

SDF Management Report 2017

The Board of the SULF doctoral candidate association (SDF) present the following Management Report for financial year 2017 (up to 2 Oct 2017).

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
Benny Borghei	Member	Linköping University
Per Boström	Member	Umeå University
Rikard Einegard	Member	Malmö University
Gui Hong Cao	Member	KTH

Introduction

The SULF operational focus for 2016-2018 states three priority areas: employment conditions and career paths, teaching and professional influence. Of these three areas, the SDF Board has chosen to focus, in the 2017 financial year, on employment conditions and career paths. The Board has worked with issues such as health during the course of doctorate studies, supervisor problems and foreign doctoral candidates' problems with Swedish authorities.

This Management Report will be presented based on the four SDF operational objectives and concludes with a financial overview as follows:

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

Membership activities

Doctoral Candidate Contact Day

On May 10, a national contact day for doctoral candidates interested in union work was organized, planned by Anna and Reza. In addition to all seven SDF board members, participants included Jeanette Lindberg from the Nominations Committee, Lina Carls Lindberg from SULF HQ and 16 doctoral candidates from Uppsala University, Karolinska Institutet, Blekinge Technical University, Stockholm University, KTH, Dalarna University, Umeå University, Gothenburg University, Halmstad University and Lund University. This year's theme was doctoral candidate health and the right to sick leave. Lecturers were SULF official Åsa Rybo Landelius, Anette Gröjer and Inger Wikström Öbrand of the Swedish Higher Education Authority and SDF Board member, Per Boström. The day ended with a social hour and exchange of experience. The participants later received an emailed summary of the day.

Newsletters to members

In 2017, newsletters were sent out in March (Benny), June (Megan), August (Anna) and October (Anna) to all SDF members with registered email addresses. The letters were written in English and included current information from SDF and reminders of upcoming activities.

SULF day

This year's SULF Day was held on 5 October. SDF held a competition on its Facebook page where members were asked to upload a photo of a shelfie from their workplace.

AGM

The SDF AGM will be held on 10 November. In addition to SDF officials, representatives of the Nominations Committee, the Board Auditor and the SFS-DK Chair have been invited. Between the Board meeting and the AGM, union official Friedrich Heger will give a lecture on what doctoral candidates should keep in mind as regards their pensions.

Facebook

All membership activities have been mentioned on the SDF Facebook page. Prior to the contact day, a marketing event was created and the competition launched before the SULF Day was also marketed through the same channel.

Recruitment

Local recruitment

In 2017, SULF and SDF planned a local recruitment campaign with doctoral candidates as its target group. Anna, Megan and Rikard had a meeting with SULF's recruitment group on 20 February which led to a sketch of a more concrete plan, budget and activities for the SULF recruitment project 2017. During the autumn term, the plan included visiting three universities (Linköping University, Karolinska Institutet and Gothenburg University), where it is assessed that there is great potential for recruiting doctoral candidates. No dates for these visits had yet been decided before the AGM.

Anna visited Gävle University on 7 April and held a lecture for doctoral candidates on how SULF works with their issues at national level. The local association then gave a briefing on how they assist doctoral candidates at local level.

Megan organized two lunch lectures for doctoral candidates in connection with the SDF Board meeting in Dalarna. On 7 September, the SDF Board had lunch with doctoral students at Campus Borlänge and on 8 September at Campus Falun.

SULF activities for doctoral candidates

During the year SDF has cooperated with the SULF Communications Department with the aim of developing SULF activities for doctoral candidates regarding recruitment and communications. SDF assisted with comments and feedback in the process of developing new recruitment materials for doctoral candidates. These materials were completed in August.

Benefits

Anna, Megan and Rikard discussed with the SULF Recruitment Group on 20 February concerning how SULF can clarify existing benefits for doctoral candidates and propose new benefits. No changes regarding benefits had been introduced up to the date of the SDF AGM.

Information material

In 2017, Reza continued the work of developing a starter kit of useful information for newly-registered doctoral candidates with foreign backgrounds, with the intention of making this available on the SULF website. Union official Åsa Rybo Landelius has been given the task of producing texts to provide the information the SDF Board wishes the document to contain.

