

Management Report 2016

The Board of the SULF doctoral candidate association (SDF) submits the following Management Report for the 2016 financial year (to 18 Oct 2016).

The Board

During the year, the Board has consisted of:

Anna Ilar	Chair	Karolinska Institutet
Reza Salim	Deputy Chair	Mid-Sweden University
Megan Case	Secretary	Dalarna University
Rikard Einegard	Member	Malmö University
Abdelrahman Ismail (<i>to 6 September</i>)	Member	Karolinska Institutet
Behbood Borghei	Deputy Member	Linköping University
Vivi Hallström (<i>to 16 March</i>)	Deputy Member	Linköping University

Introduction

The Board's work during the year focused on particularly vulnerable groups of doctoral candidates. Among other activities, a seminar on student mental health was held together with the Saco Student Council, language problems for international doctoral candidates attracted some attention and international doctoral candidates' rights to residence and citizenship were highlighted.

The Annual Report will be presented based on the four SDF operational goals and concludes with a financial overview as follows:

- Membership activities
- Recruitment
- Board activities
- Advocacy and opinion-building
- Finances

Membership activities

Doctoral candidate Contact Day

On 2 June, a national contact day for doctoral candidates interested in the union was held. In addition to the five SDF Board members, 13 doctoral candidates from Dalarna University, Mälardalen University, Karlstad University, Gävle University, KTH, Karolinska Institutet, Uppsala University, Mid-Sweden University and Malmö University also participated. This year's theme was career paths within and outside the academic world. SULF Chief Negotiator Robert Andersson, KTH's youngest professor Sebastian Meijer and career coach Tina Persson gave lectures. The day ended with social mingle and exchange of experiences. Participants received an email later providing a summary of the day.

Membership Newsletter

In the spring term, newsletters were distributed to all SDF members with registered email addresses in February, May and June. In the autumn term, two newsletters were sent out in October and November/December. Letters have been written in English and have included current information from SDF and reminders of upcoming activities.

SULF Day

This year SULF Day fell on 6 October and the theme was gender and careers in the academic world. SDF published four articles on their Facebook page, including local activities from Dalarna University and Linköping University and a video concerning gender equality in academia.

AGM

The SDF AGM will be held on 18 November. Between the Board meeting and AGM, Karin Åmossa from SULF will present and discuss Sweden's new research bill.

Recruitment

Support for local associations

Anna gave a lecture at the University of Gävle on 22 April on how SULF and SDF work with doctoral candidate issues at national level. The audience consisted of the local SULF Board and doctoral candidate members and potential members. A number of new doctoral candidates joined. Rikard gave a similar lecture at Malmö University on 15 September. Megan gave a presentation November 16 for 20 doctoral candidates at Dalarna University about double membership and how to become active within SULF.

Reza participated in the Central SULF Board meeting on 22 April. In 2016, SDF intends to work with local SULF associations to reach out to doctoral candidates more successfully. It was determined that Reza, Mats and Anna would visit local associations during the autumn term to help determine how they can attract more doctoral candidates. So far (18 Oct), no such visits have been carried out. Finally, future opportunities were discussed concerning the development of information material in the form of a starter kit for doctoral candidates recently arrived in Sweden.

Recruitment Materials

On 21 February, SDF submitted comments on the parts of the SULF internal recruitment materials - such as recruitment manual and email templates - linked to doctoral candidates. Several of our observations were implemented in the updated material. Friedrich Heger, Recruitment Manager for SULF, visited Stockholm on 1 June and discussed recruitment material and the SULF Day with Anna and Abdel Rahman. Friedrich recommended that the Board purchase its own roll up to use at different events. This was done.

This year SDF has encouraged SULF to develop information and training materials in English on the occasions when material in Swedish only has been available.

This year, SDF has aimed to communicate all of its own information in English.

The Board

Board meetings and education of the board

SDF has held 7 Board meetings:

1. 14 December 2015: The first meeting was held in Stockholm, and 5 of 7 members attended. Anna introduced the new Board to the previous Board's activities and the methods they had used. The day included a lot of planning for the 2016 financial year, which was discussed on the basis of the year's focus (particularly vulnerable groups of doctoral candidates). The Board will continue to pursue issues relevant international doctoral candidates' rights, but also focus on the mental health of doctoral candidates. Internal matters of interest included developing a description of the duties of the Board, developing a strategy for social media, creating a network of union doctoral candidates at Swedish universities and encouraging local SULF associations to start their own SDF sections.

