



# PDS Executive Committee

## Meeting Agenda

24 January 2020

Old Facilities Management Building, Room 1015

13h00 to 15h00

### Running themes of the meeting

- Working better with postdocs in different departments
- Management of the postdocs at SU and Tygerberg in terms of meetings and social events
- Keep in mind other campuses as well

### 1. Welcome and Election of “meeting” Chairperson

Tando opened the meeting and the consensus was reached that she continues as the meeting Chairperson.

### 2. In attendance: Vikas, Tando, Marguerite, Natasha, Wiets, Kim, Maaïke, Mzi, Olubenga.

**Minutes prepared by Marguerite & Maaïke (edited by Priscilla).**

### 3. Apologies

- a. Caitlin and Priscilla could not connect on skype due to bad internet connection but they communicated via WhatsApp messaging.
- b. Daniel could not join the meeting due to transportation difficulties.
- c. Bianke had been on sick leave but she was back at work.
- d. Martina had conflicting commitments and could not attend the meeting.

- e. Lee-Anne and Izel were not available for the meeting.

#### **4. Overview of agenda by meeting Chairperson**

Tando summarised the meeting agenda. The additions to the Agenda were as follows:

Tando asked to add potential office space to agenda. The issue was addressed by Natasha who stated that previous efforts had not paid off. However, the meeting rooms were always available at DRD, and she would provide a link to book rooms for meetings or as required through the DRD/Facility Management.

#### **5. Revision of previous meetings**

##### **a. Minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2019**

The minutes of the meeting were summarised by Natasha. Natasha will organise a Postdoc forum where all role players (Lee-Anne, Izel (Postdoc office), Linda (International postdocs), Dominique, Rudolph/Gina (transport)) will be present for discussions. Natasha will also share minutes from the previous forums.

##### **b. Matters arising from the Minutes of 6 November 2019**

**The policy and MOA** still needed to be discussed and updated and this was very important as postdoc funding hinges on that. If the MOA was not being followed that could be a potential contract break, and may lead to termination of funding. The MOA also protects postdocs and PhDs from unfair dismissal. The MOA serves as an umbrella cover irrespective of the funding body. The university serves as custodian for funding and MOA is thus a contract between postdoc/student with University. The project proposal is vital as well as the annual progress report associated with this. The original MOA should be updated if there is change in the project proposal. During the post-doc contract an MOA is signed at the beginning of the contract, and is followed up with an annual progress report. The postdoc, the host and the university should sign the MOA. Tando noted that the university did not always return the MOA to the postdoc. After issues with MOAs not being signed from

university side, Natasha will now take over the handling and return of signed MOAs to postdocs.

**The questionnaire** will still be sent around to assess the status of SU postdocs. This was still work in progress.

**Visibility:** The website was still to be updated with the twitter and facebook work still in progress. Login details were made available to PDS Executive Committee. The advertisement for funding will be distributed on these channels. The email list for postdocs was still an issue and many postdocs had been on the list for 5 years or more, and these should be removed. Many postdocs do not want to be on the list and Natasha will get an intern that will be responsible for updating the mailing list. Natasha will also meet with Prof Cloete in the last week of January 2020 to discuss funding options, for mentorship and capacity development for postdocs.

**Parking:** A call for parking was available until the end of March and parking will now be allocated to postdocs first, followed by postgraduate students. Natasha has given a list of postdoc names to Rudolph who is responsible for parking allocation. Parking should be applied for annually, and the costs stay the same. Parking for new postdocs that register after March will be provided when available.

**Academic and career development:** This will be discussed with Prof Cloete during the meeting in the last week of January 2020.

**Conflict resolution:** Natasha was still investigating this. So far, no support structure for PhDs and Postdocs existed. A similar role to the Undergraduate Dean was suggested, as well as a potential "Postgrad School" that offers mediation and it should be organized per faculty. However, this was facility intensive, and the issue needed to be discussed with Human Resources.

**Remaining 2019 activities:** A general thank you for the successful organisation of the year end function was given. The allocation of portfolios was successfully filled through the doodle poll, and everyone was happy in their roles.

**The budget:** This year a conference will be held and funding will have to be applied for through the NRF. The PDS budget was approximately R40 000 and was available for transport, socials, catering for the executives and PDS meetings as well as events. With regards to catering-In order to get money in advance for catering, a quotation should be requested and submitted to Kim. Kim will keep the original invoice (some discussion around files and stationery), and keep record of expenditure. Tando suggested that IT sources freeware bookkeeping software for Kim to use. Vikas will try to find such software.

**2020 plans and welcome pack:**

The process was in progress.

