



Minutes – Science Faculty Council 31 January 2022, kl. 16.30-

Present: Hanna Dort (NFR), Alexandre Adler (NFR, Fysikum), Sara Kosenina (Biochem/Biophysics, voting PhD member), Dominic Heslin-Rees (ACES), Ruben Blokzijl (DEEP), Carl Tjernell (SUS), Laveena Kansara (MBW), Ellen Nein (BÅR), Alex Rego (Zoology PhD student), Nora Bergfeldt (Zoology, ON), Andriana Mantzafou (DBB, PhD Neurochemistry), Robert Dunst (PhD, Geology), Ruilan Xu (Microbiology, master's student), Priscilla Dufweke-Lantto (Mathematics), Kristina (BÅR, Marine Biology), Felicia Tinhag (BIG/BÅR), Robin Stoll (Mathematics, PhD student), Divya Bharathi (NFR, Civis), Linnea Andersson (SCEG), Jonathan Wiskandt (MISU), Ellen Bertell (Phys. Geo PhD)

1. Opening of the meeting

a. Round of presentation

b. Election of chairperson

Alexandre Adler

c. Election of secretary

Hanna Dort

d. Election of adjuster

Nora Bergfeldt

e. Approval of the agenda

Agenda was approved

f. Approval of last meeting's minutes

Annual meeting minutes were approved by poll.

g. Co adjungation

h. Information from SUS

1. Evaluation report from the Swedish higher education authority (UKÄ) was sent to all councils and PhD councils. The report is only available in Swedish, but Carl shared key points in English

- Overall, SU did fairly well
- University needs to communicate course evaluation results more clearly
- The university needs to clarify/improve upon its definition of "equality". Does it only refer to gender equality or other underrepresented groups?

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- Pedagogical support is handled differently/given to very different degrees between departments.
- Improvement needed in programs that are handled by multiple departments
- Inclusion of foreign students/PhD students in university quality assurance needs to be increased – for example, by holding meetings in English
- Improvements in distribution of information in English are needed.
- Criticism for increased sick leave and drop-out rates among PhD students
- SU needs to improve at following up on individual study plans (ISPs)
- Improvements are needed to the study-program-to-work-world connection.
- SU has two years to address/improve the issues they were criticized for. A focus group has been made that includes student representatives and the president & vice president of SUS.

2. There will be a RALV roundtable on Zoom at 15:00 on Wednesday to discuss the UKÄ report in further detail.

3. If you have questions about applying for council funding, please email Jenny Wiren at SUS.

4. Dominic asked if statistics on PhD sick leave and drop outs were publicly available. Carl has not seen the data, but he suggests emailing UKÄ or the President's Office for further information.

5. Carl believes comparisons in the UKÄ report occurred between SU and SU in the past (not SU vs other Swedish universities).

6. Ellen asks if the recommendations from UKÄ are binding. Carl doesn't believe they are, but states that these are strong recommendations and that the university is obliged to address them. Historically, universities have made improvements based on UKÄ's criticisms.

7. Divya raises the issue of some meetings being held in Swedish instead of English, despite previous agreements to switch languages. For local groups,



Carl suggests sending emails requesting a switch to English, where the student mentions the recommendations from UKÄ. SUS is still discussing how they will respond to the issue of language barriers. Divya will email relevant parties, and Alexandre offered to sign off on those emails.

8. There were four areas in the UKÄ report with satisfactory results, mainly regarding regulations and academic quality of education. Student influence needed improvement, but was not unsatisfactory. Work-life transition was deemed unsatisfactory.

9. There is one vacant PhD position on REBUS (check). If you're interested, contact CDR.

2. Concerning NFR's representation

a. NFR presidium

- At the annual meeting, we elected one chair and two vice-chairs. The chair unfortunately had to step down, so a new election of chair needs to take place.
 - Alex Adler nominates himself as chair. Alex is voted in as chair with 13 votes.
- We now have two open positions for vice chairs.
 - Alexandre Rego and Jonathan Wiskandt nominate themselves for the positions. Both are elected with 12 votes each.

b. Nominated since last meeting:

Fredrik Grote - Chemistry Section Board

- Approved for the position.

Sara Kosenina - Samverkansberedningen

- Approved for the position.

Sara Kosenina - Stipendieberedningen (grant committee)

- Approved for the position.

Nominations from the Mathematics Department:

- For the math-physics section committee, the math department nominates the PhD student Tobias Grøsfjeld as an ordinary member. They believe he is the current member and is just missing from minutes/the website.
 - Tobias is approved for the position.
- For the docent committee, they nominate Elena Farahbakhsh as suppleant (the committee already has two normal members)
 - Elena is approved for the position



- For the teacher hiring committee, they nominate Elena Farahbakhsh as an ordinary member
 - Elena is approved for the position
- For the Stockholm Mathematics Centre they nominate Erik Lindell
 - Erik is approved for the position
- c. Open election
 - i) Ordinary groups:
All vacant positions for ordinary groups and committees are found at the NFR site at sus.su.se (<https://www.sus.su.se/fakultetsrad/nfr>).
 - ii) Groups within the quality assurance system
 - iii) Undergraduates receive monetary compensation for serving on these councils/committees, and PhD students receive extension.
 - iv) No nominations were made to fill these open positions

3. Reports from NFR representatives

Central PhD-Council (CDR)

- CDR is not yet working well, as two faculties have not yet elected people to the council. No decisions were made, due to low turnout. The position of CDR chair is still open, and grants 40 days of prolongation for 3-4 CDR meetings per semester, along with the potential to sit on the university board. CDR is in English, but the university board is in Swedish. One vice-chair position is open; Hanna Dort filled the other.

