

## DION board meeting – minutes

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<b>Time</b>	09:00 – 12:30. 10 June 2014
<b>Place</b>	Studentdemokratiet, Stripa, Sentralbygget, Gløshaugen.
<b>Present</b>	Clara Good, Øyvind Storesund Hetland, Torbjørn Pedersen (notes), Marthe Emilie Melandsø Buan, Magnus Steigedal, Haakon Utby, Merethe Falck,
<b>Absent</b>	Ahmet Tezel, Evert Bouman, Kristoffer Lund Langlie, Philipp Spenhoff, Fernanda Acre Pacheco, Morten Stornes

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**Note:** Both the old and new board was invited to this meeting as part of process of knowledge transfer between the boards. The new NTNU board representatives were also invited, but could not come.

### 1 NTNU Board cases

The following board cases for NTNU board meeting were discussed (see agenda [http://www.ntnu.no/styret/saker\\_prot/12.06.14web/Sakskart%2012.06.htm](http://www.ntnu.no/styret/saker_prot/12.06.14web/Sakskart%2012.06.htm))

- i) **Appeals (S-sak 15/14 and S-sak 16/14):** It is not common for the NTNU board to overrule lower instances in appeal cases. However, they can do this if there is good enough reason.
- ii) **Quality report/kvalitetsmelding (S-sak 17/14):** The quality in the PhD education is now included in the quality report on education. There were discussions about how the quality in the PhD education is best evaluated. How can we track how and why students and PhDs quit (even tracking the students who change discipline within NTNU has been difficult)? Should this be a task for the local administrations, and which issues will this raise regarding privacy? In addition, PhD subjects are only one small part of the PhD education. Can we measure the quality of supervision, lab equipment etc? A new survey on internal communication will try to chart how and where we have problems with communication at NTNU. The survey targets PhDs, students, and regular employees.
- iii) **Education program (S-sak 18/14):** There has been discussions on how the number of subjects and study programmes at NTNU should be developed. KD has a goal of minimum 20 students per program. Following this would influence many smaller programs, which may not be desirable. NTNU will first only look at programs with less than 10 students. Many, both students and professors, are negative to the current process. It has been remarked that evaluating at the programs is not the same as cutting the programs. The NT faculties have made calculations that show that a program needs 28 students before it is economically viable. Some faculties are now starting umbrella

programs, where smaller studies are gathered. This raises questions regarding how these can be started, funded, and who has to approve the studies. In some cases the small programs has raised issues regarding the freedom to take a master within a slightly different field. This field will not get money for the student, and are not willing to appoint supervisors. Continuity in programs, with strong local environments, traditions, and fraternities can make more students actually finish. The current economic model may have been one of the drivers for new programs of smaller sizes.

- iv) **Skikkhetsnemda (S-sak 19/14):** Skikkethetsnemnda can determine if students are unfit to pursue a particular field of study. However, if a student has been guided out of a study program at NTNU, the student is still free to start somewhere else. This does likely not happen that many times. However, it could be considered that the student will also be blocked from taking the education somewhere else. Very few cases are treated at NTNU, and more should probably be reported.
- v) **Committee for research ethics (O-sak 14/14):** A local committee will be established at NTNU. The committee is modelled after a similar committee at UiO. From the documents it is not too clear which authority and place such a committee will have. It will do some examinations and give a statement, but it is not clear how much impact this statement will have. It will be the employers' tasks to make a decision in the case.
- vi) **Future structure of the education sector in Norway (O-sak 15/14):** KD wants feedback from NTNU. We need to evaluate how we work with other institutions in the region. NTNU has already started the work at faculty level. They are evaluating the possible synergy effects of cooperation on regional and national level. NTNU will also consider the gains and pitfalls of combining with university colleges where there are large joint interests. It can be large synergy effects within some areas to create joint programs, such as between nurses and other medical studies.

## 2 Iranian PhD candidates

The current draft of the DION/SiN statement should be sent to a short review at NIRS. After that there should only be another minor revision before it is published.

## 3 Administrative support

DION will receive new administrative support officer from 1 August. Andreas Noteng will be employed in a 20 % position.

### 3.1 Division of board roles

The work in the DION board is organized in roles to simplify the work and divide it between board members. The following roles were assigned at the meeting:

**President:** Clara (elected at AGM)

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Keep up to date on board documents and dean meetings, administer DION board meetings, official representation tasks. Will also handle first contact with PhDs, register the case, and delegate it to the correct person in the board.

