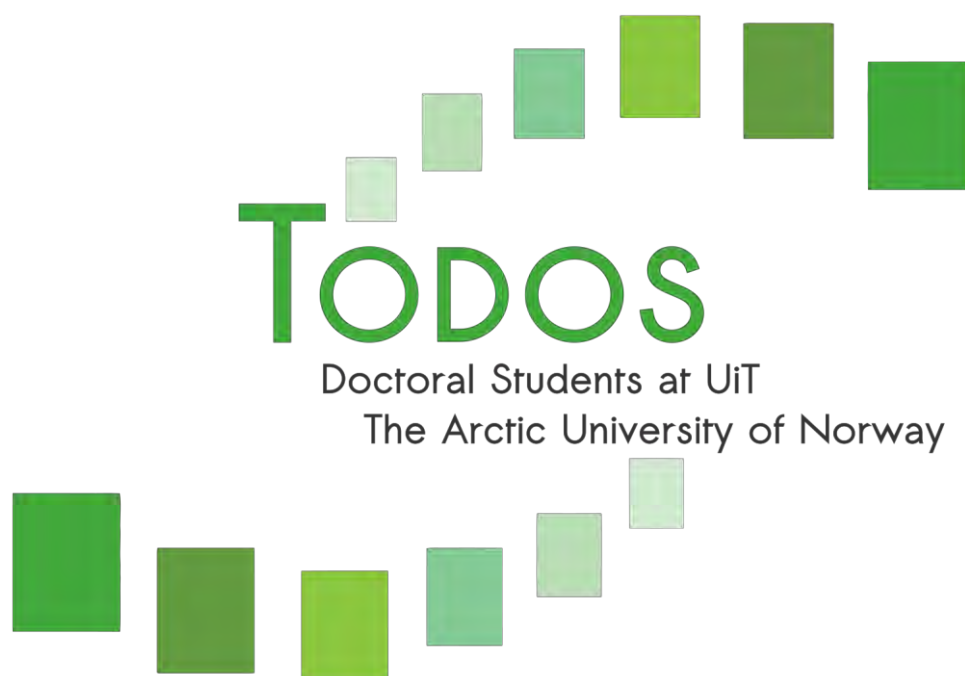


Doctoral Students at UiT – The Arctic University of Norway (TODOS)
Activity Report Winter 2020



Doctoral Students at UiT
The Arctic University of Norway

27. Nov. 2020

Table of Contents

1. About TODOS
2. Letter from the Board Chair
3. TODOS Board 2020
4. Activities
 - 4.1. Meetings, Committees and Contacts Throughout the University
 - 4.2. Events Organized for PhDs and Postdocs at UiT
 - 4.3. Other Activities
5. Budget

1. About TODOS

Doctoral Students at UiT – The Arctic University of Norway (TODOS) is an interest organization for PhD candidates & postdocs at UiT. We focus on three important aspects of being a successful PhD candidate & postdoc: good academic working environment, healthy social life, and representation of our interests on university's boards, committees, and events. We accomplish this by organizing academic seminars and social gatherings throughout the year as well as joining committees, meetings, and events with various contact persons in key positions around the whole university. Through this, we hope to contribute to improving your PhD & postdoc experience.

2. Letter from the Board Chair

Dear fellow PhD candidates and Post-Doctoral researchers from our extended UiT family across Arctic Norway and around the world,

God Jul, Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and a Happy New Year!

For many, this season is an opportunity to reflect upon the accomplishments we have achieved and the obstacles we have overcome in the last year while at the same time setting new goals and priorities for the future.

It would be an understatement to say that 2020 did not turn out as anyone was expecting and that many of us faced difficult challenges through all of it. Those challenges are still not over, and I hope you, your family, and your friends are well no matter where you and they find yourselves in the world. I hope that next year the world will be in a better place than it has been in this one.

At the same time, we should draw inspiration from the fact that challenges can be overcome, and we can adapt and learn how to do things differently even in extremely difficult circumstances. We have

seen that in the past year as we have learned how to live with social distancing. As we have learned new software to allow us to connect digitally. And as we have learned how to modify our research and our academic lives.

