

Protocol, Organism Biology steering committee meeting

Monday, Dec 11, 2023, 10:00- 12:00

Room A-402

**Attending:**

Mattias Thelander (chair)

Marisol Sánchez García

Stefanie Rosa

Simon Stael

Florentine Ballhaus

Salim Bourras

Charles Melnyk

Martina Leso

Vahideh Rafiee (coordinator without right to take part in decisions)

Katarina Landberg (coordinator without right to take part in decisions)

**Not attending:**

Carol Kälin

**§ 1 Meeting was opened by Mattias Thelander**

- a) Vahideh Rafiee was appointed secretary.
- b) Charles Melnyk was appointed adjutor
- c) The protocol from last meeting was approved with one comment
  - a. Mattias reported that he has been in contact with Mukesh Dubey in accordance with decision under point 8.
- d) Additional questions: One question was raised, see § 9 below.

**§ 2 Changing the member of steering committee**

Mattias informed that the swap between Peter Bozhkov and Simon Stael in the Organism Biology steering committee was officially confirmed by FUN-NJ. The decision is attached with this protocol.

**§ 3 New vice chairperson in the committee**

Stefanie Rosa was elected the new vice chairperson in the committee after Peter Bozhkov. Mattias will inform FUN-NJ.

**§ 4 Final reports from concluded activities, decision (KL and VR)**

- a) Careers outside academia, 2023 (VR)

Vahideh reported that the workshop was organized by the research school Focus on Water and soil as well as Organism Biology. It was held on November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, through zoom. Organizers were Eva Krab from Soil and water research school and Vahideh Rafiee from Organism Biology. 59 participants registered, but only a subset of them joined each presentation (16-27 per presentation). So, it's likely that more than 27 registered participants attended. The participants were mostly PhDs from SLU or Umeå University but there were also some postdocs and researchers. Most PhDs were from Ecology department and about 5 participants were associated to OB. The general opinion about the Workshop was 4,3 / 5.

The original budget of OB was 6000 SEK, but we overspent a bit and paid 11107 SEK. FoWS paid the rest of the budget (19401 SEK). The total cost for the workshop for both research schools was 30507 SEK. The final report was approved.

b) Thesis summary writing workshop, 2023 (VR)

Vahideh reported that the annual "Thesis summary writing workshop", organized by the research school Focus on Soils and Water was organized on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October 2023 as a hybrid workshop at Campus Ultuna and via Zoom. The organizer was Philip Jacobson, researcher at the department of Aquatic Resources (SLU Aqua), and it was the second time he organized the workshop.

50 PhD-students had registered. 37 PhD-students attended the workshop of which 26 attended at Ultuna while 11 attended via Zoom and some participants used both Zoom and Ultuna. Attendees came from 17 different departments at SLU of which 30 with an association to OB. The general opinion about the Workshop was 4,4 / 5. The total original budget for the workshop was 30000 SEK and OB had 6000 SEK budgeted. However, the total cost was ~35 000 SEK, of which OB paid 8000 SEK. The final report was approved.

c) Visualize your science, autumn 2023 (KL)

Katarina reported that this 4 credits course, organized by Andreas Dahlin, was given online Sep 25<sup>th</sup> to Nov 17<sup>th</sup>. 14 students were registered and all of them were SLU PhD-students. 11 were from Ultuna (9 from the NJ faculty of which 4 from BioC), 2 from the Forest faculty in Umeå and 1 from Alnarp. So far, 8 have passed the course and 1 from the previous occasion. Out of the budgeted 70 000 kr, 7000 Euro was spent. The activity was very well received by the students giving 5 / 5 as their general opinion about the course. The final report was approved.

a) Analysis of High Throughput Sequencing RNA-Seq Data, autumn 2023 (KL)

Katarina reported that this course was arranged by Nicolas Delhomme and colleagues from SLUBI. Starting this year it is divided into two courses giving 3 and 1,5 credits respectively. In total, 34 registered for the courses, all from SLU, including 13 PhD students, 1 master student, 18 postdocs/researchers and 2 research engineers. Of the students, 6 were from the OB research school. 6 students have past the course so far. We had budgeted 100 000 kr and this is also what was spent. In the evaluation, the general opinion of the course scored 4,4 of 5. The final report was approved.

b) To communicate science, autumn 2023 (KL)

Katarina reported that this 2 credits course is arranged together with all NJ research schools. The division of Planning and Communication (Lotta Jäderlund) is the main organizer. It ended Nov 30<sup>th</sup> and had nine registered participants of which seven were from the NJ faculty. Six students have passed the course so far. The general opinion about the course was 4,8 out of 5. The original budget for the course was 20000 SEK and all 20000 SEK was spent. The final report was approved.

