

## Introduction

The Doctoral Student Guild board (DS) has during the year been actively representing the Doctoral Student Guild in a number of different committees and activities within Chalmers and outside, which will be accounted for in this report. Further, the internal activities will also be briefly mentioned. During the year 2015/2016 the board consisted of:

Oskar Thulin	Chairperson	AM
Maria Ekström	Vice chairperson	MC2
Elke Miedema	Member	A
Ragnar Larusson	Member	AM
Linnea Qvirist	Member	B
Jonas Sundell	Member	CEE
Fatemeh Ayatollahi	Member	CSE
Alberto Alamia	Member	EE
Toni Gutknecht	Member	K
Ceena Joseph	Member	MMT
Matteo Molteni	Member	MW
Ronja Thies	Member	P
Virginia Claudio	Member	P
Onur Kaya	Member	PPD
Sankar Menon Cherubala Pathayapura	Member	SMT
Naga Vishnukanth Irukulapati	Member	S2
Naghmeh Taghavi Nejad	Member	TME

## Introduction Days

All PhD students are obliged to attend the PhD Introduction day once before the licentiate degree. It is organized bi-annually by the team behind the Generic and Transferable Skills courses. This past year the events were held on the 11th November 2015 and the 4th of May. Elke Miedema represented DS who had 20 minutes on the agenda to introduce the board, the doktorandombud and to give some advice to enhance the time spend during the PhD education.

At the first introduction day in November we were in the process of finding a new doktorandombud. Since the contract was not signed yet DS told the attendances about the function, without introducing a person. This was changed to the spring event.

After both Introduction days a lunch seminar was organized to introduce international PhD students to the working conditions Sweden. The Swedish work market is in many ways different from many other countries as it in large is governed by negotiations between the unions and the employers. More about this event is available in the section about the cooperation with the union later in this document.

## The university board

The university board is the highest decision making body within the university, and DS is given the right to have a person attend and speak, but not to vote. In this forum, the DS and the Student Union present themselves as one voice, and we have established a good tradition of having preparatory meetings before each board meeting to discuss the current agenda. The university board discusses topic of strategic value to Chalmers, among many discussed topics venture creation has been in particular focus during the working year.

During this year the focus has mostly been on the undergraduate studies and how to position strategically Chalmers for the future. DS has been involved in the work to improve Chalmers further and has taken the opportunities, when research education related topics have arisen, to point out the interest of the doctoral students. Oskar Thulin has been responsible for this activity.

## Work environment and equality (AJK)

The AJK (Arbetsmiljö och jämställdhetskommitee, work environment and equality committee) discusses issues concerning work environment (in all its aspects) and equality. It usually focuses on all employees and not on a specific group of employees. The council consists of representatives from the Unions,

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Chalmers rektor, Chalmers coordinators for equality and working environment. This year Onur Kaya was representing DS in the committee.

AJK works with action plans, follow-up and risk assessment regarding working environment and equality. The yearly employment survey, Akademihälsan's yearly report and Feelgood's yearly report are presented to AJK. These are the most interesting points on the agenda at AJK this year for PhD students as a group. DS also analyzed the results for PhD students from the employee survey in depth together with Johanna Andersson, the equality coordinator at Chalmers.

### Faculty senate

The faculty council is the representative body for the faculty's teaching staff and acts as an advisory body to the president and management of Chalmers. It consists of 30 members elected from all 17 departments, a PhD- and undergraduate student representative, and the president and/or vice president of Chalmers attends the meetings. Jonas Sundell was representing the PhD students during the current activity year. The Faculty Council should be a forum where questions of long-term and strategic character, with importance to the development of Chalmers, can be initiated and handled.

Themes discussed 2015-2016 have been: vision and strategies for Chalmers 2016-2022, gender equality at Chalmers, external research funding and demands and expectations on faculty members.

### Research education council (FUN)

FUN (Forskarutbildningsnämnden, board for research education), is one of our most important committees as the matters concerning research education are always discussed there. The board was lead by Affe (Alf-Erik Almstedt, vice-rector for research education) and Barbara Sturn (Acting administrator for research education activities) until the end of the activity year. Furthermore all vice-heads or prodekanus (the one who is responsible for research education at the department, this varies) of the departments at Chalmers are present. Oskar Thulin and Linnea Qvirist represented the PhD students in the council. All decisions concerning research education are discussed in this board before a decision (usually by Affe) is taken.