After everything we have been through this year, I am extremely proud to present this report for 2020 on behalf of the TODOS Board. It has been an honour and pleasure serving you over the last year and I am proud to say that TODOS has risen to the challenge of helping guide and stimulate PhDs and Postdocs at UiT in this new normal.

In this task, TODOS continues to be the eyes, ears, and voice of the new generation of talented scholars that it represents, and it is committed in stimulating academic and social lives both in person and online. Your attendance, your feedback and your participation in our academic and social events is constantly appreciated. It is you who make a community of lifelong learners possible.

To ensure our continued success, we always welcome your comments, concerns, and ideas via email, Facebook, Twitter, or in person.

We highly encourage you to get involved in the TODOS Board and now is an excellent time to get involved. Currently, we are seeking new members for the following positions: Board Chair, Treasurer, and Chair of Academic Affairs. TODOS always needs good people to help shape the future of its membership.

I, Ukeje, and Kat are not seeking re-election and will be stepping down in December. I would like to thank both Ukeje and Kat for their tremendous contribution throughout this year. Kat deserves special recognition for filling the role of Chair of Academic Affairs for two consecutive terms. I would also like to thank the three members of the Board who are continuing – Barbara, Miro, and Laura. It has been an absolutely pleasure of working with you and I greatly appreciate your hard work and input over this year. Thank you in taking the time to make UiT a better place to work and study.

I would also like to show my deepest gratitude to all UiT employees who work with TODOS – thank you for your support and contributions. Finally, I would like to extend my thank you to all PhDs and Postdoctoral fellows – thank you for being here, thank you for your contribution, thank you for making UiT a world class institution.

Stay safe, stay healthy, and I wish you all the best in 2021.

Sincerely,

Anatolijs Venovcevs

TODOS Board Chair for 2020

3. TODOS Board

Board-Chair – **Anatolijs Venovcevs**, Institute of Archaeology, History, Religious Studies, and Theology (HSL)

Vice Board-Chair – **Barbara Sophia Stein**, Institute of Social Education (Helsefak)

Treasurer – **Ukeje Agwu**, School of Business and Economics (BFE)

Chair of Social Affairs – **Miro Bobrik**, Institute of Pharmacy (Helsefak)

Chair of Academic Affairs – **Kara Kathleen Hodgson**, Centre for Peace Studies (HSL)

Chair of Communications – **Laura Victoria Schulte-Werning**, Institute of Pharmacy (Helsefak)

4. Activities of the TODOS Board for 2020

Overview

TODOS Board members are part of different councils and committees and participate in different meetings and events. TODOS strives to have representatives on all major university committees. In addition to that, the TODOS Board also organizes its own meetings to identify needs and concerns, plan social and academic events, generate new ideas, and share information. TODOS is also constantly receiving feedback from its members and is always working to improve the working conditions at the university. Our network of contact persons throughout the institution is used to achieve the necessary changes.



TODOS Board, Spring 2020



TODOS Board, Fall 2020

4.1 Meetings, Committees, and Contacts Throughout the University

- TODOS is represented in ***Forskningsstrategisk utvalg*** (*Research strategic council*), ***Forskningsetisk utvalg*** (*Research ethics council*), and ***Priskomiteen*** (*Prize committee*). These are vital arenas for UiT leadership, faculty leaders, and employee groups.
- TODOS had a representative on the ***Polarkomitee*** (*Polar research committee*). While the TODOS board is not directly represented, it has a close associate on this committee. The

committee was established to improve the coordination and strategic development of the polar research environment at UiT. You can find more about the polar research committee [here](#).

- Starting in January, TODOS also began doing presentations to new employees at UiT in association with the International Cooperation Office. These presentations have been used to introduce TODOS to newly arriving employees and inform them of the services TODOS provides. These took place in January, May, and September.
- The TODOS Board is committed to being a truly multi-campus organization. As of June, we have a Board member (Barbara) who sits at the Harstad Campus. Through her efforts we now have specific mailing lists for members among all the different campuses. In October, we also did a survey of the other campuses outside of Tromsø to see what they wanted from us. We are currently in the process of securing extra funds for TODOS to have compensated representatives to organize events and activities in Alta, Harstad, and Narvik in the future.
- TODOS Board members are in regular contact with representatives from the **library**, the **university administration**, **High North Academy** and the **representatives of temporary staff** at the university board.
- TODOS holds regular board meetings throughout the year, 12 took place in 2020 to plan and coordinate activities, meetings and events. Even the global pandemic did not stop the TODOS Board who moved their meetings online.

