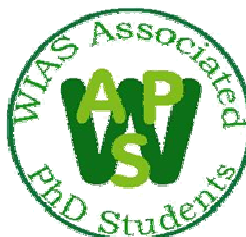


Agenda WAPS meeting June 23rd 17.00 h Zodiac Nautilus Room

1. Opening
 2. Minutes last meeting, Wednesday 14th of April 2010
 3. WIAS Education Committee meeting
 4. WIAS Board meeting
 5. Wageningen PhD Council meeting
 6. WIAS/WAPS Questionnaire
 7. Accie
 8. WAPS' internet site
 9. Important dates
 10. Miscellaneous
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1. Opening

2. Minutes last meeting, Wednesday 14th of April 2010

- Present: Myrthe Maurice-Van Eijndhoven (chair), Harma Berends, Krista Engelsma (minutes), Patricia Huijbers (WIAS secretary), Marije Oostindjer, Dirkjan Schokker, Anouk Schurink, Irene Walstra, Anne Wientjes
- Absent: Ioannis Sitaras, Marije Oostindjer

Ad 1. Opening

- Myrthe welcomed everybody and opened the meeting.

Ad 2. Minutes last meeting

- Date should be "2010" instead of "2009".
- "Huibers" should be "Huijbers".
- Questionnaire to PhD students according to the supervision will be a separate discussion point on the agenda of the meeting.
- Wageningen Science Day was organized by WGS. After the letter of WAPS to the organization, the program was changed. Every Graduate School was represented by a speaker. The day was set up around three themes. There were only few PhD candidates from WIAS, but this might be explained by the Symposium of De Veetelers and the PhD party. The WAPS Council regrets that there was no correspondence with WGS after sending their letter. The Wageningen Science Day will become a yearly event. This should be taken into account when planning the WIAS Science Day.
- The PhD party on March 12th was very nice. There were some salsa dancing classes and everyone was enthusiastic. For next year it might be an idea to organize a dinner with all WIAS PhD candidates.

Ad 3. Education Committee

- There has been a meeting on March 18th.
- ASReml course: 6 PhD students have attended the course. This course is evaluated with an average of 4.2 (on a scale 1-5).
- Ethics and Philosophy course: 15 PhD student have attended the course. This course is evaluated with an average of 4.0 (on a scale 1-5), with a low variation. It can be concluded that the quality of this course has increased considerable with the new format. The biggest remark were the long days. Dirkjan has followed the course and was positive, especially about the possibility to discuss his own research project within the course. He agrees that the evening sessions were (too) long.
- It was asked if this course will be provided again. This will probably be the case, but is under discussion.

Ad 4. WIAS Board meeting

- Supervision and evaluation of PhD project: One of the recommendations in the peer review report was that the supervision of the PhD students needs to be monitored. The IAB advised to organize exit interviews. Furthermore the idea rose to set up a questionnaire and ask students about their opinion. A first discussion on this has taken place on Tuesday 12th of April with Myrthe, Patricia and Marianne Bruining (WIAS). It will be discussed separately.
- Introduction & Discussion of the PhD thesis: Another recommendation of the peer review committee was that the Introduction and Discussion of an PhD thesis should not only be independent pieces of work that can be assessed as the student's own, but also contain a substantial, extensive and high quality literature review and recommendations.
- Involvement of international students in WAPS: the WAPS has to cope with a low participation and interest of PhD candidates (especially the international students). It is difficult to motivate PhD's to become more active. The first action point could be to set up a questionnaire and ask for expectations, demand and awareness of WAPS.

Ad 5. Wageningen PhD Council meeting

Dirkjan will represent the WAPS Council during the Wageningen PhD Council meeting on Tuesday April 27th. Topics to be discussed include;

- a) organizational development of graduate schools. There is some debate within WUR to change the structure of the WGS to one graduate school. It remains unclear to the WAPS Council if this would be on a organizational level or for logistics only. Furthermore, it remains unclear in what respect this would change research programs, as mentioned in the email of Frans Kok.
- b) There is a national tendency towards the development of graduate schools that cover both MSc and PhD education. That focus would mean that research skills might become less important. WAPS is concerned about the quality of the PhD education, since PhD's are a minority in number. It is unclear in what stage this discussion is. Dirkjan will ask for more explanation.

Ad 6. Accie

- There were 11 PhD candidates subscribed for the "Wagenings Golf and Diner" activity. Please ask you colleagues to join! Everyone can sign up by sending an email to Anne Wientjes (Anne.Wientjes@WUR.nl)
- May 27th an American Lunch will be organized at Zodiac.
- June 23rd a BBQ will be organized.

Ad 7. WAPS' internet site

- Anouk has renewed the WAPS website with new pictures of the WIAS Science Day, the new board and some news items.

Ad 8. Questionnaire

On April 13th a meeting was held between Myrthe, Patricia and Marianne Bruining to set up a questionnaire to evaluate existing courses, and supervision. A general content of the survey was discussed in the WAPS meeting. The questionnaire will contain some general questions (chairgroup, starting year, internatiol), some course related questions (quality, suggestions, courses outside WUR) and questions about supervision (functioning, role of WIAS, supervising skills). If possible, some additional questions about the WAPS Council will be included. The WAPS will participate in setting up the questionnaire, but this will be done primarily by WIAS (Patricia). Krista will send the questionnaire around and makes sure that responses will be handled confidential. A proposal of the questionnaire will be send around by Patricia.

