

DION Board Meeting Minutes

(02.06.23)

Attendees: Gabriela Kazimiera Warden (President), Diana Giovanni Magnano (vice-president), Davit Gigilashvili, Mobina Mobini, Gabriel Andy Szalkowski, Fei Song, Shubham Jain, and Anastasia Skarpeti

Time: 16:00-18:00

Date: 02.06.23

Place: Teams, Gløshaugen Kjemi 1 3. etasje Rom 312 (311_312) campus Trondheim, A221 campus Gjøvik

Minutes: Davit Gigilashvili

Reimbursement Protocol

- Fei shared the information from the previous board about reimbursement, as well as rule-of-thumb guidelines for planning the costs.
- Reimbursement has been problematic. We seemingly found the reason: when it comes to reimbursing food/catering related costs, we should choose “bevertning/hospitality” as a cost category, and also attach a list of the attendees.
- In some cases, we arrange food for people, and they do not show up, which is not organizer’s fault. Therefore, we decided to report the names of the people the food was arranged for (i.e. registrees) whether or not they came.
- When we reimburse it next time, we should make screenshots to have a guideline of some sort (Davit will do it).

DION Vipps & Participation Fee for the Events

- We need to assign a person to external costs (e.g. grants), who will guide them through the reimbursement process. This will be the treasurer (Fei in this case).
- One recommendation from the previous board is to set a small participation fee, which will make sure that people show up.
- How do we collect these fees? Fei will follow up with Regina.
- Transfer to personal Vipps may be suspicious as well as problematic for tax purposes.
- If there is an external speaker/host, perhaps they have to collect the fees? Sounds unlikely. They won’t want to take extra responsibility for this.
- We have to pay for a business Vipps account and have DION’s own Vipps.
- What if someone does not have Vipps? Norwegian bank account is needed for Vipps, so we ask them to contact us, and we will give them DION’s bank account to transfer.
- What if they do not have a Norwegian bank account? (e.g. if they just arrived) – we may accept cash as an exception. We will assess these on a case-by-case basis, but Vipps should be the number one option (they can even ask a colleague to pay on their behalf).

- Davit will create a separate file for Event costs, where we can keep track of it.

Reimbursement of the Grant Costs above 2000

- We voted and the majority agreed to reimburse the 25 extra to the applicant who spent 2025.
- Unforeseen things happen and being extremely strict with the numbers may discourage people who volunteer to contribute to the welfare of DION's members. Therefore, we will assess individual requests on case-by-case basis and decide based on common sense whether we should reimburse the amount above 2000 NOK.
- However, we should change the formulation of the call. We should remove the statement that all requests above 2000 will be automatically declined. Gabriela already updated the text. So, it is all set.

Seminar with Michael P. Alley on Scientific Presentations

- Anastasia will set up a Zoom meeting for this event, as her licensed account works fine.
- We didn't ask in the registration form whether they attend physically or not. Hence, we can estimate snacks for 20 people, and if any is left, we keep it for future events.
- Michael did not ask for payment, which is good news.
- He is also interested in doing a writing course in the fall semester.

Collaboration with NIRS

- So far their activities are limited to Trondheim.
- Gabriela had a meeting. They are interested in supporting our case regarding the Norwegian proficiency requirement.
- In August they have New in Norway seminar, where we will support.
- They also organize språkkafe.
- We contribute by sharing information to Innsida/Instagram etc.

Collaboration with Brohode Havbruk

- Marine research, mostly industrial PhDs. Gabriela communicated at their event that even industrial PhDs are DION members and can benefit from DION.
- They need help from us to get in touch with NTNU about reaching these industrial PhDs.

StartUp Migrants

- The last event was greatly attended.
- They organize all by themselves. We just share information and present ourselves at their events.

Workshop with *Anonymous*

- It took place last year, but now they want to increase audience from 30 to 50 people, and the duration from 2 to 3 hours. And also to organize it in Gjøvik too.
- *Anonymous* said that it is only possible to be done in person and wants us to reimburse their costs. They are traveling to Gjøvik to arrange a similar workshop for a company. Hence, the costs can be shared between DION and that company.
- They just wants us to book a room on each campus and arrange snacks.
- We have not negotiated the price yet.
- Davit is skeptical about reimbursing thousands of kroners for her travel while a good workshop on a similar topic can be delivered by local people too.
- Generally, several board members believe that it is better to use the best out of NTNU's professional psychology resources rather than paying considerable amount for a course with a vague and questionable quality.
- Yoga, such as the one proposed in Ålesund, can be a better alternative.
- Gabriel attended their workshop last year and did not find it useful. They have no certification in psychology, just a coaching course. Also, considerable amount of time (which DION was paying for) was spent on promoting their personal services.
- Ask Anastasia too to comment on the course.
- Anyway, it does not hurt to ask about the price and decide afterward whether it is worth it or not. Perhaps for Trondheim only. Travel costs are not justified for doing it in Gjøvik.