The work of the Nominations Committee

In 2017, the Nominations Committee has consisted of Jeanette Lindberg (Gothenburg University) and Jenny Sullivan Hellgren (Umeå University). Jeanette Lindberg, the

Committee Convener, was sent on a one-day course on nominations work on 10 May. Jeanette also attended the SDF Contact Day for local doctoral candidates. The Nominations Committee has, on behalf of the SDF Board, prepared a document containing guidelines for future Nominations Committees to be sent to representatives before the SDF AGM.

Language

During the year, SDF has encouraged SULF to provide information and educational material in English on the occasions when material in Swedish only was available. The SDF objective during the year has been to communicate all its information in English.

Facebook

All recruitment activities have been mentioned on the SDF facebook page. Two posts were marketed: one on how to contact the Nominations Committee and one on the benefits to doctoral candidates of becoming a member of SULF.

Board operations

Board meetings and training of Board members

During the fiscal year, SDF held five board meetings as well as one training day for its two new members in December 2016. A brief description of the meetings is presented below.

1. 21 February 2017: The first board meeting was held in Stockholm and all seven members attended. The Board spent the morning getting to know other. There was also a meeting with SULF Communications Manager Jon Stenbeck about future recruitment materials.

2. 29 March 2017: The second board meeting was held in Saco's premises in Lund and six of seven members attended. President of Saco-S in Lund, Lars-Åke Lööv, describe Saco operations at Lund University. SULF union official Erika Söderstjerna and former SULF Lund Chair Johan Dietsch briefed the Board about SULF operations in Lund and the situation for doctoral candidates there. There was also a Skype meeting with researchers from the SULF Research Section.

3. 11 May 2017: The third meeting was held the day after the Contact Day in Stockholm and six of seven members attended. The planned training activity was cancelled.

4. 7-8 September: The fourth Board meeting was held in Borlänge and Falun and five of seven members participated. The Board agreed to meet doctoral candidates at both campus areas, held a Skype meeting with SULF/Saco-S Chair Christina Romlid and held a meeting with a programme director for a future research education area. The planned training activity was cancelled.

5. 10 November. The fifth and final Board meeting will be held in Stockholm in connection with the AGM.

Leave of absence for union assignments

According to its Plan of Operations, the SDF Board will work to clarify the rules governing leave of absence to work with a union assignment at central level in SDF by reviewing the SULF information on leave for national elected positions. Anna has compiled existing rules and guidelines for local and central appointments in a document that will be sent, in Swedish and English, to local SULF boards.

Anna contacted SUHF regarding their 2007 recommendations on leave to take up deputy chair and chair positions and stated that these may need to be updated to become more current and include recommendations concerning the level at which universities would be responsible for costs. SUHF made the assessment that the recommendation would not be updated.

Handover to the 2018 Board

The Board plans to make a brief evaluation of Board operations in 2017 in connection with the final Board meeting to see what can be improved prior to the handover to the new Board. Anna updated the internal document to be handed over to the next Chair on the basis of her two-year experience in the position. The 2017 Board members who wish to and have time will also be invited to a meeting with the 2018 Board.

Facebook

The Board has written summaries on Facebook after its Board meetings. No posts linked to the Board's work have been marketed.

Advocacy and opinion building

Articles and interviews

Curie

- Reza gave an interview to Curie about culture clashes for foreign university employees in connection with their arrival in Sweden. "The problems facing foreign doctoral candidates" was published online on 11 January:
<http://www.tidningencurie.se/nyheter/2017/01/11/problemen-som-moter-utlandskadoktorander/>
- Megan gave an interview to Curie about the importance of discussing language issues during doctoral studies. "Give language issues more space in doctoral studies" was published online on 11 January:
<http://www.tidningencurie.se/nyheter/2017/01/11/ge-sprakfragor-mer-plats-i-forskarutbildningen/>

