

MC2 PhD council minutes - 2024/06/12

Time: 11h30

Place: C511

Present: Ragnar Ferrand-Drake Del Castillo, Hanna Linn, Hanna Karlsson-Fernberg, Nermin Trnjanin, Joey Frey, Núria Alcalde Herraiz, Zeidan Zeidan, Ariadna Soro Álvarez, Shahrzad "Sherry" Damercheli

Election of meeting officials

- Chair: Ariadna Soro Álvarez
- Secretary: Ariadna Soro Álvarez
- Adopt the minutes: Nermin Trnjanin

2. **Approval of the agenda:** Yes

3. **Meeting notice in due order:** Yes

4. **Updates from boards and committees**

- The executive board (Ledningsgruppen, LG) – Hanna Linn
 - Zeidan (AQP) to replace Hanna in the fall.
 - Diplomas will now by default be sent digitally. Paper diploma can be asked for.
 - Yata was discussed:
 - * There's still confusion on the conflict of interest. They'll ask Physics how to do it.
 - * MC2 would like it to be handled by Chalmers centrally.
 - * Nothing was decided.
 - 5 PhD student volunteers for MC2 relay race are needed. It won't be the department but the supervisor who will pay for departmental duties.
 - MC2 doors will be locked 21 June – 18 August and key would be needed to come in.
 - MC2 colloquium may come back.
- The department's advisory board (Institutionsrådet) – Isak Brundin
 - No updates.
 - Head of Department recruitment:
 - * Maria Messing from Lund has been elected as the new Head of Department. She will start mid-August.
- Chalmers PhD student Guild (Doktorandsektionen, DS) – Sherry Damercheli
 - Fredrik Börjesson Sandén (K) and Christina Lee (IMS) are the new chair and co-chair.

- Sherry (EMSL) and Lucian Petrisor (MEL) are the new MC2 representatives. Lucian has expressed interest in joining the council, so he may replace Ragnar in the fall.
 - A new DOMB was supposed to be hired by the end of the summer, but the process may be delayed.
 - Exit interviews are usually held by the heads of the Graduate Schools, but only to the PhD students that graduate get them. We raise this issue at the next meeting with Magnus (HoD) and Sara (HR), after discussing employee survey.
- The association of graduate students in Physics (Föreningen för Forskarstuderande i Fysik, FFF) – Ariadna
 - Ariadna organized a seminar on balancing simultaneous work towards a PhD and in industry was held on June 11. The speakers were Timo Hillmann (MC2 – AQP), Simon Pettersson Fors (MC2 – AQP), Erik Lindgren (Chalmers Physics), Amr Osman (MC2 – QT) and Chris Warren (MC2 – QT), who are all working for external (or their own) companies in different capacities. The discussions were very fruitful, so this may be a seminar to repeat, maybe on a biannual basis?
 - Equality group (Jämställdhetsgruppen, Jägr) – Erik Strandberg, Sherry Damercheli
 - No updated from the equality group, we have our final meeting for the semester on Monday next week
 - Dr Genie – Achintya Paradkar
 - No updates.

5. Other issues

- ISP meeting by Swedish National Union of Students – Núria
 - They will release guidelines on how to fill-up the ISP.
 - The PhD students usually don't understand how much legal validity this document has.
 - Not in every university the supervisors are present at the ISP meeting.
 - It would be nice to push again for electronic ISP connected to Ladok.
 - They stress that we are not only students, but employees and we have rights.
- Inclusive products – Núria
 - We now have hair bands in the cleanroom! They're placed next to the beard covers. Núria will email everyone and post on Facebook.
- TRC – Joey, Achintya, Ariadna
 - Ariadna send an email to Magnus:
The MC2 PhD Student Council has received accounts from several PhD students saying that their TRC experience was very bad, or that the committee set unrealistic expectations on them, or just that the

requirements that were set on them differed widely than some of their peers. With this, I'd like to ask you a couple of questions:

· Are the members of the TRC always the same? Or are they hand-picked for each student?

· Does the TRC have some guidelines on what they should evaluate from the student? Or do they evaluate based on what they think constitutes a good PhD thesis?

· How set in stone are the TRC recommendations? For example, if they say a student needs one more paper before defending, and this doesn't end up happening, what are the consequences? Ultimately, who decides whether to follow the TRC's recommendations or not? Is it the supervisor, the examiner, or the student?

· I understand that you have been holding exit interviews with PhD students for some time. Do you discuss their TRC experience? If so, are the accounts consistent among different students?

- Magnus replied the following:

That is a criticism I have not heard before. The TRC has been the same for around a year I think. We do not change it (unless there is conflict of interest).

They evaluate both the student and the research, i.e. if the student can answer questions convincingly and if the research is of good quality (= have been peer reviewed in decent journals).

The TRC decision is formally not set in stone, but they have been adhered to in 99 % of the cases. I can recall one case when it was not adhered to and it was due to a misunderstanding, but the TRC was quite upset with the supervisor at the time.

Formally it is the supervisor and examiner that gives green light to go up for defense and TRC is only advising, but there should be good reasons to go against TRC.

I have not held exit interviews for the last 12 months since I have (and still am) overloaded and not replacement have been assigned. This is problematic, yes. I have however heard no complaints about TRC, so it would be helpful if I could get more concrete examples of problematic decisions.

- In light of this, the council decides to conduct interviews with the PhD students that have had the TRC in the last year. We will conduct the interviews informally with the corresponding PhD students of our divisions.

- Psychological help – Nermin

- Nermin reached out to GU to ask further information and they replied with a bit vague information. The students are supervised by official psychologists. Nermin will spread the information.

- School evaluation – Patrik Blomberg

- We have received the self-evaluation report from the Physics department and have booked a meeting with them in August to discuss. We have also booked a meeting in August with SEE, which we are going to be reviewing.

- Department Day – Everyone
 - No updates.
- Open access publishing – Ariadna
 - Ariadna reached out to Ann-Sofie to get a timeline of negotiations but has not gotten a reply yet.
- Teaching duties table – Isak
 - No updates.
- Teaching duties allocation
 - Remember to update it with new PhD students, as well as updating the plans that are probably more definite now!
- Social media updates
 - Ariadna made a tutorial for Primula and shared in on Facebook, Knowledge Repository and with Linda Brånell. Should it be sent to more places? Email. Send to PIs.
 - Robert Rehammar’s interview is now on LinkedIn. Ragnar will add the TRC question.
- Replacements for council members
 - Staying in the council:
 - * Ariadna (AQP) – will graduate in June 2025 and can’t be chair for the whole period
 - * Hanna Karlsson-Fernberg
 - * Sherry
 - * Joey maybe
 - * Núria maybe
 - Needs replacement:
 - * Hanna Linn – replaced by Zeidan?
 - * Nermin – will look for a replacement
 - * Ragnar – replaced by Lucian ?

6. Actions to take by next meeting:

- Núria shall email about the availability of hair bands in the clean room
- Ariadna will email Magnus about the TRC
- Nermin to provide information about the psychological help offered by GU
- Patrik will review the report from SEE

7. Next meeting: August 30, 9h30, C511 – with Magnus and Sara to discuss employee survey and exit interviews.

8. Closing of the meeting: 13h02