

Board Report

Mandate: July 2023 - June 2024



The PhD Chapter at KTH
Doktorandsektionen vid Tekniska Högskolans Studentkår

A report summarizing chapter operations within the mandate period July 2023 - June 2024 on which basis, freedom of responsibility shall be assessed.

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Document versions

| Version | By/comments | Date |
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Background

A chapter board report is a summary and analysis of the activities performed by the chapter during the past year. It is supposed to account for the number of meetings and actions that have been performed during the past mandate year. The purpose of this document is also to be a background for the auditors' report.

This chapter board report has been written by Daniel Medeiros, who was the chairperson for the chapter for the mandate year 2023/2024.

Elected officials during 2023/2024

PhD Chapter Board of Directors

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| Chairperson | Daniel Medeiros |
| Vice-Chairperson | Zoé Barjot (2023) Doga Gurgunoglu (2024) |
| Treasurer | Fabio De Ferrari (2023) Hemanth Venkatesan (2024) |
| Education Manager | Ugne Miniotaite |
| Communication Manager | Andressa Mazur |
| Events Manager | Mattias Åstrand (2024) |
| Business Liaison | Sahba Zojaji (2023) Matt Davoudizavareh (2024) |
| Council Coordinator | Jana Vasiljevic (2023) Sina Sheikholeslami (2024) |
| Webmaster | Kiran Chhatre |
| Workgroups Manager | Zoé Barjot (2024) |

The PhD Chapter Board held 13 documented board meetings during the mandate period July 2023 - June 2024.

PhD Chapter Functionaries

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| THS Student Council (KF) Representative | Daniel Medeiros Saumey Jain |
| Auditor | Teodor Elmfeldt |
| Nominating Committee (2023) | Vladilena Gaisina Saumey Jain Doga Gurgunoglu |
| Nominating Committee (2024) | Vladilena Gaisina Andressa Mazur Mohammad Abuasbeh Daniel Medeiros Zoé Barjot |
| Master of Ceremonies | Saumey Jain |

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|---|--|
| | Susanna Pozzoli |
| Standard Bearer | Martin Karp (2023) Monika Rolinska (2024) |
| Vice Standard Bearer | Mohammad Abuasbeh (2023) Martin Lindström (2024) |
| Head of Female Doctoral Committee | Andressa Mazur (2024) |
| KTH Central Representatives | Main Representative |
| University Board (Universitet styrelsen, US) | Daniel Medeiros |
| Faculty Council (Fakultetsrådet, FR) | Zoé Barjot (2023) Doga Gurgunoglu (2024) Ugne Minotaite (Deputy, 2024) |
| Future Faculty Group | Jana Vasiljevic (2023) Sina Sheikholeslami (2024) |
| Employment Board | Doga Gurgunoglu |
| Language Committee | Mattias Åstrand Charlie Börjeson |
| Education Committee (Utbildningsnämnden, UN) | Ugne Miniotaite |
| Third-Cycle Education Committee (Forkarsutbidlnningsutskottet) | Ugne Miniotaite |
| Scholarship Committee | Kiran Chhatre |
| Equality Committee | Andressa Mazur |
| ISP Focus Group | Sahba Zojaji (2023) Zoé Barjot (2024) |
| Ethics Committee | Kiran Chhatre |

Account on Financial Operations

The Chapter received its grant of 1 million kronor from KTH plus around 60 000 kronor (e.g., value that ranges from time to time) from members fees THS as basic income. In total, there were over 128 transactions from the period July 2023 - December 2024, and 220 transactions from the period January 2024 - June 2024, which includes invoice payments, refunds when applicable and operational costs. As of June/2024, the Chapter currently has over 2.7M kronor in its bank account (Nordea), and a good chunk of it (between 40 to 75%) is currently left in the savings account for annual interests.

The Chapter overspent its annual budget (650 tkr during the first half, and 570 tkr during the second) during the financial year of the board. In particular, some expensive events directly hosted by the board were the Gasques (once in August/2023 and another in June/2024, 100 to 130 tkr each), the ski trip (around 70 000 kr) and a 3-day leadership workshop retreat for both the councils and the board (280 000 kr). We felt that the overspending was not a major issue given that the Chapter had not used its annual budget during the Covid-19 times, and thus the feeling was that we could test hosting different events or performing different activities (i.e., buying Slack for 30 000 kr, price including 85% discount, and renewing Survey Monkey for a similar price).

