

Minutes of DION board meeting

Time: Monday 3rd December 2012, 2 pm-5.30 pm

Place: Meeting room 245 Sentralbygg II

Present: Lise Lyngsnes Randeberg, Magnus Steigedal, Julien S.Bourrelle, Kirsti Jensen, Ahmet Tezel, Torbjørn Pedersen and Phillip Spenhoff (via Skype), Geoffrey (guest).

Minutes secretary: Cecilie Baar

Item 31/12 NTNU board meeting Thursday 6th December

Background briefing from Magnus followed by discussion. Board document are available at: http://www.ntnu.no/styret/saker_prot/06.12.12web/Sakskart%206.12.htm .

S-sak 52/12 Strategy and budget 2013 and long term budget 2013-2016.

Indicators for research should also include NFR allocation. Integration of PhD candidates, in particular international candidates, should be included as an indicator or as a goal for leadership.

The documents indicate that the wage levels (“lønnssats”) for all PhD candidates will be regulated to a 2013 level, independent of start date. However, there is a need for clarification of whether this will affect the overall project funds, i.e. will this relate to the wage level only or to the total wage and project cost for each candidate. The current situation where the money received by the faculties for each PhD position is fixed to the level when the position is taken up, and not adjusted over the years, led some projects to run out of money before their end date. This is, among other things, due to the fact that the PhD candidate salary is adjusted every year, but not the financing meant to pay for that adjustment.

There is also raised a question whether this is supposed to be a one-off incidence in 2013, or a start of a new policy. Magnus will inquire clarification. DION will support the understanding of a total increase and a new policy for years to come.

S-sak 56/12 Housing foundation NTNU/SINTEF

DION has no substantial comments to the change in statute.

Assignment of housing depends on department affiliation due to the number of PhDs associated to that specific department, which is unfortunate.

S-sak 54/12 Rector's wages

Documents will be distributed Wednesday night/Thursday morning

S-sak 55/12 Employment of Rector at NTNU

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S-sak 56/12 Employment of prorectors and deans

The salary is not explicitly expressed in the announcements. This is surprising, and not in line with the way Norwegian governmental positions are usually and should be announced. The

issue whether or not the announcements of the positions should indicate a wage interval, has been discussed in a union meeting.

Tekna commented on this issue. They would like the wage to be adjusted to the competencies and academic qualifications of applicants, and not merely based on the position.

S-sak 57/12 Temporary employees at NTNU

DION consider the documents regarding temporary employees considerably improved from the Dean's meeting earlier this year. They now include information how the faculties follow through to reduce unnecessary temporary employment. The documents support people in temporary positions that are performing jobs that should be done by permanent position holders. They now encourage moving these employees onto permanent positions.

DION appreciates the progress, but recognizes that there is room for improvement. There is a need for a description of how such improvements will be ensured. There is also a difference between permanent positions that are externally or internally funded.

DION raise question about the description of the scope of career planning, since no PhDs have to our knowledge had any experience with career planning at the institution.

S-sak 58/12 NTNU Technology Transfer AS - cooperation agreement 2013-2017

DION has no substantial comments.

S-sak 59/12 Student admission 2013/2014

DION questions the opportunity for international students to apply to Norwegian for Foreigners courses due to application deadlines, and therefore whether the numbers for admission ratio are correct.

DION questions why the importance of good knowledge of the English language is not more pressured. Also, the document is unclear on whether the increase of international students is to take place at the bachelor or master level.

S-sak 60/12 Appointment of new members for "Skikkethetsnemnda"

DION has no substantial comments.

Item 32/12 Discussion of cases submitted to DION

(a) PhD salary increase

Due to central negotiations about the wage level at start for a PhD candidate, new candidates are paid more than a number of other candidates with higher seniority. DION agrees in raising the entry level of PhD candidates rather than raising the wage level of all candidates, although recognizes that this has the side-effect of not rewarding seniority during the course of the PhD

Background: PhD candidates employed after 1st May 2012 receive salary on scale 50. This is an increase of two levels which was not retroactively given to PhD candidates currently employed. This leads to the situation where PhD candidates employed since one or two years are paid less than new candidates, respectively at level 48 and 49. Candidates in their third year get the same salary as new candidates.

DIONs OPINION

There have been discussions in the media on this case. See e.g.

<http://www.universitetsavisa.no/politikk/article15569.ece>

<http://www.universitetsavisa.no/politikk/article15556.ece>

Individual PhD Candidates find the situation unacceptable, their point is that employees should be paid based on their seniority for the same position. They claim that this is a systematic unfair situation each time there is a salary increase for PhDs.

Another way to see the situation is to understand that each candidate receives an offer which clearly stated their salary during the whole period of employment. This is a contract between the candidate and the university (or the institution financing the studies) which both parties agreed upon. The fact that other candidates be paid more or less does not influence this contract.

Furthermore, increasing the salary only for new PhD candidates is much cheaper for the government and thus it is easier to argue for such increase. The long term effect is that all ph.ds are paid more globally. PhD candidates enjoyed one of the highest increases in salary since this system was put in place more than 10 years ago.

(b) Foreign PhD candidate –learning Norwegian at NTNU

DION's position is that a basic level of Norwegian skills is necessary for all PhDs, and that all candidates should have the possibility to take Norwegian courses. DIONs also hope that NTNU, the faculties, institutes and individual supervisors not only allow PhDs to take up Norwegian courses, but actually encourage them to do so. Learning Norwegian is an integral part of integrating within the Norwegian society and should be strongly supported in order to ensure PhD candidates graduating from NTNU are relevant for the Norwegian labor market. If graduates decide not to work in Norway, it is important for Norway and NTNU that they keep in touch with the nation and the university.

Norwegian courses are not always prioritized by the candidates due to the need to improve English skills. However, DION emphasizes that sufficient English skills should be a prerequisite for starting the **PhD**.

(c) Force termination of PhD contract

The matter brought to DIONs attention by e-mail seems to have been resolved (for now). DION wants to emphasize the importance of union membership, in particular to non-Norwegian candidates.

(d) NTNUI

In "idrettsaken" it has been suggested to separate the fees for using the sport facilities and for membership of NTNUI. This may affect both the price and training offers. Although a bit outside the scope of DION, we recognize that NTNUI is an important resource for PhD candidates as well. As NTNU is subsidizing SiT through the free station principle, DION finds it reasonable that the university's sports organization reaps some benefits from this.

Item 33/12 Letter of intent STi/DION

Letter of intent is in the drop box for the members to read.

Item 34/12 Julebord 2012

The members are encouraged to send an e-mail to Inger about the choice of menu as soon as possible.

Item 35/12 A.o.b.

Kirsti Jensen is appointed as representative for DION to the central election committee.

Meeting ended: 5.30 pm

Julien S. Bourrelle
President DION

Cecilie Baar
Minutes Secretary