AALBORG UNIVERSITET

Minutes of SAMU meeting on November 8, 2023

Participants: Working environment committee representatives: Jiri Srba. Employee representatives: Lene Even, Henning Pohl, Andres Masegosa. Management representatives: Peter Axel Nielsen, Helle Westmark. Not present: Ulla Øland, Rene Rydhof Hansen, Minute taker: Diana Plejdrup Frank.

Item 1. Psychological and physical work environment

APV (Working environment evaluation)

Jiri Srba informed that the plan is to send "a letter" to all employees with the result of the evaluation. The items from the evaluation were composed at recent meeting in the working environment committee but due to technical issues delayed – when ready the draft "letter" will be sent for review to the SAMU members before it is sent to staff.

Follow-up: Send "draft "letter" with results of APV for review to the SAMU members before it is sent to staff.

Diversity and Inclusion

An action plan on diversity and inclusion has been handed in to the TECH faculty. All departments have been tasked to do so and we have chosen two initiatives to work with one of them based on the working environment evaluation here at CS.

Inclusion: Establish CS language policy

Some of the suggested elements in the policy were presented and comments were given:

- As for language choice this sentence is a bit unclear what is meant.Point is that there will be something about language choice and currently English is the choice used at the department.

- Meetings and official communication: Meetings are called in English and sometimes turned into Danish therefore we aim at communicating beforehand which language a meeting is held in. Most department meetings are held in English besides the Study Board meetings and Management meeting.

- Language training in Danish and English: We have offered this earlier and still encourage this via the official free language courses and our own English pronunciation course.

- Documentation and procedures preferable in both languages and as a minimum in English: It should be a flexible choice. On AAU website switching between languages should be easier. We can point to this to the central AAU communications.

- Cultural understanding: We had big culture event in January. Culture takes time to change.

- Inclusive communication that does not exclude staff. This has been commented on in the working environment evaluation.

Conclusion: A draft language policy for the department will be discussed on a coming SAMU meeting.

Diversity: Increase diversity in applicants for the department's positions

We would like to be able to recruit more female staff. We have received funding for the initiative via "Is it a Bird – Strategy Innovation Agency" who will coach and assist us via their Living Lab program. Focus is on search committees. Goal is to have 25% of the results to be qualified female applicants.

Comments:

- Be careful with going for equity it is not realistic. It is tricky to bias hiring. We will still hire people that are qualified for the task given.

- Bias should be balanced in terms of the research areas. And we should start even earlier at high school etc. to attract female future researchers.

- Conclusions: Do not go for goal numbers. Do not change criteria teaching-wise. We should work on built-in biases.

Article about mental health crisis is gripping science

Andres Masegosa would like to discuss recent article about the mental health in science. A large proportion of Phd students report anxiety and depression. Point: This is worrying and maybe we should try to include this in the working environment evaluations. According to Jiri Srba we actually ask these kinds of questions.

There were comments that we should consider how to ask these questions as anxiety and depression are diagnosis and can be too intrusive and private for staff to want to answer questions on.

You are welcome to suggest questions to the working environment committee and they can be considered for for the next time we evaluate.

Item 2. Approval of the yearly cycle

Appendix: See the yearly cycle of SAMU.

The yearly cycle of the SAMU meetings were approved. An English version will be made

Item 3. Economy

Appendix: See presentation about preliminary budget 2024

The preliminary budget for 2024 was presented.

- Income: We will get approx. 162 million (derives from STÅ, basic funds and index research funds). The income from STÅ will be split between departments according to module ownership. Indexed research funds are dependent on student production and on what we spend on research projects.

- External funding expenses: We expect 34 million in expenses in the new budget year, but it depends on the hiring of positions - if they are hired before January 1 and this is part of the research projects budgets.

- Operating expenses, travel, and equipment: On 5.7 million. Currently we are ensuring that we have IT equipment in stock – we want to ensure that we do not have more in stock than we can use as we prefer to spend the budgeted money otherwise.

- Salary scientific staff: On 82 million. It is going up with 3 million compared to 2023 and includes staff hired by projects.

- Salary technical and administrative staff: On 14 million. The cost is reduced with 2.5 million due to the organisational change at AAU concerning communications staff.

- Free purchase: On 26 million. This means that a project is paying salary and the money goes to department account instead. Therefore, it is important to do hours registration on time.

- Rent: On 28 million. Savings on 1.7 million as we have moved out of NOVI9, and we expect to have one single seminar room in Copenhagen in 2024. In 2027 the rent save is expected to be 6 million.

- Result: Agreed deficit on zero. So basically, we are at the same financial level as in 2023 which enables us to afford the expansion in Copenhagen.

The flow diagram showing budget figures for 2024 was presented. Additional comment to the budget not mentioned earlier is that strategic funds comprises the following CS initiatives: EVU, Copenhagen and STEM/SSH cooperation.

Status of budget 2024 is that it is about to be approved by Dean and the AAU Board will approve the entire budget for AAU late November.