During the Strategy Day we had a brain storm session about PhD education. There were four stations where the participants could leave suggestions. In charge of those stations were Bengt Jonsson, Ingela Nyström, Thomas Schön and Lina von Sydow. For today's meeting, they had summarized the suggestions from each station. In the meeting they discussed with the Director of PhD Education Wang Yi and Head of Department Michael Thuné, about possible actions based on the suggestions.

Below is a summary of the outcome of the discussion. These are not finalized action points, but rather a set of themes, under which items are listed that could be further developed into action points.

Theme 1: Advising
[The Swedish word "handledning" can be translated both as "supervision" and "advising". During the Strategy Day, Christer Kiselman pointed out that "advising" connotes support whereas "supervision" signals control. Consequently, I have chosen "advising" here.]

* How advising can/should be structured should be discussed and we should share good examples with each other. (Thomas described his model for advising and we agreed that it should be worth presenting, for example in a department follow-up seminar about PhD education.)

* The responsibilities of PhD student and adviser should be discussed. It would be good to reach agreement about those, both among the advisers at the department, and between advisers and PhD students.

Theme 2: Planning and follow-up

* The study plan should be used regularly and systematically

* Each PhD student should give seminar presentations at regular intervals (e.g., at least once per year)

* Each PhD student should have a group of senior researchers (other than the advisers) who once per year follow up how things have worked out for the student during the year.

* Follow-up should be regular and the PhD student should get to know early on if progress is insufficient. In the extreme case that progress is so unsatisfactory that the department decides to ask the Faculty to take action, this must not come as a surprise to the PhD student, but should have been preceded by a well documented process to support the student to "get on track".
The teaching duties for PhD students should be planned well in advance and known side conditions should be taken into consideration in the planning (e.g., that the student is already registered for attending a conference during one of the course periods).

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Theme 3: PhD courses

* For each of our PhD programs ("forskarutbildningsämnen") core courses should be defined and be given at regular intervals, so that each PhD student gets a possibility to take those courses.

* It is also worth considering that some PhD courses may be of interest for more that one of our PhD programs.

* It should be investigated if and how MOOC courses could be a resource in PhD education.

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Theme 4: Miscellaneous

* Experience shows that more good candidates are likely to apply for a PhD position if several positions are announced together in a larger advertisement. This implies that it might be a good idea for each PhD program to coordinate announcement of its open positions so that several positions are advertised at the same time. Also, if several positions in different PhD programs are in the pipeline to be announced, it could be a good idea to put them in a joint advertisement.

* It might be of value that the professors responsible for PhD education ("forskarutbildningsansvariga professorer") were summoned to meetings at regular intervals by the Director of PhD Education, to address issues of common interest for all our PhD programmes and specializations. Before such meetings are initiated, the purpose of such meetings and the role of such a group should be discussed in more detail.