

## Agenda for the board meeting

Date: Thursday, 14-Mar-2024

Time: 18:00 – 21:00

Location: **A0412, Biomedicum and Zoom**

Acronyms: DSA: The Doctoral Students' Association, MF: Medicinska Föreningen, DSO: Student and Doctoral Students Ombudsperson, FuM: MF Council (Fullmäktige), KI: Karolinska Institutet, KF: Committee for Research, KFU: Committee for Doctoral Education, KPK: Course and Programme Committee, CSTP: Clinical Scientist Training Program, SFS: Sweden's United Student Unions, SFS-DK: SFS doctoral committee, SSCO: Stockholm Student Union's Central Organization, AGM: Annual General Meeting

Board: Leo Gkekos; Ioanna Tsea; Sviatlana Sukhanava; Tracer Yong; Osheen Sharma; Katalin Vincze; Martha Paskin; Maya Molinari; Sylvya Pasca; Angelo Giosuè Mezzoioso; Daniel Doyon

Present: Leo Gkekos; Sviatlana Sukhanava (via Zoom); Tracer Yong; Osheen Sharma (via Zoom); Katalin Vincze; Martha Paskin (via Zoom); Maya Molinari; Sylvya Pasca (via Zoom); Angelo Giosuè Mezzoioso (via Zoom); Daniel Doyon

Absent board members: Ioanna Tsea

Others in person: Mingzhi Liu; Benjamin Smart; Vladimir Pabón-Martínez; Letizid Orsini; Fredrika Hellgren; Luca Love; Daniel Söderberg; Ahmed Abdelmoez; Nishi Dave

Others via Zoom: Sakura Sakakibara; Nerea Martin Almazan, Petar Mitev; Sara Licaj; Huy Dang; Spyridon Pantelios; Dipita Fahim; Ahmed Abbadi

### Formalia (5 minutes)

F1 Opening of meeting: 18:01

F2 Proper proclamation of the meeting: yes

F3 Appointment of person to preside the meeting: Leo Gkekos

F4 Appointment of person to write the minutes: Tracer Yong

F5 Appointment of person to sign the minutes: Daniel Doyon

F6 Reported absences: Maria Belikova; Ioanna Tsea

F7 Previous protocols: Minutes from February 2024 signed.

F8 Approval of the current agenda: The current agenda was rejected. Emma Hedberg Rundgren will be elected as a student representative at LIME department. Emma Ehn will be elected as a student representative at the steering group for the clinical research school in molecular medicine. Mingzhi Liu will be presenting the last discussion point replacing Yueyun Pan. Luca Love will give a short update on the Freezer malfunction investigation in Flemingsberg.

F9 Verbalization of the decisions per capsulam: Approval of 2000 SEK for the workshops of local and central representatives.

### **Reports from Student Representatives and others**

R1 Ombudsperson

Skipped

R2 KI careers (Vladimir Pabón-Martínez)

- Doctoral course career skills for Scientist - Spring 2024 - Exams week. Course participants from: KI, KTH, SU, Mälardalens University and University of Copenhagen
- Internship program (Spring 2024) application period - (for interns): March 26th (inclusive)
- New blogs for the Researcher Blog on the way Career portraits / From the course
- Doctoral course career skills for Scientist - Autumn 2024 - Will open soon
- Two workshop (Spring and Fall) Finish on time - academic productivity
- Mentor activity IRP- Plan
- TedxKI - 23 March
- Grants Office information seminar for the upcoming MSCA Postdoc Fellowships Call - March 27, 2024
- KFU (Committee for doctoral education) - KI Career service report about internship program for doctoral students
- More information in Career newsletter

### R3 DSA Chairperson (Leo Gkekos)

- Meeting with the Vice Rektor Bob Harris
  - We have had one meeting with Bob Harris since the last board meeting.
  - Two main topics we discussed:
    - i. Freezer failure:
      - a. Luca will probably talk a bit more about it at the end but KI has established a crisis group and is investigating the incident.
      - b. Students will be able to extend their PhD as compensation
      - c. Ioanna and I have written a letter to the students of BioNut and MedH with information and to let them know they can reach out if they want us to hear their story. It should have reached them by now.
    - ii. A case of a student that is dissatisfied with their PhD. Will not go into details because it is not our job to come up with solutions.
- Separate MF emails for DSA's workgroups
  - MF is working on creating MF emails for our workgroups so hopefully we will have them soon. Will keep you updated.

