**PhD Council Meeting**

13 October 2022, EU law library Domus Media

**Present in Person:** Trygve Losnedahl, Elsabé Boshoff, Rose Boyle, Laura Letourneau-Tremblay, Dinie Arief, Annichen Sæteren.

Tomas Tobiassen absent with excuse.

**Agenda**

1. **LiMU Meeting**

* LiMU is scheduled to meet on 17 October 2022 at 13.00pm.
* Topics: Diversity among student (survey), women employed at the University, etc. PhD Council to actively participate in the discussions.
* Laura has agreed to attend the meeting, due to Annichen and Elsabe both being unable to attend.

1. **Remuneration of PhDs**

* The discussion was raised in previous meetings due to two factors: 1) Concern of a higher remuneration for PhDs due to the increasing prices; and 2) the availability of the Faculty’s excess budget for not fulfilling the PhD intake. The Faculty have budgeted to recruit 47 PhDs and Post-Docs, yet only 35 PhDs have been recruited.
* Trgvye drated a memo on the various avenues for raising PhD salaries, including through (1) base salary increase (evaluation of collective agreements regulating the level of salaries), (2) increasing over-time work opportunities, and (3) increasing driftsmidler and what it may be used for.
* (1) and (3) were accepted by the PhD Council as avenues that should be pursued for increasing the money available to PhDs. There was general agreement in the Council not to pursue (2), on the basis of the need to protect Phd research time, and that we should not advocate for overtime work without overtime pay as this may be exploitative. In relation to the challenge that there is currently large outsourcing of work so as not to pay PhDs overtime, it was proposed that the PFF should make a strong guideline that internal resources should be used before going outside the faculty.
* On (1) base salary increase: Negotiating salary increase is hard for individual PhDs due to requirements for increase. The general way for increasing is therefore through collective agreements by trade unions. The PhD Council should investigate what its role in this could be. Possibility of discussing with unions directly in future, for them to prioritise PhDs (taking account that not all PhDs are part of unions). Need more information on statistics to be better placed to discuss with unions and faculty. Steps for follow up:
  + Trygve to ask faculty for PhD salary statistics & development over last years. Also find out if union membership impacts positively on salary.
  + Annichen to ask her union about policies & base salary
  + Based on this data, Laura to raise this issue in the PFF.
* On (3) increase and use of Personal Driftsmidler (Personal PhD Allowance): currently, each department has different budgets and rules around PhDs’ driftsmidler, including importantly (a) the amount, (b) whether it can be transferred from one year to the next. We want to advocate with the PFF for increase in driftsmidler to PhDs and clarity and harmonisation of guidelines across departments. Steps for follow up:
  + All PhD Council members to send Elsabe email with (1) what you have been allowed to pay from driftsmidler and what requests have been rejected; (2) additional needs/what you would like to be able to use it for; (3) amount of driftsmidler and if it is sufficient.
  + Trygve to gather the guidelines for the different institutes/departments and share with Elsabe, also ask them about last time it was revised/increased and based on what considerations.
  + Annichen will seek information on the taxation aspect – for inputs on how to structure the improvement.
  + Elsabe to prepare summary of findings.
  + Possible recommendations to present to deanship in December to be discussed in the next meeting, based on the findings.

1. **Shut up and Write Update**

* We have 23 registered participants.
* Trygve will seek confirmation on the logistics regarding payments of contribution by participants (NOK 1000 from driftsmidler).

1. **Annual Meeting – Dates and Preparations**

* Confirmed 29 November 2022, 16.30 – 22.00 in Room 8113.
* Agenda: Annual Report; Budget Update; Election of the new PhD Council; Election of Representative to the Faculty Board.
* Draft of the annual report will be discussed in the next PhD Council meeting (Monday, 14 November 2022) – Dinie & Elsabe to prepare draft. Everyone to send their respective inputs/summaries by 7 November 2022. Trygve to send Elsabe budget of shut-up-and-write in April.
* Dinie : To send the invite for Annual meeting with agenda, call for nominations and the link to the statutes governing the meeting <https://foreninger.uio.no/stipendiatradet/om/statutes-2020-phd-council.pdf>. Deadline for confirming to attend the meeting 22 November 2022.
* Social event with pizza, beer and wine after the formal event. Possibility to also book some further social activity for afterwards, for example, karaoke. To finalise this in the next meeting.

1. **Web page**

* Edits to be made: include minutes of meetings for archival purposes, replace background pictures, link to PhD Council Facebook account.
* Trygve to do a check of PhD council minutes to clear them for uploading.
* Dinie to share details of Facebook account with Laura.
* Laura will edit the webpage.

1. **AoB**

* **PFF meeting**
* The agenda has not yet been sent out. Laura will do a round of email consultations once received.
* **Meeting with the Deans 14 December 2022**
* Trygve will attend this meeting.
* Issue of driftsmidler set out above will be presented in this meeting.
* Issue of teaching obligations on PhDs to be presented in this meeting.
* **Teaching obligations of PhDs**
* Our concern is that the current process for allocation of teaching obligations is ad hoc and inefficient. Many PhDs struggle to fulfil their teaching obligations, while many courses resort to outside teachers due to lack of available teachers. In some cases, external resources are prioritised over requests from PhDs.
* There should be a transparent system to inform PhDs on available courses and level of teaching competence required.
* We propose that (a) double teaching and repeating the same courses every year should be encouraged, so that PhDs can fulfil their obligations in the most efficient way; (b) if a PhD contacts a course coordinator and is told that there is already someone teaching a course they are interested in teaching, there should be a formal process of being put on a waiting list; (c) there should be a general guideline that course coordinators should first seek internal teachers before resorting to external resources; and (d) there is a need for the process of matching PhDs with courses to be systematised.
* We have proposals on how (d) can be achieved, including by (1) at department level: a person, preferable Head of Teaching, designated in each department to meet with new incoming PhD to discuss their areas of competence, possible courses to teach on, and to put them in touch with the relevant course coordinators, or (2) at faculty level: that someone, e.g. the Faculty Administration inform departments on the available PhD resources including their teaching interest.
* It remains a question whether it can be expected of PhDs to take the initiative (provided they are provided with sufficient information); whether it should be the responsibility of course coordinators to reach out to PhDs; or if there is a need for a designated person to coordinate between course coordinators and PhDs for the best fit.
* Laura: To prepare a note for PFF to share concerns and initial proposals and seek information from PFF on the administrative aspect regarding teaching duties.
* **Other initiatives:**
* PhD Roundtable Session: Most PhDs do not know what others are working on, particularly if they are not from the same «cohort», i.e. do not attend PhD courses together. This limits the interaction and learning opportunities between different generations of PhDs, which can be an invaluable resource especially in the early stages of PhDs. The aim is to create an environment with a very low threshold for participation, where each participating PhD would give a short presentation on their PhD projects, to be followed by discussion to stimulate collaboration. Such roundtable session could start during the Shut-up and Write in November 2022. Upcoming PhD Council members could continue such sessions in their term.

Minutes submitted by: Dinie Arief and Elsabé Boshoff

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