

**Annual Report of the Doctoral Student Union at
Malmö University 2019**



**DOCTORAL
STUDENT
UNION** MALMÖ

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Foreword

This report describes the DSU's work during 2019 (18-01-29 to 19-01-21). The report is mainly concerned with the work in relation to the Activity Plan for the period (available at doktorandkaren.se). However, the DSU was also involved in several other activities in 2019 and these are also described briefly in this report. Local reports from the faculty board representatives are also included as well as the 2019 DSU board's suggestions for work ahead.

The doctoral union started the year somewhat uphill, with only three board members after the annual meeting. In order for the student union to function as intended, and to be able to represent the doctoral students' rights in all the university's bodies, more active participation from the doctoral students was imperative, and better routines for communication between the doctoral students and the local doctoral student representatives at the faculty were necessary. The Board has therefore made a number of changes to the doctoral student's working methods and, among other things, introduced new roles, such as event coordinator and other assignments with a more specific focus than the conventional board members' general assignment. This has been a way of "lowering the threshold" for Ph.D. candidates to participate in the DSU. Another approach has been the doctoral student's new After Work series, where doctoral students from each faculty have hosted a meeting every month: a simple idea intended to create social engagement around the student union, encourage collegiality between the faculty and make room for unanswered questions and discussions.

Further, the university's changing structures, with the local faculty boards have been allocated more decision-making power than before, has resulted in an increased need for good communication between the DSU board and faculty-representative doctoral students. On the Board's part, we have organized meetings with the faculty board representatives, developed supporting material for newly appointed doctoral students and (as we always do) participated in introduction days. We have also set up a committee that over the summer compiled a positioning document for the doctoral students with university-wide questions and concerns - such as doctoral backpack, factor time, courses and work environment. The DSU board represent these in the councils on research and research education where we sit, but we also hope that they can serve as a foundation and support for the individual doctoral student representatives on faculty level.

In this way, DSU has during the course of the year turned its attention inwards, towards the internal organization, but we have done so with the intention to build a stronger foundation and more resilient union in order to be able to continue pursuing the doctoral students' questions for many years to come.

Malmö, January 2019

The DSU board:

Alicia Smedberg

Michel Anderlini

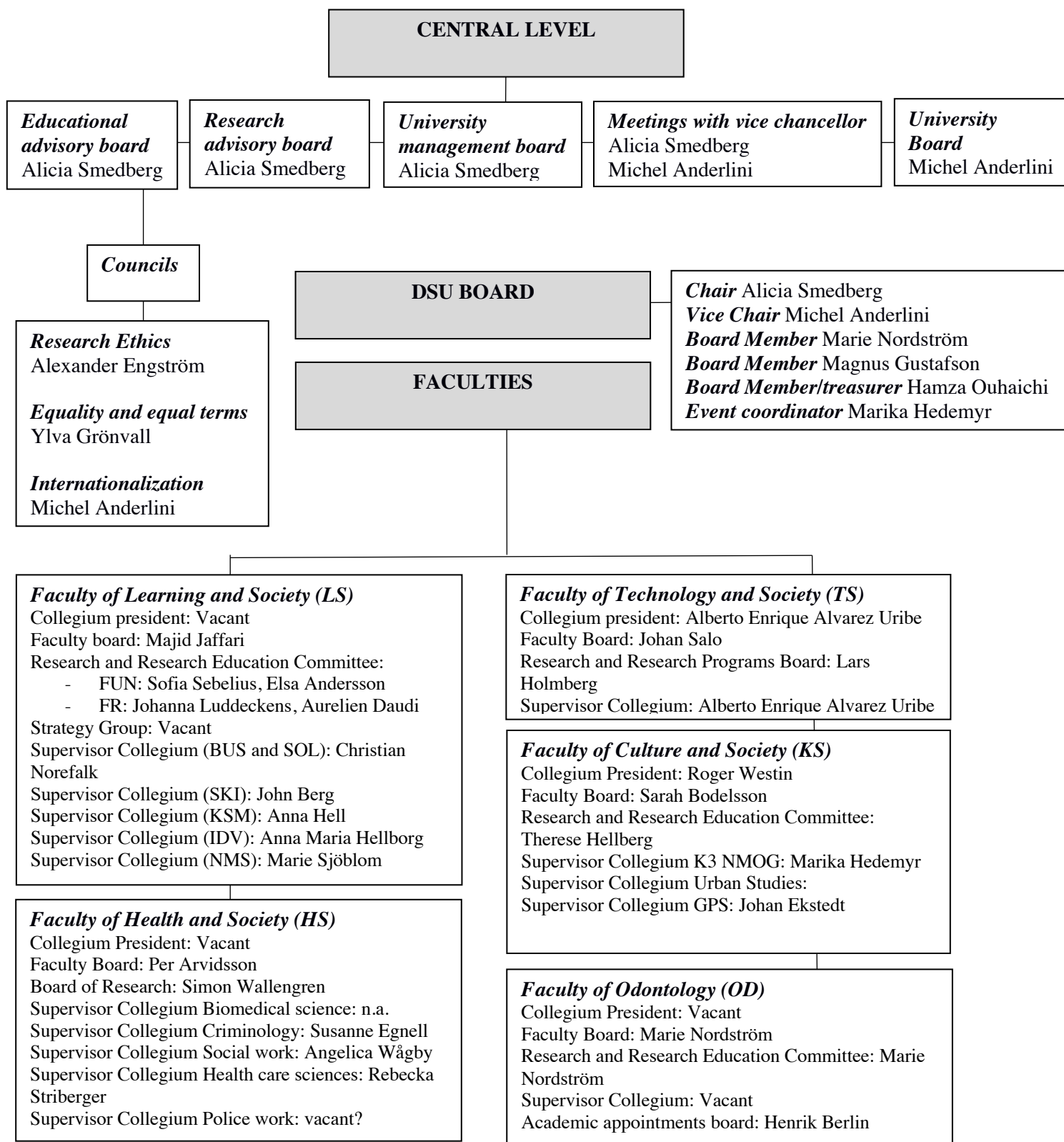
Marie Nordström

Marika Hedemyr

Magnus Gustafson

Hamza Ouhaichi

DSU representation 2019



Activities

Every year, the DSU board decides which activities that are prioritized. In this annual report, the DSU board describes how they have worked with these activities as well as other activities during 2019.

Activity Plan

All activities pursued by the DSU board in 2018 were based on the overall aims of the organization, as stated in the Activity Plan that the board published on the DSU website at the beginning of 2019:

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 (MaU). By actively and continuously partaking in conversations on all administrative levels of MaU, 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.

Prioritized Activities and Actions Taken by the DSU Board 2019

The specific activities in the Activity Plan are described in this section together with the actions taken by the DSU board.

Doctoral Student Ombudsman and Doctoral Support

The DSU will maintain the established contact with the Doctoral support and continuing investigating the possibility of a doctoral student ombudsman (DOMB).

Actions taken:

The DSU board and MaU have continued to discuss the possibility of employing a DOMB. During 2019 DSU has decided that the discussion to employ a DOMB is once again a prioritized action. This follows the re-evaluation from 2018 where it was suggested that the Ph.D. population of MaU was too small to sustain a full-time DOMB. The 2019 board recognizes this, but has instead inquired into the possibility of "sharing" a DOMB with another, smaller, university. A conversation has been initiated with the Student Union at Linnaeus University, and we continue to work on the details of such an arrangement.

We have maintained good working conditions with the responsible person for doctoral support (first Andreas Admasie, then Christian Strålhman and finally Anna Beran). The Doctoral support is a part time position, 20 % of full time. Anna Beran is employed at the international office at MaU.

Information and Communication

The DSU will strive to improve the information that is relevant for PhD students through our website and other forms of media and through the doctoral collegia.

Actions taken:

The DSU board prioritized the refurbishment of the DSU website, since it was notified that the website, although it contained a wide range of useful and relevant information for PhD students, was outdated and not quite user-friendly. An open call for interest was sent to all doctoral students on June, 17th 2019 and the DSU board selected one person, current doctoral student at the Faculty of Technology and Society (TS) and with previous experience in web redesign, to execute the work. The work on the re-design of the DSU website is now ongoing and will be accomplished soon.

