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Aalborg University
PO Box 159
9100 Aalborg

Case Officer:
Diana Plejdrup Frank
Telephone: 99407228
Email: dpf@cs.aau.dk

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Minutes of Department Council Meeting on September 29, 2022

Participants: John Stouby Persson, Jiri Srba, Helle Schroll, Tim Meritt, Gabriela Montoya, Frederik Møller, Lone Vriberg, Nikolaj Rossander (student). Minute taker: Diana Plejdrup Frank. **Unable to attend** Giovanni Bacci, Dalin Zhang, Arthur Osnes Gottlieb. **Other participants:** Ulrik Nyman

Item 1. Approval of the agenda

The agenda was approved. Please note: The meeting was held in Danish due to absence from two English speaking members. The minutes however is written in English as it is sent to staff.

Item 2. Roles and tasks of the department council

Appendix: See appendixes in Firstagenda on the tasks of department councils

The task and role of the department council were discussed. The item is on the agenda because we have discussed the need for clarifying the tasks and roles of the different councils and committees at the department.

According to the AAU regulation the council is established by the head of department to ensure that staff and students have a say on the department's academic matters. The council has e.g. two tasks to advise on strategic matters (e.g. comment on CS strategy and implementation) and to advise about the department's budget. It is however the Dean who approves the budget. As discussed at the last council meeting information about organizational changes can also be discussed here before they are decided and building matters seen in relation to the budget. Study environment is also discussed once a year as this is part of the AAU quality system to involve our students in the study environment. Apart from that you are always as a member of the council welcome to ask for items to be put on the agenda by contacting Diana Plejdrup Frank.

According to the AAU video (see link in FirstAgenda) about the tasks of the department council it indicates that the department council should approve hirings. The department council was puzzled about if this true. Diana will investigate how binding the video is.

Follow-up:

Clarify how binding the AAU video about the tasks of department councils are.

Item 3. Department economy

Appendix: See slides about department economy.

The status on department economy was presented by Helle Schroll.



Result second trimester 2022 (January – August)

We have received more income than expected from faculty primarily due to STEM and IT Vest money. We have less external funding than budgeted: We have postponed some NN positions, and budgeted buffers have been removed and replaced by actually received projects (Carlsberg, Direc, Willum). Operating expenses, travel and equipment: We have spent less on travel and equipment and therefore downgraded the budget. Scientific staff: 7 new assistant professors and 4 associate professors. TAP staff: Spent less than expected and some adjustments have been made in RES, as TAP DES position has been postponed to 1.1.2022. Rent: Slightly higher than expected, a detailed explanation will follow in separate slide.

Result: We will have a surplus of 366.000 DKK for the first 8 months in 2022.

Expected result 2022 compared to budget 2022

Income from the faculty: We expect 880.000 DKK more due to STEM Diversity, and capacity building in Copenhagen. External funding: As mentioned earlier several NN positions have been postponed and budget buffers removed and replaced by actual received projects. This amounts to 4.2 million. There was a discussion of the timing and estimation of positions in project budgets as the Dean is interested in this. Sometimes project budgets are too early estimated. There are a number of good reasons for this but in general we are beginning estimation later at CS than other departments. Project owner knows when the hirings should start, so we should sharpen our estimation on when projects expect to use the money. Operating costs: travel and equipment has been downgraded with 2 million as mentioned earlier. Scientific staff: Positions as mentioned earlier, salary is very close to the budgeted. Rent: We have spent almost 1.8 million more on rent due to Cluster 4 and Copenhagen. In Copenhagen the Dean has paid the majority of the costs. HeS showed the development in rent costs since 2017.

Result Dean decided: We expect to end with a deficit of 3.3 million as the invoice from rebuilding costs from 2021 will fall due in 2022.

Discussion

- There was a discussion of why budget info for Copenhagen is not shown here as it was earlier. Reason is that it has become rather complicated to pin this out for a number of reasons e.g., income (STÅ) is not divided between campuses, administration costs in Aalborg spent on Copenhagen, and it is not of importance for the final result. There is however still a wish to see Copenhagen budget info e.g., it could be good to see how we are doing on external funding in Copenhagen. Point is taken and we will find a way to show some key numbers for Copenhagen in a cost effective way.
- Next time we will discuss rent as this is expected to be a larger post. The increase in rent is due to the moving of SUND and the building of the Science and Innovation Hub. We are also still to pay for the basement at Cassiopeia. Nikolaj Rossander (student member) suggested that the F Club could use the basement for e.g. stuff. This was a good idea.

Follow-up:

Economy: We will find a way to show key budget numbers for Copenhagen.

Rent: Item on the agenda for next meeting.

Basement: Suggestion to use for F-Club stuff.



Item 4. Study environment spring 2022

Appendix: See mindmap about the study environment

Each semester we collect feedback on the study environment via our evaluations. We follow up on the feedback and report back to CAS, Study Board, ITS etc. As part of the process we inform the department council about the overall issues and report back to students on cs.aau.dk/Moodle.

Diana Frank presented high lights on study environment wishes and problems spring 2022. See mindmap in FirstAgenda.

