

## **Summary of meeting in the Committee for Cooperation and the Working Environment (SAMU)2016-02**

**Date:** Tuesday, May 17 2016, kl. 12.30-14.00

**Room:** SL300 rum 0.2.15

### **Agenda:**

- 1) News from committee members
- 2) Status on holidays and special holidays
- 3) Rooms
- 4) Annual working environment discussion
- 5) Physical and psychological working environment
- 6) Environment
- 7) Any other business
- 8) Meeting evaluation

### **Participants:**

Working environment: Ulla Øland and Jiri Srba

Employee representatives: Lene Even, Christian Thomsen and Lotte Finck

Management representatives: Helle Westmark and Kristian G. Olesen

Guest: Svend Ole Hosbond Poulsen, working environment specialist, Campus Service

Secretary: Mette Kaufmann Andersen

**Absent:** Ulla Øland, Christian Thomsen

### **Minutes:**

#### **ad 1 News from committee members**

Presentation of committee members to our guest Sv. Ole Poulsen.

KGO:

The research evaluation is finished and soon ready to be printed.

Organizational changes have fallen into place and details are expected to be sorted out before semester start in September. Division of rooms and committee work are also being planned.

Spilt of Faculty: The position as Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Science has been posted.

Eskild Nielsen will continue as Dean of "our Faculty, which the board has decided to name Faculty of ICT and Design Engineering. The Danish title is still up for negotiation. The Dean will meet with the four heads of department this week.

HH

Request for topic on future meeting: policy for equality and policy/strategy for fundraising.

Recommends the book "The Slow Professor" about fundraising. Maybe on the November meeting.

HW: Ulla Øland is currently on leave, everything proceeds as planned.

## **ad 2 Status on holidays and special holidays**

Status on special holidays: 10% are to be spent, the rest will be cashed – resulting in increased teaching capacity.

The situation is to be considered in the Autumn.

Notification of holidays 2016-2017:

May, 6 (the day after the ascension)

July, 11 – 29: Summer holiday

October 17 – 21: Autumn holiday

December 27 – 30: Christmas holiday

Notification of special holiday for the current holiday period can be made after January 1<sup>st</sup> 2017.

## **ad 3 Rooms**

The situation in the Autumn:

No immediate plans for moving – we need to keep moving closer until a more constant solution has been made (2018)

It is being investigated if we can move students at Interaction Design to Rendsburggade.

At the next staff-meeting, the UUP-committee will propose semesters with virtual group work (and no physical rooms). There are different opinions as to which semesters would be better for this solution. The alternative could be shared group rooms or a booking system.

At the next department council meeting, it will be discussed whether it should be possible to gain a compensation for accepting a smaller office (eg. extra means for traveling) Ten group rooms cost DKR 300,000, if it is possible to achieve the same result in reduction of rooms and at the same time provide a requested good, it may be a possibility.

There are no actual plans of more new buildings. The current hypothesis is that we will move in with Department of Electronic Systems in FrB7a,b,c and possibly d. A committee with representatives from i16 and i8 will meet. There are few means for renovating the buildings. Offices are fine, 12 and 18 m<sup>2</sup>, the laboratories are more fixed which makes it more problematic for i8. However, details are far ahead (2018), first we need to look into the possibilities.

## **ad 4 Annual working environment discussion (Guest Svend Ole Poulsen)**

Cf. The annual cycle of work, the workplace assessment has been made by inspection rounds. The department has been paired with Media Technology and workplace environment representatives from the two departments are to visit each other in September.

According to the first satisfaction analysis (trivselsbarometer), i16 is on average. The analysis is to be repeated for making assessments over time.

Concerning sickness absence, i16 is on average compared to other departments. A few long term illnesses carry weight, but these are being taken care of. In general, women's sickness absence is larger for women than for men, probably because women more often than men are home with sick kids combined with sickness due to pregnancy.

Svend Ole Poulsen, working environment specialist) fostered a discussion about sickness absence conversations, not just concerning attention from the leader, but also in order to find solutions on how to change the situation for the better. When people move closer, the risk of getting sick increases. We need to be aware both of circulation of air and the psychological effects. Campus Service has sent information to the local work environment representatives in order to put focus on potential problems with buildings and how to avoid these problems.

The university's HR-department has sent a guide to the annual working environment discussion. Notes from the discussion follow below:

Working environment the recent year:

1) Challenges:

The department has had a few long-term illnesses and personal disagreements, where we had help from outside the department. In 2014, we often discussed cutbacks, which has become a chronic condition as we are constantly challenged by the rooms situation. Other universities inform of cutbacks. Confused signals and not-too transparent management decisions/implementations create uncertainty. Growing lists of tasks, that are lifted off at one level, only to land on other shoulders give rise to disagreements about division of work, which may cause stress and irritation. (these things cannot be seen directly from the APV)

Among other things, the challenges are caused by an increasing intake of students during the recent 5-7 years, the numbers seem to stagnate now. Staffing is increasing again to meet the external projects, but this leads to further challenges for finding work space. The TAP-employees receive more tasks, it is difficult to leave tasks unsolved or use time for reflection on planning the working day. Systems do not work very well, decisions are often made by people who do not fully know the systems and how they affect the employees planning of the work. There seem to be a lack of knowledge on how procedural changes affect the everyday work. Documentation and control take much time.

