



Datum: 2023-11-11
Time: 11th November
Place: Zoom

Attendees: 20 (see Appendix)

Welcome and opening

Ole Kristian welcomed the participants

- Assigning the roles at the AGM
 - Muntequa Ishtiaq Siraji (UiBdoc) - Referee
 - Regina Paul (SiN) - Notetaker
 - Regina Paul (SiN) and Nicolas Gibney (SiN) - Vote counters
 - Gabriela Kazimiera Warden (DION) and Ole Kristian Dyskeland (SiN) - Protocol signers

Summary 2023

- board 2023 is geographically spread
- introduction about SiN, 11 member orgs, representation of PhDs and PostDocs, participation in the national committee, media and government consultations
- some of the local organizations do not represent PostDocs, only PhDs; we represent both; that is a bit problematic
- SiN is involved in two committees, UHR and KiF (gender balance); however, we are also included in other governmental work through for example consultations; government makes a proposal and sends it to SiN for an opinion
- SiN is working closely with local organisations to coordinate the knowledge transfer
- SiN was founded on 26.01.2003; NTNU and UiO are the largest member universities, approx. 1100 PhDs in Norway are not represented by SiN
- 3 working groups: mental health and supervision, career and finances
- **Mental health and supervision working group:** survey in form of anecdotal evidence about supervision in autumn, report coming in December, use as a starting point to get more attention in the media and from the university (lobbying



at the local level); Ole Kristian presented preliminary results at Forskningsetisk forum 2023; got positive feedback regarding our effort; upcoming online event – Mental Fitness – on 15th of November

- **Career working group:** survey on transferable skills, evaluation in process, report will be presented by the end of the year; online event – Digital Communication – on 1X of September;
- **Finances:** as it was announced at the AGM 2022 SiN is in a difficult financial situation, current board tried to get it under control
- **UHR representation:** UHR is a coordinating body between universities and university colleges; they have a research section (UHR Forskning) and SiN's representative (this year Friederike) participates in their meetings; the most effective way for SiN to be heard as there are a lot of people who has a say; this year UHR established a working group on the education of PhD supervisors, Friederike was part of the working group; report will be done in December, consultation will be sent out in January, local organizations have a chance to give feedback; Ole Kristian received positive feedback on SiN's role in that committee
- **Consultations:** new model for admissions to unviversities; Norwegian as working language in academia; accreditations of universities, input of the role and functions of the Research Council in the Norwegian research system, strategy for open science
- **Media apperiance:** 5 op-eds and 2 interviews so far, more are planned
- **EuroDoc:** SiN's representative (Dimitris this year and upcoming year) is representing SiN at the European level in EuroDoc; attending their board meetings, conferences (Open Science, Discrimination and Academic Freedom), participating in the career development working group
- **Events:** 2 events; Digital Communication that works in September and Mental Fitness Workshop; organization of events was done by Regina; possible through cooperation with Forskerforbundet; they are happy to continue this cooperation

Summary of Quarterly Meetings

- presentation by Regina Paul (SiN)
- 3 quarterly meetings (February, May and September)
- 3 common topics for all the meetings: communcation between SiN and the local organizations, status of the working groups, topics relevant to local organizations
- **career working group:** survey on transferable skills as huge differences between univrsities and faculties have been seen; short presentation of the results; the results will be published by the end of the year; event



- **mental health and supervision:** various issues; SiN raised discussion in the media: Friederike Schäfer was part of the UHR working group, survey; event
- **residence permit costs:** handled differently by different universities; inequality between Norwegian and international PhDs; also problematic when arriving to Norway as no always guidance
- **Norwegian language courses:** less prioritization of PhDs and PostDocs; funding issues and time of the available courses (during the day) problematic; opinion by SiN
- **funds for language refinement of the thesis:** handled differently by different universities; decided not to prioritize
- **PhDs from countries at risk:** 4 countries, negative impact on the future career of the PhDs and PostDocs; mental health burden; action on local level required; UsN SPO is supposed to have a meeting with the administration later this year; SiN will be contacted
- **new policy on the sick leave:** contract extensions now from the 1st day of the sick leave; differences between universities whether egenmelding is included; should be retroactive from the 1st of July but there are differences between universities

