

The PhD chapter should be "a force for good" for equality at KTH Royal Institute of Technology



Submitted for consideration to the PhD Chapter Meeting

The Phd chapter at KTH/ Doktorandsektionen vid Tekniska Högskolans Studentkår

Background

According to Sweden's Discrimination's agency (DO.se) most recent statistics in 2022, "A large majority of the complaints about sexual harassment concern education", "Complaints about discrimination on the grounds of disability or ethnicity most common" and "Largest number of complaints about discrimination in working life, education and goods and services". National surveys by labor and student unions such as (How healthy are the Ph.D. students?) and KTH's own surveys at the university-wide level or school-level or program levels show how substantial the impact of an unhealthy work environment is not only on harassment but also on mental health.

The latest assessment of UKÄ (higher education authority) reveals that KTH's work with equality is not satisfactory. In fact, equality issues were the only point that KTH has failed to meet regarding quality assurance processes. The latest amendment to these processes was this year and we have yet to see its results in full detail. Unfortunately, KTH Royal Institute of Technology's work against discrimination can be deemed not effective if we asked those who have reported discrimination cases reported very recently in 2022 such as publicly available errands VPU-2022-0006 and VPU-2022-0020. After analyzing several publicly available investigations, it turned out that KTH is especially struggling with handling issues that can relate to ethnicity and disability. The most recent example of those are errands that went to the higher instance of University Appeal pertained to disability-related and ethnicity-related cases. An inquiry to Student and Labour union representatives who are predominantly 'white ethnic 'swedes' at KTH have not yet developed realistic plans to combat such issues. There are many accounts from representatives from THS international or PhD representatives who were treated by KTH top management by negligence when addressing internationalisation questions in English.

We have to start somewhere and we should take care of each other and prevent bad treatment to happen to our colleagues and friends. As part of this community I'd like the PhD chapter to declare intents to do the best possible advocacy work towards effective approaches to strengthen Ph.D. students' capacity to combat discrimination and undignified treatment at KTH Royal Institute of Technology. In this motion, I would refer to such work under the umbrella term 'Antidiscrimination'. As we define it: "Antidiscrimination is an umbrella term for the work against discrimination and retaliation which covers disfavoured treatment or the violation of the person's dignity in connection to one of the seven grounds of discrimination: gender, transgender identity or gender expression or sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, age. Antidiscrimination combats the following six forms of discrimination: direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, inadequate accessibility, harassment, sexual harassment, and instructions to discriminate."

As a member of the PhD students community, my aspirations are that the PhD chapter strive to be a role-model to support anti-discrimination work within the scope of third-cycle education. We should start by looking into ourselves as individuals and communities and then be a living example for other student and employee chapters in KTH Royal Institute of Technology. This is not a Martin Luther dream nor aside bonus-goal but a human right (according to Universal Declaration of Human Rights, European Convention on Human Rights and the Fundamental Constitution on the Form of Government).

Suggestions

I would like to move:

To support anti-discrimination efforts for Ph.D. students at KTH Royal Institute of Technology in the Ph.D. Chapter official directives such as the Ph.D. chapter working directives by adding a statement of the meaning “The PhD Chapter should strive to support its members with equal opportunities for high-quality education and research without being subjected to undignified treatment or discriminatory measures.**”**

This can for instance be added to the statutes under §1.2. Purpose. For example, changing:

“Purpose

The objectives of the PhD Chapter are to promote more effective and higher quality PhD education and research, promote a stimulating working environment and improve the general conditions for its members. The PhD Chapter should also work towards a greater unity and fellowship among its members.”

To

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The objectives of the PhD Chapter are to promote more effective and higher quality PhD education and research, promote a stimulating working environment and improve the general conditions for its members. **The PhD Chapter should strive to support its members with equal opportunities for high-quality education and research without being subjected to undignified treatment or discriminatory measures.** The PhD Chapter should also work towards a greater unity and fellowship among its members.”

Behind the motion

Tage Mohammadat, PhD chapter member and THS union member.

Ex Chairperson, Doctoral Committee- Swedish National Union of Students

Ex Vice Chairperson, PhD Chapter - KTH Student Union

Ex Board Member, ST Union - University and College Department/KTH, Confederation of Professional Employees

Tage Mohammadat,
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