

## **ASSOCIATION OF DOCTORAL STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI ACTION REPORT 2016**

### **General**

Association of Doctoral Students at the University of Helsinki was founded in May 2014 and it was registered at The National Office of Patents and Registers in August 2014. The purpose of the Association is to act as a link between the University of Helsinki doctoral students and the University of Helsinki, to lobby for the interests of doctoral students of the University of Helsinki, to represent the doctoral students at the University of Helsinki, to promote their societal efforts and extracurricular activities and to promote an international graduate student community.

In 2016 the association focused on expanding the role of the association in decision-making concerning doctoral education at the university, strengthening its role as a supportive community for doctoral students at the university and gaining more members.

During the year the Association organized many different events such as pub nights, a Halloween party and info sessions together with other groups and associations such as HUART. The Association also conducted surveys among its members to find out the most pressing issues faced by PhD students at the University of Helsinki. Several members of the board worked closely with the PhD student representatives and the Big Wheel project group to keep up to date with the changes happening at the university.

### **Finance**

Surplus: 336,29€

Balance at the end of year: 529,49€

Note to the financial report: the discrepancy in the membership fees is due to one supporting member paying 2€ instead of 3€. The board decided to not require the member to pay the additional 1€ and accept the 1€ discrepancy in the bookkeeping.

The board is grateful for the donation of 144€.

### **Statistics**

Total number of members at the end of the year: 273 (160 paid)

New members: 94

Resigned members: 0

Total number of events during the year: 9

General meetings: 3

Board meetings: 12

### **Board and officials**

During 2016, the board members were:

#### **Chairperson of the Board**

Fanny Johansson (Humanities and Social Sciences)

#### **Vice-chairperson and doctoral education coordinator**

Teemu Saksala (Natural Sciences)

**Secretary and membership coordinator**

Julia von Boguslawski (Humanities and Social Sciences)

**Treasurer**

Jarkko Järvelä (Natural Sciences)

**Doctoral education coordinator**

Elina Palmgren (Natural Science)

**Event coordinator and webmaster**

Rachel Sinquefield-Kangas (Humanities and Social Sciences)

**Board Member**

Emek Ataman (Humanities and Social Sciences)

**Board Member**

Petri Tuisku (Natural Sciences)

**Board Member**

Sawan Jha (Medicine)

**Officer**

Isto Peltomäki (Humanities and Social Sciences)

**Officer**

Leo Stockford (Humanities and Social Sciences)

**Actions****Promotion of interests**

- The Association continued upholding the connections to the University of Helsinki administration and doctoral schools, the Student Union (HYY) as well as other PhD associations around the country. The board met or communicated with all the aforementioned stakeholders regularly.
- Vice chair Teemu Saksala took over the position on the Big Wheel project from Tommi Tenkanen. The issues raised in the Big Wheel meetings were discussed during the board meetings and feedback from the board and from students was taken back to the Big Wheel group by Saksala.
- Several board members presented the Association at a number of Doctoral School info sessions.
- During the spring term the Big Wheel project proposed to unify the application process so that the application time would be only two times per year. The board discussed the proposal and listened to the comments from the student representatives. Based on this the board issued an official statement to the rector arguing that it is better for the doctoral education as a whole if all schools are allowed to decide the application times themselves, according to what best fits the needs of the discipline. This statement was sent to the rector and vice rector as well as being circulated on the Association's web page, Facebook page and mailing list. The statement suggested the following:

- that the faculties continue to choose their application deadlines so that they suit the needs of their discipline
  - that application to the doctoral programmes is done according to the schedule set out by their faculties
  - that, to ensure a smooth application process and an efficient use of funds, and to maintain an international competitiveness, application deadlines should generally be held more than twice per year
- Due to three student representatives leaving their roles, the board opened up the application for those positions again and communicated this via the doctoral programme co-ordinators. In two cases a new student representative was elected for the position, in the third case the deputy took over the role.
  - A working group was established to compile a set of election guidelines for future student representative elections.
  - The board conducted an online survey to find out what kind of issues PhD students have with supervision. Board members and student representatives attended a meeting with representatives for the Big Wheel, Rebekka Nylund and Maija Urponen, to discuss supervision guidelines in doctoral education. Comments from the board and from the student representative were shared with the Big Wheel group who will share the proposed guidelines with the board in 2017.
  - The board were invited for an official statement to the government regarding their proposal for funding for universities and doctoral education. The statement was sent to Education and Culture Committee (Eduskunnan sivistysvaliokunta) on 13<sup>th</sup> October.

## Events

- The Association, together with HUART/HYT, organised an info session for students regarding the labour union and the labour rights of researchers at the university.
- Three General meetings were held in 2016:
  - An Extraordinary general meeting on February 8<sup>th</sup> to approve the resignation of board members Sonja Trifuljesko and Adrien Vetterli, and to approve two new board members, Elina Palmgren and Emek Ataman.
  - The Spring General meeting was held on February 25<sup>th</sup>. The Spring party was held after the general meeting.
  - The Autumn General meeting was held on November 23<sup>rd</sup>. During this meeting the board for 2017 was elected, the name of the Association was changed to *Helsingin Yliopiston Väitöskirjatutkijat / Doktorander vid Helsingfors Universitet / University of Helsinki PhD Students*. The required number of board members was changed to be between seven (7) and thirteen (13) members. The membership fees were also changed to Ordinary member : 10 €, Associate member : 3 €, Supporting member : 25 / 50 / 100 €
- The Association Christmas party was held on December 7<sup>th</sup>.
- Five pub nights were held at the Thirsty Scholar throughout the year.

## Communications

- Communication towards members was carried out using Facebook, email list for members, and

the Association's web page.

- In February the board made the decision to create a new Facebook page for the Association to replace the previous Facebook group. This made it easier for the board and the webmasters to communicate with current and potential members. A new logo for the association was also created using the abbreviation HYJO.
- Rachel Sinuefield-Kangas started a podcast project that is continuing into 2017. The podcasts are short and informal interviews with people in various parts of the academic world and their purpose is to share information about the different kinds of careers, jobs and projects people with PhDs are involved with. Part one, "Getting to know HYJO" was published in August 2016.
- The board created a Welcome letter introducing the association. This welcome letter was sent out to all students by the faculties in early autumn of 2016 and this boosted membership significantly during September and October. The welcome letter was further developed in the direction of a welcome pack. In 2017 the Association is continuing to lobby the university to fund and send out this welcome pack to all new students.