

MC2 PhD Student Council - General Assembly

Minutes for October 31, 2024

Present: Ariadna Soro Álvarez (AQP), Ebba Grönfors (EMSL), Hanna Karlsson-Fernberg (EMSL), Lakshminarayan Sharma (PL), Albert Lund (AQP), Shahrzad Damercheli (EMSL), Ludwig Gustavsson (MEL), Simon Pettersson Fors (AQP), Patrik Blomberg (TML), Alexander Jung (QT), Theresa Fuchs (QT), Isak Lyngfelt (AQP), Nelson Rebelo (TML), Zeidan Zeidan (AQP), Kam Rongrueangkul (QDP), Núria Alcalde Herraiz (QDP), Joey Frey (QT), Didrik Palmqvist (AQP), Ragnar Ferrand-Drake del Castillo (MEL), Lucian Petrisor Ion (MEL) Achintya Paradkar

Opening of the meeting

Election of meeting officials

- Chair: Ariadna Soro Álvarez
- Secretary: Núria Alcalde Herraiz
- Two adjusters: Achintya Paradkar and Isak Lyngfelt

Approval of the agenda

Yes, no additions requested.

Meeting notice in due order

Yes, notice was sent three weeks in advance.

General information about the council

The PhD Council consists of representatives of PhD students from different divisions of MC2. It also has representation in the different organizations within MC2 (e.g. the Executive board, Advisory board, Equality group, etc.) and across Chalmers (e.g. DS and DrGENIE). The main role of the council is to discuss various issues pertaining to Ph.D. students and to voice their concerns and opinions to the management.

Information about council activities during the year

- **Completed:**
 - Recruitment of the new Head of Department, Maria Messing: we were involved in writing the profile of the candidate and the job announcement, as well as during the interview process.
 - Organized a seminar together with FFF on balancing PhD and industry work, with most speakers being MC2 PhD students. Since the seminar was very well received, it may be repeated every other year.
 - Hairbands made available at the cleanroom entrance.

- Proposed to the Executive Board (Ledningsgrupp) for a more modern teaching tool / platform than Canvas, in order to provide undergraduate students with more interactive ways of learning and discussing, and at the same time remove some of the load off of the TAs. As a result, a procurement is underway. We provided the board with a list of features that such a platform should have, based on feedback from course evaluations and our own experience as TAs, which will be considered in the procurement.
- Thanks to recollections of personal stories and data from the employee survey, we identified the need for equality training. A workshop on this was organized by the MC2 Equality Group and conducted by Paul Bengtsson, and has occurred in two sessions during spring. We also requested an additional workshop to train managers to handle cases of harassment, bullying, and other incivilities, which is scheduled for this fall.

- **Ongoing:**

- An evaluation of all the Chalmers graduate schools, which takes place every 6 years, is now underway. Our council has participated in the self-evaluation of MC2, received a report from SEE, evaluated the self-report of Physics, and we are now awaiting a final report centrally from Chalmers. Further actions would be planned on the basis of this report.
- In the LinkedIn alumni network that we started last year, we are continuously publishing one-on-one interviews with MC2 alumni, as well as polls for everyone in the network. Check it out!
- We have received numerous complaints about the Thesis Review Committee (TRC) not being fair or asking for unreasonable goals. We are investigating the issue by talking directly to PhD students who have taken the TRC recently, as well as interviewing the alumni through the LinkedIn network. These issues will then be brought up to the department head with suggestions from the council.
- MC2 does not have a clear procedure for employees to follow in case they experience bullying or harassment. We are working together with the MC2 Equality Group and DrGENIE to create a flow chart for support and incident reporting that is clear and easy to follow.
- Working with Chalmers library on negotiating better deals for open-access publishing in the APS gold journals so that the student or their PI does not have to worry about the publication cost. Chalmers University is the only major university in Sweden that does not have free publication in the APS gold journals (PRX, PRX Quantum, PRX Energy, PRR, etc.).
- We are working to provide free menstruation products in the MC2 buildings. We are currently in talks with the department head and DrGENIE to arrange for the funding.
- Creating a holiday calendar that everyone can subscribe to and be reminded of red days and half-working days.
- Launched Voice It Out, an anonymous recollection of incidences, bullying, and harassment experienced by MC2 PhD students. 20 responses were obtained. In addition to providing a safe space for everyone to speak up, we will use these experiences to raise awareness and request concrete actions from the leadership of MC2.

Election of council members

- Members from other MC2 boards (do not need to be elected, only introduced):
 - Executive group (Ledningsgruppen): Zeidan Zeidan (AQP)
 - Advisory council (Institutionsrådet): Isak Lyngfelt (AQP)
- Division representatives:
 - QDP: Núria Alcalde Herraiz
 - AQP: Zeidan Zeidan, Isak Lyngfelt
 - QT: Joey Frey, Achintya Paradkar
 - EMSL: Hanna Karlsson-Fernberg, Sherry Damercheli
 - TML: Patrik Blomberg, Malte Dornieden
 - MEL: Lucian Petrisor
 - Photonics: -
- Council chairs: Achintya Paradkar and Núria Alcalde Herraiz

Other issues

- It was discussed to conduct a midway PhD information seminar. Based on feedback, it was concluded that the best format would be a lunch seminar together with a summary text for those who could not attend.
- The Council needs to find more information for industrial/external Ph.D. students with regard to their representation, Ph.D. guidelines, and other specific information.
- Swedish courses: we did not manage to get Chalmers to offer Swedish courses for credits, but one can still get credits for external courses if the examiner approves and a certification is provided at the end of the course.
- The results of the employee survey pertaining to the Ph.D. students are available with the Ph.D. Council for further discussion.

Closing of the meeting