



Doctoral Student Union (DSU) – Activity Plan (AP), 2015

I. Background

The Doctoral Student Union (DSU) at Malmö University was established in 2012 and is now entering its third year of member activity. In 2014 the DSU Board had the following goals: *Courses and funding for doctoral students, education for supervisors, improved communication and information, improved representation, statutes and Members.*

The priorities the DSU Board sets for 2015 are listed and described under the heading “Goals for 2015” (p.3).

II. 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 (MU). By actively and continuously partaking in conversations on all administrative levels of MU, the DSU’s ambition is to create and maintain influence in the decision making process of areas that touch upon the education, research environment and employment of doctoral students. To this end, the DSU strives to ensure that all levels of representation and influence can be easily identified and proactively engaged with.

III. DSU Board Organization (2015)

At the DSU annual meeting on 19 January 2015, 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:

Erik Karlsson, Faculty of Education and Society [LS]: President

Eric Snodgrass, Faculty of Arts and Communication [KS]: Vice President and secretary

Dimitris Paraschakis, Faculty of Technology and Society [TS]: Treasurer/Responsible for memberships.

Zahra Hamidi, Faculty of Culture and Society [KS]: Communications officer

Claudia Fonseca Alfaro, Faculty of Culture and Society [KS]: Communications officer

Erliza Lopez Pedersen, Faculty of Culture and Society [KS]: Board member/Responsible for coordination of the doctoral collegium at the faculties.

Maria Rubin, Faculty of Education and Society [LS]: Board member/Responsible for coordinating the mentorship program.

IV. DSU Board: Cooperation and Representation

- The DSU will continue to take part in conversations within “Forskningsberedningen” through the president (Erik Karlsson) as well as in the newly formed “Forskarutbildningsutskottet” through vice president (Eric Snodgrass) and one board member (Maria Rubin). 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). This meeting will be attended by the president and, where possible, vice president. The DSU president (Erik Karlsson) will also represent the DSU at meetings with the university board, meetings with the Vice Chancellor and others. Vice president (Eric Snodgrass) will represent the DSU together with Maria Rubin at the forskarutbildningsutskottet.
- In order to transform the DSU homepage into a relevant information platform for all doctoral students at MU, the DSU communication officers will continue the ongoing cooperation with BIT (Bibliotek och IT).
- The DSU will continue to support the newly founded mentor program at MU.
- 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 Fackförbundet ST and SULF (Sveriges universitetslärarförbund).
- The annual meeting is the highest decision-making body in the DSU. This meeting will be held once a year in the first months of the year and no later than 1 March. The annual meeting calls on all DSU members to participate. The annual meeting will most importantly elect a new DSU board and grants discharge for the current board.

- The DSU has and will continue to support the doctoral collegiums that have been created on all faculties (with the exception of HS, which currently has no collegium), and will furthermore try to make the dialogue between the DSU board and the collegiums more streamlined. This is in line with the ambition to build the DSU with a bottom-up structure and to initiate conversations about research education at all levels of MU.

V. DSU Faculty Representation (2015)

Faculty Board [KS]: Maria Persdotter

Board of Research and Post graduate program [KS]: Ioanna Tsoni

Faculty Board [LS]: Julia Rönnbäck

Board of Research and Post graduate program [LS]: Erik Karlsson & 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]: Aleksandar Milosavljevic

Board of Research and Post graduate program [OD]: Liv Kroona

VI. Goals for 2015

1. Website and communications

The board would like to transform the DSU homepage into a website that provides relevant information for all doctoral students at MU and not simply links to other websites. A primary goal will be to provide more information about a PhD student's rights and obligations. A further goal will be to provide tips on where to apply for research grants. The website will be updated to also include more information relevant to PhD students that are new to Sweden. An objective of pursuing more communication between members will also be pursued.

The communication officers will work on four projects relating to the website and communications:

- **Updating the DSU website.** Develop a FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) section that covers information about supervisors, the importance of the ISP (Individual Study Plan) and access to education and resources, among others. The information will be developed with the help of the Doctoral Students' Ombudsman (DOMB) at Lund University and other relevant parties. Links will be added to relevant websites, such as SULF, ST, AEA.