SULF website

- Anna commented on her meeting with the Swedish Migration Agency on 7 February. "Constructive dialogue with the Swedish Migration Agency brings hope for better doctoral terms." Published 9 February:
<https://sulf.se/nyhet/dialog-med-migrationsverket-ger-forhoppningar-om-bättre-doktorandvillkor/>
- Anna commented on the abolition of the educational grant. "Education grant abolished" was published on 13 April:
<https://sulf.se/nyhet/utbildningsbidrag-avskaffas/>
- Anna was interviewed as to why you should join the union on 24 August which was published with the title "Interview with doctoral candidate Anna Ilar: Why should a doctoral candidate become a member of SULF and SDF."
<https://sulf.se/doktorand/#intervju-med-doktorandordforande-anna-ilar-varfor-ska-en-doktorand-bli-medlem-i-sulf-och-sdf>

Sveriges radio

- Anna was interviewed on Swedish radio where she commented on the results of the report that stated that a large proportion of doctoral candidates believed that their results were used without being credited to them. The interview was conducted and published on 8 December 2016 in both Swedish and English ("Doctoral candidates say supervisors take credit for their work"):

The Local

- Benny and Anna were interviewed for The Local regarding the Migration Agency's change of practice on two-year residence permits for doctoral candidates. The interview was published on 19 January 2017 under the title "Campaigners hail change in rules for foreign postgrads in Sweden"
<http://www.thelocal.se/20170119/campaigners-hail-change-in-rules-for-foreign-postgrads-in-sweden>

Times Higher Education

- Anna was interviewed for Times Higher Education on employment relationships for doctoral candidates in Sweden. "PhD students: Time to make them employees?", 18 May, <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/phd-students-time-to-make-them-university-employees>

TT

- Anna was interviewed for TT on 7 July about the new law amendment, which means that assistant lecturers will be able to qualify for a permanent employment as a lecturer. "Young scientists will have an easier path" was published in at least 30 daily and evening newspapers:

Aftonbladet	Hallandsposten	Smålandsposten
Barometern	HelaGotland	Strömstads Tidning
Blekinge Läns Tidning	Helsingborgs Dagblad	Svenska Dagbladet
Bohusläningen	Kristianstadsbladet	Sydsvenskan
Borås Tidning	Motala & Vadstena Tidning	Sydöstran
Dagens Nyheter	Norrbottens-Kuriren	Trelleborgs Allehanda
Enköpings-posten	Norrköpings Tidningar	Västerviks-Tidningen
Folkbladet	Norrländska Socialdemokraten	Ystads Allehanda
Göteborgs-Posten	Nya Lidköpings-Tidningen	Östgöta Correspondenten
Hallands Nyheter	Piteå Tidningen	Östra Småland Nyheterna

Universitetsläraren

- Benny, Megan and Anna published a debate article in number 7, 2016, "Foreign academics not welcome in Sweden?" Also published online on 21 November 2016: <https://universitetslararen.se/2016/11/21/foreign-academics-not-welcome-in-sweden/>
- Anna participated in "Hello there" (number 8, 2016), where she described the work of SDF and the most common reasons why doctoral candidates contact SDF.
- Megan participated in "3 opinions" in number 8, 2016, where she discussed the role of the grading board.
- Anna was interviewed on the results in the Doctoral Language Mirror Report and this was published online under the heading "One in four doctoral candidates cheated of their research results" 8 December 2016:

<https://universitetslararen.se/2016/12/08/var-fjarde-doktorand-snuvad-pa-sina-forskningsresultat/>