### R4 DSA Workgroups

#### a. Doctoral Education (Sylvya Pasca)

- Had a meeting with the workgroup on the 28th of February
- The next presentation at the research school will take place this month
- The KI core Facilities Day will be on 19th of April in Flemingsberg and they will need help with advertising to students and 2 people in person on the day
- The PhD booklet is aimed to be updated in the end of May
- Waiting for updates on the teaching platform (RIMS)
- Mentoring platform: planning an in person event
- Workshops with the KI Career Service: 2 upcoming seminars (Solna, spring, and Flemingsberg, autumn)
- The next meeting for the workgroup will be on 26th of March, sending the invitation ASAP

A brief discussion about student representative workshop. Main concern revolves around the availability of student representatives to present themselves at the event as they usually have other priorities.

#### b. Student Representation (Osheen Sharma)

- Local and Central Representative Workshop: I've been working on the plan to bring all our local and central representatives together for a workshop. It's all about getting us talking, sharing ideas, and just generally bonding as a team. So far 11 out of 18 dept reps have confirmed!
- Clarification on Departmental Representatives: The Department of Global and Public Health has two reps, but nobody seems to know who they are at DSA! I along with Leo have reached out to Véronique Henriksson Milliot to figure out what's going on. Plus, We've given them the information on our DSA election rules to avoid any more confusion.
- Attended Education Council meeting (UrO): We talked a lot about making sure education quality is good for everyone at KI, especially our Bachelor's and Masters's students. And also discussed how to pick department safety reps. Tea from UrO, Leo, and I are getting together soon (20th March 2023) to brainstorm what this role should be all about.

#### c. Social Events (Martha Paskin)

I was not available for DSA duties for the past month. However, we will have our first workgroup meeting tomorrow (15<sup>th</sup>/March) and we aim to come up with a plan for the whole year. A collaboration with the mental health workgroup has been planned and many new people joined the workgroup with fresh ideas which we will hopefully implement. Possible ideal includes fika, board game, yoga, and more.

#### d. PR (Katalin Vincze)

- Kickoff meeting: 23rd of February. Content for different media channels
  - We decide to delete the twitter account and remove it from the social media X account deactivated

We decide to keep the facebook, LinkedIn,

- Niels proposes that once every six months DSA posts about what we have been up to!
- DSA whatsapp, Kati, Ioanna, Martha are now managers
- Teams channel
- To do: Instagram backup number to be checked and potentially removed This still needs to be looked into
- Next newsletter
  - We have decided to have one newsletter that includes the PhD conference flyer in the top and when registrations open for the conference we have a follow up paloma post only about registration to the conference. We

schedule the newsletter for Tuesday 5th of March. Ioanna and Kati had a Newsletter writing session, it was sent out 5th of March despite major issues with Paloma – hopefully Paloma issues are now resolved

- Content:
  - PhD conference
  - Avonova change
  - Ombuds highlight
- PhD conference advertising
  - Ioanna will send Niels information about the conference and he will make the poster. Deadline to have the poster by Friday 1st of March. Poster prepared by Niels, sent to screens on campus and featured on Instagram
- KI newsletter
  - Margareta has not responded to emails. Now Ioanna will email news@ki.se. Niels will also reach out in person since she is the admin KFU (7th March is the next KFU meeting). No updates from Margareta Stark, Ioanna is updating manually the student lists using the doctoral intro days.
- Other news:
  - Kati has been updating the Google Calendar on the website, and sharing info sent by Vladimir on Teams (the ones that are to time-sensitive till the next Newsletter which will come in April)
  - Other events and updates are regularly shared on Instagram
  - There will be a separate newsletter for the PhD conference when Abstract submissions open (25th March)
  - Ioanna is active with the PhD bloggers
  - Scheduling next workgroup meeting is in progress

#### e. Welfare and Health (Maya Molinari)

- Workgroup is now formed and includes: Benjamin, Androula, Marta and Maya.
- A first meeting has been done on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February. We discussed about the future goals and divided the MHS work
- Maya will attend the Social events meeting on March 15<sup>th</sup>. We'll make a proposal for monthly Fika

#### R5 PhD Conference (Daniel Doyon)

Sponsorship searching went well. Currently, we secured sponsorship from 7 companies. We are working on invoices customised for companies registered with different floor plan and booth location.