DS have also had pre-meetings with Affe and Barbara to discuss our view of the topics on the agenda and to have an opportunity to raise other topics that DS wanted to push for.

The most notable/important things that has been dealt with during the year are:

### **1. Handledarutveckling (supervisor development)**

The supervisor education is mandatory, and supervisors must take at least 1 course every 3 years. The institutions are responsible themselves to make sure this happens. Those supervisor development activities are seen more and more positively lately. New: there is now a guiding document available from Insidan on “good supervision”. Sofia Månson is responsible for this task.

### **2. Individual study plan**

A working group is investigating the implementation of a Chalmers common and digital individual study plan (ISP), as opposed to the various versions existing between institutions and divisions. The group investigated the possible implementation of the IT ISP platform currently used by GU, but the platform was found by the working group to not be adequate. The working group is however positive to an IT platform, but it should be implemented first after Ladok 3 has been launched. Until then, the group is looking into how the content that should be included in an individual studyplan and how an IT-platform including the studyplan should be designed. This work will be continued during next activity year. Lena Falk is responsible, and Oskar Thulin is included in the working group.

### **3. Digital thesis publication in Chalmers Publication Library**

The procedure for publishing the thesis in CPL has been greatly simplified with a new publication platform, with the goal of being able to administrate the whole thesis online. Jessica Lindholm from the library is responsible.

### **4. UKÄ evaluation**

Updates and discussions around UKÄ (Universitetskanslersämbetet)’s upcoming evaluation of the Universities in Sweden.

### **5. New DOMB (Doktorandombud)**

DS informs FUN that a new DOMB, in Moyra McDill, has been recruited and Moyra is present at one of the meetings to introduce herself to FUN.

### **6. Departmental duty hours for local PhD council engagement**

DS encourages all members of FUN to consider allowing departmental hours to be counted for participation in the local PhD student councils, this has been varying between different institutions.

### **7. Incorrect delegation of medarbetarsamtal (employee talk)**

DS raises the issue about medarbetarsamtal, which should be held with the line manager, but sometimes is delegated to the main supervisors. DS finds it beneficial to have the medarbetarsamtal with someone else than the main supervisor.

### **8. Industrial PhD student contract from start**

DS informs that it is important that for industrial PhD’s there is a clear contract before starting the PhD, especially concerning the amount of teaching required.

### 9. New guidelines concerning conflict of interest (jäv) at dissertations

A new set of guidelines are now decided upon (Document “C205 0919 Riktlinjer för jävsfrågor vid disputation”), which more clearly than before explains which type of relationships that are considered a conflict of interest for the opponent/jury at dissertations at Chalmers.

### 10. Popular science presentations

Discussions about how to best enable the mandatory “popular science presentations” for all PhD students that started their PhD after 1 September 2012. Head of Generic and Transferable Skills courses, Britt Marie, is working on how to administer those presentations for all students in a good way.

## Nomination Supervisor of the year

The Research Supervisor of the Year Award year award was presented to [Martin Andersson](#), Associate Professor at department of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering. The reward was announced on Chalmers internal newspaper and via DS' communication channels. Martin was also interviewed by board to get his take on what good supervision is and the interview will be made public in the newsletter during next activity year. The point was also raised within the board how Martin's and previous winners' experience can be beneficial for more at Chalmers. In response to this the board introduced the idea to Chalmers to have a seminar series on good supervision. Next time the conference on teaching and learning (KUL), held in January each year, will include seminars on supervision including supervisor of the year winners.

DS received 17 supervisor nominations during year 2015-16, which were all nominated by doctoral students within their own research groups. The board appointed a committee, which after thorough reading met to decide the most suitable candidates and proceeded with interviews with some of the nominating PhD students. After the interviews, the board committee met to summarize the impressions and presented a motivation for the final selection at a DS board meeting. The committee consisted of Alberto Alamia, Ceena Joseph and Naga Vishnukanth Irukulapati.

