

Society of Doctoral Candidates (SoDoC)

Annual Report 2018

As required by the bylaws of the Society of Doctoral Candidates (hereby Society), the Society's Board (hereby Board) is pleased to present the 2018 Annual Report for adoption by the Society's Members (hereby Members) at the Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Introduction by the President of the Board

1. As with the previous year, 2018 has been a great success for the Society, and the Board is pleased to present a very brief summary to what it can only be described as a very eventful year, which, as usual, started with a large turnout for the AGM meeting and with many of its Members running for the Board positions.
2. In total, approximately 50 Members attended the AGM in 2018. 13 board positions were announced, and all positions were filled with additional seven Members serving as deputies for various positions and/or ad-hoc Members, bringing the total Board Members to twenty. The Board is extremely pleased to see the active and sustained participation of women in the election, which continues to result in a gender-balanced board with three women occupying key offices in the Society, including the Presidency and the Chairmanship of Academic and Social Committees.
3. The composition of this Society's Board is as follows:
 - i. The President: Sara Mohamed
 - ii. Academic Committee Leader: Zoe Fretheim-Kelly
 - iii. Social Committee: Viktorija Viciunaite & Abhilash Nair
 - iv. Secretary: Tomohiro Harada
 - v. Adamstua Committee Leader: Erik Paulshus
 - vi. Treasurer: Kevin Raj Kaushal
 - vii. Webmaster: Sergio Rocha
 - viii. FU (Research committee): Nikoline Hambro Dybsand, Kevin Raj Kaushal, Astrid Solvåg Nesse & Aleksander Hykkerud
 - ix. SU (Study committee): Kine Bredesen & Sverre Anmarkrud
 - x. NOVA: Sabina Sibcic & Astrid Solvåg Nesse
 - xi. Ethics Committee Representative: Zoe Fretheim-Kelly & Anne Selvén Kallerud
 - xii. SiN Representative: Aleksander Hykkerud & Abhilash Nair
 - xiii. Gender and Diversity Representative: Sergio Rocha
 - xiv. Ad-hoc Board Members: Hannah Harrison, Raju Rimal, Mengesteab Hailu, Dimitris Papoutsis & Mariya Kelova
4. The Board is also pleased to see a continued participation by the Members from all backgrounds both in the Board and in activities organized by the Society. Since its founding, promoting diversity and inclusiveness has always been an important work of the Society in order to closely reflect an increasingly global environment in which we live and work. The result is that the Board has been able to better identify and be more responsive to the diverse needs of the Members. The Board is confident that the Society will continue to attract diverse and highly motivated Members for the board positions and provide an important academic and social platform for all Members.

5. The Board also welcomes the positive feedback on the inclusion of postdoctoral researchers as Members of the Society. The Society will continue the important work of raising more awareness within the University of this matter, and fully integrate postdoctoral researchers into the Society, including its constitution and bylaws, as approved at the AGM in 2018, by February 2019.
6. Promoting the welfare of the Members is one of the important tasks of the Board. Hence performance of the social committee has always been the cornerstone to the Members' overall experiences in the Society and at the University. Once again, the social committee has done an excellent job in maintaining the quality of the Society's most traditional and cherished events, such as cabin trips, BBQs and Winter Parties. On top of these, the social committee has introduced new events, some of which promise to be part of the Society's traditions for years to come. The turnouts for events are on the rise, and the future board should benefit from and build on the important work done by the Board.
7. Equally important for the Board was to provide platforms for the Members of the Society to excel in their academic and professional endeavors. To this end, the academic committee has been working continuously with the Writing Center to make it more accessible for the Members, especially in Campus Adamstuen, while collaborating with organizations outside of the University to provide the Members with networking opportunities. Additional highlights includes monthly payday drinks with informal sessions on academic themes with faculty members.
8. The Board has also been active outside of the Society to ensure that the Members' interests in the Society is represented at various University Boards and in other Institutions, and in turn, the Board is informed about decisions taken at various University boards and in other Institutions, which affects the Members of the Society. In general, the Society's representatives University boards (SU, FU, NOVA, Gender and Diversity Committee, Ethics Committee) and other Institutions (SiN) have maintained high attendance to their respective meetings. One of the highlights is the election of a Member of the Board, Aleksander, as a Board Member of SiN. The Board has full confidence in him to fulfill his duties, and promote the welfare of PhD Candidates at NMBU and in Norway.
9. In May 2018, the Board conducted a survey... brief summary here...
10. In terms of budgetary matters, the Board has managed to maintain a surplus and a fiscally sound trajectory despite a notable spike in social committee's spending. This was possible for a number of reasons *inter alia* the academic committee's independent decision to utilize the existing resources at the University, while maintaining the same level of quality and quantity. The compensation cost has also increased due to an overall increase in activities organized by the Society as well as engagement in other areas of our competences, such as FU. The Board recommends the Members to pass the 2019 budget based on these considerations.