Ad 9. Miscellaneous

- PNN wants to know in what respect they can contribute to a more active PhD network over graduate schools and cities. The general opinion of the WAPS members is that increasing or renewing their network takes a lot of time and did not have satisfactory result in the past.

3. **WIAS Education Committee meeting**

See last attachment.

There are concerns about the amount of what was previously called the “rugzakje”; amount of financial support given to a PhD to follow courses of the TSP. Wageningen Graduate Schools asks all PhD councils to put this point on the agenda of the WPC.

4. **WIAS Board meeting**

To evaluate the supervision of PhD candidates and the available courses two surveys were prepared by WIAS (Patricia). Both questionnaires were very limited and the WAPS members Marije and Akis send suggestions for revision of the questionnaires. The survey for evaluation of the supervision was shortly discussed during the WIAS board meeting and they agree to change the current draft with our suggestions. Main comment of the WIAS Board on the supervision survey was about the anonymity and confidentiality: When serious problems will be detected how to handle?

Myrthe will have a meeting with Patricia for revision of both questionnaires just before the WAPS meeting. When the new drafts are ready they will be sent around to all WAPS Council members for comments.

During the WIAS Board meeting also the “rugzakje” which is the amount of money allocated to follow courses was discussed. This amount is in most cases too small to pay all courses / congresses. As it is important for PhD candidates to follow enough good quality courses and to get enough opportunity to build up a network when the “rugzakje” is too limited, also money from other sources has to be allocated for this purpose. However, it is often up to supervisors / chair holders how to deal with this which could lead to a problem for the PhD candidate. The WIAS scientific director Bas Kemp will discuss this, also depending on the outcome of the course survey, with the heads of the different chairs.

5. **Wageningen PhD Council meeting – Minutes meeting 21-04-2010**

Present:

Myrthe Maurice – van Eijndhoven, Dirkjan Schokker (WIAS), Jose Lozano (EPS) Flavia Geiger, Lennart Suselbeek, Stefan Metz (PE&RC)

Joint doctorates

Wageningen University is developing a policy towards the awarding of joint doctorate degree programs. Lennart has found info on the internet about a joint doctorate program, that is already applied in other countries (e.g. Belgium) The PhD performs research within two institutes and each institute assigns one promoter and co-promotor. The joint doctorate program could work nicely if tight arrangements are made concerning financials, responsibilities and direction of research. One of the institutes should be responsible for the wage and fringe benefits of the PhD. The graduate school could have a role in the approval of all the critical arrangements.

Future structure of graduate schools.

Research MSc and the merging of MSc and PhD programs within one graduate school.

Jose mentioned that EPS has already started with the Res.MSc, but this could be a try-out. During the next WPC meeting, Karin Horsman (EPS) is invited. She might elaborate on this. There is still uncertainty about the actual format of the Res. MSc, and to whom it will be accessible. Doing a PhD-program should not be compared with any MSc-program and including a MSc program into a graduate school is not beneficial for PhD-candidates. Furthermore it was mentioned that education is simply not the responsibility of the graduate schools and that supervision of the Res.MSc student will come down to the research groups.

Benefits of various issue focused graduate schools (present situation) versus the benefits of just one Wageningen graduate school.

WIAS has discussed this within the WAPS council and PE&RC within the PPC. Together with EPS it was concluded that there is a lot of hesitation to go for the new model. Communication between PhD-PhD and PhD-graduate school will be negatively effected. Physical, mental and communicatory distances will be increased. The organization will be more bureaucratic and the PhD-candidate will loose part of its influence. In the present model, a wide range of expertise are represented by the different graduate schools and their councils., This will be lost if all are merged into one graduate school. Wageningen has a very good graduate school system and was evaluated as very well.

Improving the WPC meetings.

The following ideas/proposals were brought forward and were accepted by all:

- Regular PhD meetings prior to the actual WPC meeting, to discuss the agenda and other issues from the several councils.
- More representatives (2) per council to make sure that, in case of cancelations, all graduate schools are represented during meetings.
- Structure and organize the WPC PhD meetings → Chair, secretary. These functions will be assigned during the next meeting. Stefan will organize and prepare the next meeting again.

Other points

It was a pity that there was a low attendance during this meeting. Not everybody cancelled for the meeting, but this will be appreciated for the next time. Furthermore, this meeting was regarded as positive and very useful in preparing ourselves for WPC meetings.

6. Accie

About 15 persons joined the American lunch. It was really nice, everyone brought some home-baked food.

So far, not many PhD's subscribed for the BBQ. This might be caused by the 'Personeelsbijeenkoms' which is the day before.

7. WAPS' internet site

8. Important dates

12-15 October 2010	WIAS Introduction course , (1.5 ECTS)
25-29 October 2010	Introduction to mathematical modelling in biology , (2.0 ECTS)
8-10 December 2010	Advanced Statistics course Design of Experiments , (1.0 ECTS)
29 June 2010	Animal reproduction research at ASG-WUR and FD-UU; an update by PhD students. , (0.3 ECTS)
23 June 2010	WAPS BBQ

9. Miscellaneous