



Stockholms
universitet

Institutionen för molekylär bioteknik,
Wenner-Grens institut

Protocol for the Program Council (programkollegium) for master programs in Microbiology and Molecular Life Sciences

Date: Monday the 15th of November, 09:00 – 10:30

Present: Stefan Åström, Tore Bengtsson, Ruilan Xu (student), Ann-Beth Jonsson, Franziska Hildebrandt, Jessica Slove Davidsson, Ulrich Theopold, Kristina Jonas, Sofia Sundberg Örtegren (student).

1. Tore Bengtsson was appointed to adjust the minutes.
2. The agenda for the meeting was approved.
3. The protocol from the previous meeting (Grundutbildningsgruppen) from 2021-10-05 was approved.

4. Program Council

a) Review of education:

Jessica Slove Davidson informed about the ongoing education review. Stockholm University is obliged to regularly conduct a review of our programs, and Jessica is currently writing a report on our two master programs (a draft was sent out prior to this meeting). Jessica encouraged the Program Council to send any comments/suggestions on the report by the 24th of November.

The student representatives were thereafter asked to share their thoughts on the programs (both positive aspects and ideas on what can be improved). Sofia informed that her opinion is that the program is highly satisfactory. The only remark was that the structure of the program doesn't allow students to take all courses that they wish to. The course in statistics was lifted as an example. Ruilan was of the same opinion as Sofia, and expressed a wish to be able to take more courses. Ruilan also stated that some lectures demand a pre-knowledge that not all students have, which can make it difficult for everybody to understand the content. Another remark concerned the lab-work, and it was expressed that if too many students are expected to do an experiment together, there can be long periods of wait which makes the work less fun.

b) Master's fair

Ann-Beth Jonsson informed about the upcoming Master's fair which is held annually in November. Studentavdelningen is in charge of organizing the fair, and all departments are invited to present their programs. The student representatives expressed that information to international students (about fees and other practicalities for students who are not Swedish residents) are important to include in the presentation. Jessica Slove Davidson informed that this information is covered in the introduction by Studentavdelningen. International/exchange students are also invited to share their experiences.

It was pointed out that the Master's fair differs from the pre-recorded webinars (which GUG 2021-05-05 decided to wait with). The webinars would be available on demand on SU's website and would provide information about the programs to prospective students. The Faculty has set aside money to finance the webinar of the Bachelor's program (via Mediaproduktion), but currently there is no plan of financing the production of the webinars for the Master's programs. Jessica Slove Davidson however suggested that BIG perhaps could finance the use of Mediaproduktion.

c) Admission committees

It was concluded that since the admissions are in March, this issue does not have to be discussed further at this point.

d) Eligibility to program and courses

A discrepancy between the eligibility to the Microbiology program and one of the obligatory courses, has recently resulted in the scenario where a student is eligible for the program, but lacks the eligibility to take one of the obligatory courses. It was discussed whether the eligibility criteria for the course should be reduced, or if the criteria for the program should be raised. The Program Council decided on the latter. It was concluded that this change cannot be made effective until October 2022, and that the preparative work therefore can wait.

e) Athena program page

One of the student representatives made a general remark on the fact that teachers use the Athena site in different ways, which can make it difficult to find what you are looking for. Also, sometimes the documents on the course sites contain information from previous semesters. It was concluded that it can be difficult to unify the course leaders' use of the course pages, but that the minimum requirement should be that the information on the pages is updated and accurate.

After a brief discussion about Athena, it was made clear that not all students know that the program pages even exist. Some however do, and Xuilan said that the program page has been useful. Jessica Slove Davidson informed that it can be a good platform to spread information (for example invitations to seminars that reach the BIG administration).

f) Contact with master students/lunch meetings

A discussion on how to best organize meetings with master students was held, and the example of Niklas Janz, program director for the Master program in Ecology and Biodiversity, was lifted. Niklas Janz regularly organizes lunch meetings with the students, something that has been highly appreciated by both organizer and attendees. It has created a good atmosphere among the students and enabled discussions about the education that perhaps otherwise would not have come to light.

It was however concluded that the SU representation rules does not allow us to serve lunch, only light sandwiches or fika. It was decided that something along these lines would be good to organize for our master students, and that it would be advantageous to arrange the light lunch/fika with the two programs together once or twice a year. The question on who would pay for this however remains, and the discussion will continue.

g) Degree project

The question on whether the information concerning degree projects is sufficient, was asked, and the student representatives shared their opinions. Their experiences diverged, and it seems that some students find the information satisfactory, and some find the process leading up to the degree project a bit confusing. Jessica Slove Davidson informed that there will be a seminar on this during the spring term which hopefully will straighten out any questions. It was also concluded that the previously mentioned lunch meetings/fika could be a good time to inform more about degree projects and for second-year students to share their advice to first-year students.

h) Should the stem cell course be obligatory?

The program in Molecular Life Sciences is in its structure free with a small number of obligatory courses, and the Program Council was asked to discuss whether this should be changed. More mandatory courses could for example ensure progression in the program.

Sofia Sundeberg Örtegren expressed that many students choose the Molecular Life Sciences-program because of its free structure. Thus, changing this might make some prospective students less interested. This also seemed to be the general opinion of the group, and it was expressed that it should be seen as a strength to have one program which is more steered (Microbiology) and one that is less steered (Molecular Life Sciences).

The rationale behind the idea of making the stem cell-course obligatory, is to make all the courses during the first term mandatory to ensure that the students are given a good foundation. This however means that the stem cell-course has to be moved from the spring semester to the autumn semester, something that would involve major changes to the program. The question will be discussed further at a later point.

5. Other questions

Jessica Slove Davidson informed about the program evaluations that BIG recently instated. Too few students responded to the evaluation last time, which made a report impossible to write since the anonymity of the responders could not be ensured. Jessica will send out the questions in the evaluation to the group, in case someone wants to suggest changes before the upcoming spring evaluation.

It was decided that the next Program Council-meeting will be held in/after April 2022. The exact date will be decided at a later point.

The next GUG-meeting will be held on the 14th of December 15:00-16:30 in Runnströmsrummet.

Written by
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Approved by
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