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Final*

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Minutes of SAMU meeting on August 24, 2021

Participants: Working environment committee representatives: Ulla Øland, Jiri Srba and management representative: Rene Rydhof Hansen. Employee representatives: Lene Even, Lene Horn, Florian Lorber, Lefteris Papachristos. Management representatives: Peter Axel Nielsen, Helle Westmark. Minute taker: Diana Plejdrup Frank (DPF). Other participants: None.

Item 1. Welcome to the new department manager

Welcome to the new department manager Peter Axel Nielsen. Jesper Kjeldskov resigned his position as of August 1, 2021, and Peter has accepted the position as acting department manager for a year. This is therefore his first SAMU meeting.

Item 2. Psychological and physical work environment

Each department conducts the annual work environment discussion. In the work environment discussion, the department should decide on future goals for the work environment work and how to get there. This must take place at an AMiU / SA meeting or equivalent no later than August 31 2021.

APV discussion

The agenda is fixed, and the following questions should be answered and taken into the minutes (deadline August 31):

1. Have the previous year's goals been achieved?
 - No, as the stress project on CS is not finished due to delays. The local work environment committee will make a final action plan within the next month.
2. What should be in focus in the coming year?
 - Physical work environment (building/rebuilding/noise reduction etc.)
 - Post corona work life (going back to campus, working, meetings, socializing etc.)

Comment: Onboarding of the many new employees was suggested. Good point but it is not part of the APV discussion. Will be handled elsewhere. We are looking at the procedure in the coordination group.

3. How should the collaboration take place?
 - In the CS work environment committee that meets 4 times a year.

4. What goals do we set for the coming year?

- Finish the stress project. **Action:** The project should be finished, and it will be presented to SAMU and on the coming department seminar (after the meeting it has been decided to postpone this to a regular staff lunch meeting).
- Focus on the building/rebuilding of Cassiopeia (e.g., noise reduction).
- Post corona work life (going back to campus, working, meetings, socializing etc.)

Comment: What about the overnight seminars we usually had? Research groups/the administration could benefit from going somewhere together but also as a department.

5. What other inputs are possible? Should be included in the discussion?

- No additional items.

6. Approval / verification of current work environment organization

- **Action:** A representative to the work environment group from Copenhagen must be added. PAN will clarify who could be interested in this and appoint the person (the representative will act as an observer to begin with).

In addition: Preparation of a competence development plan to ensure that we have the necessary competencies for the coming year's work environment work.

- New members should take the work environment course. However not if they act as an observer. The new Copenhagen member will act as an observer.

Status on the stress project initiated at CS in 2020

The CS working environment committee had a meeting with the previous head of department Jesper Kjeldskov in July where a preliminary action plan for the topics from the stress project was made. We now have a new department manager, and a final action plan will be made within the next month based on the input from the research groups and the administration.

Comments

- According to Florian Lorber: Some people are stressed to come back after the corona period. The Head of Department at CS adheres to the central health guidelines from the authorities in terms of how we should react. The question is if many people feel like that?
- PAN sent an email to all staff in the beginning of August that we are now back to normal. Are there any specific information about people feeling scared? Message is now: We are back to normal. **Action:** Communications office should send information based on input from PAN.

Item 3. New PBL unit

Appendix: See hearing material that was sent to all department heads in May with deadline June 1, 2021, about the establishment of a new PBL unit: Institute of Advanced Studies in PBL (IAS). The material was also sent for hearing to HSU, FSU and the Academic Council. The Board of Directors has asked department heads to inform the local SU about the material.

- PAN introduced the new PBL unit which has both teaching and learning responsibilities. It is not structured as the former UNESCO center but now placed at university level. Intention is that staff can move

in and out of the new PBL unit from their own departments. The project is now in its implementation phase.

- There were no comments to the presented material about the new PBL unit.

Item 4. Rules for employees' freedom of expression

The university's rules for employees' freedom of expression have undergone a minor revision. The rules have been adopted after a discussion in the Personnel Policy Committee and in the Main Cooperation Committee (HSU). In the light of the recent debate on freedom of research and freedom of expression, Rector calls for the subject to be discussed in the department councils and in the departments' local cooperation committees.

Read the university's [rules for employees' freedom of expression](#).

- PAN introduced the rules in short – there was a minor discussion about the fine line of rules. This is just a clarification of the rules based on recent debates and previous cases in the press about what public employees can actually do.

Item 5. Information from committee members

Fixed item on the agenda where you as SAMU member can give an update on what is going on/inform about news.

- English course with focus on pronunciation: The department will soon offer a local course in English with focus on pronunciation. The background is feedback from students in evaluations that some teachers/supervisors can be hard to understand due to their pronunciation and we would like to change this.

Comments: Do the participants have to pass an exam? No, there will be a final assessment by the end and we will evaluate as we go along. Each participant will be invited to an initial meeting to clarify challenges/needs. In hiring interviews this spring there has been more focus on language skills as well and some have already agreed to take the course. The overall and reasonable idea is that our students should be able to understand our teachers.