- 11.** Throughout the year, the Board has also faced a number of challenges. The first is related to the communication strategy of the Board as a result of the implementation of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which came into force in May 2018. During the implementation phase, the Board experienced challenges in reaching out to the newest intake of PhD students and postdoctoral researchers, and ensuring uniform access to information about the Society and its activities to the Members. While the Society's social media platform as well as people-to-people communication continue to be the most efficient types of communication channels between the Board and the Members, the former is still important to craft a more uniform, inclusive and sustainable way of disseminating information about the Society. The future board should continue to engage in this matter.
- 12.** The second challenge is related to full and effective participation at various boards at the University level to which the Society is a Member. While the Board fully recognizes Norwegian as the official language at most board meetings at the university levels, the Board also points out that this practice limits our ability to participate fully and effectively in discussions which are of critical importance to the Society and its Members. As a result of this limitation, it can be inferred that the University community as a whole does not enjoy fully the input from the Society. the Board should continue to request the relevant University boards to be more cognizant of the evolving academic community at the University, which is becoming more open, global and diverse, and adopt practices that reflects this reality accordingly.
- 13.** Thirdly... something... anyone?
- 14.** Insert some forward thinking message to the future board.
- 15.** The Board appreciates the considerable work of the previous board of the Society, which allowed the Board to successfully organize this past year's events and programs. The Board appreciates especially the previous President of the Board, Hanna Harrison, and re-elected Members to the Board for enabling smooth transition and their dedication to the Society.
- 16.** Lastly the Board would like to thank all of its Members who participated in the activities of the Society. The Board hopes that the Society has enriched your experience at the University and it further hopes that the Members will continue to remain interested and engaged in its future activities, some of which are already in the making.
- 17.** Please refer to paragraphs below for a more detailed report.

Sara Mohammed
President of the Society

Report from the Academic Committee and the Representative to the Ethics Committee for the Society

- 18.** The academic committee this year has hosted its own advents as well as collaborations with other groups. The events organized have been in responds to PhD fellows and rector meeting requests.
- 19.** The year started with a Pecha Kutcha event at Campus Adamstuen, organized with students and staff, which aims to give insight into the research activities of the Members as well as the lecturers at the University. This has been repeated in February 2019 due to the success of 2017 and 2018 events.
- 20.** With regards to the writing seminars at Campus Ås, the academic committee has organized a range of half day and day seminars on writing and presentation techniques with the focus on the Members being able to present their work to a number of different audiences.
- 21.** Due to great demand the writing center was made available at Campus Adamstuen. All days were fully booked, demonstrating the need for this service at Adamstuen. We hope to continue to offer this in 2019, despite resistance from the administration at Caampus Ås.
- 22.** The academic committee has been part of the organizing committee for Young Talents hosted by the University and University of Oslo. This is the second year we have been involved.
- 23.** The academic committee has also hosted, with great success, monthly Payday Drinks, which comprised of informal discussions with faculty members on general themes related to PhD studies, such as publishing strategies, study planning and kappa writing. The academic committee would like to thank our former President of the Society, Hanna Harrison, for initiating these events.
- 24.** The Members' interests have been represented at the 2018 Ethics meetings, and have played a role in the open debates organized by the committee.

Zoe Fretheim-Kelly
Academic Committee Leader
Representative to the Ethics Committee for the Society

Report from the Social Committee

- 25.** In 2018, the social committee had been increasing both the number of activities and, often, participants per activity.
- 26.** In January 2018, the social committee arranged the AGM, which included some social activities in addition to reports and elections. Approximately, 50 Members attended the event.
- 27.** In February, the social committee organized a sledding event at Korketrekkeren, Oslo, attended by 15-20 Members.
- 28.** In March, the social committee organised the Society's traditional skiing/cabin trip where around 30 Members, at all skill levels, spent two nights and three days together at Nystølen, Nesbyen. We are happy to attract increasingly more foreign Members from warm climate countries to these typically Norwegian types of events.
- 29.** In August, the social committee started the new semester with the traditional autumn BBQ, attended by approximately 20 Members.
- 30.** In September, the social committee organized the by-now-traditional climbing event at a ropes-course in Oslo, attended by approximately 12 Members.
- 31.** In October, the social committee organized a Halloween movie night, an event we have not organized before. It was attended by approximately 20 Members and received overall positive feedback. It is likely a type of event we will organize more of in the future.
- 32.** In November, the Society cooperated with Ubuntu (African student's association at the University) to organize an African dance night. The event was open to all at the University and was intended as a platform for interaction and integration for the different cultures present at the University.
- 33.** The social committee ended the year's activity with a winter party in the beginning of December, attended by approximately 50 Members.

Viktorija Viciunaite and Abhilash Nair
Social Committee Leaders

Report from the Adamstuen Committee

34. The Adamstuen Committee is the local sub-committee for the Society localized at Adamstuen. It is responsible for providing representatives for the local university committees (e.g. Adamstuen PhD Committee, FU VET).
35. All communication was conducted by email. No physical meetings were held on Adamstuen in 2018.
36. The Adamstuen Committee hosts a pizza and socialization lunch each semester during the initial day of the compulsory ethics course for PhD students on the veterinary science program and veterinary research students (VET400). Lunches were organized on February 26 and October 15 in 2018.
37. The Adamstuen Committee did not host any further social or academic activities during 2018.

