1st General Meeting of Leibniz PhD Network

21 September 2016

Host: Leibniz Institute of Plant Genetics and Crop Plant Research (IPK), Gatersleben

Content

1. Introduction of the IPK (Prof. Dr. Andreas Graner, Director)

- Topics of IPK: Sustainability and how biodiversity is the future of crop plants - "Plant-based BioEconomy"
- The PhD-board at IPK was founded 2004
- Own seminars: presentation of results and hot topics
- Organise soft skills trainings
- Organise educational trips to other institutes
- Travel to (technical) fairs – take care of social events
- Special awards given to a PhD student by PhD students
- PhD club has its own budget that can be used to invite guest speakers or for other events

2. Presentation of the Leibniz PhD network (David Edeler)

- Camille Gaillard and Elisabeth Berger initiated the Leibniz PhD network, which is the youngest association among the four big scientific associations in Germany
- Goals of the meeting: vote of standing rules, section officers and spokespersons
- Spokespersons (2): in charge of the network
- Section officers (5): representatives of the sections

3. Introduction of the Leibniz association (Sabine Müller, Research manager)

- Leibniz mission statement: scientific excellence and societal impact, basic and applied research, collaboration with universities
- Founded in 1995, 88 institutes, 5 sections from environmental research to humanities; head office consists of scientific affairs offices
- Representatives of scientific affairs offices (Section A - Sabine Müller) are the contact persons for issues of students/Postdocs at Leibniz institutes
- Career development instruments: graduate schools and/or science campuses, Leibniz PhD network, Leibniz-Kolleg, Leibniz career guidelines, mentoring program for women researchers, career guidelines, competition, PhD symposia
- Research funding system in Germany very complex
- "Joint initiative for research and innovation": increase of research budget for university/institutional research by 3-5% per period – annual monitoring of research results
- "Leibniz competition": project funding (32 million), researchers can apply for it – only one project per year is funded
- Only 10-12% of Leibniz directors are women

4. Introduction of the Max Planck PhDnet (Martin Grund, Spokesperson)

- Max Planck: basic research, 83 institutes, budget similar to Leibniz'
- Budget for the PhDnet and events: 50k+9k € insurance, application every year
- Annual general meeting: Institutes represented by PhD students – 2015: establishment of new statutes
- Voted steering committee and section officers – min 50% of representatives must vote central financial officers and secretary

- Activities are seminars, events, surveys, etc.
- Regional PhDnet Hubs: regional social meetings of PhD students (private meetings without scientific focus)

Agenda 2016
- Network: Implementation of new statutes, build up national doctoral network
- Compensation: guidelines (TVöD contracts)
- Equal opportunity: diversity management and non-discriminatory environment
- Career perspectives: career fairs and consulting for new career tracks

Activities
- Representation, improving doctoral conditions
- Training: soft skills, interdisciplinary "visions in science" conference, career fair
- Networking: connecting PhD students, social events, alumni fairs
- "Visions in science" conference: discuss about future of science, learn to communicate science (science slam)
- 2 working groups on "alumni association" (contact to industry)
- Act successfully as political stakeholder: improvement of student compensation
- Amount of scholarships in Max Planck association decreases, more TVöD contracts
- Eurodoc annual conference (association for European PhD students)
- Max Planck career fair expands to private sector (Bayer, Accenture, EY, labfolder, SMC, ...)
- Send surveys to political parties to evaluate the positions about research funding

5. Introduction of the Helmholtz Juniors (Konstantin Kühne, Treasurer)
- 18 Helmholtz Centers, great structural difference (sub-institutes)
- 14.700 scientists, 6.800 PhD candidates
- Divided in 6 sections (institutes can be part of multiple sections)
- Centers are independent from one another (like Leibniz)
- Annual meeting, budget similar like Max Planck PhDnet (50k €)
- Constant working groups (Communications, Events, Working Conditions, Survey, Structural Development)
- Mission: establish the brand "Helmholtz", increasing public awareness, improving PhD education (science skills, soft skills)

Survey group
- Biannual survey, approx. 1.400 PhD candidates (working to improve participation numbers)
- Problems with contacting institutes and matching regulations for institutes like Leibniz

Structural development group
- Link of the network to other networks, creating communicational infrastructure (webpage, etc.)
- Annual budget discussion rather extensive within Helmholtz, budget granted until 2019 (discussion if the Helmholtz Juniors shall become an independent organisation – decision was negative)