Grants

- We have 3 grant applications.
 - Board Game: The Werewolves of Miller's Hollow
 - Retreat for temporary employees at IBT
 - Skibladner trip (to Hamar or other available destinations)
- Total cost is higher for some of them, but it is fine as long as they ask for no more than 2000 from us.
- The first one includes purchase of the board game. This should be DION's property and not their property after the event.
- We will resend a reminder to receive more applications before the deadline and make decisions afterward. Gabriela can do it.
- We need to figure out how much we want to allocate for grants – perhaps depends on the quality of the applications.

SiN

- Open science – early fall. The questionnaire is not sent yet. We will receive it early fall.
- Finance – SiN struggling financially as government is cutting costs. Cost for travel expenses should be now approved both by treasury and the president. SiN is looking for alternative revenue sources.
- Career working group – transferrable skills. They are conducting a survey, which ends on June 5. Afterward, they will analyze the results.

- Mental health and supervision – this was posted on Teams. They will analyze the results and then publish it in a newsletter. There will be another survey in fall.
- One of the main topics is whether the university covers visa and accommodation costs for the newly hired. University of Stavanger covers housing on campus for the first 6 months, and the relocation agencies manage the visa matters. NTNU does not have this.

Innovation Council (updates from Davit)

- Joint workshop with the Research Council on May 10th on benefiting from Horizon Europe's innovation instruments (instruments in Pillar III, European Innovation Council Pathfinder (EIC Pathfinder) etc.). How do we make sure that NTNU's researchers benefit from this?
 - Davit commented that we have hardly any information on this. Therefore, introduction of the tools that are at our disposal can be integrated into the PhD education.
- Separate Innovation Council meeting on May 24th on two primary topics:
 - New parliamentary report on the research system including a strategy for R&D in business to reach 2% of GDP by 2030. How can the Higher Education sector contribute to this and to value creation from the knowledge that we create? Closer integration between education, research, and value creation.
 - Impact research pilot project – how do we measure the impact that we make in societal (welfare, security, healthcare), economic (companies...), policy and system development, and learnings and education domains?
- Gabriela reported the updates from the Research Council.
- Relevant for PhD: quality check of PhD education. It was stressful to be evaluated by NOKUT. They checked several faculties/departments and approved the entire NTNU.
 - However, a lot depends on departments, and there is a big difference among them. How whole NTNU works and treats us? A discussion will open at the next meeting.
 - PhD fund survey – similar to the one conducted by the last board. Our input is needed by the end of the next week.
- Other points:
 - Use of external competence in writing proposals? Save money there.
 - Good PhD handbook that gives same info to everyone.
 - Analyze NOKUT suggestions.

Stipendiatombud

- Gabriela had an interview with UA.
- There was a suggestion to rely on Studentombud, but it does not work, because we are employed, and our problems differ from those of students'. Another argument against this is that we already have good guidelines on conflict management.
- Separate case was opened, but then declined.
- Now the main strategy is to inform mass media (UA etc.) and make this a case at NTNU board.
- It is important to publish on this in English, because otherwise, we are excluding 40% of the employees who are affected.

- We as a DION can write an opinion piece on this. We have a say here, and we know all the struggle that PhDs are going through (we receive complaints and inquiries). For instance, Gabriel has already been approached by 2 people with a similar problem just within a month of his board membership.
- Some people do not even send an email and prefer in-person counseling. We need to keep track of the number of people to use as an argument in favor of the ombudsperson.

Photo contest

- Davit will download and upload to Teams. Others will double check that nothing is missing.
- We have few photos to choose from, because the majority are depicting people without their consent. Perhaps this should have been communicated in advance.
- We have one submission where the author has explicitly mentioned that she has consent.
- In public space, with at least 20-25 people, no consent is needed. We need this for close ups.
- One photo is anonymized by blurring.
- We can vote first, and then decide. If it includes a close-up of a person, we follow up with the author to make sure that the person in the photo consents to it being published (e.g., we will ask for their email address to contact and have written consent).
- The deadline is June 7th.

Misc.

- Next meeting in August in person.
- Next meetings should be in working hours to avoid staying late on campus. We are compensated for this work.

Action Items:

1. Make screenshots of the reimbursement process (guideline) – **Davit**
2. Follow up with Regina on how the previous board collected participation fee – **Fei**
3. Create Event Costs file – **Davit [DONE]**
4. Check out business Vipps account option for DION – **everyone, Gabriela?**
5. Set up a Zoom meeting for Michael's event – **Anastasia**
6. Anastasia to comment on Elisabeth Sturdy's course from last year (whether it was good) – **Anastasia**
7. Resend a reminder to receive more grant applications before the deadline – **Gabriela**
8. Figure out how much we want to allocate for grants; perhaps depends on the quality of the applications – **everyone**
9. PhD fund survey, similar to the one conducted by the last board. Our input is needed by the end of the next week. – **everyone (Gabriela will share)**
10. Photo contest. Gather photos and prepare the evaluation form – **Davit [DONE]**
11. Check that no photo is missing in the contest folder – **Mobina, everyone?**
12. Vote for photos – **everyone**