

# Meeting Notes

## 14.08.2019

### Attending:

Giorgia Carnovale; John Christian Gaby; Pablo Ignacio Adolfo Duran Flores; Mariya Kelova; Sergio Domingos Cardoso Da Rocha, Gabriel Pigeon; Tomohiro Harada; Reina Jochems.

The meeting outline, prepared by Pablo Ignacio Adolfo Duran Flores, is given below in blue headings and black text, whereas the meeting minutes are in orange text.

The minutes were recorded by secretary Mariya Kelova and edited by webmaster John Christian Gaby.

## SoDoC board meeting agenda August 14, 2019

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The meeting started with an update from Pablo that Eva Davidsdottir resigned from her role as representative of SoDoC in the university Study committee (SU). The deputy Kine Bredesen is not able to take more responsibility than being a deputy. Thus, we need suggestions for a new SU representative that is fluent in Norwegian or other Scandinavian language.

### 1. Equality topics for SiN

- Irene is part of the equality group at SiN
- She has to decide the main work objective of this group
- We would like to discuss this with the board. Topics on equality so far can be in: gender, income and ethnicity.

### Minutes

- Irene has updated Pablo about her participation in the SiN's AGM – She took part in the equality group. The group discussion led to formulating three topics of interest where PhD organizations should discuss and focus their efforts for equality – gender, income and ethnicity.
- There was a discussion in the board on the three topics. We could not identify inequalities at PhD level regarding gender and ethnicity at NMBU. However, gender inequality might be an issue for career opportunities at higher academic level. Regarding ethnicity - there were suggestions in the board to investigate whether first generation immigrants are equally represented.
- The board identified several inequality issues regarding income – 1) economic inequalities between the different PhD candidate types – Quota/Norad students; 2) different starting pay grade between the different universities; and 3) a difference between the PhD candidates that started before the newly negotiated, national-level raise in PhD salary and those who now benefit from the raise.

## 2. Facebook questions

- Tomo had a proposal for the Facebook group question. We have to discuss it.

### Minutes

- According to Tomo - "Currently, all SoDoC members are able to join the Facebook group by making a request and answering two questions, but those questions do not in any way work to confirm whether the new applicants are indeed members, and the process is more arbitrary than we are probably comfortable with.

Therefore, I propose the questions to be amended to the following:

1. What is your name?
2. Are you a PhD candidate or Postdoc at NMBU (you must be either one of them to join this group) (yes/no drop down)
3. If yes, please provide your NMBU email address.
4. Would you be interested in receiving updates about SoDoC Activities via email? (yes/no drop down)

As for the group rules, it should be noted that agreeing to number 4 would mean that SoDoC can contact them, in compliance with GDPR.

So I propose that the board give new mandate to the webmaster to:

1. Amend the questions as stated above;
2. Verify the applicant's status at NMBU through the outlook directory using the information given;
3. Grant or deny request based on the directory; and
4. Record their email address in the address book for communication purposes, if the request has been granted AND the applicant answers "yes" to question 4."

- Following Tomo's suggestion, there was a discussion about who should be included in the SoDoC's Facebook (FB) group. We discussed how to balance between having a forum where members can discuss openly (about sensitive issues and decisions that should be restricted to only members) and at the same time to have a forum where non-members can contribute with ideas and advice.
- We need an exclusive, members-only channel for decision-making and discussion that would not be shared with professors, administrators, and other staff from the university. Currently, SoDoC uses the FB group and e-mail list as its primary communication channels. The e-mail link is open to everyone that wants to receive our news; thus, we need to restrict the FB group if we wish to have confidential communication. Furthermore, SoDoC members in the FB group have the expectation that it is a closed, members-only group. The board members identified a few issues with the restriction:
  - Former members of SoDoC, specifically former *board* members, have valuable insights and can help assure institutional memory during the transition period from one board into another, and thus should be part of the group.
  - New group applications can be easily reviewed with Tomo's proposed questions, but time and effort will be needed to review all current FB group members and exclude those that are not SoDoC members.
  - The FB group members will have to be periodically reviewed to exclude those that are no longer members. This could be done once a year, for example.
  - We need to have a similar discussion during the AGM. Thus, we should keep track of everyone that will be excluded now, so in case at the AGM there is a different decision, we could reinstate some or all those people.
  - People that will have recently joined the university as PhDs or postdocs might not yet have an NMBU e-mail address. It would be favourable to give them an option that still allows them to join.