Question session with the Max Planck and the Helmholtz representatives
- Q: How much time is required for engaging in the PhD network and do they get financially compensated?
- A: It is an important engagement, it should be financially compensated, but it is also a soft skill training and is a positive bonus for one's career. It takes time, but still allows to do science properly. HeJu works to get contract\financial recognition. It can also be used to ask for a contract extension at MPG PhDnet.
- Q: Can you give some more information about the GeW? (Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissen)
- A: GeW is a platform organising conferences on science, i.e.: science funding. It is a workers' union, all in German, and most of the members are teachers
- Q: What about stipends issue and social security?
- A: The MPG PhDnet example: in 2014, 2/3 of PhDs were on stipends. President changed since then. PhDnet did communication campaign. 2015 discussions towards only contracts, set in place July 2016. It´s a specific kind of contract based on TVöD 13 at x% (for example, has less vacation)
- Sabine Müller points out that the central administration of the MPG employs 550 people, which is significantly higher than the number of employees at the central administration of the Helmholtz and Leibniz. Leibniz can voice central recommendations, but not force institutes, which is comparable to the Helmholtz Association. PhDnet is the only organisation that can bring all PhDs together in MPG.
- Q: What are your experiences about the transition between teams (representatives of the network) due to high turnover caused by short term contracts?
- A: Working groups in HeJu prepare agenda and handing over process happens during the general meeting. MPG PhDnet: positions vary in their challenges and the degree they are "upfront" and can evolve between different years, PhDs don´t need to go for election but can engage in working groups. HeJu: it is easier to join the organisation team of the PhD network when you just started your PhD. MPG: often still regular exchange with elected alumni.

6. Results of the World Café

Future of the network
The issue in this group was to find out how our network should look like in the future – once it is established.

Digital survey
- To make statistics to give feedback to other institutes → transparency
- For the Leibniz inner performance and also outer performance
- For the institutes and the department to figure out possible problems for some heads of departments
- Form to fill out → communication platform
- To include in the survey: if a need exists for strengthening soft skills

Rules and guidelines
- E.g. tenure track (take care for some scientists)

- Equality in social standards (contracts, social insurance)
- Write Guidelines for PhD Representatives with common framework for election (head office)
- "Best Practice"

Interdisciplinary conference
- Prizes for Sciences Slam as incentives for participation
- One event for all disciplines followed by sessions about more specific topics (for example according to the sections)
- To generate the feeling "We are Leibniz"
- Socializing across local clusters

Career day (Arbeitsamt, Industry, Information)
- Together with Max Planck and Helmholtz networks
- Talks about a life apart from Science (Leibniz Alumni?)
- Start-ups and small companies should pay less than bigger companies
- Diversity of topics and companies according to the topics of Leibniz
- Founding of companies or start-ups, but also information for independent scientific careers
- Cooperation with Wissenschaftsladen Bonn for Jobs → spread out to our network

Building up networks
- Social networks (Alumni network): twofold, one for the job and one for meeting people → Also the possibility to meet with other MPG and Helmholtz PhD candidates
- Centralization, this network is the first step for that (fixed budget for institutions in Leibniz)
- Email distribution by e.g. phdrep@institute.de → good and sustainable communication
- Newsletter, Thematic RSS feeds/blogs (install Server and give the first push)
- Leibniz Wiki → Working group
- Guidelines for Open Access etc. → maybe working group
- International organisation of PhDs (European Academy of Young Scientists, Eurodoc)
- Ethics in science – use our "unexploitedness or virginity" in science to give a message to the community
- Budget, funding → working group

Situation of the Leibniz PhDs
This round table has been established to find out and talk about the situation of the PhDs in the Leibniz institutes.

- Heterogeneity of contracts (not positive)
- Only a few PhD candidates have scholarships
- Good development with regard to three-year contracts
- Some documents are not in English, unfortunately
- Only few students participate in Graduate Schools
- Leibniz Graduate Schools don't have enough courses and mentoring
- Most say that they work too much for the money they receive
- Some of them are able to do home office (positive)

- More career advice wished for on how to apply for fund or money after PhD
- Some institutes are less organised than other

Situation of the PhD representatives
This round table has been established to find out and talk about the situation of the PhDs in the Leibniz institutes.

- How do we get to know the PhDs? How do know who is new?
- Checklist supposed: Checklist for new PhD to go to PhD Representative, tandem of new and old PhDs, socializing, central PhD list
- Election is an issue
- Difficult to find people who want to do the job
- In some institutes there are possibilities to work in the advisory board
- Good point that the first meeting was initiative for some PhD representatives
- Willingness to be PhD representative is not connected to the budget

Benefit of the Leibniz PhD Network
In this group we wanted to find out and come up with the benefit of the Leibniz PhD Network.

- Firstly: That there is a change and activity!
- Transparency across all institutes, soft power to change things at your institute
- Opportunity to share information with Helmoltz and MPG
- Organisation of seminars, soft skill meetings etc.
- Raise statistics
- Don't forget the social scientists – get awareness (diversity)
- Alumni network in future
- Common identity
- We PhD students want to have more power in institutes, Leibniz association and also politics (comparable to a labor union)
- To improve working conditions (payments etc.)
- Important to have a budget as Leibniz PhD Network
- Improvement of education of PhDs

7. Presentation and discussion of the network and operational modus + votes (M. Annegarn-Gläß, A. Arcudi)

In order to have a vote, the statues which where aligned with the lawyers of the head office of Leibniz were presented and discussed at the general meeting. A report of the open discussion is presented below.