4.2. Events Organized for PhDs and Postdocs at UiT

December

For two years now, the TODOS Board has a rotating administrative structure meaning that half of the board members are elected in June and half at Christmas and both serve one-year terms. This allows for overlap in leadership and means that TODOS can constantly host activities. While the new board members find their place in the organization, older board members can still host events. Thus, TODOS was able to continue its activities in December after the last winter meeting. This included two events:

Shut Up & Write Sessions - TODOS partnered with the University Library to provide “Shut Up & Write” sessions. These sessions enabled PhDs and Postdocs to carve out time and space to focus specifically on their writing needs. Sessions were structured with goal-setting and timed writing periods, followed by breaks. One session was hosted on December 9th with 20 people attending.



Shut up and Write Session, December 9th, 2019

Life After the PhD, Part 2 - This series was designed as a collaboration between TODOS and the High North Academy, in response to feedback that PhD and Postdoctoral fellows needed guidance in developing their professional skills. The first part of this series was hosted in October and on December 10th saw the much-anticipated Part 2. The second workshop was titled, “Building Your CV - Toward Your Dream Job!” 22 people registered for the event.

January

TODOS Monthly Social Gatherings - For two years, TODOS has been organizing monthly social gatherings for PhDs and postdocs. Typically, every second month we meet up on a Friday after working hours at Bazinga on campus while the months in between we get together in the evening at Blårock downtown for their “Blue Monday”. We eat, drink, chat and have a great time.

The first gathering in 2020 took place in January at Blårock which was held on January 20th, the real [Blue Monday - supposedly the most depressing day of the year](#). Fortunately, there was no depression to be had that day as over 25 people came out to take over the top floor of Blårock. The event lasted long into the night.

Shut Up & Write Sessions - January saw the start of weekly Shut Up & Write Sessions for 2020 in partnership with the University Library. Three such sessions were hosted on January 9, 16, and 23. The events have been extremely successful with 20-30 people attending each week.

Arctic Frontiers Conference - Our Director of Academic Affairs, Kat Hodgson, represented TODOS at a panel-discussion side event to the Arctic Frontiers Conference, titled “Academic

(un)employment and mobility in the Arctic North-project: Knowledge based Growth in the Arctic.” The event organizers and the audience sought insight into the perceptions and lived experiences of both Nordic and international PhD candidates regarding the High North labour market and career opportunities.

February

TODOS Monthly Social Gathering - Our second social gathering took place at Bazinga on Friday, February 28th with approximately 15-20 people attending.

TODOS-UB collaborative events:

- 1) *Shut Up & Write Sessions* - Shut Up & Write Sessions continued through February with high attendance numbers. Three sessions were hosted on February 13, 20, and 27.
- 2) “Your Name Isn’t Joseph, Why Are You Stallin’? - A Writing Workshop for PhDs and PostDocs” - this workshop was designed to help fellows understand the myths we tell ourselves about writing and provided tips for how to overcome procrastination and paralysis in the writing process. 25 people registered for the event.

International Mother Language Day - Held on February 21st and organized by the Bengali Community at UiT this was a TODOS-affiliated event to celebrate the diverse, multilingual community in Tromsø.

March

Shut Up & Write Sessions - Shut Up & Write Sessions continued in March with one being hosted on March 11.

University Shut Down - TODOS Board met the day before the university decided to shut down in response to the international response to the COVID-19 pandemic. All planned events were cancelled with hope of being hosted when the university reopens. This included two Shut Up & Write sessions, the last instalment of the Life After PhD series, and a Writing Retreat to Vikran. All planning for potential future events were put on hold. We were very disappointed, but the safety of our members comes first.