Git visited and informed the Board about SULF and how to improve cooperation within SULF. We also received a visit of Anders Jinneklint from Universitetsläraren.
2. 4 February: The second board meeting was held in Stockholm and 6 of 7 members attended. We discussed the future opinion articles on permanent residence permits, career conditions for young scientists and professional identity. Robert Andersson gave a lecture on international doctoral candidates' situation in Sweden, linked to the permanent residence permit situation.
3. 15 March: The third meeting was a Skype meeting where we updated each other on the progress of what we were working with. 6 of 7 members participated. Reza Salim was elected as the new Deputy Chair.
4. 12 -13 April: The Board held its annual retreat in Linköping. The fourth meeting was held on 13 April in which 6 of the 6 members were present as Vivi had chosen to resign. Karin Åmossa, SULF's Senior Researcher, held an internal education for the Board on career paths within and outside the academic world, and also stayed for a discussion on lobbying. Other issues discussed were our efforts to enhance cooperation with local SULF associations, and how we can work towards legislative change regarding permanent residence permits for doctoral candidates.
5. 13 June: The fifth board meeting was held via Skype and 6 of 6 members participated. We discussed the Contact Day (2 June), and planning for the rest of the year. Rikard held a briefing on a social media plan with a focus on how to develop our Facebook page.
6. 27-28 September. The sixth board meeting was held at Mid-Sweden University in Sundsvall. 4 of 5 members attended, as Abdelrahman had resigned. The Board discussed the plans for the SULF Day and the development of a description of tasks and responsibilities for SDF Board members. We were visited by the new SULF Communications Director Jon Stenbeck. We discussed SDF's efforts to develop a strategy for how to work with social media. Jon informed us about how SULF wants to work with reaching more doctoral candidates in the future.
7. 18 November. The seventh board meeting will be held in Stockholm in connection with the AGM.

Job descriptions for SDF Board members

The Board has developed a job description for members of the SDF Board. The purpose is to clarify the responsibilities of various members and their duties in the Board. The text has been made available to the Nominations Committee for their work in recruiting a new board. After the AGM, the text will be uploaded to the SDF website.

Handover to 2017 years on the board

The Board plans to make a brief evaluation of its work in 2016 at the final Board meeting on 18 November, to see what can be improved in future Board activities.

Advocacy and opinion-building

Publications

Universitetsläraren

Anna participated in “Hello there!” (issue 8, 2015), where she gave advice to newly-registered doctoral candidates.

Anna described the new Board and its plans for 2016 in issue 1, 2016.

Curie

On 7 April a debate article entitled *Äntligen förbättras villkoren för doktoranderna* (At last conditions for doctoral candidates are improved) by Anna, Ulrica Lundström, Chair of SFS-DK, and Moa Ekbohm, Chair of the SULF doctoral candidate association in 2013:

<http://www.tidningencurie.se/22/debatt/debatter/2016-04-07-antligen-forbattras-villkoren-for-doktoranderna.html>

Ergo

Uppsala Student Union magazine Ergo mentioned that Anna had been elected as new SDF Chair in its issue 1, 2016.

DN (daily newspaper)

On 13 April, Anna published a response *Otidsenlig syn på unga forskares villkor* (Old-fashioned approach to conditions for young researchers) with Mats Ericson, SULF Chair and Emma Spak, Chair of the Swedish Young Doctors' Association (SYLF) in reply to a debate article entitled *Dramatisk minskning av nya doktorander i Sverige* (Dramatic decrease in young doctoral candidates in Sweden):

<http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/forskningsministern-vi-vill-ha-de-bast-lampade/>

UNT (Uppsala daily newspaper)

Behbood, Anna and Ulrica Lundström published a debate article *Doktorander i kläm* (Doctoral candidates caught in the middle) in the UNT hard copy newspaper on 26 June:

<http://www.unt.se/asikt/debatt/doktorander-i-klam-4278998.aspx>

The Local

Doctoral candidates caught in the middle was also translated to English and published in The Local on 16 August: <https://www.thelocal.se/20160816/foreign-doctoral-candidates-caught-in-the-middle-of-poor-legislation-sweden>

Upcoming publications

Susanna Karlsson at the Language Council of Sweden is writing a report about language policies at Swedish universities. She interviewed Megan February 29 about problems experienced by non-Swedish speaking doctoral candidates. The report has been delayed.

Reza gave an interview to Curie in October about culture clashes for foreign university employees when they arrive in Sweden. The interview has not yet been published.

