

## Minutes of Department Council Meeting 2020-04

<b>Time:</b>	Wednesday November 18, 2020
<b>Place:</b>	MS Teams
<b>Members of IR</b>	
Students:	Laurits Brøcker (LB), Anna Maria Suarez-Barcelona Ørum (AMSBØ), Clara Sofie Rose (CSR)
TAP: (LEA),	Helle Schroll (HeS), Frederik Møller (FM), Lone Vriberg
VIP:	Dalin Zhang (DZ), John Stouby Persson (JSP), Jiri Srba (JSr), Tim Meritt (TM), Giovanni Bacci (GB), Gabriela Montoya (GM)
Chairman:	Head of Department Jesper Kjeldskov (JK)
Absent:	Clara Sofie Rose (CSR)
Minutes taker	Diana P. Frank

### Agenda:

1. Approval of the agenda and welcome to new member
2. Corona restrictions
3. CS establishment in Copenhagen
4. Rebuilding of Cassiopeia
5. Department economy
6. Strategy work at the department
7. Hirings and department structure
8. Study environment
9. Status on action plan and diversity
10. AOB

### Minutes:

#### 1) Approval of the agenda and welcome to new member

The meeting is held via MS Teams due to the current Corona situation. Welcome to Dalin Zhang as new member of the council. He replaces Peter Dolog. The agenda was approved.

#### 2) Corona restrictions

Current status is that we are in the part of the North Jutland that can travel freely and we only have few students and employees that live in the restricted areas. Restrictions are currently that we need to wear face masks but we have some mask free zones which requires that these areas are locked. Within this week the remaining doors will be installed by the stairs. We hope to avoid an entire lock-down.

Currently there are some discussions about travelling home for Christmas for our international employees – guidelines have been sent out earlier by our University Director that still apply but our research coordinators have communicated this again in the research groups. The message is don't travel currently unless it's extremely necessary. If you do so you have to be in quarantine according to the guidelines and without salary. Some few exceptions have been made and a work plan for the quarantine period should be made.

#### 3) CS establishment in Copenhagen

We are up and running in Campus Copenhagen with Johannes Bjerva and Anders Schlictrull under supervision and coordination of Peter Axel Nielsen (PAN), who is our study programme coordinator. It is working very well and students are happy. Of course it is challenging – so PAN is there regularly. The new Cisco videoconference system is almost up and running.

As for hirings we need to scale up and for office space the plan is that all TECH departments will be placed in the same area at Campus Copenhagen. Currently we are situated together with CREATE staff.

#### Comments

- LB: How is the social situation with the new students? Experience is hard in Aalborg – but we at least have the F-Club.
- JK: We need to engage the F-club in Cph to ask them who would like to be representatives in Cph. The department are willing to finance some activities there. AMSBØ also suggested that LAN party should include Cph. students. Conclusion: LB will ask F-club to invite JK and PAN to a start-up meeting about the study environment in Cph.

#### **4) Rebuilding of Cassiopeia**

Cassiopeia has been allowed to stay in this building. The major part of the rebuilding process has been restarted due to the delay caused by the savings discussions. This includes renovating student areas, auditorium e.g. – we hope it will happen as soon as possible. ITS will move out by the end of 2021/ early 2022. In the meantime we have some smaller renovation work e.g. new meeting rooms above balcony, cluster 5 and the Claudio room.

#### Comments

- LB: Solar cells on the roof was suggested as a future investment. JK might bring this up on future building meetings.

#### **5) Department economy**

HeS presented budget 2021 and status on budget 2020. Slides are available in FirstAgenda.

#### Budget 2020 compared to 2021

- Income is increasing with 5.860 million due to increasing education income and 2 dean agreements
- External funding: 1.022 million less including buffer of 2 million for incoming projects.
- Operating expenses: 3.329 less spent due to a reduction in travelling and more is spent on equipment
- VIP staff: 14.035 million in increase – see more info under hirings.
- TAP staff: 3.209 is increased due to several new positions – see more info under hirings.
- Rent is a huge position: But we have saved some on rent for the basement (850.000).
- Study board: More censor expenses: 244.000
- Copenhagen: Spent more on salary than on consumption costs (281.00).

#### Budget 2021

##### Salary

- 8 assistant professors Aalborg
- 1 assistant professor Copenhagen
- 5 associate professors Aalborg
- 1 associate professor in Copenhagen
- 2 professors and 4 PD for strategic efforts

We do this go get extra hands and to put focus on some strategic efforts. This is to build up strategic areas and try and attract strong people from outside. Historically we have grown through the years but not done steering towards a specific research area.

##### Additional hirings

- 1 business ambassador
- 1 project leader with diversity
- 1 TAP in Copenhagen
- 1 HR employee to assist HW.

#### Operating expenses

- Huge laboratory investments and a lot equipment sent home to employees and for the rebuilding. Total of 3.956 million.
- Travel: Reduced according to AAU management by 25%. Total of 1.850 million.
- PR, courses and consultant: PR has been adjusted. Total of 1.232 million.
- Rent: Savings on the basement by 850.000 in 2020. Total of: 14.178 million.

#### Forecast for 2020

- Dean specific target of 2 million in surplus. We now expect a surplus of 3 million. However some building costs might be moved to next year due to Covid19 delays. Consumption costs downgraded with 1 million e.g. the means in the research groups, disposal rights etc.

