

Committee for Research

KI Junior Faculty Activity Report and Budget 2020 request

Submitted by the 2019 KI Junior Faculty leadership: Chair Carolina Hagberg; vice-chairs Kristiina Tammimies, Rodrigo Fernandez Gonzalo, Shireen Sindi; Secretary Magnus Helgesson and Treasurer Ujjwal Neogi.

Short about KI Junior Faculty

The Junior Faculty Steering Group at KI, established in 2002, is an interest organization of and for researchers with a Ph.D. but not yet a permanent academic position as university lecturer or professor. Junior faculty refers to a stage in the research career and includes postdocs, assistant professors and researchers (both short-term and permanently employed).

We aim to promote the development of a predictable and transparent career system at all levels of KI and to advocate for conditions that allow present and future junior faculty at KI to perform at their best and to conduct independent research of high academic quality and originality. The Junior Faculty Steering Group has a direct and continuous dialogue with KI leadership. We currently have two allocated seats in the Faculty Council and one adjunct seat each in the Committee for Doctoral Education and the Committee for Research. The Steering Group voices the opinions of the junior faculty based on information from our yearly junior faculty survey and by having a broad representation at the majority of departments at KI. We provide support to early-career academics through our website and by organizing seminars, workshops, and hearings. We aim to integrate equal opportunities in all of our work. The work carried out by the Junior Faculty Steering Group is divided into different focus areas, represented by Focus Groups. The number and the scope of the Focus Groups can vary and is dependent on the most prominent issues Junior Faculty at KI needs to tackle at a specific time point. As the Junior Faculty Steering Group is an interest organization, we do not have a member registry. All junior faculty at KI are welcome to participate in the activities organized by Junior Faculty and to apply to become a member of the Steering Group. Our activities are financed from the Committee for Research Budget with 300 000 SEK/year which we ask to be 350 000 SEK for the coming year (attachment 1).

A summary of our recent and coming activities

Communication focus group (coordinator: Kristiina Tammimies)

The main focus of our communication focus group is to conduct a yearly survey to gather the opinions from everyone at KI who has a Ph.D. but not yet a permanent

position as a university lecturer or professor. Our survey contains approximately 65 questions covering three main focus areas of JF at KI: career systems at KI, funding situation, and equal opportunities. Each section had both closed and open-ended response options. We use the results to prioritize our core activities. The survey results were communicated to all head of the departments in 2018 by sending out the survey report together with a letter to highlight the findings. The latest Survey report covering answers from 2017 and 2018 will be sent to the committee after activity report has been presented.

For the 2019 survey, we added questions regarding the new infrastructure at KI (send out after the meeting). Overall junior faculty at KI seems to be happy with the new buildings at KI but are concerned by the rental situation.

Funding and Policy Focus Group (coordinator: Nick Tobin)

The goal of the funding and policy focus group is to promote the development of diverse funding schemes that support researchers at early and middle career stages, provide better opportunities for junior faculty to explore new and breakthrough research ideas as an independent researcher and avoid the loss of high-potential junior faculty.

In the last years, the focus group has focused on the analysis of gender bias in the evaluation of Assistant Professor candidates for faculty-funded positions. The first analysis has been peer-reviewed and published in F1000 (Holst and Hägg, 2018, *Positive bias for European men in peer-reviewed applications for faculty position at Karolinska Institutet*). Follow-up analysis of this work has been on-going together with Equality focus group. Sara Hägg will come and present the newest findings to the Committee of Research in December 2019.

Additionally, the focus group has done a comprehensive gathering of age and gender distributions of research group leaders across KI Departments. Nick Tobin will come and present these findings for the Committee for Research in the November meeting. Currently, the focus group is analyzing the data from the Swedish Research Council focusing on potential age and gender disparities.