Megan gave an interview to Curie in November about the use of Swedish and English in different situations at Swedish universities. The interview has not yet been published.

Megan gave an interview to Universitetsläraren in November about examination boards. The interview has not yet been published.

Benny, Anna och Megan wrote a debate article in Universitetsläraren about the need for two-year visas for foreign doctoral candidates in Sweden. The debate article has not yet been published.

Website

In the spring, SULF introduced a new website. SDF's section has been updated with the new Board members in Swedish and English:

<http://www.sulf.se/Om-SULF/Organisation/Professionssektioner/SDF/>

Videos

Abdelrahman made 3 videos of Robert Andersson, Chief Negotiator at SULF that were published on our Facebook page:

- Membership benefits
- Common doctoral candidate issues
- International doctoral candidates

Events

Megan attended the launch of the podcast entitled *PhD career stories* on 29 September. In the podcast, PhDs who have found successful careers outside academia are described and the aim is to inspire doctoral candidates.

Facebook

Between 18 November 2015 and 16 October 2016 page likes from members increased from 529 to 905. These posts have been written almost exclusively in English. 46% of Facebook members are women. 56% of members are between 25-34 years old. We have marketed 9 posts, 1 event and the page twice.

Social Media Strategy

Rikard worked during the year, with input from the rest of the board, with the design of a social media strategy for SDF, essentially linked to our Facebook page. After meeting with SULF Communications Director Jon Stenbeck on 27 September, we received many new ideas on how such a plan can be formulated. The planning will continue during the next year.

Saco Student Council

SDF has undertaken extensive collaboration with the Saco Student Council over a number of years. Since the other 22 union student sections focus on education at undergraduate and graduate level, it was important for SDF to participate in Saco Student Council activities to represent doctoral candidates.

The Membership Council

Vivi took part in Saco Student Council first membership council on 20 February. Pedagogics in

the classroom was the theme of the meeting. Anna took part in Saco Student Council membership meeting on 21 May. The theme was sustainability in multiple arenas. The revision of Saco Student Council policy programmes was the main item on the agenda. Megan participated in Saco Student Council third meeting on 17 September. The theme was the changing labour market. Also this time, the focus of the discussion was on the revision of their political programme.

Chair Network

Anna took part in Saco Student Council first chair network meeting on 13 March. Student sections discussed the pros and cons of going to Almedalen. The revision of Saco Student Council policy programmes was also discussed. Deputy Chair Reza participated in the second chair network meeting on 17 September. The focus of that day was to identify common areas of interest for future cooperation between the union student sections.

Other events

Anna attended the inauguration of the Saco network Young Graduates on 21 January. Saco has developed this network as a platform for those who are new to the labour market. The theme of the evening was the limitless working and concerned how technological developments have contributed to a more stressful work environment.

Anna and Megan participated in Saco's annual Higher Education Political Forum on 3 February, where the theme was Sustainable Development. SULF co-organised a seminar entitled "What are the consequences of Swedish research being mainly conducted by the children of academics?".

Anna had a meeting with Kristin Öster on 18 February to discuss collaborations during the year. The primary discussion was how the Saco Student Council and SDF could collaborate on the mental health of doctoral candidates and other students. In addition, a meeting was held with Kristin, Deputy Chair Malin Påhls and two representatives of Teknologgruppen on 21 May where a decision was taken to coordinate a workshop on the mental health of students and doctoral candidates. Rikard became involved in the work, and Skype meetings to plan this seminar were held on several occasions during the summer. The seminar was held on 16 September at the University of Lund, in connection with Saco's recruitment campaign in Skåne. The day was very successful and about 40-50 participants attended. Lecturers were Kristin Öster, Emma Nilsson (Student Representative Lund University), Alexandra Popovich (doctoral candidate representative at Lund University), Karin Fristedt (work environment researcher at Saco). The day ended with a panel discussion in which Charlie Eriksson (founder of AldrigEnsam [Never Alone]) also participated. The seminar was broadcast live via the SDF Facebook page.

Megan will participate in the Saco Student Council annual congress on 26-27 November at Bosön. This congress is the Saco Student Council's highest governing body.

Response to government proposals

Anna had a meeting with Kristin Öster on 21 April to discuss the report entitled *Trygghet och attraktivitet – en forskarkarriär för framtiden* (Security and attractiveness - a research career for the future) as concerns their response. On 15 June Anna gave feedback on the Saco Student Council referral response.