**c. Minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2019**

The meeting with Prof Cloete was mainly a repeat of 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019 meeting. It was decided that both Tando (non-voting position) and Natasha (voting position) will sit on the Research Committee, which is a role that Natasha previously filled in 2017. The committee consists of the DRD, chair persons of sub-committee A, B and C, and was chaired by Prof Cloete. The committee decided on language policy, funding allocations of publication funds, general funding and how this was divided, as well as strategic funding, incentives, emergency funding, and the development of researchers. The committee sits every second month, and the presence of the PDS Chairperson should contribute towards creating awareness around postdocs. A point raised for potential discussion was the allocation of cost points to postdocs, especially if they generate their own funding, in order to prevent it from ending in a general pool or being misspent by the host on other projects other than the postdoc's.

d. **Matters arising from the Minutes of 8 November 2019**

**Forum:** The DRD forum structure will be changed. Currently it was set for February, and Natasha will update on this.

**Workshop and meet and greet:** The date was determined by Prof Cloete and the event was hosted by him. The date will still be confirmed and will be until 3pm, followed by a cocktail function. The aim was to ensure that the postdocs as well as their hosts attended the event. The issues around postdocs not on mailing list were raised and were being addressed by Natasha's office.

**Development of joint postdoc forum with Prof Cloete:** This was an exciting development of a joint postdoc forum with international universities to create the opportunity and funding for postdocs to visit overseas partners (and vice versa) for an extended period of time. Co-funding will be available and once all the partners are confirmed, a presentation will be given at the second Research Committee meeting scheduled for the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2020. A pilot of the forum will start with 4 partners in China.

**Monthly meetings:** The Crossley room or CREST room (Wilcox building) will be available for monthly meetings. This needed to be booked for the year (not July, October or November). Wiets and Priscilla will have to interact with the administration to organise the dates. The Executive meetings will be from 14:00-16:00, and IT (Vikas and company) will set up a Survey monkey to confirm dates. The executive is to meet monthly, and it was still to be decided whether the whole PDS should meet monthly, every second month, or quarterly.

**Other matters:** Kim suggested a set up profiles for each executive role on SLACK< as well as share minutes on Slack.

**NRF funding for postdoc conference:** This should be applied for together with Prof Cloete. The opening call was scheduled for the 1<sup>st</sup> week of February 2020.

**Communications:** The postdoc email list needed to be updated urgently. The issues of how different campuses registered their postdocs need to be addressed. Face Book and Twitter duties will be split between IT (who will make it pretty and update it), whilst Maaïke will be responsible for answering emails and can refer to Tando or Natasha for confirmations. The DRD was updating the mailing list and hoped to catch all the Tygerberg postdocs and postdocs from other campuses that have fallen through the system. Maaïke and Marguerite will contact people who manage Twitter of FHMS and other campuses to reach postdocs. The mailing list will be migrated to the DRD. The Google mail address will primarily be used for social events and social media by IT where as the SUN address will be used by communications.

**Welcome pack:**

This was discussed later in the meeting under new business of the day.

**6. Business of the day**

a. **Feedback from admin:** Lee-Anne and Izel were not available to give an update.

**b. Natasha's role in the PDS and Executive Committee**

i. **Introduction of support staff in other campuses by Natasha:**

Natasha is responsible for early career researchers and Lee-Anne is responsible for the registration of all postdocs as well as payments. There are approximately 310 postdocs basically split 50/50 between local and international. Izel manages all international postdocs. Lee-Anne manages postdocs according to their funding bodies (i.e. NRF, Claude Leon, industry, etc). Natasha manages Lee-Anne and Izel, and drives capacity development. Consolidocs fall within the latter category. The

objective of Natasha's role is to create a unique SU experience for postdocs that results in tangible skills such as teaching experience. Natasha will update about the upcoming event on "How to be a lecturer" that she has organised. She also manages mobility of joint postdocs together with Tharina. Riana is the cluster manager, and mainly handles big grants (NIH, etc) for early career researchers.

ii. **Role for Leeanne and Izel in PDS Executive Committee**

**explained by Natasha:** There have been issues with payments and registrations. The request by Marguerite could create a short, unified protocol for registration that can be put up on the DRD or PDS website with regards to registration and steps to follow. Natasha stated that it was the host's responsibility to contact the DRD with regards to a new postdoc. The DRD then would contact the postdoc with the required forms and it is the postdoc's job to follow up from there and complete the required registration forms (irrespective of funding body). A unified protocol on how to go about it as a prospective postdoc requires a PDS website, and there is thus a need for a website template. Vikas and IT will look into this.

iii. **Summary of Natasha's role:** Her role is to get things done. She has a supporting role and representative role.

- c. **Re-registration onto SU network for continuing postdocs:** Postdocs should not use IT HUB to re-register on the network. They can use <https://maties2.sun.ac.za/rtad4/useradm/> to re-register if the cost point is known. It is the host's job to pay for registering of laptops/computers and usernames on network. This should be done annually. There has been communication directly from Rianna to deans to communicate this. It again highlights the need for the postdocs' running costs to a cost point that can be managed by the postdocs themselves. It has been requested that the host support needed to communicate again to deans,

division heads and hosts directly. Kim will send an email with the link for computer re-registration. There has been an issue that postdocs have already paid for registration, and Tando has asked whether Kim can follow up with regards to reimbursement of the registration costs.