## Representing Chalmers Doctoral Programs at Charm

Each year, DS represents the doctoral programs at Chalmers at CHARM, the labor market fair organized by the Student Union. Several board members participated in manning our booth and providing information for curious students about what it really means to be a PhD student. Ceena Joseph was responsible for the planning of the activity.

The representation at the fair usually entails to answer question about how to find available PhD-positions, the recruitment process, what the education entails, pros and cons, how a regular day might look, salary, etc. So in this respect, the DS

members are not there as DS-representatives, but rather as representatives of the research education.

### The Swedish National Union of Students-PhD committee

SFS (Sveriges Förenade Studentkårer) is the Swedish National Union of Students and “the collective voice in Sweden”. The Chalmers Student Union is one of the member unions in SFS. SFS-DK is the PhD candidate committee of SFS. SFS-DK is also a member of Eurodoc, which is SFS-DK’s counterpart on a European level. The goal is to represent all PhD students at Swedish Universities, also the ones which do not have member unions. Maria Ekström from DS board has been a SFS-DK board member throughout the DS activity year.

The goal of this year was to renew SFS-DK tasks.

#### 1. Increasing visibility

SFS-DK only had four board members, most probably due to lack of visibility. This year we focused on reaching out to get more board members 2016-2017. This was done via:

- Updating the SFS-DK part of the webpage to English
- Being active on the facebook page Doktorand I Sverige
- Being active on related facebook pages such as Högskoleläckan

#### 2. Status of all PhD students at Swedish Universities

SFS-DK wanted to check the status the PhD education. This was done by:

- First getting contacts to all PhD councils, Student Unions or PhD education responsible.
- Secondly to create a survey investigating common issues for all PhD students at Swedish Universities. This survey was sent to the contact list and also posted at the different visibility channels stated above. This will be analysed 2016-2017.

#### 3. Follow up on 2014-2015

PhD students from non-EU countries coming to Sweden before implementation of the new law to give PhD students the same rights as other workers still experience problems obtaining citizenships. SFS-DK together with SULF interviewed PhD students and wrote a debate article.

#### 4. Monitoring Swedish research and research education

A lot of SFS-DK’s effort is to monitor and evaluate Swedish research and research education. This is done by evaluating UKÄ’s and other agencies work. A significant effort has been put into writing debate articles about PhD education in collaborative work.



### Research misconduct

The board originally met only in case of need, to investigate suspect cases of misconduct in research. During the academic year 2015-2016 this has been changed, and the committee's aim has been broadened. It now counts more members than before and has started to meet regularly for constructive discussions about its scope and goals. Matteo Molteni has been involved in this work as the DS representative.

This year the board investigated two cases, involving graduate students (current and former), and senior staff (at Chalmers and another Swedish university). In both cases the board decided not to act and dismissed all the charges: in one case this was due to the lack of evidence to support one's claim, in the other case because the suspected irregularity had already been solved by the parties involved at the time the committee started investigating.

### Library Council

The Library Council (Biblioteksrådet) consists of the library director, additional representatives from the library and representatives from various committees within Chalmers and from the Student Union and DS (via Ragnar Larusson). The goal is to maintain connection between the library and other parts of Chalmers. During the meetings the following has been addressed:

- Important issues/subject that affect the library on an operational level or in a strategic way.
- Cooperation between the library and other parts of Chalmers.
- Development and quality issues.
- The library annual report.
- The operational plan for the library.
- Potential big change in operation of the library.
- Follow up on the operation.
- Hiring of the library director.

The discussions were mostly gathered around general library topics, most notably the new library at Lindholmen, which will be located in the building called Kuggen.

### E-publishing and Open access publishing (RePub)

REPUB is a "reference" group for electronic publication. Its purpose was to start a dialog between the library and other parts of Chalmers, including the PhD students, about issues regarding open access and electronic publications. The discussions in the meetings typically evolve around the CPL system. Updates regarding CPL and the new Research database (<https://research.chalmers.se/en/>), that is replacing CPL, have been discussed during the year. Another topic was about the suggestions for the new national

guidelines for open access policy for scientific information made by the Swedish Research Council. See <https://publikationer.vr.se/produkt/forslag-till-nationella-riktlinjer-for-oppen-tillgang-till-vetenskaplig-information/>.

Ragnar Larusson has been representing DS in REPUB during the activity year.