----- Katalin Vincze left 18:32-----

#### R6 The Senate (Konsistoriet, Maria Belikova)

Maria was not present in the board meeting. However, she sent in a brief report containing following message.

*not much, the budget process has started, now is the chance to make impact. Also a lot of "myndighetskapital" so a lot of investments can be made. Extra focus in the budget on ALF medel distribution. I talked about our view on the freezer-thing in Neo, I brought up what we talked about last meeting.*

*Report from Forskningsrådet: budget work starting – a lot of plans: even out "klinisk forskarskola" so they are announced evenly each year, and increase spots. Plans to start a post doc programme that you can start directly after PhD. Plans to investigate a new program instead of "forskar-AT" so that it is still "early entry" and to change forskar-ST sp that it is more "late entry". Around 100 new PhD registered on the clinical side, same on KI side. However 37% are "biträdande överläkare" and 15% are "specialistläkare", so there is consensus that specially doctors need ways to enter early into research.*

#### R7 Faculty Board (Fakultetsnämnden, Daniel Söderberg)

- Career ladder: Got in touch with JF. No decision was made. Possibly fewer grants but larger sums. Discussion about need to clarify future career paths at KI.
- Preliminary budget approved.
- Educations wants money for doctoral and postdoctoral education in some specific areas (radiography, dental medicine, speech therapists and some others) because there are very few teachers in these subjects. Need to get more teachers to be able to keep the educations.
- KFU: suggestion to increase number of KIDs and/or give a few KIDs with 100% finance degree. Possibly this can be integrated with the education committee's suggestions, e.g., KID in education or in subject areas that are in need of scientific enhancement.
- Rector and the leadership is doing a tour to all departments.

#### R8 Committee for Doctoral Education (KFU, Niels Krämer)

Presented at later time point

R9 Committee for Research (KF)

There is currently no representative in the KF.

R10 Medicinska Föreningen (MF) and Fullmäktige (FuM) (Fredrika)

Meeting cancelled, no update.

R11 Other boards, and committees

- Bylaws task force
  - We had a meeting and have made further changes.
  - I will circulate the updated version with the board
- Student compensation task force
  - We had a meeting and agreed on some percentages
  - I haven't had time to do anything further
- Migrations task force
  - Great meeting with Ulla Tunkara
  - A lot of things the committee could be doing

Luca Love: Freezer disaster. Report issued, police informed, all investigation in progress.

Osheen Sharma: Safety representative needed to be recruited. In contact with Tila to discuss setting up this position. Main confusion of safety rep's role is from overlapping role with ombudperson. Should discuss with safety network, chair of MF to draw clear line in duties.

----Niels Krämer joined 18:45-----

Niels: KFU report

During the last KFU meeting, monography thesis criteria was a major issue. In addition, KFU planed to recruit 2 representatives for clinical research school.

--- Niels Krämer switched to zoom----- 18:50

## Decision Points

- D1* Election of student representatives  
Presenter: Leo Gkekos

Election was put forward. Passed. Emma Hedberg Rundgren was elected as a student representative at LIME department. Emma Ehn was elected as a student representative at the steering group for the clinical research school in molecular medicine.

- D2* Event completion report (15 minutes)  
Presenter: Ioanna Tsea & Leo Gkekos

Leo explained why DSA needs a reporting back system for events we fund but not necessarily lead in organising and how the proposed system works. Questions about how detailed one should elaborate the outcome of the event. 2~3 sentence is desired. Revised version coming

----- break 18:58 till 19:08-----

## Information & discussion

- I1* Presentation by SULF about PhD salary negotiation (30 minutes)  
Presenter: Mikael Brisslert

DSA has invited Mikael Brisslert, Ombudsman at Sveriges universitetslärare och forskare, SULF. SULF is one of the unions that represents PhD students to KI. Mikael is invited to our meeting to talk to us about the salary negotiations that are happening behind the scenes.

Mikael went through the different sources of income for PhD Students, PhD salary ladders at KI and Göteborgs Universitet, and the differences between time-based and progress-based systems of salary increases.