Some other highlights finance-wise:

- Introduced the fast-track for funding, where under some circumstances, the Chairperson and/or the Treasurer could approve the funding request directly. This allowed the Councils and other students to request funds: 44 funding requests from non-board students during the period January - June 2024.
- We operationalized some past board decisions, such as rewarding gift cards for those who helped us during the PhD Pubs or with other important events (e.g., reception). This was done together with GoGift. Nearly 30 000 kr was awarded through 83 gift cards (average: 361 kr) to 35 people.
- For the first time, the Board used a system for charging tickets (Orbi) in order to encourage participation and reduce the per-person cost in some expensive events. This system was firstly used at the Gasque in June/2024, and we hope that it is likely that it will be used again in the future.

Account on Educational Advocacy and Representation

During the whole mandate, the Chapter Board has continued to attend and represent at all committees, councils and groups that we were allowed to attend - in particular, all committees at Central KTH with the exception of the Management Group (which is, then, attended by the THS President). An important highlight for our work was, during the period July 2023 - December 2024, the conclusion of the analysis of the survey done by the past board, which was presented in several committees. Among other surveys/studies conducted during the mandate are the ones with salary and time compensation guidelines comparison across Swedish universities and another survey focused on employment aspects, focusing on the salary ladder. An important point during the same term was the educational advocacy regarding the campus closure - both by THS and by the PhD Chapter exerted strong pressure regarding the definition of dates and an independent investigation of the viability of the ownership of Electrumlab, which was then done by the Chalmers ex-President.

Other important highlights of our work were the several working groups that we took part in:

- Working Group for the upcoming Doctoral Survey, in which KTH will lead the work.
- Working Group for Thesis Templating, where a template for Microsoft Word is currently released and a LaTeX is in the works.
- Working Group for Quality Evaluation of Third-cycle courses.
- Working Group for Time Compensation, which will reevaluate the current guidelines, and continue over the next board period.

We continued to coordinate the Future Faculty and we were attending tasks for recruitment, docentship or promotion of professors 88% of the time both during HT23 and VT24 (54 tasks each term, we filled 48 of them each term). This is, of course, done with the enormous help of the councils who motivate the doctoral students to fill those positions. We also discussed the possibility of paying the doctoral students to take part in these tasks, as it is done by THS for the first- and second-level students, but this idea was not approved by the unanimity of the councils.

Several ASPs were reviewed during this period, and some programs got major changes (i.e., the E2DOC program, at EECS; reduced from 75 to 60 credits in some cases). More recently, Swedish language courses will also be allowed for credits as part of the first/second cycle courses credits allowed in doctoral programmes.

Other relevant aspects, but no less important, to note is that we also managed to have representatives at the THS Kårfullmäktige and, in addition, we were invited for the Library Committee at KTH, in which a representative was already selected despite the committee starting only in August. Finally, we strengthened our bonds with the Labour Unions by having an active doctoral student at the local SACO-S at KTH.

Account on Internal Affairs

For the first time since 2020, every single position in the Board and the Chapter Functionaries was filled during the period January 2024 - June 2024, which means a total of 10 board members, 5 members of the nominating committee, 1 Auditor, 6 people officially appointed to the DrInK Group, 1 Head of the WoP Committee, 2 standard bearers, and 2 members to the KF. There was a high engagement of all these people, and this allowed the Chapter to flourish and bring more visibility to it. In particular, we had 1067 members of the PhD Chapter out of a total 1500 students with 1% or more active on Ladok, and we are currently the biggest Chapter at THS (albeit this number fluctuates over the year).

We strengthened a lot of processes and our relationships with different stakeholders - namely the PhD Councils, the Labour Unions, THS and KTH Central. For the first stakeholders, our Council Coordinator started to attend every Council meeting to discuss possible questions, and we also offered them the opportunity to take part in our 3-day Leadership Workshop with Andrew Schenkel. We further held extended board meetings where we invited the Councils Presidium to attend and to discuss several educational-related questions. We also spoke with different Doctoral Student Organisations across the country, and we even received the people from the Stockholms University Studentkår in person to discuss third-cycle educational influence.