### SACO and wage negotiations

DS is as previously involved in the wage negotiations between the unions and Chalmers. In the end of the negotiations an agreement was reached of 2.5% annual salary increase. It was stressed that these salaries are minimum levels and that PhD students can individually negotiate higher individual salaries. It was also stressed that in case the licentiate, that is associated with the second salary level, is delayed due to Chalmers administration, retroactive salary increase for the intermediate time should take place. If the employer has accepted part time for the PhD student the doctoral education should now also be prolonged with the corresponding amount of time. As it has been a problem that many PhD students are not getting the licentiate degree at half time of the education, as should be the case, it has been stressed that the individual study plan should be designed so that the degree is met in time. The second salary tier, that is associated the licentiate seminar/degree, seems to be dependent on many other factors than the own performance, that is why DS has pointed out that the PhD salary ought to be improved. The employer and the trade union have also agreed to analyze how different PhD salary ladders are implemented at different universities in Sweden. This analysis will serve as a basis for the negotiations in 2016 and will potentially lead to a more adequate design.

Another activity that was initiated together with the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations, SACO, this year, was seminars on labor rights. These events were held in conjunction with the introduction days for new PhD candidates. Since Chalmers agrees on the importance of this activity, the university has sponsored with a light lunch to the participants and costs for lecture hall.

The DS representative has met with the union 6 times during the year. The DS representative also has opportunity to take part in education programs organized by SACO. Jonas Sundell has led the PhD student representation in the wage negotiations and towards the unions.

### Doktorandombud (DOMB) and the DOMB recruitment committee

The ombudsman (DOMB) is one of the most important services granted by DS to any PhD student who may experience a problematic situation in their PhD studies. The DOMB is bound to confidentially and never acts on his/her own



initiative. The DOMB can help the PhD student to identify issues, discuss potential solutions as well as be a support in meetings with supervisor or department.

In July at the start of the activity year we got the news that Bengt Stebler, our outgoing Doktorandombudsman intended to retire in September. Bengt had at that time served as our DOMB for 10 years for which we, the DS board, will be ever grateful. As an interim solution we appointed an acting emergency DOMB in Göran Nyman who agreed to help out. Upon the announcement of the retirement DS also initiated an activity to recruit a new permanent DOMB. DS also enquired information about how other doctoral student boards at other universities managed the DOMB position. The recruitment committee consisted of Oskar Thulin, Ragnar Larusson, Ronja Thies and Virginia Claudio.

The following job advertisement was used:

*Doktorandombudsman (DOMB) is to assist and help individual PhD students at Chalmers with problems that may arise concerning all aspects of doctoral research and employment. DOMB is hired directly as a contractor by the DS board and should not be bound to other duties which may affect the main responsibilities as DOMB. This means, for example, that DOMB should preferably not be affiliated by Chalmers other than through DS. The workload typically is around 20% of a full-time employment but can vary depending on the demand for the DOMB's services.*

*DS is looking for someone who has excellent social and communication skills. Someone who is understanding and empathetic. The candidate should be unbiased and solely act to protect the interest of the PhD student. The candidate should also be able to support PhD students in potentially difficult conversations, and thus should be able to display authority. The candidate is furthermore trusted with keeping an absolute confidentiality between the DOMB and her/his clients.*

### **The main responsibilities of the DOMB are to:**

- offer regular consultation times at the DOMB office.
- offer consultation by appointment.
- be available to support the student in potentially difficult meetings.
- be bound to absolute confidentiality and keep confidential case records.
- write a yearly report on the DOMB's work.

### **Qualifications**

- Excellent communication skills, both written and oral, in English and Swedish.
- Experience with working conditions at Swedish Universities.

### **Merits**

- Experience in supervision, especially PhD student supervision.
- Teaching experience at university level.

