**PhD Council Meeting**

22 August 2022 , EU law library Domus Media

**Present in Person:** Trygve Losnedahl, Tomas Tobiassen, Elsabé Boshoff, Rose Boyle,

**Present via zoom:** Laura Letourneau-Tremblay, Dinie Arief

**Agenda**

1. **Concept Note and presentation on the 'Onboarding Survey for PhD Students at the Faculty of Law (UiO)'**

* A draft of the concept note from the PhD Council has been sent to Vibeke and Gorill for their perusal before the upcoming PFF Meeting.
* Suggestions from the PhD Council concerning the concept note:

1. Welcoming Package: PhD Council suggests using the welcoming package at Pluricourts as a reference, with options to add additional information related to all PhDs.
2. Technical suggestion regarding the 'Buddy Program':

- It should be different from the currently available academic staff mentorship program, which is mainly concerned with career advice from someone in a different department.

- Senior PhDs should carry out the buddy program, should be voluntary based, and would likely not be remunerated (we could suggest later on that it should be compensated with teaching hours, depending on how time intensive it is).

- Main responsibility of a buddy is to ensure a smooth inclusion experience for newly enrolled PhDs in their new job.

- The Maritime Department has some best practices in encouraging someone in the department as 'buddies' to new PhDs.

- Encourage PFF to discuss on administrative aspect and process for assigning the buddy program.

1. **Relevant Items for upcoming PFF Meeting (24 August 2022)**

* Updated guidelines for JUR9302 publishable article

1. PFF to revise the current course guidelines/criterias of JUR9302.
2. The PhD Council agrees that the new guidelines/criteria should be revised to make it more precise and clear. It should make provision various alternative written works, and not be limited to journal articles. The guidelines/criteria should be more flexible to accommodate different types of research.
3. It was proposed that other works, comparable to journal articles (such as book chapters) should be accepted. It is further proposed that co-authored works/articles should also be accepted. All comparable works should comply with the criteria of being a scientific work and the required length. For co-authored work, the substantive contribution as well as the number of pages contributed by the PhD candidate should be indicated.
4. Following discussions on whether *Lovkommentarer* should be recognised, it was proposed that this should not be explicitly included as an example, but could be considered if it meets the requirements of scientific work and required length, and could be considered on a case-by-case basis.
5. The PhD Council suggest PFF draft the new guideline/criteria for inputs by the PhD Council.

* Webpage for mentorship (we do not have access unfortunately, so difficult to comment.)
* New PhDs should be informed about the mentorship program by their supervisors when they start.
* Current PhDs should also receive information about this programme, including practical information about how to join, and such information could be repeated, for example at annual evaluations.
* Since the success of the mentorship program relies on the voluntary participation of professors, there is a need for PFF to market it towards professors.
* Welcoming session: PFF informed us they would hold a welcoming session at the start of the Fall Semester. The PhD Council to seek confirmation on the date and to be included in the welcoming session program to introduce the council's (council members, purpose, and activities).
* Changes in the language of PhD Courses

1. PFF made a change to the use of language in the PhD course JUR9041, and then postponed the implementation of the decision to next year. Currently, three of the PhD courses are delivered alternately in English (odd years) and Norwegian (even years) and one course JUR9041 is always taught in English.
2. Based on feedback from PhDs on the JUR9041 course that they would prefer to take this course in Norwegian and with a focus on more doctrinal legal writing, PFF decided that the course would follow the same rhythm as the other courses and alternate languages every year, starting with Norwegian in 2022. Furthermore, the content of the course would be slightly adjusted to be more legally focused in Norwegian and more focused on criminology approaches in English. Following complaints from students already enrolled for this course, the implementation of the decision was postponed to 2023.
3. The PhD Council raised concerns both about the substance and process of this decision:
   1. It is not clear what the process was that led to this decision being taken. Previously, the course was always presented in English so that all PhDs can take it in their first year, as this is a foundational course, and while all students speak English, not all speak Norwegian. This seems to not have been taken into account when this new decision was taken. The PhD Council understands the need to discuss the language in this course, but proposes that decision taken to accommodate newly raised challenges should not leave others worse off, or at least all factors should be taken into account before such decisions are taken.
   2. Regarding the process, the PhD Council did not have the opportunity to give input before this decision was taken. Furthermore, it was proposed to be implemented with immediate effect, whereas the semester had already started and English students had already signed up for the class. In future, decisions to make substantive changes to course should be made at least the semester before, and before students sign up for the course.
4. The PhD Council suggests having this on the agenda at the next PFF meeting, for a reevaluation of the decision and possible consequences, and to find the best way forward for all PhDs.
5. PFF to be requested that information on PhD courses should be shared with students in due time, and before the start of the semester. Currently information regarding the dates of the compulsory JUR9031 course has not been shared for this semester. Taken together with the language policy of alternative language every two years, PhDs should be given due notice of when courses take place to plan their schedules.

* Laura informed the PhD Council that PFF still accepts applications relating to COVID issues.

1. **Faculty Board meeting (relevant matters from the meeting of 4 June 2022, attended by Thomas )**

* The PhD Council were briefed on the following:

1. The Board is facing problems recruiting new PhDs, where they have a target of 50 PhDs, with only 35 PhDs currently employed. This has led to an excess funding which is currently put to use in other areas of the faculty.
2. The PhD Council proposed that recruiting new PhDs should be prioritised. However, until such recruitments are made, it was proposed that the Board could distribute the excess funding for purposes of the welfare of existing PhDs. Some ideas are for the Board to utilise the remaining budget for increasing PhD wages, providing PhDs an opportunity to supervise master's students, other types of teaching, etc., taking account of labour laws.
3. PhD Council to continue to advocate for increased base salary for PhDs during the Board meetings.
4. Trygve to prepare a discussion document for further discussion in the next PhD Council meeting
5. The PhD Council was informed that the research groups of the faculty have been established and will start working this semester.
6. **Upcoming events:**
7. Shut-up-and-write event 17-18 November 2022:

* To date, 16 participants have registered and we therefore have space for an additional 9 people.
* Dinie will send a reminder a week before the deadline of 15 September 2022 – to include newly enrolled PhDs.

1. Back-to-school beer: Planned to take place after the welcoming event by PFF. Funding could come from the PhD Council Internal Account or could be for the own account of participants.
2. Annual meeting: Plan to have it between 21-25 November 2022. The agenda of the annual meeting is to elect the new council members (2022/2023). For this event we should ask for funding from the Faculty.
3. **Finances**

* Currently, the PhD Council have three sources of financing:

1. PhD Council Internal Account (Managed by Elsabe)
2. Funding from the Dean/Faculty for PhD Council Activities 2022 (via the University)
3. Grant from *Lovsamlingsfondet* for PhD Council Shut Up and Write Event

* Everyone who had expenses from the summer party to send the amounts and whether it has been refunded to Elsabe.
* Finance status update following the summer party will be provided in the next PhD Council meeting.

1. **AoB**:

* The Nordic Journal of Human Rights editorial team is looking for a new book review editor. Call for applications: <https://www.uio.no/for-ansatte/enhetssider/jus/smr/aktuelle-saker/2022/call-for-application-book-review-editor-for-the-no.html>. The deadline for the position is 15 September 2022.
* The PhD Council is to advertise this position to all PhDs.

Minutes submitted by: Dinie Arief and Elsabé Boshoff