Participation

During 2019 the DSU has partaken in several of the Universities own initiatives to improve Ph.D. participation, such as the introduction days for new Ph.D. students, as well as taken several own measures to further active participation in the union itself.

Action taken:

At the start of the year we introduced the possibility of participating in the DSU within new roles. These we suggested as the conventional roles of board members to many Ph.Ds. appeared heavy and unattractive. We reasoned that by lowering the threshold to become an active part of the DSU working group we might attract some – rather than none – new members. We made an announcement for the roles of communications officer and events coordinator and was successful in our search for the latter.

We also assigned new roles within the board, and allowed for board members to pursue a specific question. One such question has been Magnus Gustafsson's work around Ph.D. work environment. He reflects on this on page 10 of this document. The new roles within the DSU were compensated with the same amount of time as the other board members (12 days/year).

Action taken:

We saw the need to improve our relationship with those Ph.Ds. who were/are active locally in their faculties and institutions. To this end we have arranged semesterly meetings with faculty representatives and the DSU board. We have also produced a guiding document for those new to role and responsibility of acting as a Ph.D. representative. As many Ph.Ds. take on this assignment for the first time, it can be a daunting task which we hoped to make more accessible by providing some guidelines for "good practice" and other helpful tips.

Social Events

In order to focus on the task to create meetings places for doctoral students, the DSU Board created a new position of social coordinator, who is an adjunct board member. The position of social coordinator has been held by Marika Hedemyr. Two series of social events have been developed during the year: **PhD After Work Series – Exploring Malmö**, and **PhD Discussion Series**.

Action taken:

The PhD After Works series was launched in May 2019. Each After Work (AW) is hosted by one of the faculties, by simply deciding time and place and thereby allowing all members to see new places in town. The Aws were held regularly, (17/6, 26/9, 31/10, 28/11 and 16/12) and generally held at 16.30-19.00 at a pub or bar in central Malmö, and 15-25 persons comes every time. It is worth noting that the majority of attendant are international PhD students.

Due to time constraints, the DSU has not been able to organize an academic lecture series, something that will be passed on to the next DSU Board, alongside with the possibility to co-organize events with the Student Union and to plan lectures and workshops with the University Library. The PhD Discussion Series was developed during the year, and will be launched during 2020. The format is an inspirational talk/seminar with a following discussion, held at daytime.

International PhD Students

The work related to internationalization and global outreach has been a priority for the DSU Board during the year of 2019. The DSU Vice-President, Michel Anderlini, has been representing the DSU at the Advisory Committee for Global Outreach (Rådet för Globalt Engagemang). Among other achievements, the DSU was involved in the creation of courses in Swedish for international PhD students, which have started during the autumn term of 2019.

The collaboration with the International Office has also been reinforced, and regular contacts are held between the DSU Board and Anna Beran, International Officer responsible for PhD students at the International Office.

Besides, in the DSU positioning, a particular emphasis has been put on the insecurity related to institutional duty hours for international PhD Students: "At present there is no guarantee of how many hours a doctoral student will get, but a ceiling of 20% of the doctoral student's time, i.e. "the fifth year". DSU sees that this lack of security affects all doctoral students' working conditions, but would like to emphasize that the weight is somewhat heavier for many international doctoral students. For those Ph.D:s who are in the country on a working visa, being able to predict in advance how long the contract will be is crucial for their social security".

To finish with, as mentioned before, the afterwork series organized by the DSU has particularly attracted international doctoral students, which is the sign that it responds to a demand of more meeting places between doctoral students.

Doctoral Collegia and faculty boards

As mentioned in the introduction to this document, the new university structures increased the need to establish good communication channels with the doctoral collegia, and The DSU will support and collaborate with the doctoral collegia.

Action taken:

We have actively encouraged Ph.D. students to take on representative roles within their faculties. There are now faculty board representatives at each faculty.

Action taken:

The DSU has arranged semesterly meetings with faculty board representatives, and produced guidelines for what the assignment entails.