Physical environment

- Sharing of group rooms is not optimal/to much noise: This is a condition we need to live with as square meters are sparse. Each group will have to decide on a set of rules for sharing the group room. Tips/Good advice will be made and sent to the students for inspiration (including how to share the screen in the group rooms). Comments: According to Lone Vriberg it is very different how group rooms are shared depends on the semester and location. We try as far as possible to do the best we can to allocate the rooms. Some students also do not use their rooms. According to Peter Axel Nielsen we therefore we need to find more effective ways to use them.
- Screens in group rooms: Very positive with the screens in group rooms. There is wish for one screen per group instead of one screen per group room. The screens we have bought have been prioritized. Tips rules for sharing group rooms will be made including how to share screen.
- Bikes sheds: We have reported the need for more bikesheds again to CAS and we have taken some pictures with suggestion to where they might be placed. Suggestion is to add one or two more sheds besides the current one in front of NOV19. Suggestion from Nikolaj Rossander to use the basement for bikes? This was noted as a good idea if possible.
- Greenhouse outside Cassiopeia: We have reported the wish to CAS.
- Trash sorting: More clear communication: Communication happens in connection with semester start and ongoing through the semester. According to John Stouby Persson this is not optimal at semester intro meeting. Lone Vriberg could report that the message is sent to students via Moodle.
- Changing table for students with children in handicap toilets: The department council recommend setting this up as soon as possible.

Digital

- Physical teaching is preferred by students/but would like more digital material made available (for revisiting): The responsibility for the pedagogics in a course or project module the teacher's and it is a pedagogic consideration. Comments: The views/wishes on this can vary across courses and semesters. Currently study management is working on the feedback from the department seminar about the learnings during corona.
- "Bad we are losing Overleaf/AAU is ending cooperation": Students only know this due to rumors. We however expect Overleaf continues but currently awaits final decision from our University Director.

Follow-up:

Diana Plejdrup Frank will follow-up on the pending items about study environment and make summary for cs.aau.dk to be sent to students via Moodle.



Item 5. Update on DITECH project / status on action plan for diversity at CS

Appendix: See slides about DITECH project and status on action plan for diversity at CS

DITECH project status:

Ulrik Nyman presented the status of the DITECH project about diversity and inclusion. The original motivation was to recruit more women in IT. Focus was changed to making the student mass as diverse as possible. In practice, it has been run by our communications staff (2 full-time employees), but the project is paid for by the faculty and ends before the end of this year.

There are three focus areas in the project. The main focus has been on onboarding. A new basic narrative has been developed in relation to how we should communicate about our educations and a new onboarding concept for our students. The new image material as part of the new narrative was presented. It is used in brochures, on study guide dk and in various contexts, e.g. on recent DIREC meeting. The material has been sent out as a playbook to the four departments on the TECH faculty. We want to create a story about what our students work with in our educations and what it can be used for. The idea is to market ourselves more broadly to be application-oriented where it is both for the recruitment of employees and students.

Greater diversity in the student body: The project vary in terms of community focus and human focus. It is also about technology and maintaining professionalism. There must be a good balance between the two things.

The basic idea of Vincent Tinto was presented. We have translated this into an onboarding concept with a focus on academic content versus alcohol. Hiring tutors is now our responsibility and not the student community's and the onboarding concept runs over a longer period. A new concept "how to Uni" has also been introduced so students are as well prepared as possible when they start. The onboarding concept has been well received and been "sold" to other departments and universities.

According to Nikolaj Rossander the onboarding activities are spread out more evenly across P1 and P2 – where some activities are better where students know each more than in the beginning (camp, LAN, pub crawl, Latex). The activities are designed for each education. As for Latex all study programmes are welcome. Programme coordinators and semester coordinators should be informed about this. According to Lone Vriborg, they are already via Moodle pages.

What is the effect of the new marketing material (pictures) in terms of female staff recruited? According to Peter Axel Nielsen it is hard to measure effects based on a year's intake. However, all the findings make good sense good to implement. But the question is if it is enough? We need to work further with this as a culture and especially the well-being of our students to avoid dropouts.

Status on action plan for diversity at CS

Diana Frank presented the status on the action plan for diversity at CS. It was initiated in 2020 in the coordination group and SAMU with the main theme internationalization due to the increasing numbers of international staff. Since then, we have taken several initiatives: Policy for Danish courses and as part of this run local Danish courses with Damsø&Damsø, worked with onboarding procedures, added more international staff in committees, councils and education groups, worked with recruiting of international staff in form of welcome packages, made introduction of new employees in welcome brochures and via portraits in newsletter and at cs.aau.dk etc.

Status can be seen [here](#) and is presented to The Dean and The Committee for Inclusion and Diversity (ULD) soon. We will continue to further work with the goals on department level.



Item 6. Building and rebuildings

Peter Axel Nielsen informed about the current discussions in management across TECH departments. The major challenges are economic as we are looking into significant increases on the building front. So, we are looking at how we can use square meters most efficiently. FB7G is removed and students are moved.

All course lectures are so large they require auditoriums. We will not save costs on this in 2023 but first in 2024. In Copenhagen we know that we use more office space than needed.

Rebuilding of Cassiopeia. Goal is to better use floors/hallways for actual functions to reduce unused space. We will initiate a dialogue with students about to use group rooms better. This will be initiated after the process with CAS and architects have started. So despite increases in rent it makes good sense to do the rebuilding.

Nikolaj Rossander suggested to call for a consultation meeting with students. According to Peter Axel Nielsen it must be timed right. The plan for the rebuilding also awaits building costs to fall. So, it might be better to do the rebuilding in 2023.

Item 7. Status and hirings

A short status on the hirings was given.

7 assistant professors and 4 associate professors has been hired. Technical and administrative staff: One secretary from the First Study Year has been transferred to CS. The associate professors are not all new employees but promotions to new positions. But we have hired staff in 11 new positions.

We have had the first meeting about the coming spring hirings to discuss the founding principles for research and teaching competences.

Item 8. AOB

No items. Other than the next meeting is planned for November 30. If necessary, a short meeting with info about the budget 2023 might be scheduled late October/early November.