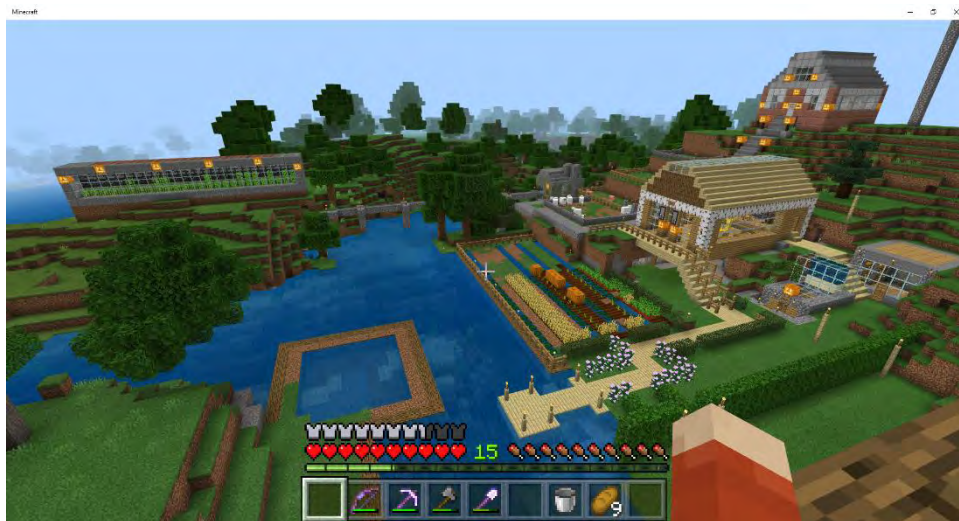
Going Digital:

In response to the global pandemic and to continue fulfilling our mandate, TODOS moved all its operations online to its Facebook page, website, Twitter account, and email.

- 1) *Virtual Accountabili-buddies!* - A Facebook initiative created to keep our members accountable. Participants were encouraged to post their daily goals in the morning and in the evening post what they managed to accomplish. This ran every weekday from March 14 to March 24.
- 2) *TODOS Minecraft Nights* - TODOS set up a Minecraft Server and ran weekly game nights every Saturday. Members were encouraged to stay at home and play video games (in their off hours, of course). The logic was that if you are at home playing video games, you are not getting sick. The first TODOS Minecraft Night took place on March 28.
- 3) *Communication with Membership* - With social distancing measures in place, TODOS stepped up its role as an advocacy and communication group. TODOS postponed all social and academic events on March 11, a day before the official Norwegian government shut down. This was followed up on March 16, reassuring our members that the interests of PhDs and Postdocs was one of the top priorities of the UiT administration and urging them to stay safe, stay home, and stay calm.

April

TODOS Minecraft Nights - We continued our Minecraft Nights through April with game nights being hosted on April 4, 10, 18, 24, and 25.



TODOS Minecraft World

Virtual Shut Up & Write - TODOS's popular Shut Up & Write sessions were moved online on April 28th with 15 people attending in a digital format. The meeting was held through Microsoft Teams and was very well received. So much so that a spin-off, self-organized Shut Up & Write session was established by several members.

Communication with Membership and Expanding Advocacy - Throughout April, TODOS increased its communication with its members and national bodies representing PhDs and Postdocs on the developing situation related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Communication took place via email and on the TODOS Facebook page.

May

Virtual Shut Up & Write - Shut Up & Write sessions continued online. Sessions were hosted on May 5, 19, and 26, with approximately 10 people attending each time via Zoom, from multiple UiT campuses, including Alta and Narvik.

Leadership Skills course - Director for Academic Affairs, Kat Hodgson, represented TODOS as a guest presenter for the High North Academy course, FSK-8003: Leadership Skills. She presented the topic, “Culture and Conflict in the Workplace” to approximately 20 students via Zoom.

Communication with Membership and Expanding Advocacy - This work from April continued through May as government and university restrictions were eased and concerns were raised from PhD and Postdocs who were concerned how they could successfully finish their course of work and study. Through this TODOS continues to advocate on behalf of its members to receive clear messaging from the university administration about necessary contract extensions.



TODOS Board Meeting in the middle of the pandemic.