#### Comments:

- The 25% savings on travelling: It is on university funded travel and not on projects. And the savings is found in other areas in our internal budget where the money was needed.
- Study board: Why an increase in censor budgets (salary)? HeS: We have had more exams than we budgeted.
- Copenhagen: We have a significant surplus this year but is due to big buffers in the budgeting but it has turned out not to be so expensive. Investment in furniture is expected and some equipment for research.
- JK: Overall we are in good shape. Good initiatives are accepted. But we cannot put more equipment in the building. Equipment committee is closed and now headed by the vice deputy of studies, Ulrik Nyman. Students can then apply for equipment and we can assure that it is prioritized.
- GM: Positions for technicians is that for taking care of equipment? 4 technicians will be posted this week the aim is to give tech support.
- Claudio facilities: Ambition from Dean and Pro-dean is to facilitate research by having super computer capabilities. CS could maybe engage in this area. However seems not to be interesting for CS as it requires electrical engineering. It will be discussed at a coming professor meeting. If relevant, our view should be on the software side of it.
- Current budget model is under review. The model is good for us due to good study programmes and because we are doing more teaching. We try to lower this by hiring more staff to focus on research and applications. We need to be able to be active in hirings and strategic efforts. Especially Copenhagen is a strategic effort.
- JP: Basically we should invest in people in terms of development at all levels – also students. Equipment is a short term focus. We educate students that are in high demands and top notch. This is where the money should go.
- JK: We are investing on people both on professor level but also on the administration side to support and respond to needs that we see ahead. E.g. we are looking for a department business ambassador to present us outside the university and to establish a strong alumni side. We want to know the companies in the region to attract them and hire our students. Formerly it has been done ad hoc or in other parts of the university. A business club has been suggested were we can discuss and set up new projects. 2 communications people hired to promote this.

#### **6) Strategy work**

The second strategy day working on the department's ambition was held on Friday November 13 2020. The leadership group and Mobilize has summarized an ambition which was the starting point for the discussions. The day was to make goals on the short and long term. JK will receive the notes from the day this week and the next step is to work on the material. Overall input from the day was: Research input, easily implementable things, particular things that requires working groups. Writing of the strategy needs further involvement from employees.

#### Comments:

- DPF: Members of the department council can promote / communicate back the discussions in this fora in terms of the discussions we had in one of the groups at the strategy day with visibility in decisions e.g.

- LB: Students might also be more involved in the strategy work at CS. DPF: They are already at recent advisory board meeting where strategy input was given. But point taken.

## 7) Hirings and department structure

Some changes have been made to the department structure. The AI/ML team has been created across research groups. This has been welcomed by the Dean. A lot of the hirings has been done with this purpose. The Data science education is anchored in the AI/ML team. Group in Copenhagen will also have to shape from that foundational premise. The matrix structure has some challenges – but we are aware of – so we can balance it right. Aim is for other things to go across: Computational sustainability and digitalization.

### Comments

- JSP: Hiring professors in these areas – hard to compete with other institutions in Europe.
- Specialization topics among students: Better opportunities to move from the master's students level to the PhD student level – to make it more attractive to move into research. Department scholarships might be an approach.
- HeS; Department money paying for PhD's has been tried before and has not been a success in terms of motivating the supervisor. JK: A requirement could be that it should be financed.
- GB: Maybe a grant for conducting the PhD for the student could be an idea.
- JK: We might do this by making some strategic department scholarships. As young researchers should be facilitated.
- JSr: Prefers if it is based on the excellence criteria but could be combined.
- GB: Suggestion for a commission that decides among excellence and strategic thoughts.
- Maybe a problem convincing students for PhD's – if they have this option.

## 8) Study environment

DPF presented a summary of the study environment problems/wishes reported in spring 2020. Presentation is available in FirstAgenda.

Each semester departments must follow up on the reported study environment problems/wishes as part of our quality assurance system at AAU. The process ensures that actions are taken on the problems/wishes and that students are informed (via cs.aau.dk and Moodle). Apart from this it is discussed at the Department Council meeting, where representatives from the students are present.

- It is clear that the students are suffering under the corona restrictions and that it has major impact on the social environment.
- Biking sheds are still missing for students and staff on Cassiopeia: We have recently received news that the project manager is investigating if more sheds can be set up. But we will follow-up continuously.
- Frederik Bayers Vej 7: The rooms were rented for extra student work places in spring 2020: Feedback is that the building is not optimal in terms of indoor environment and aesthetics. However this is a contemporary solution, but we will see to what can be done in a minor scale.

## 9) Status on action plan for diversity

DPF presented status on the action plan for diversity approved January 2020. Follow-up has been done in the coordination group and status reported to the AAU main works committee meeting (HSU) on October 6 and our local committee for cooperation and the working environment (SAMU) at November 17. The action plan is available in FirstAgenda.

- Study curricula is being translated into English and is ready by end of 2020.

- Involve more international staff in administrative tasks and policy bodies: 2 new international staff members of department Council and 3 new members of study programme groups.
- [Policy for attending Danish courses](#) made and available at intranet cs.aau.dk. As a result a local Danish course by Damsø & Damsø started in spring 2020 with good experience and continued with a new class this fall. Cultural training events arranged by ISU is described in the procedure and can be arranged locally/or attended. It has been communicated to the research groups in spring 2020.
- Welcome of new international staff: Our communications officer Nina Hermansen has made [new brochure for new employees](#) and are doing short presentations of new staff on the web.
- Closing of ISU was cancelled after pressure from several sides (departments etc), which is very good.
- Attract and keep qualified international staff: Offering new start packages/benefits: This has been done actively in the hirings of associate and assistant professors in 2020.

#### 10) AOB

No items.