

Tätigkeitsbericht der Studienvertretung Doktorat an
der TU Wien laut §19a HSG und §20 HTU-Satzung

Activity Report of the Programme Representation of
Doctoral Candidates in Accordance with the Austrian
Law Regulating the Representation of Students (§19a
HSG 1998) and the Articles of the Students'
Representation at University Level (§20
HTU-Satzung)

Studienvertretung Doktorat

Budgetjahr 2016/2017 (1.7.16 - 30.6.17)

Abstract

The activities of the representatives of the doctoral candidates at TU Wien during the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 are briefly summarised. They include counselling, meetings, workshops for doctoral candidates and much more. A short financial overview is given in this report.

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1 Introduction

In accordance with the Austrian Law Regulating the Representation of Students (Hochschülerinnen- und Hochschülerschaftsgesetz 1998, shortly HSG [4]) the main task of the Programme Representation of Doctoral Candidates (Studienvertretung) is the representation of the interests of all doctoral candidates at the TU Wien (see §18 HSG). In our case this comprises the counselling of doctoral candidates, participation in the curricular committee for the doctoral programme (Studienkommission für die Doktoratsstudien), contact to professors and the works council (Betriebsrat), writing official statements (Stellungnahmen), organising workshops, providing infrastructure and much more. The costs for workshops, infrastructure for counselling, etc. are covered by a part of the students' union fee (ÖH-Beitrag) [4] [5]. Due to the fact that every doctoral candidate has to pay this fee, we want to report the expenses and the activities of the programme representation, as stated in §19a HSG 1998 and in §20 HTU-Satzung (articles of the students' representation at university level [5]).

It is generally agreed upon that the representation of the doctoral candidates cannot reasonably be done by only five people as given by law [4]. The five elected students' representatives (Markus Bajones, Alexander Fischl, Christoph Fröhlich, Alexander Grill and Martin Müller [3]) have decided to work and make decisions together with all committed predocs. Due to this decision, all activities of the Programme Representation of the Doctoral Candidates have taken place within the Fachschaft Doktorat, which consists of approximately 10 predocs, five of them the official students' representatives. The members of the Fachschaft Doktorat are working as volunteers and thus without payment for their work within the Fachschaft Doktorat. All decisions of the Programme Representation have been made during the Jours Fixes of the Fachschaft Doktorat, where every doctoral candidate at TU Wien can participate. Hence the term "Fachschaft Doktorat" is used in the following instead of "Programme Representation of the Doctoral Candidates".

2 Activities

This section is the summary of the activities of the Fachschaft Doktorat during the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017.

2.1 Counselling (Beratung)

One of the main activities of the Fachschaft Doktorat is counselling of persons who want to enrol on a doctoral programme and doctoral candidates at TU Wien. We offered opening hours, individual counselling and counselling via e-mail.

2.1.1 Opening Hours

The opening hours of the Fachschaft Doktorat were every second Tuesday at 5.30 p.m., where study-related counselling was offered. Approximately 30 doctoral candidates and 15 persons interested in enrolling on a doctoral programme made use of this offer.

2.1.2 Individual Counselling

Beside the opening hours the Fachschaft Doktorat offered individual counselling of doctoral candidates. Nearly 20 people made use of this offer.

2.1.3 E-mail

Most of the study-related counselling was offered via e-mail. On average there were around five e-mails per week sent to the e-mail address fsdr@fsdr.at. The vast majority of the questions were from people from all over the world who wanted to enrol on a doctoral programme at TU Wien. The members of the Fachschaft Doktorat replied to all of them. Since most inquiries can be perfectly answered by referring to our homepage, first experiments for automatic reply algorithms using neural networks have been conducted. However, further investigation is deemed necessary.

2.2 Meetings of the Fachschaft Doktorat and Doctoral Candidates

Every fourth Tuesday we organised a Jour Fixe and a few “Stammtisch” in irregular intervals.

2.2.1 Jour Fixe

Every four weeks on Tuesday the Fachschaft Doktorat had a Jour Fixe. This is an open meeting where all decisions are made. Every doctoral candidate at TU Wien was invited. The information regarding date, time and location of the Jour Fixe was published at the website www.fsdr.at and some of the Jours Fixes were also made public in the information e-mail (sent to all doctoral candidates).

2.2.2 Stammtisch

The Fachschaft Doktorat offered a so-called Stammtisch at irregular intervals in order to connect doctoral candidates from different research areas and faculties. A Stammtisch is a meeting in a restaurant or pub, where we get together and talk about issues related to doctoral studies. The information regarding date, time and location of the Jour Fixe was published at the website www.fsdr.at and some of the Jours Fixes were also made public in the information e-mail (sent to all doctoral candidates).

2.3 Activities in Self-Governing Bodies at TU Wien (Arbeit in Kollegialorganen der TU Wien)

The curricular committee for the doctoral programme had only two meetings on 4 April 2017 and 14 June 2017 due to administrative issues. To avoid friction and outright opposition to eventual guidelines in the future, the committee wants to initially focus on all those parts that work particularly well and are appreciated throughout TU Wien. In general, a map of “things we like most” about doctoral studies at TU Wien shall be compiled.

