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Enhancing Communality of Doctoral Researchers: A Case Example from Oulu University

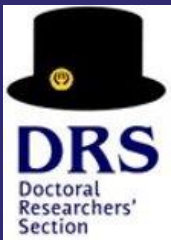
12.10.2023

Domus Bothnica, Vaasa

Jarkko Impola

University teacher, Doctoral Researcher

Chairperson of the Doctoral Researchers' Section of the Student Union of University of Oulu



Who?

Jarkko Impola (MEd)

- University teacher
- Doctoral Researcher in the Faculty of Education and Psychology
- Experience on student organizations (esp. management, finances and academic affairs)
- **Chairperson of the Doctoral Researchers' Section (DRS) 2023-2024**

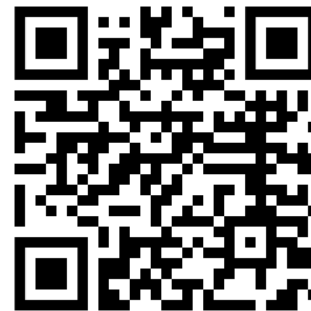
Sari Pramila-Savukoski (MSc)

- Expert in Hybrid Intelligence programme
- Doctoral Researcher in the Faculty of Medicine, member of the Research Council
- Experience on student organizations, teaching, developing education

Vice Chairperson and Secretary of the Doctoral Researchers' Section 2023-2024



Jarkko's
Research
Profile →



Sari's Research
Profile →



Student Union of University of Oulu (OYY)

- A community of around 12 000 members, and a lobbying- and service organization
- Supervises the interests of students in the university and in the city of Oulu
- Offers guidance and assistance in studying and student life related matters
- Organizes free-time activities
- Supports, aids and trains student organizations operating within the Oulu academic community
- Supports and trains student representatives of the university administration

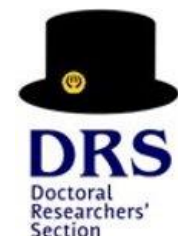
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University of Oulu Graduate School (UniOGS)

- Coordinates doctoral training in the University of Oulu since 2011
- Main task to provide high quality doctoral education at the University of Oulu
- Supervised by the Vice Rector of Education and led by the UniOGS coordinator
- Consists of a management group and four field-specific doctoral training committees with student representation in each
 - Health and Biosciences
 - Human Sciences
 - Technology and Natural Sciences
 - Information Technology and Electrical Engineering
- 22 degree programs
- Approximately 1300 students, and 170 graduates in 2022

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Doctoral Researchers' Section (DRS)



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- Established 2013 as a community for doctoral researchers
- Supported and funded by OYY, although the Section is mostly run on a voluntary basis by doctoral researchers themselves
- Does advocacy and lobbying work within UniOGS, arranges events and trainings for doctoral researchers
- Offers an interdisciplinary platform for discussion of timely matters for doctoral student representatives and other doctoral researchers
- Collaborates with UniOGS for the development of doctoral training in Oulu university



Track Record:



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- Preparing a survey to doctoral researchers concerning the quality of doctoral training in UniOGS + analyzing and disseminating the results
- Lobbying for changing the official title of PhD Students to Doctoral researchers
- Lobbying for 10 % work contracts to all doctoral researchers with a working grant
- Getting staff e-mails for all doctoral researchers regardless of employment status

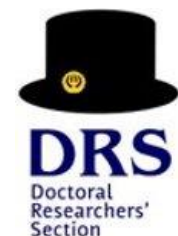


Promoting Communality in the UniOGS:



- Meetings (approximately once in a month), open for all doctoral researchers
- Teams-channel, and a Facebook group open for all doctoral researchers
- Events: Picnics, networking, pre-Christmas Party
- Communicating activities and encouraging people to join via Social Media (esp. Instagram)
- Bilinguality (FIN/ENG)

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Challenges:

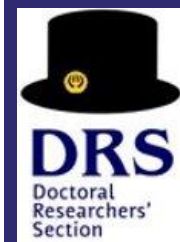
- A diverse community is also a dispersed community
- Most doctoral researchers are already involved in a community related to i.e., their own research unit or study field
- Many are unaware of what the DRS is and what it does
- The activities might not be conceived as relevant to oneself
- DRS is often only approached due to some specific need, i.e., a problem to be solved
- Encouraging Finnish doctoral researchers to join as well



Future Points of Development:

- Developing the meetings and longer-term actions (i.e., via renewed rules and action plan)
- Working to have more doctoral researchers involved via active promotion of activities and consistent encouragement
- Finding people to commit to activities (i.e., chairmanship and student representative positions)

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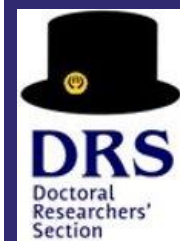


More about us:

- Website:



- Instagram (at)drsoulu:



Thank you!
(Questions and
comments are welcome)