



Doktorandkåren Malmö

## Doctoral Student Union (DSU) Annual Report 2016

### DSU representation 2016

The 2016 DSU board consisted on the following members:

President	Ida Runge HS
Vice President	Marie Appelgren HS
Treasurer and responsible for memberships	Adrian Lundberg LS
Collegium Coordinator	Erliza Lopez Pedersen KS
Communications officer	Eric Snodgrass KS
Board member	Erik Karlsson LS

### DSU Representation in central committees

Central research Board	Ida Runge
Doctoral Education Committee	Ida Runge, Marie Appelgren
Board of Directors	Erik Karlsson
Meetings with vice chancellor and directors	Ida Runge and board of DSU

### Doctoral collegiums at Faculty Level

President KS-TS	Claudia Fonseca Alfaro
TS Faculty Board	vacant - until 161101 Niklas Ehrlin.
TS Board of Research	vacant - until 161101 Niklas Ehrlin.
KS Faculty Board	vacant - until 160630 Maria Persdotter
KS Board of Research	Eric Snodgrass

Supervisor Collegium TS NMOG	Vacant
Supervisor Collegium K3 NMOG	Eric Snodgrass/Linda Hilfling
Supervisor Collegium Urban Studies HK	Malin Mc Glinn
Supervisor Collegium GPS	Jacob Lind
President LS	Anna Maria Hellborg
LS Faculty Board	Elaine Kotte
LS Board of Research	Marie Larneby, Erik Karlsson
Supervisor Collegium (SMDI)	Marie Thavenius
President OD	Victoria Dawson
OD Faculty Board	Alexandar Milosavjevic
OD Board of Research	Anna Klinge
President HS	Ida Runge
HS Faculty Board	Ida Runge
HS Board of Research	Zoran Vasiljevic

## **DSU Activities 2016**

As stated in the board's Activity Plan 2016, 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. Priority was given to the following issues in 2016.

**The goals stated in the Activity Plan (AP) 2016 were the following:**

### **Implementation of doctoral ombudsman (DOMB)**

#### **Background from AP:**

During 2016 the DSU will continue to investigate the possibility of getting a DOMB at MAH. The issue will be sent out to the Collegiums at the faculties for further development and to anchor the proposal with the doctoral students.

#### **What the board has done:**

The board has collected input from the faculties doctoral collegium as well at various central committees. MU has as an effect of this, decided to implement a "forskningshandläggare med inriktning forskarutbildning" (Research Coordinator especially towards research education). This position will correspond to some of the issues raised by the DSU in relation to an "ombudsman". The new position should be seen as a stepping-stone towards installing an ombudsman. The new position should also give us an overview of the type of grievances that we are experiencing and how big the need is.

## **AKL courses and Doctoral courses in general**

### **Background from AP:**

During 2016 the DSU will make an inventory and analysis of the available courses offered at Malmö University as it would seem not all PhDs feel as if the courses are relevant to them.

### **What the board has done:**

The DSU has collected available evaluations from third cycle courses (research courses) and determined that improvement was needed, mostly in relation to in-depth subject courses. This was presented to MU and resulted in the development of at least one extra course directly towards this issue. The DSU recognizes that there is still need for further development of third cycle courses, not least with the transition toward university-status.

## **Language issues**

### **Background from AP:**

The DSU will continue to collaborate with MU in the development of a new language policy.

### **What the board has done:**

The DSU has had a continuous dialogue with PhD students and representatives for MU regarding the implementation of a new language policy at MU. This has resulted in Hans Lundqvist (senior advisor to the vice chancellor) to be tasked with the development of such a new policy, with input from the DSU. The policy will be developed during the spring of 2017. Further follow-up is needed to ensure a policy that corresponds to the needs identified by the DSU.

## **Increasing members and representation in the Doctoral Collegium**

### **Background from AP:**

During the year, DSU will continue trying to increase its member base. We would like to collaborate with MAH in order to facilitate a process to inform the DSU when new PhDs are employed.

### **What the board has done:**

Despite our best efforts, the DSU membership has decreased from approximately 120 to around 90 members. This might be a consequence of a problem of not getting hold of a list of active PhD students. This will need to be addressed by the coming board.

## **Create meeting places for doctoral students from different faculties**

### **Background from AP:**

The DSU will continue arranging social and educational events, like the DSU breakfast to facilitate cross-discipline collaborations amongst doctoral students and to discuss relevant issues, bringing in guest speakers where appropriate

**What the board has done:**

The board has arranged an entire day for doctoral students dealing with career planning, the rights and obligations for doctoral students. This has been done in collaboration with SULF. The board is happy to acknowledge that the day seems to have been fruitful for the participants.