- **Tips for grants.** Provide specific information of Swedish bodies that offer research grants to PhD students (fieldwork, organize a conference, present at a conference).
- **Facebook Page.** The main aim is for the DSU to gain prominence through relevant social media as well as creating a platform to inform, share and raise useful discussions related to doctoral student's rights. Moreover it aims to develop a network for doctoral students in Malmö and facilitate new students connecting to the network and DSU. A Facebook page (Organization) will be created and maintained.
- **New in Sweden?** The DSU board has realized that some of the information provided by MU targets master and not PhD students. The communication officers will develop information that complements the information provided by MU. This project has low priority and will only be carried out once the previous activities are done.

2. Increased representation & increasing the number of members

This will always be a priority for the the DSU and this year we would like to make a specific push at recruitment in order to build a solid membership base across all faculties. In addition to recruitment, the board will work to further encourage involvement by DSU members in the different organs at MU that are relevant to doctoral issues. In order to attract more members to the DSU, a DSU BBQ will be organized. The aim of the board is to organize this in the beginning of the Fall semester.

3. Continued work to appoint a part-time “doktorandombudsman”

The appointment of a “doktorandombudsman” is extremely important since a “doktorandombudsman” can provide specialized support in issues that are of a case-to-case nature and/or that require legal expertise. The previous board established contact with Alexandra Popovic, the Doctoral Students’ Ombudsman (DOMB) at Lund University, and the current board will continue the collaboration. Secondly, the board will establish an initial contact with Linnaeus University to explore the possibility of appointing a joint ombudsman that can work part-time for both universities. This issue will also need to be pursued within the administration at MU. While this process takes place, the board will negotiate with Alexandra Popovic on the possibility of receiving training for the DSU board members in basic legislation regarding a PhD student’s rights and obligations. The DSU board will summarize this information and provide it to its members through the DSU website (see point 1 above, FAQ project). The DSU board will also investigate what sort of legal advice that might be available from MU. In doing this work around the possible appointment of a part-time “doktorandombudsman,” the DSU will in the process also aim to act as a helpful resource and point of contact, primarily via the website, for any PhDs seeking information and advice on where to go with enquiries on issues that might require legal expertise.

4. Routines for introduction of new doctoral students

The DSU will work for the implementation of a more standardized way to introduce new doctoral students to Malmö University. The DSU feels that there is room for improvement as to how the introduction of new doctoral students at MU is executed, especially for doctoral students

that do not start their education together with other students but are hired individually and not as part of a group. The doctoral collegiums will be given a key role in this introduction. The president of the DSU will together with the rest of the board develop some sort of “checklist” that can be used by the doctoral collegiums to make the introductions more efficient and beneficial for doctoral students. The DSU board will push to further the administration at MU to make all relevant information known and accessible to all new doctoral students. The board will investigate through which channels this would be best achieved.

5. Increase the role of the doctoral collegiums at the faculties.

In order to further the bottom-up structure of the DU, the board will this year work on developing the doctoral collegiums at faculty level. We will appoint a board member responsible for coordinating the collegiums and to develop structures for the collegiums ongoing communication with the central board of the DU. A priority will also be the creation of a doctoral collegium at HS, which currently does not have a doctoral collegium.

6. Scholars at Risk

The previous board initiated cooperation with Scholars at Risk (SAR). The goal for this year is to see if this cooperation needs to be deepened. The president of the DSU board will initiate an informal dialogue with the SAR contact person at MU Naser Eftekharian to investigate if there is a need for a more profound cooperation between the DSU and SAR.

7. The Swedish National Union of Students (SFS)

The Board will investigate the possibility as well as pros and cons of the DSU joining with the SFS.

8. Survey. Employment status of PhD students

The DSU will make an attempt to improve the statistical information available from MU about the employment status of PhD Students. The president will raise this issue with the central administration at MU. In a first step a survey will be carried out to get an initial mapping of how the MU PhD Students are employed, to what degree they do research work and how much time is devoted to other tasks.

VII. Annual report

An annual report based on this Activity Plan (AP) will be presented at the annual meeting, which will take place before 1 March 2016.

VIII. Budget report 2015

The DSU Board (president, vice president, two communications officers and treasurer) is funded by Malmö University and “Kammarkollegiet”. The board members and the Faculty representatives are financed by their respective Faculties. Additional income is generated through membership fees.

The document “Budget 2015” gives an account for planned expenses.