- Changes in Statutes were done in the document
- Point 5 (2): 6 weeks before general assembly
- Point 6 (1): Members are PhD candidates
- Discussion: What if a PhD representative, who is a section officer or spokesperson drops out as PhD candidate (e.g. PhD representative at institute is voted for shorter terms than the section officer)?

- Answer (Camille): The person that can't fulfill the requirements for being a section officer or spokesperson can't/shouldn't/might not become member of the steering committee.
- Discussion: (David) Deputies for Section officers shouldn't be voted for because too complicated and too many persons, but section officer can choose a deputy for help. (Student) Deputies should be voted for because spokespersons also have elected deputies = section officers. (Martin S.) Steering committee would be too big and president won't know who to contact. (Student) Deputy is unlikely to work in his position – as it would be an exception that the section officer drops out! – do not need voted deputy.

Vote 1:
(1) Voting for deputies for section officers and section officer at general assembly (1)
(2) Deputy is appointed when required (majority)
(3) Abstention (2)

Vote 2:
(1) Deputy among the PhD representatives (28)
(2) Deputy among PhD candidates (minority)
(3) Abstention (1)

Point (8.2): (Student) Voting should be validated by min 50% attendance of institutes representatives. Problem: Some sections (D) not sufficiently presented. Option: Using proxy, i.e. institute announces another institute to vote (Camille) Institutes that are not interested and not present at meeting should not be forced to vote.

Vote 3:
(1) No 50 % participation for section officer elections, but for major revisions in statutes (majority)
(2) 50 % participation for section officer elections and for major revisions in statutes (1)
(3) Abstention (1)

Changes in standing rules or hot topics are going to be discussed in next general assembly.

8. Voting of Statutes

- Agree (47 people for 47 institutes)
- Disagree (1): Why? (Student) The situations of PhD students in different research fields differ a lot – student does not feel properly represented with her field (social sciences or humanities)
- Abstention (0)
- If more than 50% people disagree: PhD Network cannot work
  → Idea: Working group on editing the statutes and standing rules

9. Election of spokespersons and section officers

Spokespersons candidates (votes):
- Voting: 2 votes per institute for 2 different candidates:
- Sabine Müller about role of spokespersons: Visiting senate, report to government board, participate in Leibniz working group for supporting career developments of scientist at the institutes. Working groups also work on equal opportunity topics or law. Problem: German

6

language.

- David Edeler, Section C (19)
- Martin Schmidt, Section E (39)
- Friedrich Anders, Section D (4)
- Verena Ott, Section B (7)
- Olga Naumov, Section D (28)
    → **Elected spokespersons: Martin Schmidt and Olga Naumov**

Section officers candidates (votes):
- Sabine Müller about the role of the section officers: Participation in general assembly of Leibniz Association and present the network/section in front of directors → get more support for the sections

Section A: Inga Marie Bause (IWM) (only candidate) Saskia Ripp (IDS, deputy)

Section B: Antonio Arcudi (HSFK), Christa Gotter (deputy)
- candidates: Antonio (4)
-                    Christa (3)

Section C: Carolina Schwedhelm, Leon Hilgers (MFN, deputy)
- candidates: Pascal Bartling (2)
-                    Benjamin (1)
-                    Martin Wolff (1)
-                    David Edeler (2)
-                    Carolina Schwerthelm (6)
-                    Jeanne Wilbrandt (1)

Section D: Lydia Neumann (LIKAT, Rostock)
- candidates: Florian (3)
-                    Lydia (6)

Section E: Femke Lutz (PIK) (only candidate) (7)

10. Coordination of working groups

At the general meeting we decided to establish working groups to start the activities within the network. All PhDs can participate in or establish a working group. Below you find the responsible persons for the established working groups at the general meeting and their first results or decisions.

Obligatory groups
- General assembly team: Lydia/Saskia (LIKAT, Rostock)
- Structural group: David Edeler (IPK), Martin (FZB), Jeanne (ZFMK), Carolina (DifE)
- Structure/Communication concept

- o Problems: Leibniz Kooperativ – Is it only a CRM system? What is the use of it for survey?
- o → Connect to David's group
- External/Internal: David Edeler (IPK)
- Internal:
  - o Webpage for Leibniz PhD Network
  - o Leibniz Kooperativ: maintain a web server list
  - o Creation of generic email addresses
  - o Allows every PhD representative to have an account
- External:
  - o Connect to other PhD/Science communities

Facultative groups
- Diversity/equal opportunity (also working conditions!): Christa Gotter (IAMO), Verena Ott (IfL)
- Common guidelines and rules: Steering committee
- Digital survey: Florian (IPHT), Simon (IPN)
- Career day: together with other PhD organisations → steering committee
- Ethics in science: Nobody volunteered
- Working conditions: Friedrich (AIP)
- Interdisciplinary conference: Benjamin (HKI)
  - o Challenge: find topic that applies to all PhD students
  - o Define conference boundaries, finances? Forming of smaller working groups?
- Digital survey: Simon Grund (IPM)
  - o Design (depth/width) of the surveys
  - o Acceptance of the directors
  - o Data safety
  - o How do we reach the PhD candidates?