**Continue looking into issues relating to research services (forskarservice) for PhDs****Background from AP:**

Currently the research service does not have a specific mission to cater to PhD students, however they have expressed an interest in being able to do so. The DSU will investigate the possibility of changing the research service's mission statement in collaboration with MAH during the year.

**What the board has done:**

The board has got clarification that forskarservice does *not* have a specific obligation towards doctoral students and will not have the possibility or resources to do this. MU has stated that it is the responsibility of the supervisors to provide research support for doctoral students.

**ISP****Background from AP:**

To follow the proposal of the new online management system for digitizing the Individual Study Plans, as this could be an important and powerful tool in PhDs' research. The FUU will continue to work on this and our representatives in the FUU should be invited to partake in that work. The DSU can also work with the membership and doctoral collegiums for gathering further recommendations for the development of such a digital version of the ISP.

**What the board has done:**

The board has been continually in dialogue with MU regarding this issue and substantial headway has been made towards digitalizing the ISP, hopefully during 2018. A temporary ISP has been developed by FUU that will be in effect during 2017 whilst waiting for the new ISP to be implemented.

A committee will be formed autumn 2017 with representatives from the DSU to work out the details of the new ISP.

**University Status**

In June 2016, the Swedish government decided to grant Malmö University's application to receive university status. In relation to this, the DSU issued the following statement:

The Doctoral Student Union are very excited that Malmö Högskola is officially obtaining university status. The potential benefits of such a decision are several and tangible, especially for the already strong research environment at MAH.

At this pivotal moment, the DSU Board would like to take the opportunity to highlight, from the doctoral perspective, the issues that can be improved as we begin the transition into this

new era. Doctoral students are at the frontline of research and anything that improves doctoral education has the potential to improve the research environment as a whole.

- **Improve the situation for international, non-Swedish speaking staff and the possibilities for them to learn the language.** A welcoming environment is necessary to avoid the possibility of exclusion (for instance, in staff meetings, in regards to important information available on MAH's website, relevant research related policy documents and so on). Allocating more resources to supporting non-Swedish speaking researchers would contribute to MAH's internationalization goals and improve the research environment for those who don't yet have the ability to understand Swedish.
- **The creation of a Doctoral Affairs Coordinator.** There is currently not a role within the MAH that specifically has the assigned task and expertise to address and follow-up on issues and grievances that might arise amongst doctoral students. While the main role of the doctoral student union board is to ensure all doctoral students receive an education of quality by collaborating with the decision-making organs at the university and working to *change policies* when the need is seen; the role of an ombudsman is to ensure that the policies that *already exist* are implemented by mapping structural problems within the university and working on an individual case-to-case basis with doctoral students. A Doctoral Affairs Coordinator would help improve doctoral students' access to education with quality by acting as a stable and informative point of contact, as well as working to inform the decision-making organs of Malmö University of such issues and thus allowing a continuous self-evaluation prompted by the mapping of structural problems.
- **Improve the working environment for doctoral students.** Many doctoral students have expressed the wish for more designated quiet areas to ensure there are adequate working spaces for reading and writing (for instance, the new Niagara building does not have many such spaces).
- **Individual Study Plan (ISP).** A more developed ISP document, such as the current suggestion to fully digitalize the ISP, would be welcomed as this is a useful tool for maintaining the quality of one's doctoral development.
- **Forskarservice support for PhDs.** Currently MAH's research service does not have a specific mission to cater to PhD students. PhDs would greatly benefit from proper support from the research service (for example, with finding, applying for and writing grants), and we encourage the allocation of dedicated funds to the research service for PhD support.
- **Improving the variety and quality of PhD courses.** There is a need for more high quality PhD courses offered from MAH at both the general level and in regards to specific research areas.

We are confident the potential to improve the already strong research environment at MU is tremendous and we are very happy to be part of this new journey.