June

Virtual General Meeting – Because of COVID regulations, the spring general meeting was held digitally via Zoom. 12 people attended to hear the general report and elect new board members. There were door prizes and a Kahoot quiz. In the elections, Laura was re-elected for a second term as the Chair of Communications, Miro was elected as the Chair of Social Affairs – replacing Lorenzo who did not seek re-election, and Barbara was elected as the Vice Board Chair – replacing Ataur and making TODOS history by becoming the first TODOS Board member outside of Tromsø campus.

Virtual Shut Up and Write - Shut Up & Write sessions continued online. Sessions were hosted on June 2, 9, and 23, with approximately 10 people attending each time via Zoom, from multiple UiT campuses.

Hike Sherpatrappa with Kat – With easing COVID restrictions, Kat Hodgson brought back her Sherpatrappa hikes. The first one was held on June 21.

July

Midnight Sun Sherpatrappa Hike with Kat – July 18 was one of the last times to see the midnight sun in Tromsø. Kat hiked Sherpatrappa at midnight to see the last rays of the midnight sun.

August

Welcome Back Minigolf - With social life carefully reopening in Tromsø, TODOS held Welcome Back Minigolf at Storgata Camping on August 21. The event was a huge success with over 30 people attending to socialize and play minigolf. Storgata Camping has become TODOS's default social location since the place is large enough to host people at a safe distance.

Virtual Shut Up and Write – Online sessions were hosted on August 6 and 26 with approximately 10 people attending each time via Zoom, from multiple UiT campuses.

September

TODOS Movie Night – TODOS brought back the movie night on September 4. The movie was "Her" and 12 people attended.



Waiting for the movie to start.

TODOS Monthly Social Gathering - The monthly social gathering was held at Storgata Camping and 20 people attended to drink beer and make new friends. This was our first monthly social gathering since February because of COVID-19. The event was held on September 16.



TODOS Social – September 16

Virtual Shut Up and Write – Online sessions were hosted on September 16 and 30 with approximately 10 people attending each session via Zoom from multiple UiT campuses.

October

Writing Retreat to Vikran – After the original setback with the spring lockdown, the writing retreat to Vikran took place from October 2nd to 4th. 12 people attended. The retreat consisted of three writing sessions as well as social activities in the evenings.

Survey of the non-Tromsø Campuses – TODOS sent out a survey to campuses outside of Tromsø and received feedback from members about what they wanted to see on their campus and how TODOS can help them best. This information is being used to push for greater funding for TODOS to increase its activities on all campuses where PhDs and Postdocs are present in large numbers.

TODOS Monthly Social Gathering - TODOS has its monthly social gathering on October 30 at Storgata Camping and approximately 15 people attended. This was our last physical social gathering of the year due to the growing second wave of COVID-19 in Norway and new restrictions instituted by the university.

Hike Sherpatrappa with Kat – The last hike of the year was held on October 11.

Virtual Shut Up and Write – Online sessions were hosted on October 6, 20, and 27 with approximately 10 people attending each time via Zoom from multiple UiT campuses.

November

Life After the PhD – Life After the PhD came back after a long pause and was held over Zoom with 8 people attending. The topic was self-assessment for one's future career goals.

Virtual Shut Up and Write – Online sessions were hosted on November 3, 11, 18, and 25 with approximately 10 people attending each time via Zoom from multiple UiT campuses.

December

Virtual Shut Up and Write – Kat's last sessions as the coordinating the Virtual Shut Up and Write Sessions as the Chair of Academic Affairs took place on December 2 and 9 with approximately 10 people attending each time via Zoom from multiple UiT campuses.

Digital Julebord and Winter Elections – Digital Julebord and winter elections are planned for December 4th. Pizza will be delivered to attendees who can join us via Zoom from Tromsø, Alta, Harstad, and Narvik.

4.3 Other Activities:

- TODOS is a member of SiN (*Stipendiatororganisasjonene i Norge*), the national organization for PhD candidates, postdoctoral fellows and early career researchers, which aims to be a contact point both for each local interest organization in Norway as well as from the European level (Eurodoc). SiN represents early career researchers' interest on a national level when it comes to policy making. This year Miro attended SiN general meeting on behalf of TODOS. The meeting was held on 10th and 11th of

September in Oslo.

