



Doctoral Student Union (DSU) – Activity Plan (AP), 2014

Background

The Doctoral Student Union (DSU) at Malmö University was established in 2012 and is now entering its second year of member activity. In 2013, the DSU focused on establishing a sustainable work structure, creating a communication platform, recruiting members, ensuring representation at all administrative levels, as well as spreading information about its existence to all doctoral students at Malmö University (MU). As the annual report shows, all stated goals were accomplished during 2013. This enables the DSU to focus on more concrete aspects of doctoral student education and work environment during the upcoming year. The priorities the DSU sets for 2014 are listed and described under the heading “Goals for 2014” (p.3).

Main visions and goals

The main goal of the DSU is to remain actively engaged in creating a dynamic, reliable and creative research- and work environment for all doctoral students at Malmö University. By actively and continuously partaking in conversations on all administrative levels of MU, the DSU ambition is to create and maintain influence of the decision making process in areas that touch upon the education, research environment and employment of doctoral students. The DSU therefore also strives to ensure that all levels of representation and influence can easily be identified.

DSU Board Organization (2014)

At the DSU annual meeting on December 3rd 2013, an official election committee suggested a new board for the doctoral student union. The new board has now convened and the tasks have been assigned as follows:

Susan Lindholm, Faculty of Education and Society (LS): Chairman and communications officer

Malin Mc Glinn, Faculty of Culture and Society (KS): Vice chairman and secretary

Banafsheh Hajinasab, Faculty of Technology and Society (TS): Treasurer and responsible for memberships

Åsa Ståhl, Faculty of Culture and Society (KS): Board member

Margareta Serder, Faculty of Education and Society (LS): Board members

DSU Board: Cooperation and Representation

The DSU will continue to take part in conversations within “Forskningsberedningen” as well as in the newly formed “Forskarutbildningsutskottet” through chairman (Susan Lindholm) and vice-chairman (Malin McGlinn). , The DSU will also continue to have meetings with Hans Lindquist (vice-chancellor for research and research education), Peter Jönsson (research coordinator at MU) and Maria Dahlberg (research administrator).

The DSU chairman (Susan Lindholm) will represent the DSU at meetings with the university board, while vice-chairman (Malin McGlinn) will continue to be the DSU representative at faculty board meetings at KS. Through Margareta Serder and Åsa Ståhl, the DSU will continue to contribute to the process of internal quality evaluation of the research education at MU.

In order to convert the DSU homepage into a communication platform for all doctoral students at MU, the DSU communication officer (Susan Lindholm) will maintain a close cooperation with BIT. The board has also initiated cooperation with SAR (Scholars at Risk, contact person at MU: Naser Eftekharian, Senior Advisor to the Vice-Chancellor).

The DSU will support any attempt at starting a mentorship program at MU in 2014 (previous contact persons have been: Cathrine Albér, Anna Jobér and Magnus Lindquist).

The DSU will continue to work closely with other Student Unions at Malmö University, as well as with SFS (Sveriges Förenade Studentkårar), LDK (the doctoral student union at Lund University) and the unions ST and SULF.

DSU Faculty Representation (2014)

Faculty Board (KS): Malin Mc Glinn

Board of Research and Post graduate program (KS): Peter Palm

Faculty Board (LS): Julia Rönnbäck

Board of Research and Post graduate program (LS): Margareta Serder & Anna Maria Hellborg

Faculty Board (HS): Manne Gerell

Board of Research and Post graduate program (HS): Zarah El-Schich

Faculty Board (TS): Steve Dahlskog

Board of Research and Post graduate program (TS): Fredrik Ohlin

Faculty Board (OD): Evaggelia Pappia

Board of Research and Post graduate program (OD): Liv Kroona

Goals for 2014

The main goal of the DSU for 2014 is to contribute to the establishment of a research environment/community, from which doctoral students at all departments will benefit. In order to accomplish the creation of such an environment, the Board has identified the following priority areas:

Courses and funding for doctoral students

It has been pointed out by many doctoral students that the courses that are currently offered at MU do not meet individual needs sufficiently. The question of possible courses at MU also ties in with the question of doctoral funding; in some research education programs doctoral students cannot afford to pay for courses elsewhere.