Link about work permit salary threshold shared by Osheen during the discussion  
<https://sverigesradio.se/artikel/report-work-permit-salary-threshold-should-be-raised-to-sek-34-200>

There is more information on SULF's website. The presentation will be available in the [Onedrive folder](#).



- 12 Proposal for amendments to the doctoral student's contract addressing salary disparity (20 minutes)  
Presenter: Nishi Dave

Nishi Dave elaborated the salary gap between PhD with and without an MD degree is unjustifiable and seek DSA's support to abolish this distinction.

Tracer Yong: The fundamental question to this issue is whether DSA support KI's policy to encourage MD to do PhD or not. If yes, this incentive should stay in place. In my view, this ladder under discussion which is qualified by having a medical degree serves the purpose to attract international MD (like myself) since the higher salary ladder is clearly aiming for Swedish MD.

Luca Love: I think it's justified to have a higher salary for medical trained people. Ideally everyone should have that higher salary, but I think that's unrealistic.

Angelo Giosuè Mezzoiuso: Medical doctors have a higher cost opportunity in doing their PhD in comparison to other professions.

Daniel Söderberg: The incentive is very much less than the real difference between MD salary and PhD salary. Plus, there are MD doing research outside of this ladder.

Benjamin Smart: MD study is in general longer and more expensive than other degrees in certain countries.

General discussion: Different payment is inherently unfair. The reason behind this incentive need investigation, perhaps other type of incentive may be useful for a replacement for this discrepancy.

Tracer Yong: The reason for this incentive to exist at the first place is, in my view, not because the degree worth more than others but simply to encourage MD to do science. Having more MDs with scientific background facilitates biomedical project's translation from lab to clinic.

Ahmed Abbadi: The comparison between different stratification is meaningless and will never end. The fundamental issue here is we all are not satisfied with this current payment. We should seek to increase salary in general.

There was discussion in KFU about payment adjustment of PhD with clinical duty. Salary ladder is adjusted every year.

Leo Gkekos: DSA will continue to investigate this issue. A new task force is established for this reason. Members at the time of the meeting: Leo Gkekos, Nishi Dave, Fredrika Hellgren, Letizia Orsini, Tracer Yong, Maria Belikova.

-----Osheen left 20:02-----

- 13      Discrimination incident at FyFa (10 minutes)  
Presenter: Ahmed Abdelmoez

Ahmed explained the incidence. A question was raised about the definition of discrimination.

Leo Gkekos: individual cases are not within the scope of DSA, though we are interested to draw attention for improvement of general PhD study condition.

We should aim to gather experiences of more student for a better definition of systemic problems.

Luca Love: Entranched academia system i.e. immunity of professorship against punitive measures to certain degree greatly hinders investigation and justice actions.

----- Daniel Söderberg and Nishi Dave left 20:19-----

-----Luca Love left 20:23-----

- 14      Discrepancies between PhD students with and without scholarship  
Presenter: MingZhi Liu

MingZhi explained, among Chinese PhD students, there is a notable prolonged visa extension time those funded by Chinese Scholarship Committee (CSC) comparing to those funded otherwise. This has cause great inconveniences to CSC scholars.

DSA migration committee had briefly discussed this issue with Ulla Tunkara and it is believed all CSC scholars had been granted extension they applied for. To our knowledge this is not the case. According to MingZhi's understanding, around 7 CSC scholars who applied their visa extension more than six months (the current average waiting time) ago are still waiting for their decision.

DSA migration committee will meet with Ulla and Nailin Li in near future to discuss potential solutions to address this issue.

## Open Discussion

Leo Gkekos: there is a vacancy for CMB rep of prefect overhearing.

Daniel Doyon: with Niels worked with SSD planetary report card. It is a move to promote sustainability in practice. A discussion followed on how we as scientists can contribute to this. In general laboratory work is very intensive and has the priority of outcome rather than sustainability. Ways to maximise efficiency and best use of research resource is feasible. DSA's opinion toward joining this network is needed.

Niels Krämer: we can arrange meeting talking about this issue journal club style.

Include a few slides on student rep workshop next Monday to increase the awareness of this issue.

End of meeting (20:38)

# Signature page

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