Sv. O: Is there anything you have yet to discuss in the department?

In 90% of the cases, the pressure comes from "outside or above" – due to economical control

Sv.O: Do you miss a way of communication?

No, we have means for communication and we use them, eg. concerning management of economy, where communication has improved, but they are also under pressure. Concerning matters related to HR or the Faculty – they listen and bring our concerns further, but nothing happens, which leads to resignation. We do not have the time to enter into dialogues with no progress. Helle Westmark participates in an administrative forum, where it is possible to point out inconvenient working procedures or distributions. However, it is unclear whether this forum will be able to push things through. All departments mention similar problems.

2) The positive things?

The APV shows, that we like each other; the atmosphere is good and we have a good social convention. We may have become more aggressive and speak up whenever we find something inconvenient.

Sv.O: It is important that you use the relevant channels and possibilities to speak up. Time registration gives important insight. AAU has chosen not to use time registration, but it could give leverage to the arguments about how we spend more time on procedures. HH: We should be aware not to blur lines between work and privacy. It does not need to be a problem if you are able to keep things apart, but it should be clear that we have more tasks which takes time from other tasks, which may remain unsolved. The TAP-group have individual job descriptions, which are revised at MUS-interviews.

3) Have you had situations, where the department lacked knowledge about the working environment work?

Yes, the head of department has had situations he did not know how to react on. But he knew where to get help from outside. A few years ago, the department received a notice from the working

environment authorities, and we were not given assistance on how to fix things. This has been changed since then.

Currently, we have a problem with noisy automatic windows. It has been a long battle and solutions have yet to be found.

4) Which picture does the inspection round give?

Nice to visit the employees in their usual surroundings – it makes it easier to see the working conditions. The employees were happy to meet the members of the committee. Positive benefits: politeness, personal knowledge, movement of furniture, identify needs, which could be helped quickly. Maybe the next inspection round could focus on the psychological environment now that the physical needs in the offices are covered.

Sv.O: The annual inspection rounds do not have to cover all aspects.

Sv.O: The action plan is lacking deadlines. UØ will look into the various tasks; many of them are easily handled, and therefore, it does not make sense to set deadlines. However, it is important to write the information in order to document the work.

5) How do you want the working environment in one year?

Measurable goals: Minimize number of sick days. The work of the environment committee is planned, so the members are present in the environment every day. If they observe something, or are approached by other employees, it is easy to schedule ad hoc meetings.

Work environment representatives are often “spotters”, but it would be more satisfying if problems could be anticipated. It is important that the representatives are known in the environment, inform their colleagues and encourage them to bring forth potential issues. At the department seminar in august 2015 employees were asked “what pleases and what strains”.

Questions/comments from Sv.O:

- Is it possible for you to work with working environment in themes? Look into how you work with the defined psychological problems. Where are you able to do something? Where can you strengthen the positive things, speak about values (the good things about our work, what do we miss) You may need a person from outside to give input.
- Don't work with measurable goals, work with the process. Be conscious about the leader's role – seriousness about working environment is an important signal.
- Does anyone need help to structure the working day? It is a learning process e.g. for a Ph.D. student. What does the committee do to help them? Do the Ph.D supervisors have common guidelines?  
RRH: It is difficult to make common guidelines as it is an increasing number of students with various needs, from different cultures and traditions. Their motivation needs to come from themselves.
- What is important for the TAP-group?  
LeE: It is important to accept that your working day is “chopped into smaller bits” – the management gives freedom under responsibility. The most present issue is that many of the decisions being made affect our possibility of structuring our working day.

6) Collaboration in the recent year

The committee members are satisfied with the collaboration, and if they do not have the needed competencies, they know where to seek assistance.

There are internal meetings in the committee, but the working environment meetings are held joint with the collaboration committee.

Sv.O: it is important to challenge the framework, even though it can be frustrating trying to affect the system repeatedly with no visible effect.  
KGO: Ignoring working tasks may be a solution. Under acceptance from the leader it may be ok to refer to lack of resources.

7) Do we have the required competences?

AAU must offer internal courses on working environment – also for heads of departments. An occupational injury costs salary and other expenses paid by the department.

Campus Service is also working on becoming an organizational unit. We are beginning to see more transparency than before. More dialogue meetings on the psychological working environment will be held in the year to come.

Har vi de fornødne kompetencer?

**ad 5 Physical and psychological environment**

Nothing

**ad 6 Environment**

Sv.O: A new position as environment employee in Campus Service is expected to be filled in near future.

**ad 7 Any other business**

Nothing

**ad 8 Meeting evaluation**

The Working environment group will meet when Ulla returns.

Sv.O applauds the good atmosphere during the meeting. It is important to be able to discuss the present issues – otherwise they cannot be solved.

**Minutes:**

Mette K. Andersen