- Anna was interviewed about the Swedish Migration Agency change of practice regarding two-year residence permits for foreign doctoral candidates. "Longer residence permit for foreign doctoral candidates" was published on 20 January 2017: <https://universitetslararen.se/2017/01/20/langre-uppehallstillstand-underlattar-for-doktorander/>
- Reza wrote a chronicle entitled "Cultural Contrasts affect the teacher-student relationship" published in number 2, 2017 and online on March 20: <https://universitetslararen.se/2017/03/20/cultural-contrasts-affect-the-teacher-student-relationship/?hilite=%22Reza%22%2C%22Salim%22>
- Benny was interviewed about foreign researchers' problems with the Swedish Migration Agency. The article was entitled "Postdoc thrown out of Sweden. Wanted to apply for jobs." Was published on 27 April: <https://universitetslararen.se/2017/04/27/postdok-kastas-ut-ur-sverige-ville-soka-jobb/>
- Benny was interviewed in an article entitled: "Globalization Requires Efficient Authorities", published on 27 April 2017: <https://universitetslararen.se/2017/04/27/globalization-privacy-authorities/?hilite=%22globalization%22%2C%22kräver%22>
- Anna was interviewed about new regulations at the Migration Agency, which will be positive for sandwich doctoral candidates. In issue 3, 2017.
- Anna participated in "Hello there" (number 5, 2017), where she described the days she spent in Almedalen and why she chose to become involved in union work.
- Reza wrote a chronicle entitled "In a non-hierarchical society far, far away from home", published in number 5, 2017 and online on September 25: <https://universitetslararen.se/2017/09/25/in-a-non-hierarchical-society-far-far-away-from-home%E2%80%86/?hilite=%22reza%22%2C%22salim%22>
- Per was interviewed in the Universitetsläraren about his compilation of the different rules and guidelines that apply at higher education institutions when doctoral candidates are admitted to hospital. The article will be published in number 6 and online October 4: <https://universitetslararen.se/2017/10/04/sjuka-doktoranders-rattigheter-varierar-stort/>
- Upcoming: Anna wrote a chronicle of what she had gained from her four years as an elected representative on the SDF Board. The chronicle is entitled "Through the influence work in the union I also changed myself" and will be published in number 6 and online in October.
- Upcoming: After a tip from Anna and Jeanette Lindberg, Universitetsläraren chose to publish in number 6 several articles on the subject of shadow doctoral candidates. Anna is interviewed about what she believes SULF and other actors can do to prevent shadow doctorates. The tip also led to the fact that the Higher Education Authority taking contact with Universitetsläraren and then choosing to review Karolinska Institutet's use of research trainees.

University websites

- Megan was interviewed about her commitment to language issues in SDF, published on their website on 14 February: <http://www.du.se/sv/Om-Hogskolan/Aktuellt/Nyheter/Megan-Case-vill-oka-sprakkunskaperna-i-forskarvarlden/>

- Per discussed sick leave and career opportunities in the Umeå University Newspaper Aktum. On 16 March, "Panel discussion: Three Shades of Doctoral Life" was published:
<http://aktum.umu.se/tre-nyanser-av-doktorandliv/>

University World News

- Benny and Anna were interviewed by University World News on the abolition of educational grants and the situation for foreign doctoral candidates in Sweden. "Employment status given to nearly all PhD students" was published on 21 April:
<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=201704201449161>
- Benny was interviewed by University World News about SULF's work with doctoral candidates who are experiencing various problems with the Swedish Migration Agency. "Foreign PhD candidates in battle against bureaucracy ", 26 May:
<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20170526134448732#.WSrvVcSL5c.email>

Citizenship, residence permits and population register

According to its 2017 Plan of Operations, the SDF Board of Directors was assigned to continue the work of improving foreign doctoral candidates' opportunities to gain citizenship, residence permits and registration. Benny and Anna highlighted these issues in many articles during the year and have also been interviewed about SULF's successes in this field. The results of SULF and SDF work on these issues in 2017 are summarised below.

Following intense advocacy from SULF and SDF, the Swedish Migration Agency chose to allow two-year residence permits for foreign doctoral candidates on 17 January. This happened only days before SULF and SDF's agreed meeting with the Agency. The meeting of 7 February consisted of Anna and Benny representing SDF, the SULF Chair Mats Ericsson, SULF's negotiator Robert Andersson and three representatives of the Swedish Migration Agency. During the meeting, other issues related to residence permits, citizenship and public registration were discussed.

When considering citizenship applications, the Migration Agency has continued to refuse citizenship to doctoral candidates if they, in previous applications for residence permits, stated that they intended to leave Sweden after their studies. We attempted to prevent this problem from occurring for future doctoral candidates by proposing that the Migration Agency remove or change the wording of this question in its forms for temporary residence permits. Anna had contacted the Migration Agency regarding the forms where they put the question "When are you planning to leave Sweden?" And gave feedback on how the questions in the forms could be reworked. The Swedish Migration Agency created two new forms for doctoral candidates; one for first-time application and one for extension of residence permit. Questions about future plans have been reformulated, but the question "When are you planning to leave Sweden?" remains. However, the Migration Agency informed Anna that doctoral students do not have to fill in that particular information.

