

AGENDA FOR AUPA BOARD MEETING

TIME: January 25th 4-6 pm

LOCATION: Dales café, building 1653-014

GUESTS: Felix Paulsen



1. Welcome

2. Formalities

- a. Election of Chairman

Litten was elected as Chairman.

- b. Approval of minutes from last meeting

Approved.

3. Updates from local associations

Health PhD Association:

- At their last meeting they were discussion the PhD Day at Health and the party afterwards.
- They are also developing a new logo.

Arts PhD Network:

- Miriam has become President
- Had their last board meeting the 4th of January:
 - They are working on having a huge PhD event where they hope 60-80 people will showing up.
 - Focus will be on jobs for PhDs from Arts.
 - They are working on flyers and plan to have a panel debate and make the audience participate during the event as well.
 - They have a room and the event will be in May.

- They have the money for it. People from Zealand will get their train tickets payed.
- Socializing afterwards at Stakbogladen with free beer.
- Heidi have agreed with Miriam to make people aware of the Arts PhD Network.
- Heidi is attending a meeting where she will make people aware of AUPA and the Arts PhD Network. They are working on a flyer for that purpose.

Phabuss:

No one from Phabuss present at this AUPA meeting.

PHAUST:

Update from last meeting:

- Arranging two workshops:
 - One about stress where a psychologist will attend.
 - One about studying abroad.
- PhD tax issues were discussed – especially in relation to 4+4 PhDs they have experienced problems. What is scholarships, what is SU and what is pay for teaching. They are trying to figure out if guidelines exit or else they will request them. At the AUPA meeting it was suggested that these PhD tax guidelines could be shared and distributed to the other faculties as well.
- PHAUST also discussed the hiring practices for PhDs at the last meeting. There are problems with supervisors finding candidates who cannot match the grade requirements. Discussing if there are PhDs who are qualified to do a PhD but do not have the

correct grade average. Discussing if there should be or is a "second round" (kvote 2).

- Talk of a "PhD Starting Kit" with the info on what to do when you start your PhD. As of now they only have the PhD Day and nothing more.
- Discussed the teaching and course evaluation. The TA (teaching assistant) evaluation as of now has problems. Not every department has a TA evaluation and sometimes there is only one box to write in which has several problems to it and the TA cannot see it. Also, if a name is misspelled it does not show.
 - At the AUPA meeting PhD teacher evaluation was discussed – how to do it the best way. Problems with low answering percentages and student evaluation as the only form for evaluation of the PhD's teaching skill. Problems with students' answer – is it honest, reflecting a general sense of the course/TA?
 - AUPA is considering taking up the student evaluation problems with the school leaders. It was suggested that the supervisors should be forced to give feedback as well.

4. Joint Action Workshops

The Joint Action (JA) workshops are an AUPA initiative to avoid stress.

Status update:

- The workshop will be the 19th of February.
- We need a location and someone to be responsible. Andreas will contact Statbiblioteket and write to Jesper about it. Perhaps he will contact Felix about as well.
- Marketing about the JA workshop will be made from the general flyers which will be modified a bit (title, date, place). Jesper will

be informed to modify it to something catchy – otherwise Litten will do it.

- It was decided to have a Joint Action meeting quite soon.

5. PAND

a. Status update from the meeting the 8th January

PAND is the PhD Association Network of Denmark.

They are working on developing it further and very motivated.

- They are currently working on developing action plans for this year.
- They have agreed on having a physical or skype meeting once a month.

Last meeting the following was discussed:

- New website: phddenmark.dk.
 - They have an event calendar we can share.
- Cases or issues about PhDs being extended. Andreas knows more about it.

Viktorjia will follow up on PANDs strategic plan for this next year. They had a digital strategy meeting and asked for our opinion.

b. Funding

- They are preparing a template for funding letters to send,
- 10.000 dkk each year. We can ask to renegotiate the amount if we want.

Next PAND meeting again 5th of February. Viktorjia will participate.

Viktorjia will put the minutes from PAND on dropbox.

6. "Quality in PhD Processes" survey

a. Summary of the results

Aarhus University have a quality survey every 4th year. They sent out the results in December.

- Jesper, Anne and Litten discussed the result of the survey and Litten has put their comments on dropbox.

Main point of concerns:

- PhD students being satisfied.
- Stress level has been increased – discussing what to do about it.

b. Discussion of the research environment, supervision and workload.

Is there something we can do about the fact that almost 1/3 of all PhD are really stressed? Or do we think that the survey states that PhD students are succeeding fine?

Main concern about stress level increasing.

AUPA meeting thoughts about it:

(Litten will go with Jesper to the PhD School leader and talk about the report.)

- Finds it disbursing that it says: "PhDs are during fine" when many students are stressed.
- The way the survey ask the questions is a bit wrong – answers to the questions cannot convey the full meaning.
- There is too much work in the Aarhus university PhD program which they do not ask about in the report.
 - 840 hours of teaching is perhaps too much.
 - Could the teaching hours be something related specific to what the PhD work with.

- ST have a minimum of teaching hours as well as a maximum. However, it affect the wages.
- BSS also recently had a reduction in teaching hours to 740 hours.

Litten suggests that AUPA should ask in the local associations how they spend their teaching hours and then present it to the school leaders.

Other thoughts on the survey and results

- Perhaps put pressure on common ground within as well as across the faculties.
 - There should be a realistic academic quality level according to the time the Danish PhDs actually have to do it.
 - Can the Danish PhDs compare with the other countries?
 - The research environment scored pretty low in the survey – but this is a very important part of the PhD. Perhaps research environment such be a main point for focus for PhD education and not just something that would be “nice to have”.
 - There is a lot of individualism in the PhD world. Perhaps “journal clubs” and such can be part of the dissertation hours.
- c. Initiatives/Ideas for improving the research environment and work load for PhD students - Facebook post about the results, PhD school leader meeting. Could a mindfulness course help? Or minimizing the obligatory work (teaching, etc.)?

AUPA discussed if mindfulness can help reduce stress or if the stress is simply based on too much work for the PhDs.

- Mindfulness can lessen the symptoms but there is too much work.

- Yes, mindfulness can help. However, as a strategy for handling stress, mindfulness makes the stress an individual problem - but it may be a strategic institutional problem.
- Problem with the survey; The survey needs to take the qualitative part of the survey into account as well.

7. Recruitment Norms

- The norms have now been accepted by the university leaders.
- Litten will look into it and get information.
- Next step is to get it out to the faculties.
- We will hear more later. Litten will send out emails when she knows more.

8. PhD school meeting 31th January

- a. Recruitment norms
- b. Quality in PhD processes
- c. PAND

The above points were discussed earlier on. Litten will take action on them as decided on the AUPA meeting.

9. Update of homepage

- a. Status
- Emails going around about the photoshoot for the webpage. Perhaps shoot at Feb. 8th in the morning.
 - Marie will take the pure-pictures for the individual pictures and put them on the website. The group photo will be added after Feb 8.
 - Please let Marie know if you want changes to the website.

10. Any other businesses

- Next meeting 15th of march is the next meeting.
- The Junior Researcher Association have a course calendar we can share. Marie will send Litten a link.