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- *PhD or a similar experience in research (preferably within engineering or natural sciences).*
- *Experience of working at Chalmers but no current affiliation with Chalmers.*
- *Experience with student representation or counselling.*

### **Contract**

*The DOMB is hired as a contractor by DS. A contract is signed for up to four years with possible renewal. The DOMB is provided with a mobile telephone and access to an office space for consultations at the Chalmers Student Union building.*

The recruitment committee asked Chalmers to post about the available position on Chalmers' job advertisement page. DS also used their own communication channels to advertise about the position. The recruitment committee also asked Chalmers officials whom they thought could have interesting ideas of candidates to approach. This included the vice rector for research and research education, the equality coordinator, teachers in doctoral student leadership and management courses and people that had been involved in similar positions at Chalmers before. The recruitment committee also contacted the Department of Psychology at the University of Gothenburg for interesting candidates. Additionally, the committee also contacted interesting candidates directly to make them aware of the position and to try to influence them to apply for the position.

The recruitment committee had 4 eligible candidates, that all were judged to be very competent in the role, to chose between. All candidates were also asked to hand in resumes, cover letters and to answer a form to declare any potential conflicts of interest in representing the PhD students at Chalmers. Interviews were conducted with all of the candidates. References were collected once the recruitment committee had decided to focus on two preferred candidates.

It was with great pleasure that the Chalmers Doctoral Student Guild could announce the new Doktorandsombud (DOMB), [Moyra McDill](#), Professor Emeritus from Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada. Moyra moved to Sweden in January 2013 and has since been a visiting lecturer at the university in Skövde and visiting researcher at Chalmers.

Moyra has an extensive experience within research, teaching, administration, student project supervision, PhD student supervision and undergraduate student counseling. Her experience covers a wide variety of roles at Carleton, for example she was appointed Dean's Advisor for Women in Engineering at Carleton, to address the issues of female students engineering. In her career she has had the opportunity to help undergraduate students with a wide range of challenges and the DS board believes that experience can come into good use in her work as DOMB, although the range of problems facing PhD student can indeed be different from those of undergraduate students.

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DS board has since the recruitment been involved to help Moyra to adjust to the new position and to advise in problematic situations PhD students when needed. The board is very happy with the performance of Moyra during the activity year. Upon next activity year the board plan to implement a yearly DOMB report that details systematic issues in the research educations that DS can advocate politically at Chalmers to address. A more formal work description is also planned to be established in cooperation with Moyra.

### The general assembly meetings

During the year, DS has had 2 general assembly meetings. The minutes from the meetings are available on DS website.

December 2015

- Moyra is introduced to the assembly as the new doktorandombud
- Annual report and freedom from liability for the board of 2014/15.

June 2016

- Election of a new board for 2016/17.

### The work of the board

During the year, the board had 6 board meetings of approximately 3 hours each. The minutes from the board meetings are available on DS website. The main topics that have been addressed are detailed below.

DS has continued to hold the PhD satisfaction seminars in departments where it had not been presented. The seminar is about spreading awareness and knowledge of the optimum PhD student experience, what potential issues that may arise and what one individually can do to address these.

Good cooperation with and the existence of a local PhD student council is key for the DS board to be able to represent the PhD students well at Chalmers. The board has also been trying to work closer and to help the department PhD student councils further during the year. A recommendation document was drafted to help the local boards to organize their work and to point out in which department meetings and groups they should be included. The document also tries to separate the work between the local PhD student councils and the DS board in an appropriate manner so that we together can do a better job for the PhD students at Chalmers. The DS board has also started a mailing group for the chairs of the local PhD student councils with the intent to enable the local PhD student councils to learn from each other.

The DS board together with Chalmers did also finally find a way to arrange for the activity level reporting routines so that all PhD students who are eligible for

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the SJ/Västtrafik rebate is getting the appropriate eligibility logotype on the respective Mecentat student card.

DS has throughout the year been meeting the head of the Generic and Transferable Skills courses to discuss how the classes can be improved further. The waiting times for courses has been reduced significantly during previous years. Most of the classes are working well, in those cases where improvement potential has been existing this has been communicated.

DS also made a considerable effort lobbying in the AJK council for including PhD student specific questions in the employee survey as many of the questions were not applicable to a PhD student's work situation. A set of questions were suggested and of which the large majority of the questions were later included in the final survey. This work has been intended to make the PhD student situation more visible in Chalmers.