- Recent status on our action plan for diversity (earlier worked with in this forum) has been reported to HSU. On their last HSU meeting they have asked why we did not choose to focus on the gender equality subject. We chose the subject internationalization deliberately as we have a diversity project dealing also with gender equality. A status on our diversity project and our approach to this from the research evaluation has been added in our status to HSU. PAN commented that: As for diversity it is not only gender issues – we need to have a broader agenda. We will continue working on this.

Item 6. Post Corona

Do we need to keep this as a fixed item? We will keep it for the next meeting at least. People's anxiety still remains.

- General info about study start fall 2021: For 3rd semester and upwards a specially arranged study start is happening at Cassiopeia from September 2-3 with partly socializing and teambuilding activities. A program will be sent out soon. Copenhagen will be handled separately with similar activities. We are "rebooting the students". We have received substantial funding to support these activities. We are postponing group formation until the week after. It is for the students benefit that we do this.



Comments

- There was a discussion about the learnings of the corona period especially in terms of the digital study environment. Each semester we gather student's evaluations and this spring the digital environment was part of the questionnaire/evaluation. A follow-up (answer) for the students will be made soon on our CS website and sent out via Moodle.
- Some of the feedback is that the students like video recordings of lectures (e.g., you can access the material later and so on). There was a discussion about this and PAN would like to emphasize that it is the teacher's method decision whether or not a lecture will be recorded as this requires quite an effort and proper equipment.
- Let's learn positively from the experiences in the corona period (e.g., online versus physical meetings/teaching etc.). JS suggested to share the good experiences for teachers. PAN agreed that we need to organize our experiences and we also need to be better at explaining our reasons for our choices.
- LH asked about the corona questionnaire that was sent out to the administration - what is the feedback on this? **Action:** HW will clarify where the feedback has ended.
- **Conclusion:** We are back to pre-corona. What changes could we make from the learnings.

Item 7. Department's establishment in Copenhagen

Fixed item on the agenda to ensure ongoing information / discussion about the establishment of the software educations and the department's team in Copenhagen, as it has an impact on working and personnel conditions.

- We now have 5 employees in Copenhagen. PAN is the education coordinator there. New employee is Andrés Masegosa. Daniel Russo has been relocated from Aalborg to Cph. Christina Maxwell Berthou originally comes from the First Study Year administration and is hired 20% in CS until August 2022, after which she will be fulltime employee at CS. Regular meetings are set up and distribution of the teaching load is being worked on. Things are beginning to get organized – but we are still under establishment. The new building to host us will be ready by January 2022. Challenge is that we do not have group rooms for SW3. Lars Vinter Smith, communications, is working on getting the F-club involved and the Dean is funding the establishment of a TECH student club. Students and employees need to be integrated at CS.

Comments:

- LH asked about support in terms of administration (fundraising, etc.). PAN: it will happen from Aalborg but it will be good to go there at some point.

Item 8. Status on Cassiopeia rebuilding

Fixed item on the agenda as long as Cassiopeia is being rebuilt, as it is important for working and staff conditions.

- Future: No specific plans yet. This year: Department lab is being established – it is a research lab not for students' activities and the doors will be closed into the lab. Corridors will lead students and staff into the cluster behind.

- Upstairs: Offices facing the courtyard will be rebuilt (ceilings, etc.). Study administration area will be constructed close to the auditorium. Time schedule is this year. The auditorium is not available from the middle of October. UØ will send out info as soon as we have the final plan. Study counselor will be in a meeting room this semester.

Item 9. Status on hiring

Fixed item as agreed on previous SAMU meeting.

The new employees hired in 2021 was presented at the recent department day. Policy is we are trying to go to the limit as long as teaching is still not covered. We will keep on hiring.

Comments:

- SAMU expressed surprise that we are keeping on hiring with the same pace until end 2022. As info from previous department head indicated that it would be less in 2021.
- PAN explained that this year we did not hire all open positions. The reasons for this were discussed. Partly, the Danish HR procedures will delay the process causing that we lose some of the candidates; but there are several other reasons.
- A “search committee” will be introduced at CS. We are allowed to shortlist. The Dean is supporting this.

Item 10. Environmental considerations

Fixed item on the agenda as The Working Environment Committee is an integrated part of SAMU. It deals with points about environmental considerations that are important to employees.

- UØ informed that in the future garbage bins will be removed from offices. Background is that there be introduced more sorting of trash at AAU. More info will follow when we know more.
- JS commented that smoking outside smoking areas has started again. **Action:** UØ will send out an email again with a reminder.

Item 11. AOB

No additional items. Other than follow-up on the economy will come out as separate material from HeS after the follow-up on the current period.

Item 12. Evaluation of the meeting

The meeting was evaluated: A very effective meeting and the debate was focused.