**Vice president:** Øyvind

Description: Will also keep up to dates on political issues, and fill in for the president at need.

**Information manager (formerly Communications officer):** Fernanda

Responsible for making sure that the case registry is up to date, and easily accessible. Should update and add information to the FAQ. Responsible for updating the information material for DION.

**Event manager:** Marthe Emilie

Responsible for event management, delegating tasks surrounding events, getting presenters, and booking locations. Responsible for the event plan and budget. Note: It should also be possible to also use our administrative support to help organize events.

**Technology manager:** Philipp

Description: manage web sites, social media, e-mail lists, and Innsida. Responsible for making sure that updated information, and event information is available online.

**SiN contact:** Morten

Description: keeping DION updated on SiN events (and vice versa)

The work with responding to questions from PhD candidates and others, which is quite time consuming, was discussed. Until now, this has been the responsibility of the Communication officer. It involves reading regulations and other documents, some of which are available only in Norwegian. The suggested solution for this work is that each board member will then have their area of specialization. The president will be the first point of contact for requests sent to DION, e.g. requests from PhD candidates in need of assistance, or requests from NTNU administration, and forward the questions to the responsible board member. Five categories were discussed (based on the topics of previous requests):

1. Duty work
2. Funding
3. Conflicts (especially supervisor conflicts)
4. Health
5. IPR

Since all board members were not present at the meeting, the division/description of board roles will be confirmed or and possible adjusted at the next board meeting.

## 3.2 Meeting with Tekna

When PhDs transitioned from students to employees, we at the same time went from SiT (the student services) to bedriftshelsetjenesten. However, the PhDs live in a different reality than the regular employees and have different needs. These are not fulfilled through only bedriftshelsetjenesten. Tekna (and DION) wants to chart why PhD candidates are quitting their PhDs. No-one seems to know, and this is not really good enough. International surveys show a high degree of mental health problems among PhDs, and we do not think that NTNU can prove that the same is not true here. There is also a problem that the existing possibilities for support are not communicated to the PhDs.

The employee appraisal interview (medarbeidsamtalen) is the man safety valve for PhDs with issues at his working place, and is critical for the work environment. The supervisor might be the main topic in such conversations, but this will be hard if this is the person who performs the interview. The procedure for performing the interviews is also far from professional (or even adequate) at some departments.

## 3.3 Etichs workshop

DION has meet with Simon Lie (Rectors staff for innovation) about case descriptions for the upcoming ethics workshop at the Department leader meeting. The main focus for the cases is ethical dilemmas between leaders and doctoral candidates. DION was indicated that the time spent on this topic would be 1 hour and 20 minutes. At the next meeting with the working group this was corrected to 25 minutes. DION has prepared 6 cases for the so-called interval training in ethics. Øyvind will represent DION at the meeting and will bring the poster.

## 3.4 Meeting in the Central Research Committee

Clara participated in the meeting in the Central Research Committee (Forskningsutvalget) on June 6. DION was invited to comment on the planned revision of the PhD handbook.

**PhD-handbook:** DION will contribute in the revision of the PhD handbook. We must supply a name within August. Norwegian skills are preferable. NTNU will also update the PhD websites at the same time. The work is of some magnitude, and there will be a coordinator leading the project (30 % position).

**Duty work:** Financial issues means that many departments cannot afford a year of duty work, however this is the current NTNU (and national) norm. The duty work is most often paid by the department. Some people also think that duty work leads to too much split focus, however many disagree and means that the final year is important for the quality of the thesis. The meeting did not come to a final conclusion. DION thinks that the 4<sup>th</sup> year is important, and that one learns a lot from having the duty work. Physics have started to experiment with 3.5 year as the standard to treat everyone more equal.

**Communication course:** There will be two pilot courses this fall. There is already experience with a similar course at the Faculty of Medicine. The course will be both in scientific and popular

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communication. The feedback was generally positive, but there were some concerns that the course tries to handle too much, on how it should be incorporated in the existing coursework, and if it can be compulsory.

### 3.5 NIRS summer party

Clara, Øyvind, and Fernanda represent DION at NIRS summer party. NIRS will supply more information about what they need help with.

The current communication with NIRS has been a bit unstructured, and this should be improved in the future.

### 3.6 Forum for Faculty representatives

Case moved to next board meeting, but considered of high importance.

### 3.7 Next board meeting

Next board meeting is scheduled for 25 August 09:00-12:00.