Action taken:

The DSU positioning document 2019 was developed through an appointed committee with the intention of identifying those key questions and concerns that are applicable to most Ph.Ds. at MaU regardless of location. The committee consisted of several members of the DSU board, faculty board representatives, HK

representatives, and members from previous' years DSU boards. Several Ph.Ds. from the university also acted as advisors to the committee. The group meet once before the summer holidays, and twice following it to develop the positioning document which was then announced to all Ph.Ds. at MaU. Following two weeks' notice, the positioning document was held to a vote at an open DSU meeting and passed with revisions. The revisions were made by the DSU chair (Alicia Smedberg), and the document was then publicly announced as the official position of the DSU.

The purpose of this exercise was to democratically develop a common ground which could support those Ph.D. representatives on the faculty boards who were now faced with a significantly increased responsibility. As these representatives are not *sui generis* part of the DSU, the board was concerned that they would find themselves isolated. The DSU boards ambition was that the positioning document could aid those representatives by showing the shared need in questions relating to:

- a) Doctoral rucksack
- b) Institutional duty hours
- c) Factor time
- d) Research and Work environment
- e) PhD ombud
- f) PhD courses
- g) Supervision

The DSU positioning document 2019 is available on the DSU website.

Membership payments

The DSU will work on simplifying the administrations of membership and membership-payments

Action taken:

Before the summer of 2019, the DSU has terminated its agreement with Membit, that handled membership of membership payments on its behalf. This is due to difficulties regarding the contacts and collaboration with Membit.

To this regard, a new agreement has been entered with Mecenat, whose interface and payment options are more user-friendly (notably the possibility to pay directly online, instead of doing a manual bank transfer), which was welcomed by the Ph.D. students that do not live in Sweden or do not own a Swedish bank account.

ISP – Individual Student Plan

The digital ISP, originally intended to be implemented during 2018, was delayed as the pilot run held at Karolinska Institutet experienced some teething problems. We are told that the new ISP will be implemented during 2020.

DSU join The Swedish National Union of Students (SFS)

The DSU has not prioritized the question of joining the SFS during 2019, but have established some links to the organization through shared work.

Actions taken:

Alicia Smedberg worked with the SFS to produce a reply to Inger Enkvist's op-ed (2019-01-13) in Svenska Dagbladet. The reply (2019-02-06) was signed by the SFS and a number of local doctoral student unions from around the country, Malmö DSU being one of them.

The DSU statutes

A proposition was made by the 2018 board to two changes in the DSU, these were voted through for at the annual meeting 2019. The first, minor, change was with regard to the name switch from Malmö Högskola to Malmö University (in the Swedish version of the statutes, the English already said University). The other change was regards the unions closing as a union, and the possibilities to change the statutes. The former change is needed if there will be no nominees of PhD students, PhD students that will be able to engage themselves in the DSU. Then the current DSU board need to close down the DSU as a union for PhD students at MaU.

Other Activities

The DSU was involved in a wide range of activities not specified in the Activity Plan. These activities refer to new issues that arose during the year as well as more spontaneous initiatives to improve PhD education at MaU. In 2019, the DSU:

- Contributed to the equality of the "Ph.D. rucksack" – the amount should be the same at all faculties at MaU (50 000sek).
- Initiated a new practice where the vice-chair is elected in June, affording the sitting chair (elected at the annual meeting in January) to support the vice-chair in their new assignment and affording the vice-chair to support the new chair. This we hope to lessen the loss of organizational memory that may otherwise occur when the whole DSU board is elected in January.
- Participated in the development of the Supervisory Collegium – with basis in the results of the supervisory survey 2018 – hosted by AKL.
- Participated – twice - in the AKL course for Ph.D. supervisors
- Participated at several quality dialogs during the year, occasions associated with the UKÄs evaluation of the university.
- Initiated dialog concerning future lunch seminars for PhD students and Post PhD with the Doctoral support and the International office at MaU, supposed to be held by the International office/Doctoral support and DSU.
- Carried out an investigation into the work environment of Ph.D. students at each faculty.
- Held two meetings with vice-chancellor Kerstin Tham.

Reports from faculty board representatives, and two internal DSU positions

To the knowledge of the DSU board, all five faculty board have an active Ph.D. representative under 2019. As this is a new position 2019, the faculty board representatives have reported their activities briefly in this report. All Faculty Board Representatives were invited to include their report here, but only LS and OD responded. For further information, contact your local faculty board representative.