Partaking in courses that are of relevance for the research of individual doctoral students, as well as in obligatory courses that meet the requirements of the General Study Plan (Allmänna Studieplanen) is of great importance for both doctoral students and MU as a research environment. In order to create a doctoral student community that enables doctoral students (and other members of academic staff) to meet and engage in research conversations across faculty boundaries, it is therefore preferable that doctoral courses of high quality and relevance are given at MU.

The DSU therefore will work for a revision of the courses that are offered by MU at both general and faculty levels. The DSU proposes to become an active participant in conversations with the central administration (through Forskningsberedningen and Forskarutbildningsutskottet) and AKL, in order to influence the process.

The DSU also proposes an investigation into the distribution of doctoral student “spending money”, that is how expenses of courses, books, travel and conferences are paid for at each faculty.

Education for supervisors

The academic environment goes through transformations continuously which calls for the need for academic staff to do the same. The DSU therefore would like to initiate a conversation about how education for supervisors could be updated as well as how new attractive courses for supervisors could be offered.

Improved communication and information

During 2014, the DSU wishes to further improve both external and internal communication and visibility, using the DSU website and social networks as the main tool. By translating all DSU related documents into English and creating a calendar on the website, the DSU hopes to make visible the work of the DSU and also to work towards a bottom-up and including structure.

Improved representation

The ambition for 2014 is to work towards a structure in which all faculties at Malmö University are represented in the DSU Board. To achieve such a goal, the DSU believes that a first step is to have frequent and structured meetings with all DSU faculty representatives. We believe this can be the start of creating so called “Doktorandkollegier” at faculty level, which hopefully will help build the bottom-up structure that we wish to achieve.

Statutes

During 2014, the DSU statutes that will be undergoing some revisions to better meet the current situation. This includes a translation to English as well as unified and easily accessible language.

Members

The DSU will continue to work towards increasing the number of members. Special attention will be given to non-Swedish doctoral students. In order to do so, the DSU will be present at different gatherings where doctoral students are invited, as well as organizing a Doctoral Student Union day.

Introduction of new doctoral students

The DSU will continue the work to improve the routines for the introduction and welcoming of all new doctoral students at MU.

We suggest:

- that routines for the admission process (including the appointment of supervisor) are formalized and transparent
- a checklist for supervisors (including information about ISP, ASP, rights and obligations, DSU membership etc.) in order to safeguard that all doctoral students, independent of faculty or department, receive the same information. Such a checklist should be accessible for all stages of research education
- that the DSU are routinely informed of the admittance of new doctoral students
- that the DSU receives up-to date information about doctoral students from all faculties (that includes doctoral students who have finished their degree, those who no longer work as doctoral students due to other reasons, and those who are not formally registered as doctoral students, yet work as such at MU etc.)

Doktorandombudsman

The DSU also wants to initiate a discussion regarding the employment of an ombudsman for doctoral students during 2014.

Meetings

Meetings with “Kårfullmäktige” (meaning all doctoral student members) will be held once per semester (according to the statutes). In addition, the DSU will invite all faculty representatives in order to initiate the creation of “doktorandkollegier” (see above). This is in line with the ambition to build the DU with a bottom-up structure and to initiate conversations about research education at all levels of MU.

Annual report

An annual report based on this Activity Plan (AP) will be presented at the annual meeting in which will take place before February 15th 2015.

Budget report 2014

The DSU Board (Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Communications officer) is funded by Malmö University and “Kammarkollegiet”. The board members as well as the Faculty representatives are financed by their respective Faculties. Additional income is generated through membership fees.

The document “Budget 2014” gives an account for planned expenses.