

Minutes of Department Council Meeting 2019-04

Time: Wednesday November 20, 2019
Place: SLV300 room 0.2.15
Members of IR
Students: Rune Møberg Jacobsen (RMJ), Anders Høgh Hansen (AHH)
TAP: Helle Schroll (HeS), Mette Kaufmann Andersen (MKA), Lone Vriberg (LEA),
VIP: Peter Dolog (PD), John Stouby Persson (JSP), Jiri Srba (JSr), Tim Meritt (TM), Giovanni Bacci (GB), Hua Lu (HL)
Chairman: Head of Department Jesper Kjeldskov (JK)
Absent:
Minutes taker Diana P. Frank

Agenda:

1. Approval of the agenda
2. Department economy
3. Plan for new hirings
4. Study environment
5. Action plan for gender equality and diversity
6. Election to The Department Council 2019
7. AOB

Minutes:

- 1) Approval of the agenda
The Department Council approved the agenda.
- 2) Department economy
HES presented the budget 2020. Slides are available in FirstAgenda.
 - Budget 2020 expected surplus on 2 million.
 - Extra 7 million in STÅ income after hearing process of STÅ model.
 - Generally, budgets are taking into account the possible "taxameter" cuts in the finance act.
 - Hirings VIP and TAP: 6 associate professors, 8 assistant professors, constituted 3 professors. TAP: 4 Lab technicians, 2 fulltime communication and 1 fundraiser.
 - Rent of NOVI 9 is being investigated as a supplement to current student work spaces.
 - Study Board of Computer Science: mainly censor expenses.
 - Copenhagen: 2 million is in the budget and we have started to look at the recruiting plans.
 - Current balance on 20.506 in savings is on the budget overview, even though the Dean canceled it.

As for the positions - the numbers in the budget are new staff. In the next budgeting year, we can put in positions that are prolonged.

Lab team to support research groups is expected to free time to be used on research instead. The team is to be considered as a department resource. There was input from the students in the council that maybe student workers could assist in doing research as student helpers.

The different types of taxes we pay were discussed especially on conferences. However, this is decided by upper management and might be handled by each department – paying the taxes for conferences themselves.

The purpose of the economy item today is to have comments. TRM asked what about ideas for specific equipment e.g. Lazer cutters? In this forum we can discuss if we should buy more equipment. The more specific needs can be addressed in the research groups.

3) Plan for new hirings

JK gave update on the hirings. We are hiring assisting and associated professors as we usually do. The texts for the job postings will be scanned for gender issues and optimized in general.

Comments

What are we missing? What about the distribution of the positions in the groups? This is a balance. Should we look at the teaching loads in the groups or? This is not always the solution due to flexibility in terms of overlaps. Supervisions are more flexible but what about the courses. We have discussed this before in the council and it should be the people who are qualified for teaching who are assigned to a course. Does this mean that the ownerships of courses can change in the groups?

Conclusion: teaching plays a role in terms of the hiring strategy.

Apart from teaching aspect in a hiring strategy, how should we divide the positions? Maybe take the same approach as for the coming lab team – if you want to expand in research it is not enough two hire one or two. We should look at who can fill the positions and contribute to research. Reason is we need more hands and to free resources for research and extract external funding. The challenge is where we want to grow. Historically, we have made open calls and accordingly looked at which groups needed them. The question is if we wish to continue growing where we are already big? Maybe we should do more targeted hiring? This might be a challenge thus narrowing qualified applicants. We have to choose the area where we want to grow and do the lobbying. In terms of flexibility of hiring committees, it is good with flexibility. We cannot strategically decide where we want to grow. We need to diversify and not become too vulnerable – maybe look at the complementary in terms of something we are already good at and then go into a direction. Maybe make focused calls on top of open calls (with an attractive package) and we need to be good at spotting potentials (maybe before the call). If possible, two rounds a year. In terms of areas, it would be nice to be able to attract competences in e.g.: artificial intelligence, data science.

Conclusion: Suggestion for procedure is that the research groups give feedback to JK about the needs. Point is that we need to put in a perspective what is good for the department and to find a balance between excellence and the wider good.

What are our thoughts on language skills for teachers: we need to accommodate this in way that we still can maintain our quality in teaching in our study programmes. Language must not be hindrance. This discussion is already taken up in ULG and the professor group.

4) Study environment

Each semester departments must follow up on the reported study environment problems, which is part of our quality assurance system at AAU. The process ensures that actions are taken on the

problems reported by students in semester evaluations and steering group meetings. The list of the problems reported from semester evaluations in the spring of 2019 is available in FirstAgenda and was summarized at the meeting. The students are informed each semester about the actions taken via Moodle.

Comments

- Group rooms: We have economy to rent more space: we have responded to this by investing in rent and we are investigating if NOVI9 might be a solution. Group rooms: according to the students in the council, there is no such a thing as group rooms. We should instead address them as work spaces. This is noted and in line with general view.
- Table height cannot be set to fit with chairs: item has been reported to CAS last semester who has forwarded the wish to Inventory. According to students in the council the table height can be fixed manually. However, CAS must report back to us what is to be done in order to fix this.
- Table tennis: suggestion to move this to NOVI9: If not disturbing others this might be an option. The council suggested to maybe move it to the basement when there is room for it.
- Alcohol free activities: some students complain that there is too little alcohol free activities – but according to F club and Fixd they already arrange several alcohol free activities. They suggest that we should focus at department level on how to facilitate this better. JK prefers the grass root approach. In general, we should encourage students also to do things themselves instead of expecting someone else to do it for them. JK pointed out the maybe the students clubs should cooperate more in future. It was commented that when companies arrange events at Cassiopeia they should also offer free soda and not just free beer. The student clubs should make them aware of this.

5) Action plan for gender equality and diversity

The Board of Directors at AAU has decided that action plans are to be made at faculty and department level to ensure a better balance between genders. The Dean is the overall responsible, but it is the department managers who are in charge of the implementation via the department's committees and councils. The work is done during the autumn and deadline for sending the action plan for approval at the Dean is December 18 2019.

The theme "Internationalization" was chosen at the SAMU meeting on October 1. The first draft for an action plan based on input from the research groups, department council and other input has been made and is available in FirstAgenda.

Comments

There was a comment from JSr to change the formulation about "Keep (nearly 50/50) mix of international/Danish staff" – this should be changed to "a healthy mix".

If you have further comments, you can send them to DPF as soon as possible but no later than December 10 2019. The action plan is also discussed tomorrow at SAMU, in the research groups at the next coordination group meeting.

6) Election to The Department Council 2019

The election is on track on the VIP side. Current VIP representation was elected by an uncontested election. On the TAP side there is 4 candidates signed up – with only room for 3. Election period is between November 25 – 28 2019. There is also a contested election between student representatives.

7) AOB

Student activities: it has been decided to allocate means for student activities and other initiatives that could benefit the experience of studying at the department. Applications for this should be sent to the Deputy Head of Department Uffe Kjærulff (UK) with a brief description of the suggestion including its aim, who it will benefit, and an estimate of the expected costs. Students are encouraged to apply on behalf of a larger group, e.g. their semester, or their education, rather than individually or as project groups. UK will inform HES accordingly.

8) Meeting plan 2020

The meeting plan was decided to be as follows: Wednesdays in March, May, September, November 2020.