

Autumn PhD Council Meeting - 7 Dec, 2023

Opening of the meeting

Start at 15:38

Participants:

Dongwon Kim (DK), Filippo Schiavo (FS), Roger Cattaneo (RC), Anna Sandberg (AS), Alik Litsa (AL), Pranay Nayak (PN), Jerzy Paxzos (JP), Ellen Riefel (ER), Gandharva Appagere (GA), Lukas Rødland (via zoom) (LR), Nadia Dachlythra (via zoom) (ND), Alexandre Alder (via zoom) (AA).

Meeting formalities:

1. Approval of meeting being announced according to procedure
 - (a) Approved unanimously.
2. Confirmation of agenda
 - (a) Agenda confirmed with no changes requested unanimously
3. Election of chair person
 - (a) ER was elected as the chairperson unanimously
4. Election of secretary
 - (a) GA was elected as the secretary unanimously.
5. Election of two adjustors
 - (a) FS, AL were elected as adjustors unanimously.

Approval of previous meetings minutes (spring meeting 2023)

- The chamber approved the minutes of the Spring meeting - with change to the title as raised by GA. Change: The word Autumn to be replaced with Spring

Report from the cashier

- Asked money for the Trivia night - approval is yet to come. Case officer assigned. Approval is expected in few days.

Report from the revisors

- No reports presented by the revisors.

Information about the different councils and faculty work in general

- No specific reports from the councils or faculty work. To be summarised in the Chairperson's report.

Nominations and elections of representatives to faculty level

- Chair Makes an announcement that there are not many PhDs present, So another announcement will be sent before the main elections in February.
- Chair starts presenting the advantages and the perks in terms of hours/days compensated for being in the committees at the University, Faculty, Sections and Department.
- AA notes, as a vice chair to CDR, the committee plays a crucial role in bringing issues that directly effect the PhD students in terms of salaries, work environment and supervision. The issues are usually raised in the section or department level which are raised passed up the ladder to CDR which co-ordinates with SUS to resolve the concerned issue. AA encourages any participation in terms of nomination to the CDR board.
- GA seconds AA with regards to NFR that as a natural sciences faculty council body, NFR board is where most issues related or concerning PhD students at Fysikum gets raised and first originate and discussion. So, participation is highly encouraged to join the committee with a nomination. ER notes that the election to Chair and VC for NFR for the upcoming year concluded yesterday (Dec 6, 2023) but nominations to Fysikum rep is still open. GA seconds it but adds that there is still an open position for VC as NFR has room for 3 VC positions.

Nominations:

University and Faculty level:

1. CDR - None
2. NFR - GA (Vice chair)
3. Promotion committee - FS
4. Basic education - None
5. Information group - None
6. IT committee - None
7. Collaboration committee - None

Section level:

1. Section advisory committee: None
2. Research education: ER
3. Stipend committee: FS
4. Academic appointment: FS

ER will send another notification to all PhDs in January to nominate themselves to available positions in the Faculty, Section and University level committees.

Reports from the Chairperson:

- The council organised 2 PhD game-nights. Plans to continue with these activities through the upcoming year.
- Athena page where all PhDs are automatically enrolled is now updated with
 - Templates for Licentiate and Thesis.
 - Minutes for the PhD council meetings (as they are available and confirmed)

- Notifications on the activities from Council such as Trivia and game-nights.
- The PhD council has been involved in codifying the role of mentors:
 - Guidelines draft is being prepared together with the Director of studies.
- Besides the role of mentor document, the PhD council is also working to establish a framework to assess the quality of supervision.
- Course evaluation for the PhD courses has been revitalised on the initiative from KuF and director of studies. Fysikum has kick-started a new system to evaluate the courses. Looking for evaluators.
- Licentiate has become optional with half-time seminar added as an alternative choice for the PhDs' mandatory mid-way evaluation. This decision has been communicated on faculty web-page and the guidelines have been uploaded.
- Division PhD meetings to get a feeling to the issues and concerns faced by the PhD students in the division has been initiated and piloted since early this year.

Report from NFR

- The salary negotiations have concluded and finalised with all SU PhDs getting a raise of 8.1% total increase applied retroactively from Oct-23
- Unlike Fysikum, some departments do not yet have a well-defined system to decide a 50% raise for PhD salaries and NFR tried to push for this to be included in the Salary negotiations but ON left this to the discretion of the departments and concerned authorities. So, the current recommendation is to let the departments come to a consensus but a reasonable agreement that is favourable to all parties i.e. PhDs, Supervisors and faculty with regards to 50% increment time.
- The SUS has approved and adopted a 'Position document' that outlines the roles and some guidelines for the PhDs and all other student positions in the University. The document will be uploaded on the PhD council athena page.
- PhD level courses across departments have been another topic of discussion and NFR council recommended a survey across all departments among PhD students to gather data on interests and the type of PhD level courses. Further, inter-departmental courses could be explored.

Other issues:

- None raised in the chamber.

Meeting closed

- 16:39