Erik Paulshus
Adamstuen Committee Leader

Report from the Treasurer

38. Treasurer Reports the budget balance for the 2018 financial year.

	Budget 2018	Used 2018
Academic Committee	20,000	2,438
Social Committee	70,000	78,705
AGM 2018	3,000	4,174
SIN Membership	2,000	2,000
Transportation, etc.	7,000	4,874
Compensation	20,000	22,400
Support from NMBU	122,000	122,500
Balance		7,936

Report from Faculty Board (FU) Representatives

- 39.** Since the last AGM in 2018, the Society's Representative was present in five FU meetings where topics such as the Phd education, open access and the University's new general strategy were discussed. The minutes for the FU meeting are available to the public at <http://opengov.cloudapp.net/Meetings/nmbu>.
- 40.** The main goal as the Representatives to FU for the Society was to try and build a bridge between FU and the Society:
- 41.** In the opinion of the FU Representatives, the flow of information and feedback between the two of has improved significantly from the previous year, mainly by attending more board meetings than previous FU reps, and by asking the Members for feedback on topics, which were especially relevant to them. The Society's Representatives were also able to host a presentation about our role as reps at a FU-meeting.

Nikoline Hambro Dybsand & Kevin Raj Kaushal
FU Representatives for the Society

Report from Representatives to SiN for the Society

- 42.** Stipendiatororganisasjonene i Norge (SiN) is a joint committee of interest organization for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers at Norwegian colleges and universities.
- 43.** SiN representatives serve as an official link between the Society and 8 other interested organizations from various universities in Norway.
- 44.** As SiN representatives, our main responsibility to the Board is to attend the monthly board meeting and keep the other board members updated about our activities. The main duties involves reporting the activities of a nationwide interest organization and provide regular updates on the important event happening over other local organizations in Norway.
- 45.** The main activities of SiN in 2018 has been as follows:
 - a. Presenting our views and answering to hearings from Kunnskapsdepartementet and other related bodies
 - b. Organized a mini-conference that has invited the leaders of interest organizations from all major Universities in Norway.
 - c. Oslo Met has officially been included as a part of SiN in July 2018.
 - d. Started development of a plan to involve PhD candidates in increasing the visibility of how we work and what the result of our work is. For now, it is akin to a research day where PhD candidates will disseminate/explain their work in public.
 - e. Discussed our opinions about Plan S and are preparing to give feedback to the organization overseeing this.
 - f. Participated in Kontaktkonferansen 2019, listening to government representatives of research and higher education, trade and industry and environment. There were also representatives from the industry and higher education. The main topic of the conference was how to increase innovation by collaboration between academia, industry and government.
- 46.** In 2018, other than being the SiN representatives for the Society, Aleksander Hykkerud was also elected as the board member of SiN. This has greatly enhanced the visibility of the Society in a national platform.

Aleksander Hykkerud and Abhilash Nair
Representatives to SiN for the Society

Report from the Representative to NOVA Committee for the Society

47. As a platform for cooperation between Nordic Universities within Forestry, Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences, NOVA UN operates on the basis of the core value of nurturing and strengthening the Nordic dimension.
48. One of the goals for the future was to increase the activity level to the ambition of 25 to 30 courses a year. For 2018 that number was 14 PhD and 3 Master courses.
49. The main topic for the NOVA strategy seminar 2018 was UN Sustainable Development goals. The Seminar was held in conjunction with a meeting between NOVA and BOVA Boards in Kaunas, Lithuania. Some of the issues discussed during this seminar were also: How well the goals have been attained, preparation of an action plan for the next year and ensuring that all the NOVA functions are focused on achieving the mission of NOVA. The NSB presented the results of the NOVA student survey 2018.
50. The NOVA Student board (NSB) held its annual meeting on 7 June and a meeting with BOVA Student Board (BSB) on 8 June 2018. Main discussion topics were:
 - a. Survey to PhD students- The NSB presented the results gained from the questionnaire disseminated among all PhD students, members of NOVA network universities to NOVA Board (NB) and provided a brief reflection on the survey considering problems we faced during survey carrying out. The student evaluation of NOVA courses should be used as a proactive measure for future courses.
 - b. The election for new positions within the student board.
 - c. Advising BOVA members on how to establish their own student board. I introduced the Society`s way of organization and suggested that they should at least try to do something similar, that is to form a student organization. It is very important to have a strong student body representing all the interests of PhD students.

Sabina Sibcic
Representative to NOVA for the Society

Representative to Equality and Inclusiveness Committee for the Society

51. Three Meetings were held since the last AGM in 2018.
52. The current development strategy, which will last until 2020, is to *promote and increase female representation in positions as Associate Professor II and Professor II in fields where the female representation is low.*

Sergio Rocha
Representative for Equality and Inclusiveness Committee for the Society