- d. **Inetkey is now free (Postdocs should be informed):** Inetkey is now free, but still needed to be logged onto until April. The issue has been raised that some postdocs still receive a student account (fees of approximately R600). This was to be followed up by Natasha.
- e. **Open day on 29 February 2020 (08:00-15:00) simultaneously in Stellenbosch and Tygerberg campuses:** This open day was aimed at school children and their parents. It has been decided to rather make use of the society day that comes up to have a stall at all the campuses. This was a Faculty Society day and Tando will follow up with email addresses that she will send to Wiets to organise this.
- f. **Welcome pack:** The item was mainly skipped for the meeting. Natasha has a draft document together with a document that Tando sent to her. It was asked that local postdocs should also get focus on this document which mainly focussed on international postdocs. The pack will include dairies, and an information booklet. The idea was raised to have this in a reusable bag (Marguerite to look into potential sponsorship for this). The bags will be distributed by the DRD when a postdoc arrives.
- g. **Mentorship program for Postdocs:** This is dependent on Natasha's meeting with Prof Cloete in the last week of January 2020. The program was aimed at early career researchers (staff) at SU, and would like to extend to include postdocs. The mentorship program currently matches staff with mentors (whom are paid for this, and is thus budget dependent). QUESTION: what would a postdoc want from a mentor, that is, which skills, industry based, support for big decisions etc.? Is there a benefit for a mentor being paid for by government? Hence this needs to be justified. Currently the system matches mentors to mentees.



The general consensus in the meeting suggested that the postdocs would like to pick their own mentor from a list of mentees. Tando will create a channel on slack to ask what postdocs want from a mentor in order to create a single profile that can be presented to Prof Cloete by Natasha. This should be completed by Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> of January if we would like Natasha to present it at the meeting next week.

**h. Year planner for the PDS Executive Committee**

- i. Regular meetings within the executives once a month as previously discussed.
- ii. Meeting with Prof Cloete should be arranged. Priscilla should find a date as soon as possible and arrange with Prof Cloete's PA as quickly as possible.
- iii. The main events should be planned soon for the year planner and additional events can be slotted in where possible: A potential Anti-valentine's day event has been suggested for the 14<sup>th</sup> of February 2020 (after work/during work) as an early meeting event to meet postdocs informally in order to recruit them to the meet and greet the PDS. Invites should be sent out not later than 28<sup>th</sup> of February 2020. No conclusive decision was reached with regards to this. Wiets is currently working on a list to put on a calendar. Suggestions included hikes, quiz nights. Wiets also gave feedback on year end (overall consensus was very enjoyable!). Budget for socials include transport (10 or more people required for event), and sometimes food dependent on event.
- iv. Responsible (from Admin portfolio) for the Year Planner: Members should liaise with Priscilla and Socials.

**7. Feedback from IT**

**a. Website progress**

- i. A deadline for the first preview (template) will be set: Vikas has ideas and following this up with the rest of the IT personnel. No deadline has been decided on.

b. **Whatsapp group administration:** Vikas was currently administrator and can give administrative rights to whoever wants to add people to the group.

c. **Facebook, Twitter**

i. Group photo (replace with interim until group photo is available).

The issue was not discussed in the meeting.

ii. Members should use Gmail for social media as has been discussed previously.

d. The executive Skype/hangouts for future remote participants will be set up.

e. IT should get full information from SUN-IT on how to register and re-register. This will be in the welcoming package.

## 8. **Feedback from Finance**

a. Cost point and Budget 2020 has been discussed as above.

b. Funds for socials catering, etc. without paying upfront for reimbursement will be accessed.

c. The postdocs that have paid for the network registration can be reimbursed and need to get advice from Natasha.

d. **Feedback from Communications** (as discussed above)

e. **Dedicated webmaster**

i. SUN email (administration, sending and replying to emails for postdoc community) vs Gmail (for social media) will be used.

f. Plan of action to communicate better with postdocs will be put in place.

g. IT should create PDS Executive Committee mailing list for SUN email.

## 9. **Feedback from Socials** (as already discussed, see above)

- a. Year-end function feedback was given.
- b. Ideas for social events for the year were listed.
- c. Year planner should be populated with events.
- d. Outreach (bag collection) was suggested by Natasha and Marguerite.
  - i. An annual conference bag collection initiative for primary schools in Khayamandi, Idas Valley and Cloetesville was suggested: Bags mainly originate from ADA and were also collected at year end. The call was still open. Other outreach initiatives and suggestions were still welcome, and can be included in the social calendar.

**10. Postdoc parking:** Already discussed, see above.

**11. Postdoc funding from NRF.** Members were encouraged to plan for the way forward.

**12. Policy and MoA update from Natasha:** Feedback from previous meetings was given as discussed above.

**13. Status of postdocs at SU update from Natasha:** Points 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 already discussed, see above.

**14. Questionnaire on changing status of SU postdocs** (update from Natasha)

**15. Postdoc forum and Postdoc conference (October):** Plans were still underway.

**16. Suggestions for next meeting:** Mentorship program will be discussed. The items remaining from the meeting's agenda will be transferred to the next meeting of the PDS.

**17. Closing**

The meeting closed at 16h30.