

The Nomination Process: Fixing the democratic sanctity



Submitted for consideration to the PhD Chapter Meeting

The Phd chapter at KTH/ Doktorandsektionen vid Tekniska Högskolans Studentkår



Background

The Ph.D. chapter is the only chapter out of the 21 chapters of THS, where its board members get time compensated for attending a board meeting, and even chapter meeting. The KTH rector has given 2 full-time Ph.D. positions to run the Ph.D. chapter. This costs nearly 2Mn SEK every year to KTH. The PhD chapter also gets 1Mn SEK grant from KTH to organize activities. The Ph.D. Chapter also has a school council at each school, where each council roughly has 1 Ph.D. position as compensation. If one does an underhand calculation, this is nearing 8Mn SEK in costs to KTH, or about 8000 SEK per Ph.D. student at KTH; or about 40K per student throughout the 5-year program. Where is the money coming from? From the research grants received to hire Ph.D. students and other research money for doctoral education at KTH. To put the cost figure into perspective, in one chapter meeting, a student complained that his supervisor was not paying 1000 sek for publishing one extended page in his research article produced after months or years of hard work

Section 11 of Chapter 4 of the Swedish Higher Education Act states: A student union shall be democratically organised and able to represent the students within the union's area of activity.

In lieu of large sum of money being spent on Doctoral student representation, and a duty of the PhD chapter to adhere to the acts passed by the government, it is fitting that the PhD Chapter shows the highest democratic standards when discharging its function.

The Nominating Committee Introduction

The nominating committee is responsible for preparing and administering election errands for vacancies appointed by the chapter meeting. Among its duties it has to promote the elections that are administered during the current year of operation, to collect nominations and candidacies, to interview candidates and verify the candidates' references, to declare statements and reports about the candidates before the chapter meeting, to liaison with THS nominating committee for election of union vacancies. Unless otherwise specified in a separate policy document, the nominating committee shall consider as grounds for recommendations: suitability of candidates to the vacancy, representativeness, and diversity in regard to gender, study programs and other backgrounds deemed applicable such as study model.

Historical Norms of the Nominating Process

Historically¹, the nominating committee of PhD Chapter has ensured high democratic spirits. For example, several nominating committee members have relinquished their positions as nominating committee members, at the preceding

¹ <https://www.dr.kth.se/nominating-committee/>



chapter meeting even before contesting for any position, before the start of the process, and/or even a prior chapter meeting. In order to further streamline the process, in 2020-21, the nominating committee moved away from forms that are posted on DR-Website and accessible to board members

Currently, the nomination process occurs through one web form. All the details of all candidates, and email communications with candidates, are accessed by all nominating committee members. If a nominating committee member also forays himself into the contest, then such a process cannot be judged as fair. This motion aims to correct the same.

Suggestions

To₁ discharge the duties as laid by the acts of the Swedish Parliament by working through democratic means.

To Amend §5.11.4. Compatibility of roles

Current version:

A member of the PhD Chapter Nominating Committee may not nominate themselves for any PhD Chapter Board or PhD Chapter Functionary position. Any potential conflict of interest, according to the standards of KTH, should be stated by the PhD Chapter Nominating Committee members, in which case the PhD Chapter Board holds the right to exclude members from the committee.

New Version

To ensure the democratic credentials of the nominating process, no member of the nominating committee shall be proposed as a nomination to the PhD Chapter Meeting for election to any board position of the PhD chapter. Any potential conflict of interest, according to the standards of KTH, should be stated by the PhD Chapter Nominating Committee members, in which case the PhD Chapter Board holds the right to exclude members from the committee.

To₄ Add §5.11.5 Resignation of a member of the Nominating Committee

A nominating committee member shall be relinquished of his/her role in the nominating committee only after the resignation of the said member is approved by the Ph.D. chapter meeting.

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PhD Chapter Member, Stockholm, 2022-11-06