On 19 August Anna submitted a response to the Saco Student Council updated political programme. The proposals that the Saco Student Council chose to embrace in their new

programme were: 1) that all doctoral candidates must be employees and scholarships should not be allowed, and 2) to take advantage of international expertise by making it easier for doctoral candidates who want to stay in Sweden after graduation (granting residence permits).

SFS-DK

Anna and SFS-DK's Chair met on 15 January. Future cooperation was discussed. During the year, three debate articles have been jointly published. The SFS-DK AGM was held in the summer. New Chair of SFS-DK is Fredrik Lindeberg.

SULF

Local cooperation

As part of improved exchange of information with local SULF associations, SDF has chosen to create a list of about 30 local doctoral candidates or people working with doctoral candidate issues who are active in union work. Two e-mails were sent out in the spring. The response from the local associations has been positive.

On 27 September SDF held a meeting with the local SULF association in Sundsvall. The discussion revolved around doctoral candidate issues important at central and local levels. Ummis Jonsson, Chair of the local SULF association, gave examples of common problems faced by doctoral candidates at the university.

Central cooperation

Anna held a meeting with chief investigator Karin Åmossa, SULF Chair Mats Ericson and Jeanette Lindberg, member of the SULF Board, on 1 April. The aim was to coordinate SULF work with doctoral candidate issues in 2016.

Behbood contributed to SULF's response to government proposals regarding the report entitled *Security and attractiveness - a research career for the future* by attracting attention to the need for an improvement to foreign doctoral candidates' situation concerning residence permits and citizenship. SULF's response can be read in full here:
<http://www.sulf.se/remissvar/trygghet-och-attraaktivitet-en-forskarkarriar-framtiden-sou-201629/>

Anna participated in the SULF annual chairperson conference on 29 September in Stockholm. During the day SULF progress during the year was discussed, the SULF Day and the concept of collegiality. Karin Röding, State Secretary at the Ministry of Education and Research, presented the content of the new research bill.

During the year, SDF has undertaken several discussions with the SULF Board, working committees and Chief Negotiator Robert Andersson on how best to work concerning foreign doctoral candidate problems with residence permits and citizenship. Benny and Anna worked out a list of such problems. The working committee decided that we should primarily focus on the issue of residence permits for more than one year at a time. An invitation to discuss the length of residence permits was sent to the Swedish Migration Board on 23 September signed by Anna and Mats Ericson, Chair of SULF. Migration Board welcomes the initiative but want to determine the time of the meeting later because they have a high workload right now.

Education Committee

On 3 March, Anna was invited to attend the open hearing on education convened to discuss the

new bill on research and innovation. Karin Åmossa and Mats Ericson also attended on behalf of SULF.

The swedish higher education authority (UKÄ)

This year UKÄ analysed the survey material for the upcoming report Doktorandspegeln. Anna and the former SDF Chair Jeanette Lindberg gave suggestions for this analysis to project manager Anette Gröjer on 14 January. Publication has been delayed but is expected in mid-November 2016.

Anna participated, along with Karin Åmossa and Jeanette Lindberg, at a reference group meeting within a pilot evaluation of research education on 7 June. The meeting was about the new system for evaluation of doctoral studies. SULF representatives highlighted issues such as representativeness and anonymity for the doctoral candidates when being interviewed in connection with their programme's evaluation. A large part of the material that forms the basis for the evaluations is provided by the universities themselves. SULF also questioned whether this type of material gives an accurate picture of reality as experienced by doctoral candidates.

Finances

The Board requested and received the sum of SEK 119 000. The budget framework has been adhered to. Outcome is up to 12 Oct 2016 are preliminary as costs for the final Board meeting, the AGM and handover have not been included. Plus that the financial year is January-December.

Target area	Activities	Allocated	Utilised (to 12 Oct)
Membership activities	Contact Day	20 000:-	28 700.02:-
	AGM	15 000:-	?
	SULF Day	2 000:-	0
	Total	37 000:-	28 700.02:-
Recruitment	Support to local associations		2 945.00:-
	Recruitment material		1 320.00:-
	Total	0	4 265.00:-
Board	Board meetings		16 681.76
	Incl. residential		27 209.00
	Total	60 000:-	43 890.76
Advocacy and opinion-building	Saco Student Council	13 000:-	8 914.00:-
	SFS-DK	7 000:-	0
	Facebook marketing	2 000:-	903.91:-
	Total	22 000:-	9 817.91:-
	Total	119 000:-	86 673.69:-

Conclusion

The departing SDF board would like to thank the members for the trust and confidence placed in them.