will hold their annual Assembly in June and a new board will be elected. Filip expressed his interest to stay in the board but also mentioned that it would be good to have an extra MC2 student since he might not be on the next council. Any interested parties should contact Filip.

DS PhD student council workshop summary

Josef attended the student council workshop that DS organised. He commented on how remarkably different the academic culture is between different departments and how different issues they are facing. On the contrary a common issue faced by all councils is the emergence of issues with the supervisors and how to handle them. The DOMB had a presentation and concluded that "everything is terrible" about that issue. There are some rules to protect the students but there is no control or penalty for breaking them. When an issue does emerge, all solutions are hard or impossible to pull off and typically fall back into the supervisor having the last word.

There are cases where supervisors are hinting to their students that they should leave, or bully them into resigning themselves since they cannot fire the students since firing is a long and tenuous process with a lot of external checks in place.

The rules of procedure will be rewritten about the defence mainly to clarify what happens if a student does indeed fail in their defence. There are some sparse rumours about students failing at their defence but they should be classified as hearsay, so technically there are no cases to refer to. Allegedly there has been two defence failures in Chalmers, and the failures in general amount to one every five years in the entirety of Sweden.

Nevertheless, we should strive to improve communication with the other councils to help alleviate those issues.

International Staff Mobility Office (ISMO)

It appears they focus on solving issues that involve mobility, taxes, pension, housing etc. Our job will be to add it to the knowledge repository and communicate with administrators.

Supervisors should start project work between MSc and PhD in order to allow their non EU students to reapply for visa from within Sweden.

ISMO can help with visas since they have direct contact with Migrationsverket.

Furthermore there seems to be some Chalmers expat monthly meeting activity organized and the administrators should know where to find the mailing list.

Introductory Video/letter to new PhDs

We should have some form of introductory info welcoming new students that come in our department.

After discussions, it was proposed that this letter should have the web-page of the council (maybe in the form of a QR code), the name and email of the local student council representative, the website of the knowledge repository (with QR code), issues that we as the council can help with, directions on how to contact ISMO, and info regarding common supervision and work environment issues.

Filip volunteered to make a draft. The timeline for this project is by summer.

Issue reporting and logging

It will be good to keep track of things that the council cannot do much about in order to forward them as issues higher up. This logging should provide leverage towards IQ, IR etc to prove that the incidents are really issues.

We should not necessarily require the name of the one reporting the issue however we need to have a council member responsible for each issue. If people do provide their names when reporting an issue, we can always censor that list before making it public if someone demands to see the data.

We should provide enough context to pin-point the issue but the person reporting should have control over what will or will not be made public. If they want they may leave their email so we can contact them back for help or further discussion.

We should ask the DS people if we can have a form like that in our website for people to leave potentially anonymous complaints.

Other issues

There were no other issues.

Closing of the meeting

The meeting closed at 13:12.

Next Meeting: The next meeting 6th of May at 12:00

Sealing the minutes

Hafid Zehri has sealed the minutes 07 May 2019.