Discussion about new policy on sick leave

- OsloMet: egenmelding and child's leave included
- NTNU: handled differently by the departments
- UsN SPO: regulations not clear, Zohreh Abdollahkhani (UsN SPO) is going to share them
- Friederike (SiN): discussed at UHR, regulations regarding being retroactive are ambiguous to them too, so it is expected that different universities are going to handle it differently until there is a common ground
- Muntequa Ishtiaq Siraji (UiBdoc): at UiB one has to apply for an extension when the PhD contract is finished; not possible to apply during the contract period; would be beneficial if the latter would be the case
- Therese Sefton (OsloMet); talked to different institutions regarding the understanding that if, e.g., one is sick at home or sick at home with a child, the answer is that it needs to be registered in the portal and one get the extension then



Financial statement for 2023

- 2022 operation result: -150,000 NOK
- financial report presented based on the period 01.01.23-31.10.23
- income: 285,022.09 NOK
- expenses so far: 197,006.57, planned to spend 329,900.00 NOK by the end of the year
- upcoming expenses: board work compensation, transition seminar and audition
- AGM online, significant decrease in deficit for this year because of that; approx. costs: 8400 NOK allowances (lunch and coffee)
- income of the SiN board: main source HK-dir, membership fees from local organizations (modified scheme this year), and bonus (additional inflation compensation) from Kunnskapsdepartementet
- expenses of the board have been strictly kept tracked this year; also strict restrictions on the expenses
- board compensation: the procedure was changed, no expenses for the upcoming taxation are taken into the next year
- expenses for the transition seminar this year 19,098.57 NOK instead of anticipated approx. 30,000.00 NOK
- EuroDoc membership fee 3,600.00 NOK, they covered 200 Euro for travel to the AGM
- expenses for the representation: UHR meetings and conferences approx 6,813.00 NOK
- other expenses are webpage, leader's phone
- estimated balance until the end of the year approx 72,000.00 NOK, result of operating costs for January 2023 - March 2024: -28,082.98 NOK
- one of the reasons for the difficult financial situation: 500,000.00 NOK budget and SiN was told by the government to spend everything by the end of the year, otherwise the budget will be cut
- the budget was passed; everyone who does not approve was supposed to indicate it with a reaction; no objections



Elections

Rules

- only delegates can vote
- 2 votes per organization
- we are going to use Mentimeter
- vote counter check by Nicolas (SiN) and Regina (SiN)
- recommendations provided by the nomination committee are not binding, they are based on the experience by the current board and are meant to avoid bias based on the presence of the candidate at the AGM
- position order: president, vice president, treasurer, head of governmental relations, head of communications

Voting process

- first vote to indicate how many delegates we have
- UiAdoc: Simone Grande and Ram Srinivas (2 votes)
- UiBdoc: Muntequa Ishtiaq Siraji (2 votes)
- UiOdoc: Karl Henrik Storhaug (2 votes)
- UiSDC: Usman Shaukat and Ali Hasan Saber Alkaraly (2 votes)
- UsN SPO: Zohreh Abdollahkhani and Ivie Porto-Sordal (2 votes)
- NHHdoc: Silas Braun (2 votes)
- OsloMet: Therese Sefton (2 votes)
- TDOOS: Claire Degail (2 votes)
- DION: Gabriela Kazimiera Warden (2 votes)
- in total 18 votes
- the counter of votes did not work, got more votes than supposed to multiple times; voting will be done through Zoom by sending a private message to Nicolas
- vote for either accept the whole list proposed by the nomination committee or reject; in case of rejection voting will be done for each position separately



- UsN SPO did not receive the information about the elections and the possibilities to apply in advance; the email containing this information was sent out on the 12th of October by Regina to the heads of the local organizations; the email explicitly says to forward the information to the members; UsN SPO needs to contact their leader regarding this issue
- some of the applications were sent out late and therefore were not accounted for
- 12 yes, 4 no and 2 blank

The elected board

- **President:** Ingvild Bergom Lunde (UiOdoc)
- **Vice President:** Claire Degail (TODOS)
- **Treasurer:** Abdelrahman Abdelaal (UiSdoc)
- **Head of Government Relations:** Karl Henrik Storhaug Reinås (UiOdoc)
- **Head of Communications:** Ali Hasan Saber Alkaraly (UiSdoc)

Presentations by the new board

President

- experience: in academia since 2010: PhD, PostDoc and worked in administration
- published an opinion in Khrono this summer about how difficult it can be for PhD candidates; a lot of feedback and opportunities opened up afterwards
- approach: listen to the board members
- have a direct dialogue with the member organizations
- learn from the current board