## § 5 Status report of ongoing activities, information (KL and VR)

a) Molecular methods: from theory to methods and applications (Community profiling by sequencing), autumn 2023 (VR)

The course was given on October 13<sup>th</sup>- November 17<sup>th</sup> 2023. The course leaders were Grace Pold and Karina Clemmensen from Department of Forest Mycology and Plant Pathology. It had 16 participants. The course was designed to have weekly journal clubs led by students and a teacher and an on-campus workshop. The on-campus workshop consisted of lectures, three practical hands-on sessions and a study visit. This course has a follow-up post-workshop activity for students to apply what they have learned to their own projects. Two students are currently completing this activity and they will report on it in late January 2024. The general opinion for the course was 4,2 /5. The budget outcome is not yet complete why approval of the report was deferred to our next meeting.

- b) Genome-wide predictions in breeding: genotype-phenotype associations and genomic selection (Plant breeding for sustainable development), autumn 2023 (KL)

Katarina reported that this is a new course that we give for the first time. It is a collaboration with the SLU breeding network and Martha Rendon from Plant Biology is the course leader. It is a very comprehensive course given in a hybrid format including three weeks of scheduled activities with some homework in between. 13 students registered (10 PhD, 1 Master, 2 Postdocs) representing all SLU faculties. 6 of the students belong to the OB research school. The course ended Dec 8<sup>th</sup>.

- c) Understanding and coding the R language, autumn 2023 (VR)

Vahideh reported that this course organized by Matt Low at the Ecology research school was given on November 6-10, 2023. We have not received the final report yet so the approval of this course was postponed until next meeting.

- d) How to write and publish a scientific paper, autumn 2023 (VR)

Vahideh reported that this is a course organized by Marisol and George at Department of Forest Mycology and Plant Pathology. The course is currently running. There has been 5 out of 7 sessions, there will be one more on Dec 13 and the final on Jan 10. 10 students registered, but one has dropped out. We had budgeted 70000 SEK for the course and this is also what will be spent. Approval of the report postponed until next meeting after completion of the course.

## **§ 6 Status report of planned activities for 2024 (KL, VR)**

- a) Katarina informed that practical skills in sequence analysis, 2 credits, will be given in February 2024 by Tomas Linder at Molecular Sciences. It has already been advertised twice via E-mail.
- b) Katarina informed that the spring version of the course Visualize your Science, 4 credits, organized by Andreas Dahlin at Visualize your Science, will be held March 18<sup>th</sup> to May 14<sup>th</sup>. It has already been announced to the OB students, and will be advertised to all NJ students next week.
- c) Katarina and Vahideh informed that they have started the planning for the annual OB workshop and asked the committee members for feedback. The proposal is to organize the workshop over two days sometime during the first weeks of June. A suggested theme is to follow up on last year's workshop but with a different angle: One session would include inspirational talks by former OB students who have chosen different carriers after their PhD. A second session would follow up on the

health theme, but with a focus on physical health and how that influence your work efficiency and mental health.

- d) Vahideh reported that the course “Navigating large biological datasets using simple bioinformatic tools” arranged by Edoardo Piombo will start on April 22nd, 2024.
- e) Vahideh reported that the course “Forest pathology” will be given by Malin and Audrius at the Department of Forest Mycology and Plant Pathology in Spring. They are still planning time schedule for the course.

## **§ 7 Yearly report to the faculty (KL)**

Katarina informed that the research school activities are followed-up each year by the faculty, in the form of a short-written report (max 2 pages) by each research school. It should contain a general description of our activities with a focus on deviations that have occurred in relation to the original plan, planned changes for 2024, and comments on financial outcome relative to budget. In addition, an excel file listing all our conducted activities during 2023 and their outcome is to be added. The deadline is set to 1 February 2024. The coordinators will put together this report, share it with the committee, and send it in to the faculty.

## **§ 8 Report of FUN, NJ meeting for directors of studies for research schools, (VR)**

Vahideh reported that she attended a FUN, NJ meeting for study directors for all research schools at SLU on November 7th, 2023. Several topics were discussed:

- a) Yearly report to the faculty, information about its date and content.
- b) PhD Course announcements: whether all courses are announced in time and if all students could access to the webpage for more information about the course.
- c) Requested action: Study directors should send a reminder to RS-PhD-students to regularly check their RS-web for course info/courses planned.
- d) Requested action: Each RS should put an info-box with the 4-year plan for PhD-courses on their RS-web.
- e) Quality assurance of PhD education.
- f) The SciLifeLab and Wallenberg National Program for Data-Driven Life Science (DDL) aims to recruit and train the next-generation of data-driven life scientists. PhDs and postdocs will be hired for this program.
- g) A new course in AI and its application in research and study. It was suggested that all research schools participate in this course as a joint activity.

## **§ 9 Additional questions (MT)**

Mattias informed that Carol Kälin will defend her thesis in spring and there should be a new replacement for her at the Organism Biology steering committee as the PhD representative. Carol will ask the PhD student group at Mykopat to suggest a new representative.

## **§ 10 Next meeting (MT)**

The next meeting will probably take place in April, 2024. It was decided that Katarina will circulate doodles to set meeting dates in April, June, October and December 2024.

Attachment:

Decision from FUN-NJ, replacement of Peter Bozhkov for Simon Stael in steering group.

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Vahidehalsadat Rafieebanadaki, secretary

Date and Place

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Charles Melnyk, adjutor

Date and Place

# Signature page

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