Social activities for PhD students has been put on the agenda during the activity year. Social activities are here all activities that have a social aspect for the PhD students outside of the board. As much of the resources in the board is going into representing the PhD students at Chalmers the social activities could not be that extensive, as aspired, during the year. The emphasis has been put on being effective. A drop-in lunch was arranged a month before the general assembly for the PhD students being able to give input to and get to know the board better. The board has also been trying to spread the word of the Gothenburg PhD Pub events, see link here <https://www.facebook.com/phd.pub.gothenburg>. Every second event also features a popular science presentation with an interesting speaker. The DS board is also interested to cooperate with and to market other groups that arrange social activities for PhD students in Gothenburg. Elke Miedema has been responsible for this activity.

During the activity year the DS board gave attention to the present situation with very scattered information for PhD students. The doctoral students are also currently lacking a user-friendly portal, similar to what the studentportalen is for the undergraduate students at Chalmers. This is currently taking time from both doctoral students as well as administrative personal at Chalmers. Time that instead could be used for far more productive purposes. The DS board drafted a proposal to the Chalmers Development Portfolio (CUP) with capabilities that would improve PhD life and make Chalmers more efficient. Some capabilities, among the ones that were proposed, were implemented in the end of the year in a new Chalmers doctoral student portal. This includes general PhD student information and information about the Generic and Transferable Skills course package. The DS board is satisfied to see that the effort gave results and will continue to advocate for implementation of, but not restricted to, information about, enrollment in, way to enlist for exams, participation in course evaluations for all courses that PhD students participate in. The board also thinks that a future individual study plan, personal result records, study certificates and records of teaching activities should be accessed in the portal.

The DS board has been getting indications for quite some time that PhD students are not getting the saved up vacation days paid out at the end of the contract. It has been communicated to the Chalmers human resources division that as long the PhD students have fulfilled the regulations by the collective agreements they have the right to these vacation days. Chalmers has now agreed on this being the correct interpretation.

The board has also kept the homepage updated with information to make the work of the board visible for the PhD students at Chalmers. Two newsletters with handy information to the PhD students at Chalmers were also distributed. These newsletters as well as older newsletters are made available on the homepage. Sankar Menon Cherubala Pathayapura has led the newsletter activity, and the homepage and technical support has been managed by Fatemeh Ayatollahi. A considerable effort was also put at redesigning the homepage and the graphical content for other information material. Throughout the year an emphasis has been put on balancing the information that is sent to the PhD students via mails, the guiding principle has been to only send information of quality, that is concerning the large majority of the PhD students, in a collected manner. The homepage, as well as the social media presence has been used more extensively since it is less intrusive. DS is also present on Facebook and LinkedIn.

A new management organization came with the selection of the new rector at Chalmers. This had the effect that Mats Viberg took over the responsibility of research and research education from Alf-Erik Almstedt (Affe). On behalf of the PhD students at Chalmers we want to thank Affe for his positive work and at the same time welcome Mats to his new position. Among the most notable things Affe led work to abolish the stipend funded PhD positions to only, in the general case, allow for employed PhD students. A meeting was held with the rector to ensure the continued interest for the research education from the Chalmers management. The chairs of the activity year and the upcoming activity year also met with both Affe and Mats for a handover meeting in the end of the activity year.

To the end of the year the nomination committee worked to secure competent representation from all departments at Chalmers for the upcoming activity year. The general assembly elected representatives for all departments at the spring assembly. The committee was led by Ragnar Larusson, Elke Miedema and Naghme Taghavi Nejad. In effort to make the work of the nomination committee more transparent a nomination policy was agreed upon in the board during the year. This document is also applicable in a recruitment process, such as a doktorandombud-recruitment process. The policy document is made available on the DS homepage, and found here <http://www.dokt.chs.chalmers.se/documents/2016/05/nomination-policy.pdf>.

The funding situation has also been addressed throughout the year. Primarily to secure the appropriate funding to cover the additional expenses of the new

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doktorandombud. The board has also started to plan for and to lobby towards Chalmers for an increased funding as the board is taking a larger and larger role in the representation of PhD students at Chalmers. This at the same time as the PhD student hourly rate has increased considerably more than the SCB KPI (consumer price index) that the funding is associated with. The board will continue to address the funding situation during next activity year.

On the basis of this report the board of DS thinks that it safely can be said that DS has represented the doctoral student at Chalmers well and fulfilled all its obligations towards the organization during the activity year of 2015-2016.

DS Chairman 2015-2016



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Oskar Thulin