Vice President

- experience: used to coordinate the communication process across different campuses at UiT which is geographically spread

Treasurer and Head of Communications

- Ali Hasan Saber Alkaraly presents on behalf of Abdelrahman Abdelaal and himself
- experience: engaged in UiSDC activities
- passionate about socializing and meeting new people
- communication and networking is important



Head of Government Relations

- experience: representative at the department and university level and national student organization
- aims for a close cooperation with different local organizations
- constructive dialogue
- better be heard in public debate and lobby for our interests

Proposed budget for 2024

- the presented budget is just a proposal
- estimation of the income from the government is 300,000.00 NOK
- **proposed change for the board compensation:** move from compensation based on hourly calculation to fixed total amount
- AGM travel allowance per person: 2,500.00 NOK
- continue with external funding for the events, e.g., universities or unions
- OsloMet and TODOS have not paid the membership fees so far
- **expenses board:** locked 150,000.00 NOK, approx 60,000.00 NOK for the AGM, transition seminar approx. 45,000.00 NOK, EuroDoc related expenses approx. 6,600.00 NOK, UHR and other conferences 37,500.00 NOK
- advantage that UHR representative and president are around Oslo, i.e., less expenses for travel
- additionally, less expenses as we decreased the board size by 3 people this year
- Karl Henrik Storhaug Reinås (UiOdoc): would like to thank for the solid work on setting up the budget
- Therese Sefton (OsloMet): thanks for the transparency of the budget, OsloMet is going to pay the fee
- membership fees were previously the ground for voting at the AGM, we have exemptions for TODOS and OsloMet this time, there have been some precedence: 2021 half of the organizations did not pay the fee and then paid the double fee in 2022
- Therese Sefton (OsloMet) would like that we all are taking a vote whether the missing payment of the membership fee should be the reason for revoking the voting rights



- Nicolas Gibney (SiN): we are not allowed to take away the voting rights, but the organization can be ejected after 3 years of not paying the fee

Voting process

- 2 votes: approve the current membership fees and the budget
- **current membership fees:** 3% of the yearly budget of the organization, with 1,000.00 NOK being the minimum fee and 6,000.00 NOK the maximum
- vote on maintaining the fee system: 1 objection; **approved**
- provisional budget: **approved**

The way forward

- first some thoughts from Ole Kristian, later discussion
- three simultaneous roles of a PhD in Norway: researcher, student (study program, transition us from student to researcher) and employee (employed doing a PhD, rights and duties)
- difficulties by handling conflicts where three areas intersect, e.g. misunderstandings with supervisor or unrealistic expectations
- we should propose ideas how these 3 roles can be unified
- students, for example, can be expelled from a university for cheating, but PhDs cannot because of the employee status
- students follow UH loven and local regulations, however, employees follow Statsansattloven
- current structure of SiN: independent of local organizations, board members have their duties, one year term
- although SiN is totally independent from the local organizations, we cooperate with them through email, Slack and social media, but it is hard to reach everyone out
- one-year term too little, however, we cannot make it two-year term as it is an additional workload, and in some positions significant workload; additionally a lot of PhD positions are only for three years, most of the people get engaged into PhD representation not right away, especially if one just moved to Norway, this can significantly reduce the number of possible board candidates; into the are coming to Norway
- **question is:** are we effective as we are now if we want to have a voice?