2.4 Providing Infrastructure for Doctoral Candidates

The Fachschaft Doktorat has a small office in Geniegebäude, Getreidemarkt 9 and one small storage room in Freihaus, Wiedner Hauptstraße 8-10. The office and the storage room were used for counselling, meetings, organisation tasks, IT infrastructure and every day representation work.

2.5 Information and Service

One important task of the Fachschaft Doktorat is providing information for doctoral candidates. Thus, our website was maintained, information mails were sent, our Facebook page and group were further developed.

2.5.1 Website Maintenance

The Fachschaft Doktorat has a website, www.fsdr.at. Beside the revision of existing content we also have provided new information for all doctoral candidates.

2.5.2 Information via email

We sent two information e-mails to all enrolled doctoral candidates at TU Wien. We informed the candidates about news and upcoming events regarding the doctoral study at TU Wien and particularly the second information e-mail was focused on the upcoming ÖH elections (see above).

2.5.3 Social Media

The Fachschaft Doktorat also commenced activities on the social media platform Facebook. A Facebook page [2], as well as a Facebook group [1] were maintained to connect doctoral candidates at TU Wien, and provide them with up-to-date information.

2.6 Training of the Members of the Fachschaft Doktorat

One training for the members of the Fachschaft Doktorat took place from 24 to 26 February 2017. The goals were improving the knowledge of current legal norms, discussing the current situation of doctoral candidates and getting ideas for the further work as representatives of doctoral candidates. In particular it is our objective to transfer formal and informal knowledge from advanced and senior members to newcomers at Fachschaft Doktorat.

The discussed topics included possible improvements on the curriculum and guidelines, current employment situation of the doctoral candidates at TU Wien and further work in the curricular committee etc.. New recruitment options and methods to increase our outreach were discussed. Moreover, some in-depth maintenance work on our homepage was performed and parts of our information section were updated.

2.7 Projects

Besides the above mentioned every day work, the Fachschaft Doktorat organised and participated in projects like two orientation programmes and information events and the

election of the student representatives. Although we were unable to organize workshops for predocs this year we hope to continue some workshops for the years to come.

2.7.1 Information Events

Due to the fact that the Fachschaft Doktorat represents the interests of doctoral candidates all over TU Wien, it is very important to offer possibilities for meeting each other and talking about current problems and ideas to solve them. Two of this possibilities were the Winterfest on 7 December 2016 and the Sommerfestl on 12 May 2017, both organised by Fachschaft Doktorat. These were small parties at the rooftop terrace of Campus Gußhaus (Neues EI, Gußhausstraße 27-29) and the adjacent Kontaktraum. Approximately 300 doctoral candidates and professors attended the parties.

2.7.2 Orientation Programme

As mentioned in 2.7.1, meeting possibilities are very important for doctoral candidates. Therefore, the Fachschaft Doktorat organised two Orientation Programmes for doctoral candidates enrolling in winter term 2016 and in summer term 2016/2017 on 7 December 2015 and on 12 May 2017, respectively. This information event is a first introduction to university life for doctoral candidates at TU Wien.

2.7.3 ÖH elections 2017

A particularly important although not that time-consuming part of last years special activities was related to the recent election of the student representatives or “ÖH elections”, whereby providing information and motivating students to participate or even engage as representatives can be seen as primary concerns. Voter turnout for doctoral programs is usually comparatively low and attempts to boost participation rates show only mild effects as observed over the last years. Nevertheless, we are quite pleased that this year’s election resulted in a two point increase with an PhD specific voter turnout of roughly 22 percent.

3 Budget

All students (this includes doctoral candidates) are members of the ÖH (Österreichische Hochschülerinnen- und Hochschülerschaft - the official representation of students at the national level). Every student has to pay the students’ union fee (ÖH-Beitrag). 15% of the fee remain at national level. The rest of the money goes back to the local representations, in our case the HTU Wien (Hochschülerinnen- und Hochschülerschaft an der TU Wien - the official students’ representation at university level). The latter distributes the money according to its articles to the students’ representations, the departments of the HTU, representations at faculty level, etc. [4, 5].

The budget of the Programme Representation of Doctoral Candidates at TU Wien (Fachschaft Doktorat) was approximately 14000 EUR of which approx. 45% was spent. Money was used for the following items: providing the food and the non-alcoholic drinks served during counselling and at the information events (approx. 500 EUR), to train the members of the Fachschaft Doktorat (approx. 3200 EUR), for announcements regarding events of Fachschaft Doktorat and informations regarding the ÖH elections (approx.

1200 EUR) and for upgrading our IT infrastructure (approx. 400 EUR). The rest is going back to the HTU Wien where it is used to set up reserves.

4 Conclusion and Outlook

A lot of work has been done during the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017. Besides the every day work like counselling for doctoral candidates, writing statements, participating in the curricular committee etc., the Fachschaft Doktorat also organised two orientation programs to guide new and prospective doctoral candidates. Since the workload of each individual member of Fachschaft Doktorat has increased significantly, our main goal for the following term will be to attract new volunteers in order to retain the quality of our daily operation.

For further information about the work in the Fachschaft Doktorat, please contact us via email: fsdr@fsdr.at.



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