Many foreign doctoral candidates and their family members have experienced considerable difficulties in registering and obtaining personal registration numbers at the Swedish Tax Agency because they have held a residence permit for less than one year. This has caused extensive problems and is something that SDF has taken up in several debate articles. The Tax Agency has continued to claim that at least a one-year residence permit is required to issue personal registration numbers, despite many judgments against them in the Administrative Court and the Administrative Court of Appeal in which SULF played an important role. However, the Supreme Administrative Court ruled on 17 May 2017 that it is not necessary to have a residence permit for at least one year in order to be registered in the population register, which is in favour of foreign doctoral candidates in Sweden. There was also a new law passed on 1 August which meant that postgraduate students who are waiting for a residence permit will not lose their residence-based benefits.

Anna met with three members in the Parliamentary Committee on Education to discuss the prospects for foreign doctoral students to study in Sweden and their opportunities to stay in Sweden after they graduate. On 12 October she met Thomas Strand (SocDem) and Betty Malmberg (Mod) and on 18 October Fredrik Christensson (Center) in the Swedish Parliament.

Almedalen

Anna participated in the Almedial Week together with representatives of SULF. SULF and SDF organized a well-attended seminar with the title "Credit where credit is due –doctoral candidates' path to independence". Panel participants were Anna, Anette Gröjer from the Higher Education Authority and Sven Stafström, Director General of the Swedish Research Council,

The seminar was also broadcast live on the website and is available on SULF's YouTube channel. In addition to the seminar, Anna attended several other seminars and participated in social events in connection with education or research policy. In order to be visible in Almedalen, Anna printed up sweaters with SULF and SDF logos.

Online visibility

In the spring, SULF set up a new website. The SDF page has been updated with new Board presentations in Swedish and English:

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

More governing documents have now been uploaded onto the SDF website and it also contains SDF's latest interviews and debate articles in the media.

We have also stated to the SULF communication office that SULF and SDF should be listed higher when searching for unions for doctoral candidates online.

Videos

In the winter of 2016, SDF purchased material for video recording by mobile phone in the form of tripod and microphone. Un-edited video material is available from a board meeting and from the Contact Day.

Facebook

Most SDF interviews, chronicles and debate articles have been mentioned on the SDF facebook page. Three posts linked to opinion and advocacy were marketed: sick leave and prolongation, a call for foreign doctoral students with problems with the Social Insurance Agency and a post in connection with the change of practice concerning two-year residence permits.

Between 18 November 2016 and 1 October 2017, SDF page likes increased from 917 members to 1266. Entries have been written in English. 43% of Facebook members are women, 55% are between 25-34 years old. Four posts have been marketed as well as one event and the page twice.

Social media strategy

During the year, Rikard undertook primary responsibility for developing a social media strategy to determine how SDF works with social media mainly linked to the SDF Facebook page. A draft of the strategy has been issued in connection with the SDF AGM.

Sick leave and prolongation

Per has, with the help of Rikard, mapped the manner in which sick leave and prolongation regulations are implemented and applied by various universities in Sweden. Doctoral candidates have also been asked in the form of e-mail and facebook posts, to what extent stipulated rules are followed in reality. This summary was presented at the SDF Contact Day as well as in an article in Universitetsläraren which has not yet been published.

Saco Student Council

During the year, SDF has participated in several Saco Student Council activities. Since the other 22 trade union student sections focus on education at the undergraduate and second level, it has been important for SDF to participate in the Saco Student Council activities and to be the voice of the doctoral candidates.

Membership Council

Three membership councils have been held in 2017. Their purpose is to act as an information channel, but also as a forum for skills development in matters relating to the Saco Student Council. Megan participated in the first membership council on 25 February. Anna and Megan participated in the third membership council on 6 September. No Board members participated in the second membership council.

Network of Chairs

Three chair network meetings have been held in 2017. These are for the chairs and deputy chairs of the student sections. Anna participated in the first on 26 March and the third meeting on 16 September. Reza participated in the second meeting on 13 May.

