

DION Meeting Minutes

05.05.2021

1. Opening

The president (Martin) went through the agenda of the meeting and we got to know each other a bit better thanks to a very nice question pool that Martin prepared.

2. Previous protocol

Brief discussion about the AGM meeting and the budget for the upcoming year.

3. Upcoming and previous work

Innovative council: Amanda is a member of the Innovative Council and she briefly explained what this council does: NTNU has allocated money for new courses and programs, which should increase innovation at the university and the council should come up with some ideas. So far there has only been one meeting, in which the budget was discussed (each faculty has its own budget, in the Council one representative from each faculty). For the next meeting the agenda is still not known, Amanda will let other DION board members know. 6-9 meeting a year are planned. Amanda will inform DION board members about the questions relevant for PhDs, so everyone could contribute some ideas. Amanda got an impression from the first meeting that everyone is open to suggestions and it is more like a discussion.

Aida has raised the issue of contract extensions for PhD and PostDocs. Dekan said there will be a new work group, which should figure out, if the extensions are possible, but DION was not invited to be a part of this work group. The reason for creation of this work group is that last year the contract extensions due to pandemic were made in a hurry and a lot of PhDs were not happy about the outcome. Ludwig suggested to ask if it will be possible that one PhD representative also attends these meetings because PhD students are directly affected by the result. We can publish a petition about taking this issue for the government discussion. The problem is, however, that extensions are often dependent on the faculty in charge. Everyone shared their experience from last year. In one group 2 PhD students got extensions for half a year, because one PhD

student could not travel and the other one could not conduct the necessary experiments. On contrary, in the other group a PhD student was also not able to conduct relevant experiments for 3 months but got the contract extension only for 20 days and had to “adjust her/his goal for the PhD”. As can be seen from these examples, the distribution of extension is not systematic and unfair. A common suggestion was that everyone gets a two-month extension. Aida thinks that if there will be support from the government, there will be equality for everybody and this issue will not be faculty-dependent. This issue is even more pronounced for PostDocs because faculties don’t support PostDocs that much, this should be brought up in these work groups. Martin got an inquiry about promoting an petition about extension of the PhD period. He uploaded it on Teams, board members briefly went through and discussed it. Everything seems to be all right and nobody sees a reason why we should not support it. The question is how many people are needed to sign it, Martin will ask the person from whom he got this inquiry. We should ask Kine also to read through it. The downside of this petition could be that as far as it becomes a topic on the government level, the university can say that it is not their issue anymore.

Discussion about different organization we should keep in touch with. NIRS contact point: Social events for international researchers, e.g. language afternoon or winter market trip to another city. We stay in touch with them and promote their events on our social media. Ludwig will contact NIRS about possible Cooperation.

Discussion about increasing DION’s visibility: Siamak suggested to create a QR code and attach it to the coffee machines in the common rooms to draw more attention. We should start with our own departments. Olga’s suggestion was to start a cooperation with people, who are creating handbook and seminar “Welcome to Norway”. Otherwise we could create a brochure that every PhD will get. The Innsida and E-Mail PhD and PostDocs channel can be used only once or twice a year for the election. Masab will provide us an access. Martin asked, if Regina went to the Medicine Faculty presentation. The presentation was canceled due to Corona restrictions, and was postpone to August. In general, the faculties will send emails to DION in the end of July or beginning of August about the presentations, we can keep track about which faculties did reach out and which not and contact them ourselves.

4. Allocation of responsibilities

Vice President: Amanda
Social media (including Innsida channel): Payel and Regina
Web site: Olga
Newsletter: Aida
Inquiries: Siamak and Ludwig
Union Contact: Amanda

5. Meeting dates and year wheel

Next meeting should be in the end of May and the next one in June, since it is unsure if we can meet in July due to vacation period. Martin will make a Doodle with appointment suggestions and prepare and send us the agenda for the next meeting.

6. Other questions

Ludwig received a funding request for “Pint of Science” (scientific presentations and discussions while having a pint of beer), 18.-20.May. Required funding is 5000 NOK. Short discussion about, whether we would like to provide a funding. Everybody agreed. We have to inform the organizers that we would provide the required funding, but they have to cover the costs first themselves and send us the bills later. We can co-host the event on Facebook.

Aida received an IEEE request if DION can help with organization and funding. The idea is to invite professors from different faculties to share their experiences, about how to do research. After short discussion the DION board concluded that we will not support this request.

This raised a discussion about how we should proceed with grants. We should announce on social media and in the newsletter that we can provide grants if someone has an event idea and wants to organize it. Regina suggested to announce a contest for summer events and first three are getting funding. In Gjovik next week supposed to be an Happy Hour event due to 25 years of DION.

Payel raised a topic of 17th of May, that we should have an event. However, a lot of people are not in the city or have already planned something with their friends/family. We can make a photo competition: Your 17th of May. Regina’s suggestion: The winner (one in each city) gets two cinema tickets.

Olga raised a topic that we should have an event in July e.g. barbecue because a lot of people are staying due to pandemic. We should discuss it in the next meeting, who of us is probably staying and what we could organize.

Olga raised a topic about everybody's strengths., we can use:

Olga: photography and video (can be used as content for our posts)

Ludwig and Regina: presentations (can attend faculties presentations if possible)

Martin: mental health (organization of mental health week).