### 3. Local negotiations

- Some members raised the concern of our support for local negotiations.
- We have been in contact with the union to know the best way to do this.
- Our role will be limited to encourage members to fill out and send formularies.

#### Minutes

- In order to facilitate and to increase SoDoC members' participation in the negotiations, we should request the forms be in English and encourage our members to submit them.
- The forms are different forms for union members vs. non-union members, and each union may have their own forms.

### 4. Meeting with R&I

- The main objective is to discuss budget allocation and current SoDoC work
- Waiting for a date
- Leader should go. Should someone else?

#### Minutes

- On 27<sup>th</sup> of September, Pablo will meet with the R&I office to present and discuss the budget, our proposal for more funding, and the topics that will be discussed with the pro-rector in October. John Christian Gaby is joining Pablo as the postdoctoral representative.

### 5. Meeting with Pro-rector

- There is a request for a meeting to R&I. We are waiting for a date.
- Leader + a postdoc should go. We have to decide who is going as postdoc.
- We have to prepare the topics. There is already an open survey. We can remind people to add more and synthesize the discussion to 3 to 4 topics/problems with respective proposal/pre-solution. We need at least two people to do this and then present it to the board for refinement and discussion.

#### Minutes

- The first points were already discussed under point 4 of the agenda.
- We will need to prioritize 2 to 4 topics for discussion – first we should have the discussion in the FB group, then organize a meeting with at least 2-3 people from the board and narrow the topics to 2-4. Those for now will be (Pablo?), John Christian Gaby, and Mariya Kelova.
- We should start the meeting with a request for an update on what has been done with the issues from the last meeting.

### 6. Grant scheme

- Gabriel and Pablo have worked on a draft for the rules of the grant scheme. The board has to discuss its contents.

#### Minutes

- The board discussed the draft.
- An important eligibility criterion for the grant projects should be that there will be a benefit to the members of SoDoC.
- It might be wise to restrict the length of the applications.

## 7. Constitutional changes

- Tomo and Pablo have been working on an update of the SoDoC constitution.
- The document will be shared with the rest of the board for discussion.
- It should be voted on at the next AGM.

The updates will reflect the intent of SoDoC to be a non-partisan organization of PhD students and postdocs that represents its members' general interests in a number of areas, including university policies that affect its members.

### Minutes

- The proposed changes of the constitution will be shared with the board at one of the next meetings, once it is ready.

## 8. Topics added by other committees

### Minutes

- Sergio wanted to comment on the budget – the expenses for the social activities are high in the beginning of this year mostly because of the ski trip that costed 51 000 NOK. However, if the price is divided per person – it was very reasonable. There are 12 000 NOK left for the rest of the year per budget but, as planned, we are going to allocate some of the budget surplus to the incoming social activities. Those activities will be:
  - The Welcome (Back) to Ås BBQ – 16<sup>th</sup> August
  - The cabin trip. It is expected to cost 25 000 NOK. It is planned for 30 people with everything included – lodging, food, and transport.
  - Additional activities anticipated for the autumn/winter will be the Christmas party and the AGM.
  - The next ski trip is booked at Hemsedal and will be during the first or last weekend of February.
- Giorgia updated the board on the planned academic committee activities:
  - Seminar “Statistics as a foreign language” on the 28th of August.
  - In September, she is planning a seminar with Tim Richardson about Kappa planning.
  - Later in the autumn, Giorgia is planning to organize a seminar or an event about stress and mental well-being.
  - There is interest in a seminar for machine learning but the originally chosen presenter has not been available so far. John Christian Gaby has a few contacts who could be approached with a request to present on the topic.
  - It will be nice to bestow tokens of appreciation (i.e. a customary gift) for the seminar speakers.