Other events

Anna met Saco Student Council Deputy Chair Carl Hellström on 20 February and 2 October to discuss SDF activities in 2017.

Reza attended Saco Student Council leadership training 21-25 August.

Megan plans to attend the Saco Student Council Congress on 9-10 December.

SFS-DK

Benny and SFS-DK Chair Fredrik Lindeberg met during a meeting in February and discussed their boards' activities. Anna invited the newly-elected Chair Paul Borenberg to the SDF AGM.

SULF

Local cooperation

In 2017, SDF has held meetings or discussions with representatives of three local SULF and/ or Saco boards, in Lund, Gävle and Dalarna. These meetings have given a picture of the problems faced by doctoral candidates at local level, and SDF has been able to provide inspiration and suggestions for solutions.

Once this year, the SDF list of people locally involved in doctoral candidate issues has been utilised in order to obtain information on guidelines for sick leave and prolongation.

Central cooperation

During the year, SDF has held talks with SULF's central Board and negotiator Robert Andersson on how to work with foreign students' problems with residence permits and citizenship.

SDF has collaborated with SULF's recruitment team to develop new recruitment materials for doctoral candidates and to take up issues on benefits for members and doctoral candidates who have been elected to union positions.

Anna attended SULF's Annual Chairs' Conference on 27 September in Stockholm. During the day there was a discussion as to whether SULF should retain its national sections in their current form or whether the sections should be wound up, strengthened, added to or replaced. In these discussions, SDF was taken up as a positive example of a national section that works well.

SDF Vision Document

The SDF has a Vision Document that is updated every three years. The current document is for 2015-2017. Anna composed a draft based on the three SULF operational focus areas 2016-2018, which Per helped to develop.

The Board has discussed with the SULF organizational consultant Maria Mattiasson on how the SDF Vision Document should relate to SULF's vision documents and other governing

documents in the organization. It is proposed that the SDF Vision Document should be a document also supported by SULF. Since a SULF vision document had been introduced since 2015, the SDF document has now been given the title Opinion Document. The Opinion Document extends over one year instead of three in order to allow the new board to renew the document together with the SULF Secretariat and Central Union Board prior to the next congress period.

Finances

The Board requested the sum of SEK 153 500 and was awarded SEK 130 000. We have stayed within the financial framework we received however outcome is up to 2 Oct 2017 only and the costs of the last two Board meetings, the AGM and handover have not been included. Also the financial year stretches from January-December.

Goal	Activity	Requested	Received	Used (till Sep 21)
Membership activities	Newsletter	0	0	0
	Contact Day	28 000	23 713	16 044,94
	AGM	15 000	12 704	?
	SULF Day	2 000	1 694	0
	Facebook	500	423	100
	Total: 45 500		Total: 38 534	Total: 16 144,94
Recruitment	Local recruiting	6 000	5 081	1 624,25
	SULF activities for doctoral candidates	2 000	1 694	0
	Benefits	2 000	1 694	0
	Information material	5 000	4 235	0
	Nominations Committee	5 000	4 235	6 214,5
	Language	0	0	0
	Facebook	1 000	847	?
	Total: 21 000		Total: 17 785	Total: 7 838,75
Board activities	Handover	0	0	?
	Board meetings	60 000	50 814	62 090,2
	Board training	8 000	6 775	0
	Leave for union positions	0	0	0
	Facebook	500	423	0
	Total: 68 500		Total: 58 013	Total: 62 090,2
Advocacy and opinion building	Written materials	0	0	0
	Saco Stud. Council	11 000	9 316	3 741
	SFS-DK	5 000	4 235	0
	Almedalen	-	-	626,4
	Online visibility	0	0	0
	Social media strategy	0	0	0
	Video recording	1 500	1 270	0
	Citizenship, residence permit and registration	0	0	0
	Facebook	1 000	847	361
Total: 18 500		Total: 15 668	Total: 4 728,22	
		Total: 153 500	Total: 130 000	Total: 90 802,11

Conclusion

The departing Board would hereby like to thank the membership for their confidence during their period of service.