- TODOS has established regular monthly meetings with the representative for temporary employees at the university board. These meetings are working on several issues:
 - Regular working meetings with a member of university administration that will start in January and be a platform to communicate PhD and Postdoc learning experience directly to the administration.
 - Increase annum compensation of PhDs who are located on campuses outside Tromsø but must travel to Tromsø on their annum for mandatory classes and thereby limiting the amount of money those PhDs have for other activities like conferences, books, and international classes. This issue will be reviewed locally at campus level in order to provide a solution next year.
 - Clarification and possible supplementation to corona-related extensions where PhDs and Postdocs received unequal and unclear treatment among different faculties.
- TODOS is seeking to increase its budget for the first time in many years. This money will go to hosting more events in Alta, Harstad, and Narvik campuses as well as having compensated TODOS representatives on those campuses who would be responsible for using that event money and coordinating with the rest of the TODOS Board.
- TODOS, thanks to Barbara, has moved all its working files from Google Drive (used since 2014) to Microsoft Teams. Microsoft Teams has better security encryption allowing TODOS to store all its files with the same level of digital protection offered to other university information systems.
- TODOS has been actively using social media and email to promote all TODOS events. At the same time, TODOS website has been updated and improved.

5. Budget

Every year, TODOS receives a set amount of **250,000 NOK** to host activities for PhDs and Postdocs as well as settle out operational costs.

Unfortunately, we have not been able to host our planned events which requires financing due to the Covid-19. However, pending bills and operational costs still remain. These are broken down below.

Pending bills

From 2019, we had pending bills of **79,477.11 NOK**. This deficit was due to too much expense from last year, hence requiring a withdrawal from this year's account. However, this withdrawal is not peculiar to this year. There was a deficit of **92,205.09 NOK** from 2018, which required an equivalent withdrawal from the budget of 2019.

On 27th December 2019, TODOS organized a seminar. The invoice for this was paid out this year. Requiring a withdrawal of **435 NOK** by NORGES ARKTISKE STUDENTSAMSKIPNAD (SITO)

On November 29th 2019, TODOS organized a side event for the Munin Conference: "How (and why) to work as an open scientist in the 21st century." It was a seminar and lunch for the speaker combo event. 10 people total attended the lunch for an invoiced amount of **4,600 NOK** by NORGES ARKTISKE STUDENTSAMSKIPNAD (SITO)

Available budget 2020

To carry out our operations and activities for 2020. We had **165,487.89 NOK** allocated to us when all pending bills from 2019 had been paid out.

Fixed Bills 2020

We have a fixed bill of **2,000 NOK** every year. This is paid out to the Association of Doctoral Organizations in Norway (Stipendiatorganisasjonene i Norge - SiN). This is usually paid out in December every year.

Board Members compensation

TODOS allocates **150,000 NOK** every calendar year for compensation of board members for the work done. This is an equivalent of **12,500 NOK** every semester for each of the six board members. The compensation goes to work contract extension to compensate for time spent on TODOS activities. It can also be added to the board member's annuum or taken as duty work.

Earlier in the year, a previous board member Ataur took out his compensation as duty work. This means that **12,500 NOK** has been given over to TODOS to carry out our events. So far, no other board member has given over their compensation.

Hence, we have budgeted **137,500 NOK** to serve as compensation for board members.

Vikran Retreat

The Writing retreat to Vikran cost **9,000 NOK** to cater for accommodation for the participants.

TODOS film night

For the TODOS movie night we purchased popcorn, snacks and drinks for **258 NOK**

Gift Cards

At the TODOS meeting before the summer, we had gifts for lucky participants slated at a total amount of **1,315 NOK** as Tromsø Sentrum Gift Cards.

We also ran surveys across our satellite campuses, lucky participants of this surveys won a total of **500 NOK** gift card for Ark Bookshop

Remaining budget as of Dec 3rd, 2020

As of Dec 3rd, we will have an available amount of **14,914.89 NOK** to work with. This is going to the purchase and delivery of pizza for our great digital julebord.

This concludes the TODOS Report for 2020.



Thank you for a wonderful year, we'll be back in January, keep up the cheer!