With THS, we held three meetings THS x Dr where we brought important issues related to both operational and educational aspects. We also averted the possibility of losing our Chapter Hall. Given that the programmes in Kista were moving to the main campus, the PhD Chapter could be relocated to another Hall as there is low usage of that. In particular, the lower usage is because KTH does not give access to T-Centralen when a new doctoral student starts his/her/their employment. We made several agreements with the ABE, EECS and SCI schools where the doctoral student will now have access to the Chapter Hall from the beginning of its employment. We also created a permanent form where students may request for access to T-Centralen.

Operationally, we bought Slack for Business (with a non-profit discount of 85%) and we believe that this brought a lot of value to us. In particular, all other councils are all located in the same workspace as us, which then increased the population from 35 to over 70 users. We simplified the time compensation report, the prognosis report and we supported the Auditor from the boards 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 (Pil-Maria Saugmann) to deliver the auditing reports of those years, giving financial freedom of responsibility for those ex-board members and bringing more accountability / transparency for the current board. The statutes and bylaws were also updated to reflect the motions approved on the Chapter Meetings.

We held digital elections multiple times during the period July/2023 - June/2024, and this wouldn't be possible without the help of the THS (Teodor Elmfeldt) and the Nominating Committee. This severely increased the engagement on our elections, with up to 60 doctoral students logging in into our platform and casting their vote.

Account on External Affairs

There are several highlights on external affairs that it is important to mention:

- For the first time, we worked together with THS International to host a reception for the new doctoral students - this happened twice (both in August/2023 and January/2024). This included an onboarding process, for the first time, and also a traditional Swedish party - Gasque - that was also hosted by the PhD Chapter for the first time.
- We held several business visits: ABB, NKT and Hitachi in 2023, and Hitachi and Scania during the first half 2024. We also took part in the REVERSED fair, in collaboration with THS and KTH, that allowed us to get more business contacts.
- JML: Together with the Doctoral Female Committee (WoP) and KTH, we held several “PhD Impact” workshops where students were able to discuss these questions. We also hosted a LGBTQI+ meetup for discussions and mingling.
- Newsletter: During the first half of 2024, we started to send bi-monthly newsletter where we presented important information (including councils news) and changes at KTH - in particular, we focused on strengthening the presence of the PhD Ombudsman (Ingrid Illiou) and the usage of our Chapter Hall.
- We also took part in Störträffen to present the results of our Survey 2023 and to talk about the mental health of doctoral students.
- Supervisor of the Year Award: We kept the yearly tradition and, after around 70 nominations, we awarded the prize to Martin Monperrus (EECS).
- Finally, we focused on strengthening our brand by designing new jackets with the PhD Chapter logo, and to keep constant updates in our social media so we can interact with students.

These activities were in addition to the several events hosted by the board and the DrInK group during the whole year, especially the pubs (karaoke nights, quiz night, comedy night, watch parties, etc), and also in addition to the educational influence activities described above.

Potential Future Activities and Recommendations

In our survey, the doctoral students perceive our work as 4 out of 5. There is still a lot of margin for improvement, but I believe that we started to shift winds and go in a really great direction. Our Vice-Chairperson and Education Manager started some work in the handover process that will make the life of the next board easier and highlight which issues will be the most important ones to deal with. We are handing the chapter to very capable hands, and we hope that the PhD Chapter will continue to thrive in the future.

Finally, previous resigning reports had included an attachment with all the financial transactions done by the board. However, that was in a context where the PhD Chapter had a very limited amount of resources, which is totally different now. Given the amount of transactions we had (nearly 350), we believe that it is unfeasible to put all of them in a meaningful way in this report. However, it is important to say financial reports were always publicly available at every Chapter meetings where members could ask any questions they wanted.

On behalf of the resigning board,

Daniel Medeiros
Chairperson 2023/2024
Stockholm, 30 June 2024