

## **DION Board Meeting – February 2024**

**Date:** 20/02/24

**Attendees:** Fei Song, Behnam Rosti, Alireza Norouzasas, Anna Szlavi, Peter Rohrer, Anastasia Skarpeti, Gabriel Szalkowski, Davit Gigilashvili, Gabriela Warden (for part of the meeting)

**Minutes taken by:** Davit

### **Gabriela updates from language council**

- Gabriela had one meeting with the language council.
- Discussed: mandatory 15 ECTS. Nobody was saying it was a good idea.
- NTNU has no capacity to make it mandatory for everyone.
- It is against internationalization policy of NTNU.
- 400 academic staff signed letter against this; sent to rector – open letter with just our names.
- The following issue was brought up: is language work counted as duty work? Some departments do that, some don't. It's not standardized. The council will look into it and send a letter to each faculty. They will contact departments. Standardization is important to avoid unequal treatment.
- Wording has changed from "mandatory for everyone" to "mandatory if there is need" – but who decides what need is?
  - It's a very vague and fuzzy word.
  - It comes from the politicians.
- It may be better to have mandatory framework regarding language rather than to keep it unclear and let others decide how to deal with us. Some people speak the language they prefer. If we don't have a clear framework, it is challenging for us – they decide what to do, increases hierarchy and risks of misusing it.
- Sometimes there is unwelcome atmosphere. Each campus has its rules. Many of the foreigners are excluded since the meetings are in Norwegian. The rules are very vague. That's the role of the language policy council to clarify what the rules are. There are cases where some of the Norwegian staff have negative attitudes toward foreign staff. This was quantified in research, and the data will be published soon.
- 5 Norwegians and 3 foreigners in the council. Argument: "It is the foreigners who ask for making it mandatory". However, everybody in the language council has signed the letter. We don't know whether the rectorate has signed the letter.
- Important problem: we don't know who will pay for it. Our survey shows that people already struggle a lot to find time for language courses. Will this guarantee contract extension? If not, will this compromise the research quality? Will it be included in mandatory 30 ECTS – then it may worsen the educational part. What about postdocs? They don't have this 30 ECTS anyway. Many unanswered questions.
- If offering language tuition is a hassle for a department, foreigners may be discriminated against in the hiring process.
- How to internationalize if you keep publications in Norwegian? We need our articles to get citations, so there is little incentive to publish in Norwegian.
- The survey on language courses at NTNU will be completed soon by Davit and Anastasia. The rest of the board and Gabriela will have a look, and we will have one round of revision before publishing it.

- Behnam has a presentation with students on February 27<sup>th</sup> and main takeaways can be presented there too. We will just ask people to look for the report. It will be out soon.
- Next language council meeting is on April 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Peter updates from research and innovation councils**

- Innovation council:
  - Innovation at humanities, Experts in Teams, use student innovation; student projects from EiT to integrated PhDs.
  - Lots of discussion about innovation profile, innovation CV. Not in at least for couple months.
  - Trondheim 3.0
  - General briefing from rector – nuclear power debate; strategic agreements more publicly available.
- Research council:
  - New financing model that comes from the government. Approved back in fall. Previously funding was based on indicators; from 2025 budget – only related to completion of study programs, etc., i.e. student-related. PhD completions. Lost: research related metrics (e.g. publication points), incentive for EU projects that were co-financed, this is taken away too. NTNU internal financing model will be developed instead. Big pot to NTNU, NTNU distributes amongst faculties. PhD financing shouldn't change much either. Co-financing EU projects is important – agreement reached on this. It will be on average 20%. Fund that funds PhD positions is unchanged. Takeaway: won't affect temporary staff much; more focus on education than research.
  - AI – government giving money for AI research; NTNU interested in it.
  - Large scientific equipment purchases - NTNU will support.
  - Publication shouldn't be a career development metric.
  - SO stilling – PhD/postdoc funded at the rectorate level. 1 PhD position to each main thematic focus areas.
  - Was tuition fee on a master's level mentioned? No, this is more a topic for education committee.
  - Ombudsperson? Not started yet. There should be a working group on this. Waiting to hear further news.
  - Peter will follow up how new budget and removal of publication metrics affect open access publishing.

### **Norwegian language requirement**

- Anastasia and Fei were contacted by USN.
- SiN quarterly meeting on February 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Interviews with the media, but some should be anonymous.
- Also contacted by Tekna and Forskerforbundet – unclear how the unions will position after wording was changed from “mandatory” to “when needed”.
- It is important to have a unified position with SiN and other PhD organizations. Easier to lobby for this position when we are all together.

- They started discussion last April. And we learned late January, 1 month ago. Ask for clarifications – we may win some time.
- The discussions will continue until August. It may or may not pass. According to NIRS, it will pass for sure.
- Continue discussion until August. Politicians want better to integrate in the society and be better fit for the market.
- Fei will continue with SiN. And keep the board posted. Our report will be strong argument.

### **Contract Extension**

- Extension of the previous board is too delayed. We should start the process earlier next year. Keep record of spent time and ask for reimbursement earlier.
- NTNU is responsible for sending money to the department. And it's up-to the department to decide how they use this money. They may count it as duty work.

### **Budget & Events – Future Plans**

- We will hear before next week, whether we have 150K or not.
  - Plan as if we have, and if something happens, cancel events.
  - Important to know in advance. Also for grants.
- Budget needs revision, because some costs will be different from those proposed by Gabriela in the letter where she requested increase in budget. For instance, travel costs will be lower.
- Allocate time for this at the next board meeting to discuss specific events as well as the principle on how we distribute money across campuses.
  - One thought is to share by the population.
  - An alternative idea is to check last year's attendance and distribute accordingly. Population-wise can be unfair to Gjøvik and Ålesund, where events are always well-attended, because they feel more isolated and more eager to participate. More money is needed if there are more people per event. It'd be unfair Trondheim to get more events simple because of the temporary staff population if the events are not attended. For instance, last year DION paid around 3K NOK to a speaker, while only 3 people attended the event.
- The conclusion on this was the following: each campus prepares a draft plan for the specific events and a proposal for budget. Next time we will go through them and discuss together. This discussion is needed not only for approval but also to exchange ideas and make each other's events better.
- Important factors to consider:
  - We have to balance between low cost and relatively expensive larger events.
  - We have to balance between entertainment/social and scientific/academic events. DION's mission is to organize both.
  - We have to focus on events that will be good for advertising/promoting DION.
  - We should also think of the events that are more interesting and will be well-attended.
  - Last year we voted against inviting someone expensive and recommended using NTNU's resources as much as possible.
- Soon we should have a ticketing system, which will make things easier.

**Next Meeting**

Next board meeting will take place 09:00-12:00 on Thursday, March 21. We book 3 hours, because we need to go through budget proposals, and it may take some time.