Central Student Council (CSR)

- Better distribution of information on/advocacy for student health resources is needed.
- The faculty has discussed the ability of students to comment on decisions made by one person. Examples were given from the Law Faculty, but not the Faculty of Science

Faculty Board & Arbetsutskottet (ON)

- There was an ON meeting at the end of December that was mostly about economy and hiring processes. On Thursday (the upcoming meeting), the Board will discuss a new bachelor's program in marine geology. The UKÅ report was also discussed in detail.



- The primary decision on corona impact extension lies with the relevant department, but decisions can be brought forward to the dean if, for example, the student does not agree with them.
 - There has been no recent discussion at the faculty level of a general pandemic-related prolongation for PhD students.
 - Jonathan asks that, given that the decision that no general prolongation would be granted is now outdated (made last year), that the discussion be reopened at an upcoming ON by Nora (not the meeting on Thursday).
 - Jonathan offers to spearhead the formulation of our argument for general extension. Nora will try to contact some members of the coronavirus working group to help out.
 - Robert asks what ON discusses about the marine geology degree program. They go through the education plan and approve it, then the program moves forward for the ultimate decision from the “principal”. Linnea adds that marine geology will be replacing another bachelor’s program (check?)
 - Today, there was a meeting with Katariina where she reminded us that the board of NFR can always contact her to set up a meeting with the Dean.
- Grundutbildningsberedningen (GB)
 - There was no GB-AU meeting.
 - Alexandre reports discussion of independent study programs in biology and the marine geology programs.
 - Department & Section Committees
 - No reports.

4. Topics for discussion.

- a. The half-program raise of doctoral students: when is that for your department?
 - i. Alexandre Rego discusses the policy at the Department of Zoology. Although no documents exist detailing what the policy is, the “unofficial official” policy is that the 50% raise is given upon submission of the licentiate thesis to the department LK.



The issue will be discussed with the faculty board, and we'll have an update at the start of March. Conversations have been ongoing with SACO, who agree that inequality within/between departments regarding raises is a serious issue. DIZ is now looking for examples of how other STEM departments handle their raises.

- ii. Jonathan says that MISU calculates the 50% raise based on net study time. He emphasizes that the rules for the 80% raise are well-defined, perhaps at a national level.
- iii. Ruben states that DEEP raises are based on net study time.
- iv. Ellen (Phys. Geo.) states that raises at her department are very much up to the supervisors, and no very clear rule exists. Thus, halftime raise time differs a lot between different PhD students within Phys. Geo. Ellen agrees that raise requirements should be transparent and clearly defined.
- v. Robin (Mathematics) also refers to 50% of the "requirements", with the opportunity to get the raise at defense of the licentiate if that occurs earlier than the 50% mark. He comments that it's not extremely transparent, but that no large differences have been noted between different students.
- vi. Robert (IGV) states that the 50% raise comes after the "halftime assessment", which is a "mini licentiate" with a presentation. Usually, students have one paper published at this time.
- vii. At MBW, raises are given at 50% time, regardless of if the halftime presentation is given.
- viii. Nora mentioned NFR's displeasure with the differences between departments at the December meeting. We will wait for the decision by Forskarutbildningsberedningen.
- ix. As NFR, we agree that 50% time + 50% prolongation time would be a fair time to receive the 50% raise.
- x. Carl states that ON can go into departments and tell them when rules are broken, but believes that this issue will likely be pushed forward to a more central council for more



discussion/clarification if it's deemed to affect more than our Faculty.

- xi. Alexandre Rego will forward his communication with ON/SACO to interested parties, including Ellen Berntell and Robert Dunst.
- b. UKÄ report on quality assurance at SU (see Carl's report from SUS)
- c. Laptop return policy: should we be allowed to buy them?
 - i. The policy is changing so that, instead of students receiving their laptops at the end of the PhD, the departments are taking them back and destroying them for "data security".
 - ii. Alexandre Adler proposes that he contacts the data security officer for the university on behalf of NFR to discuss laptop buyback and/or a laptop-keeping grace period.
 - iii. Alexandre Rego brings up the case of PhD students working on PhD-related manuscripts post-graduation and/or continuing on as a postdoc at SU.
 - iv. Dominic suggests looking into SU's sustainability pledges regarding e-waste.
 - v. Carl asks if this is an official university policy; Alexandre believes that it is a university-wide rule change based on communication with his department, but he is unsure if a written policy exists.
 - vi. Robert believes laptops can be kept at his department, provided they are more than three years old. He would like to bring this issue to the environmental board he sits on, since e-waste (screens, keyboards, etc) is a huge issue at the university following PhD student graduations.

Kommenterad [1]: Adler or Rego?

5. Information from student- and PhD-councils

- Ellen (Phys. Geo.) has been discussing with her council that SU has some of the lowest PhD salaries in Sweden.
- Information from Alexandre: SACO renegotiates salaries every three years. Over the next three years, we'll be raised to Uppsala's levels at the time of negotiation last winter. We will not be raised to KTH levels, at



least not in the next three years. It is unlikely negotiations will be possible before the next SACO renegotiation.

- Laveena asks for any updates on the changes to the Aliens Act. Alexandre notes that wait times at Migrationsverket wait times have skyrocketed as a result of the rules change (some people have been waiting a year for what previously took two months), but, unfortunately, there is not much the university has power to do.
 - The wait time is especially troubling for non-EU students, who can not return home while extension is pending. Within the EU, travel has been possible, since people have been able to have border agents within Sweden pull up their Migrationsverket status.

6. Other

- a. Alexandre reminds undergraduate students to email him with any issues they would like added to future agendas for discussion.
- b. The next NFR meeting will be on 28 March. Please contact us by email if you have any questions in the interim. nfr@science.su.se.

7. Meeting closed at 18:40