Career Focus Group (coordinator: Karin Sundström)

The Career Focus Group works towards KI having clear and predictable career paths at all career levels; that all recruitments of junior faculty at KI should be transparent and based on external review, and that junior faculty at KI, especially at the Biträdande Lektor/FoAss stage, get the appropriate funding, mentoring and support during this initial career stage to allow them to develop their independent line of research and focus on producing high-quality research throughout this career stage. To understand the needs of junior faculty we have in addition to the JF yearly survey also interviewed the researchers receiving a faculty-funded FoAs position between 2014-2017, asking what non-monetary support these they did get when starting their lab and what they were lacking. Based on the answers we have now started initiatives such as organizing an information seminar for this year's top applicants of the Career Ladder Biträdande Lektor positions during the interview stage, working together with central KI HR to host the event.

To inform young researcher at KI about the Career Ladder the JF career focus group has organized a yearly hearing about the faculty-funded positions, providing a chance for everybody to ask their questions directly to the board of recruitment. We have also held workshops on how to start a research team, including sessions dealing with economy, hiring and leadership, during 2018-2019 and a half-day seminar on how research decisions were made at KI in 2017. During the past years, the focus group has mainly engaged in the discussion and spread of information concerning the reduced meriting time for Biträdande Lektors from 7 to 5 years. We have also offered feedback to the KI leadership on the proposed new Career structure at KI which we find a positive move towards the right direction.

Equality Focus Group (coordinator: Shireen Sindi)

The Equality focus group aims to improve and highlight unequal situations for junior faculty at KI. The focus group aims to achieve this goal by striving for greater transparency in academia, highlighting scientific role models from all avenues of science, pursuing a mentorship program for junior and established researchers, encouraging the employment of a qualified equality researcher, and educating and informing researchers and research leaders on discrimination, issues and solutions. Major work for the past half a year has been the establishment of the Junior Faculty Mentorship Program at KI, launched 25th of September with a total of 60 mentor-mentee pairs across KI departments. The mentor program will continue for one year with a mid-term and term evaluations which will be summarized in a rapport fall 2020.

Additional work from the equality focus group has been to participate in the analysis of KI recruitment procedures for biträdande lektor positions as reported from the policy and funding focus group.

National Junior Faculty of Sweden

National Junior Faculty (NJJ) of Sweden (www.nationaljff.se) is an umbrella organization for local junior/future faculties at Swedish universities. The vision of NJF is to create the best possible academic environment that enables early-career academics to achieve their full potential. NJF's mission is to represent and support early-career academics by (i) recognizing the values and competencies of early-career academics, (ii) strengthening the professional development of early career academics, and (iii) advocating for policies that promote positive changes in the academic system. At the moment, there are ten member faculties at NJF; Linköping University, Lund University, Malmö University, Sahlgrenska Academy, Stockholm University, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Umeå University, Uppsala University, Örebro University, and Karolinska Institutet.

As one of the biggest Junior Faculties in Sweden, KI Junior Faculty takes an active role in all the activities conducted by NJF. In addition, the NJF chair (Sara Hägg) has been a member of KI Junior Faculty for the last 18 months. Every year, NJF launches the National Junior Faculty Survey, where we try to collect data from early-career researchers across Sweden to study the influence of work situation and well-being on perceived scientific environment. Part of our data

have been recently published in a peer-review journal (*Signoret C, Ng E, Da Silva S, et al. Well-Being of Early-Career Researchers: Insights from a Swedish Survey. Higher Education Policy. 2018*). Among other actions, NJF has written several statements and letters to, e.g. Vetenskapsrådet and Minister for Higher Education and Research, regarding relevant issues such as Plan S, VR Consolidator grant, VR Funding Strategy or Career System. Some of these documents have been published in national media such as Svenska Dagbladet.

The representative members of each local junior/future faculty meet once per month (online). Also, we participate in bi-annual meetings that take place at one of the participating institutions. NJF main goal for 2020 is to organize a conference entitled “Sustainable development of future academia – a National Junior Faculty conference.” The conference will be held at Karolinska Institutet in May, and preparations started half a year ago.

Additional information to be send out to the committee after the activity report has been presented at the meeting

1. Junior Faculty Survey Report 2018
2. Changes in KI infrastructure questions from JF survey 2019
3. Holst and Hägg 2018 F1000
4. Junior Faculty PM on the new career structure