## **Other activities (not specifically mentioned in the Activity Plan)**

- The DSU has continued to present itself and its work at doctoral student introduction day.
- Informing PhDs of various issues via ongoing work with DSU website and Facebook page.
- Arranging PhD representatives for the various strands dedicated to MAH receiving university status.
- The DSU participated in SPHERE (Support and Promotion for Higher Education Reform Experts) conference at MU. Ida Runge and Erik Karlsson spoke at the event as to their experiences of doctoral education and influence at MU.
- Ida has been involved in the development of overall guidelines for doctoral education at Malmö university (DNR: LED 1.3-2016/460). This work has been crucial for the upcoming new quality assessment framework that is being developed.
- The DSU has been involved in creating the application for University Status to the Swedish Government.
- The DSU has been active in informing and recruiting doctoral students to a team that is responsible for the current evaluation of certain doctoral education subjects as MU by the Higher Education Authority (UKÄ).
- The DSU has been involved in the development for an innovation arena in the building of Gäddan. Marie Appelgren has led this work.
- The DSU is involved in a UKÄ project regarding gender equality. Marie Appelgren has led this work.
- The DSU were represented in the “hörandeförsamling” tasked with finding a new pro vice-chancellor.
- The DSU has made an effort to strengthen the collaboration between SULF and the DSU, both at a local and national level.
- The DSU has appointed representative Malin Mc Glinn to participate in a work group developing a new strategic plan for MU. This work is to be done in 2017.

## **Report from the doctoral collegiums**

**LS:** The doctoral collegium is the collegium for the Faculty of education and society and include around 50 doctoral students. Some of the issues that have been brought up at the collegium meetings include: the new strategy document for the faculty, the evaluation (UKÄ) of two of LS institutions (history and pedagogy), the possibility of a common doctoral office, the ISP and who at our faculty that should officially calculate our remaining doctoral time.

**HS:** The collegium has discussed issues regarding Doctoral students that are employed outside the university. The collegium sees a need to clarify expectations from both the employer, the doctoral student and the university regarding employment, rights and obligations of the doctoral student.

The doctoral education in the Hälsa och Samhälle (Health and Society) discipline, experience a lack of consensus regarding the core of the subject that makes it hard to identify with the subject. This process is ongoing.

There exist discrepancies in the availability and possibility for doctoral students to do departmental duties, such as teaching, especially for doctoral students that cannot teach in Swedish.

There is an ongoing revision of the criteria for the half-time seminar, as it seems that current criteria are too vague.

There is an ongoing discussion regarding an opportunity to obtain statistical advice in the process of writing a thesis.

The president of the collegium has had numerous contacts with prospective doctoral students that are interested in employment. The president of the collegium has been involved in the recruitment of a new dean.

**KS/TS:** The KS-TS doctoral collegium is the doctoral council from the Faculties of Culture and Society (KS) and Technology and Society (TS). KS has around 29 doctoral students while TS has 11. During 2016, the collegium had 6 meetings and the most important issues it worked on were: advocating the creation of a doctoral ombudsman position, trying to improve the conditions of international non-Swedish speaking doctoral students, trying to improve the working environment of doctoral students housed in Niagara and trying to influence the process as MAH transitions into a university. The collegium also organized a PhD Day, with the collaboration of both faculties, where we had a workshop on tips to finish our dissertations on time and received information from the HR department on health-related benefits available to staff. The collegium chairperson was present in both the MUSA and NMOG hearings organized by the KS faculty.

**OD:** The OD Collegium include around 50 doctoral students. During 2016 there has been a re-organization; both student representative and the larger part of OD's research board has been replaced (including the Director of Doctoral Studies "studierektor"). Consequently, no PhD-day was arranged during 2016. The representatives at OD have arranged meetings for PhD-students regularly but very few attend those meetings. One reason is that many, around 2/3, of the PhD-students in OD have their work of place outside the OD faculty. A PhD-day is planned in April 2017.

## Suggestions for work ahead

The DSU board has identified the following issues, as suggestions to what we believe need to be stressed during 2017.

- The situation for international PhDs needs to be further discussed and improved. For instance, issues around introduction and pressing issues that relate to international students when starting PhD work in Sweden.
- The next board should maintain regular contact with a new *forskningshandläggare med inriktning forskarutbildning*, and consider continuing the advocacy for a fully pledged ombudsman, and should remain a priority in the future.
- The DSU board could look into the MU policy of "breddad rekrytering" to ensure that it also includes research education and that the policy is utilized.
- Look into the possibility of raising the issue of creating a centralized and searchable online site for all PhD courses in Sweden (similar to what exists in Denmark). This would involve collaborating with various national networks.

- The DSU should partake in the development of the quality assessment framework, including the development of the digitalized ISP.
- The vice chancellor has asked the DSU to be a reference group for the development of multi-disciplinary research schools. This is an important issue for the further development of doctoral education at MU.
- The DSU should take a more active part in monitoring the career planning support available at MU. This will be further stressed in the new ISP.

*Malmö, January 2017*

Ida Runge

Marie Appelgren

Eric Snodgrass

Adrian Lundberg

Erliza Lopez Pedersen

Erik Karlsson