- **suggestions:** long term strategies - make a strategy for 4 years; board terms being two-year terms after all? should local leaders be in the board, but someone else is doing the work e.g. having full/part time advisors?
- **influence:** SiN is not always the first one who is called if there something to get an opinion on
- **cooperations:** continue cooperation with Forskerforbundet? **political parties:** should SiN engage with parliament? Academy of Young Researchers: often disagreements (e.g. on Norwegian as working language), but possible to find some ways to cooperate; Arendalsuka: should SiN be physically present?
- **suggestion for areas to focus:** intellectual harassment within the concept of having three roles as a PhD; financial stability framework, mental health; national course platform (Denmark has a platform like this), supervisor ethics (follow up on the report Friederike Schäfer (SiN) was working on)
- Nicolas Gibney (SiN): non-governmental private businesses asked for collaboration; they are a potential source of funding; the board 2022 decided against a collaboration; if such requests come up, the new board should consider them very carefully as it can make an implication
- Ingvild Bergom Lunde (UiOdoc): thanked for the clear overview; difficult to organize collaboration with all the local organizations; would it be possible to write an op-ed in-between boards and even maybe local organizations? Nicolas Gibney (SiN): would be very good to get local organizations to sign on it, but it would not be easy to organize it
- Gabriela Kazimiera Warden (DION): importance of Norwegian language, very big problem from her experience in DION as DION has seats in some committees at NTNU, where the working language is Norwegian, therefore (ideally) president or vice president have to speak Norwegian; it happened in the past that candidates for the board could have been elected based on the Norwegian skills, not competences; we should lobby for the Norwegian language being not the selection criteria, but the qualifications; at NTNU 50/50 foreigners and Norwegians as PhDs; Norwegian PhDs are not really involved in such organizations as DION; criticism regarding the SiN elections: presentation of candidates should be before the elections; opinion regarding proposed structural changes: it would be good to have members of local organizations being SiN board members to get representation from all the local organizations, however, problem of compensation
- Nicolas Gibney (SiN): use of Norwegian language in academia is very controversial; extremely beneficial to have native Norwegians at the board as it is very beneficial not only to know the language but also the system; not a solution to dictate to UHR that they have to speak English with us; when SiN published opinions in



English, there was a lot of engagement, but it was reduced to being englishization of academia

- Gabriela Kazimiera Warden (DION): her point was that it is important to give priorities to PhDs and PostDocs to learn Norwegian and not to eliminate the Norwegian as a language
- Ali Hasan Saber Alkaraly (UiSdoc): PhD and mental health: when he just came here, didn't know much about the system, we should advocate for a requirement for universities to make people familiar with the procedures; departments and universities should pay for Norwegian courses, UiS pays only for A1
- Muntequa Ishtiaq Siraji (UiBdoc): language is important topic, to learn Norwegian slow but longer process to learn the language, cannot be expected that people learn Norwegian very fast
- elections discussion: Muntequa Ishtiaq Siraji (UiBdoc) and Ivie Porto-Sordal (UsN SPO) criticized the election process and the nomination committee, Regina Paul (SiN) pointed out that they could have raised their concerns earlier, during the elections
- Ivie Porto-Sordal (UsN SPO): UsN SPO does not receive the emails from SiN, Regina Paul (SiN): we only have the president's email and he received all our emails, UsN SPO needs to talk to him regarding the communication; raised a point about having SiN meetings with local organizations more often meetings; looks like the compensations of the SiN board are much higher than compensations obtained by e.g. UsN SPO board
- Nicolas Gibney (SiN): last year we asked if more frequent meetings are desired, and answer was no; impossible to find anyone to be on board for the national organisation, a compensation is an incentive
- Ole Kristian (SiN): nomination committee was established as last year some positions haven't been filled and needed to be filled at the AGM, which significantly slowed down the elections
- Gabriela Kazimiera Warden (DION): regarding the nomination committee: SiN communicated that in advance and it was possible to vote against the nominated candidates at the elections; if people would have had concerns, they could raise it then, and that is why Gabriela didn't say anything and simply voted no

Closing

- Ole Kristian (SiN): thanks the participants for their participation and congratulates the new board
- meeting closed at 17.00



SiN Annual General Meeting 2023-11-11
Zoom

We have read the above and hereby declare that the protocol is correct:

Ole Kristian Dyskeland
Ole Kristian Dyskeland

Gabriela K. Warden
Gabriela Kazimiera Warden



Appendix: Attendance

Attendees

Ole Kristian Dyskeland (SiN)
Regina Paul (SiN)
Zihao Wang (SiN)
Friederike Schäfer (SiN)
Yucong Ma (SiN)
Anum Masood (SiN)
Jareef Martuza (SiN)
Gabriela Kazimiera Warden (DION)
Simone Grande (UiAdoc)
Ram Srinivas (UiAdoc)
Karl Henrik Storhaug (UiOdoc)
Silas Braun(NHHdoc)
Ivie Porto-Sordal (UsN SPO)
Zohreh Abdollahkhani (UsN SPO)
Usman Shaukat (UiSDC)
Ali Hasan Saber Alkaraly (UiSDC)
Muntequa Ishtiaq Siraji (UiBdoc)
Therese Sefton (OsloMet)
Claire Degail (TODOS)
Ingvild Bergom Lunde (UiOdoc, observer)

Missing

Dimitris Polychronopoulos (SiN, excused)
NMBU (not excused)
NIHSPO (excused)