We have also included two reports from the DSU board members who have piloted the new "roles" within DSU.

Special DSU board assignment: work and research environment ***Magnus Gustafsson***

During the year, Magnus Gustafson obtained the views of doctoral student representatives from all five faculties regarding the physical work environment. The survey has shown a pattern with regard to Orkanen, Niagara and Gäddan: The open plans make it difficult to concentrate on work, while also in some places result in poor attendance at the workplace which means poor utilized premises and a worse psychosocial environment because you do not meet your colleagues. OD does not have these problems. A possible improvement for Orkanen, Niagara and Gäddan could be quiet reading corners, or research corners. Magnus Gustafson met with the building manager Mats Lyberg and presented the survey to him. Gustafson has also presented the investigation to the head safety representative Lina Corter. Collaboration between Magnus Gustafson on the Doctoral Student Union, the head safety representative Lina Corter and Jenna Pystynen on the Student Union regarding physical work environment has also been initiated.

Event Coordinator DSU ***Marika Hedemyr***

Two series of social events have been developed during the year: **PhD After Work Series – Exploring Malmö**, and **PhD Discussion Series**. One of the Doctoral Student Union's members, Marika Hedemyr, has been appointed as event coordinator for both development of the series and realization of the events.

The PhD After Works series was launched in May 2019. Each After Work (AW) is hosted by one of the faculties, by simply deciding time and place and thereby allowing all members to see new places in town. The AWs are generally held at 16.30-19.00 at a pub or bar in central Malmö, and 15-25 persons comes every time. It is worth noting that the majority of attendant are international PhD students.

The PhD Discussion Series was developed during the year, and will be launched during 2020. The format is an inspirational talk/seminar with a following discussion, held at daytime.

Faculty of Odontology (OD) ***Marie Nordström, faculty board***

Many of the doctoral students at OD are externally funded and spend most of their time outside the faculty. This brings challenges in bringing the doctoral students together and in arranging research seminars. During the semester, we have arranged a couple of lunch meetings. It has been an important forum to discuss issues relevant for doctoral students at OD but also a good opportunity to just meet and socialize. The most central issues discussed has been the lack of Doktorandryggsäck, wish for research seminars at the faculty and the need for regular meetings between the doctoral students. These issues have been brought up with the research and research education committee (FFN) at OD and the discussions will continue next year.

Faculty of Learning and Society (LS) ***Majid Jaffari, faculty board***

Unfortunately, we did not have a joint meeting at LS, but we met in different contexts. As a PhD student representative, we attended a faculty board meeting since the summer of 2018, and doctoral students were informed about the new role and responsibility of the faculty board regarding new rules of procedure and delegations. We have addressed the Faculty Board regarding doctoral courses and schedule; wishes were that the courses should not clash with each other and the response was positive.

We had a doctoral internship with thematic science within the "Research School learning in multicultural societal contexts" on November 14-15. Since then, some doctoral students have had an activity / workshop on writing and presentation in the research school.

Suggestions for Work Ahead

The DSU board encourages the DSU board of 2020 to keep being involved in most of the abovementioned activities. Several of the activities presented are not finished. Suggestions for additional work include:

- The DSU positioning document 2019 suggests that the union continue to work with the following areas:
 - a) Doctoral rucksack
 - b) Institutional duty hours
 - c) Factor time
 - d) Research and Work environment
 - e) PhD ombud
 - f) PhD courses
 - g) Supervision
- We suggest that the DSU 2020 follow up on the positioning document together with KFU chair Lars Plantin, with Christian Strålhman and with Anna Beran.
- We suggest that the DSU prioritize the academic event series under 2020, and that they may work with the MaU library.
- We suggest that the work regarding the Ph.D. ombudsman continues, and that the 2020 board continue to work with Linnaeus University to establish a shared service.
- Work with the Ph.D. work environment, and to have a continuous discussion with MaU regarding solutions/create better prerequisites for the work environment during the doctoral education.
- Work closely alongside the faculty board representatives.
- Work with increasing participation in the DSU.