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Minutes of Department Council Meeting on June 27, 2024

Participants: Peter Axel Nielsen, Jiri Srba, Giovanni Bacci, Daniele Dell'Aglio, Tianyi Li, Johannes Bjerva, Helle Schroll, Lars Vinther Schmidt, Lone Vriborg. Students: Kresten Laust Faaborg Sckerl. Not present: Tim Merritt, Oliver Viller Nielsen, Leon Groth.

Minute taker: Diana Plejdrup Frank.

Item 1. Approval of the agenda

Agenda was approved.

Item 2. News at the department

Hirings are in place before summer holiday. 9 open positions. 4 in Copenhagen. The professor positions are also in process, and it will be clarified who will be going to interviews late June.

SW education in Esbjerg by September 2025. We are ready to send in the application to the Ministry of Education. We await the final outcome of the negotiations between AAU and Education Esbjerg and municipality.

Living Lab: Activity supported by the consultancy "Is it Bird". Improving quality of applicants to the department's positions. The goal is to increase female applicants. It is financed by Novo Nordisk and Willum foundation. The focus is on search committee.

Research evaluation 2025: We do the research evaluations every five years. The last evaluation was concluded in 2020. We will prepare for the coming research evaluation. The evaluation will be concluded with visit from the international panel in January 2026. The work will be initiated on the department seminar in August.

Item 3. Moving 2027

Item from the student representatives about the dialogue meeting held with students about moving in 2027.

According to the student representative Kresten Laust Faaborg Sckerl the dialogue meeting about the planned move in 2027 was notified four weekdays in advance. This was unfortunate because very few students turned up and it also collided with the status seminar.

The Head of Department acknowledges this issue. The department has no intention of excluding students and suggested the possibility of another meeting. It will also be more informative as we have more updated info since the last meeting.

There were rumours among the student organizations at ES about changes in room allocation for students (one single room versus shared rooms). Facts are that the current plan includes joint Friday Bars. Currently there is no specific design for the student areas. There is the canteen in the C building and the room beside this. However, the Heads of Departments for CS and ES are working on solutions for the different student clubs.

Conclusion: Another dialogue meeting is considered a good idea, with an update on the 2027 move. This meeting should be scheduled outside of regular meeting hours to ensure better attendance.

Item 4. CPH Strategy

Background

The department has root in Aalborg and has opened in Copenhagen with the software programme. Starting with 30 students. Since then, the intake has grown, and we expect 80 students starting this Autumn, which is the cap on the bachelor's programme.

Growth strategy:

The strategy for growth was to cater for 50 new students every year. The Dean has increased his ambition, so the strategy has changed. An action plan has been made and a survey of potential students.

Action plan

The idea is a CS intake of 150 bachelor's students and 50 in the master's programme. We will work on taking in more students and hire more teachers. It also requires a revision of the curriculum for the software education. Currently, there is a joint curriculum, but we expect deviations dependent on Copenhagen and Aalborg and who is employed.

AAU Communications has made a survey of potential students. The main conclusions are:

Various ways to choose study programmes

- IT students chose study programmes based on job opportunities.
- Quality in study programmes: Certainty and trust in what we learn. Clear usable competences. Basically, this is very important.
- Low knowledge about Campus AAU: We need to increase the awareness of this.
- Study environment: Rumors about low study environment can be a barrier. Our current students are ambassadors.

Current status

AAU management are improving the strategy. They are advancing study programmes in the CPH Campus on TECH and reducing on SSH and ENG Faculty. 80% will be TECH programmes in future. Work is on improving

student areas to make them more attractive. AAU communication will develop a communications strategy. More scientific staff is currently being hired. More visits to CPH by CS management: To create more synergy.

Discussions

- Johannes Bjerva asked about the student numbers in the fall 2024 in CPH. How is the distribution of SW7 intake of students? Out of 32 – more than 20 applicants have a Danish passport. The Head of Studies has the full picture. 1/3 of the intake is international students, which is promising.
- SW programmes: Considering how students chose study programmes. We could emphasize more project cooperation and more info about PBL and maybe supply opportunities of networks for start-ups. The SW business industry opportunity is a good point. They have a bit more access to relevant student work. Bring it into projects, so it is study relevant.
- Students and F-Club connections are trying to be maintained at CPH. All TECH students are gathered in a campus-wide Friday Bar.
- Things have changed in terms of attendance on campus after corona. This is hitting in a different way in Copenhagen. Staff is working on this in Copenhagen and with tight cooperation with ES.
- According to the student representative the ADSL student club arrange board games has done this since the start of the software programme in CPH. The F-Club is struggling a bit coming back after corona – there are no resources for this.

Conclusion: The CPH strategy implementation will be on the agenda for the department council meeting next year.

Item 5. VIVE report about sexism

Appendix: See material about sexism in academia

The department council and SAMU at CS is recommended to discuss the main conclusions of the report 'Sexism and Career Paths at Danish Universities' prepared by the Danish Centre for Social Research and Analysis (VIVE). The report will be discussed in management fora, committees, and councils at AAU. The Main Joint Consultative Committee (HSU) was informed on June 26.

What is the problem?

If we look at academic careers at universities, there is a lack of female positions in academia which might be connected to sexism. It seems there is a problem with discrimination, working environment and sexism. This is a result of universities having hierarchical structures, competition in academia career paths and short-term employment contracts.

Method of the study

The study is focusing on PhD students. On AAU level we are close to sector percentage in terms of gender and sexual demeaning behavior and unwanted physical contact and coercion.

Where and who?

Particularly young people and individuals with children and bisexuals are vulnerable. The behavior comes from senior colleagues with seniority, managers and supervisors. Academic environments with few female staff. And a rude environment.

Consequences

It influences retention of staff and can result in mental health problems after their employment here.

Discussion

- AAU has decided that the level of sexism at AAU is not acceptable and therefore has decided to react on this fast. SAMU will work on this, and workshops will be organized in Autumn. The topic concerns AAU as a whole and the ULD Committee will only work on this issue the next year.
- According to Jiri Srba from the working environment committee at SAMU we have a little bit of data from CS. In the working environment survey last fall we had one question about this showing one case on department level. We will refine the questions about diversity in future surveys.
- According to Helle Schroll she has been working as coordinator for PhD students for 25 years and has seen no signs of this but will be more aware of signs in future.
- The female proportion in evaluation committees for scientific positions is low this might create a bias. There is a Ministry rule that both genders have to be present in the committee. This creates challenges i.e. as the few female staff at CS are often asked to be part of these committees.
- What will the department do to protect our female staff for occupying committees. The members can be from other departments or universities. The department will, if possible, suggest alternative candidates for the committees.
- There are other examples, e.g. project presentations for awards here female staff are always presenting. It would be better with more random choices. So, it can be counterproductive. It is trend in society.
- According to Lars Vinther Schmidt the same situation applies with female students who feel exposed when events like "IT Camp for girls" are organized.

Conclusion

At CS we will so far focus on three things:

1. Raising awareness via training.
2. Simple observation (react when we see and hear it).
3. Make clear how to report it (already in [CS Code of Conduct](#))

We will setup workshops in Autumn and the process involves all staff. The questions in the working environment survey this fall will be adjusted with more gender-neutral questions. An action plan will be presented. The CS Code of Conduct will be revisited and maybe more specified.

Item 6. AOB

You are welcome to send suggestions for agenda items for future meetings to Diana.