

Summary of Extraordinary Meeting in the Committee for Cooperation and the Working Environment (SAMU) 2013-04

Date: Tuesday November 19, 2013, 13-15

Location: SL300 rum 0.2.15

Agenda:

- 1) News from committee members
- 2) The economic situation and budget 2014
- 3) Traveling policy
- 4) Career planning
- 5) Physical and psychological working environment, including visit from the Danish Working Environment Service
- 6) Stress and work load
- 7) Environment
- 8) Other business
- 9) Meeting evaluation

Participants:

SAMU: Safety committee: Ulla Øland, Jiri Srba and management's representative Rene Rydhof Hansen
B-site: Henriette Frahm, Lene Even, Hans Hüttel, Christian Thomsen
A-site: Kristian G. Olesen, Helle Westmark
Secretary: Mette Kaufmann Andersen

Minutes:

1) News from committee members

KGO:

Network seminar on working environment is coming up – UØ is participating

The department has received the message that our refrigerators must be energy-efficient. The deadline is not until 2015, so we are not investing at the moment.

The collaboration secretariat has a meeting on January 15 - HeF + LeE will participate.

HW:

Staff: Helle Schroll returns Thursday in week 47, Michael van der Graaf will resume work gradually in January.

UØ+HeF have initiated process on job satisfaction (Arbejdsglæde), which involves activities in the secretariat and various posters in our building. The secretariat has discussed how the economic situation is influencing the daily life in the secretariat and moderates the work satisfaction.

HeF:

There is a lot to do as trade union representative at the moment. All cooperation committees have extraordinary meetings. HeF will be absent owing to operation 2 weeks from December 4.

2) The economic situation and budget 2014

Dullness due to the economic situation and its consequences can be found everywhere.

There is nothing we can do to improve result for 2013; we are now looking at 2014, which is expected to be another year of savings where possible. We are working to retrieve data based on actual figures, which the working group can use for analyzing various scenarios. SAMU and the department council need to be enlightened to be able to make qualified decisions. Working groups have been established to cover the following areas: rooms, traveling, IT7equipment, TAP/department+SICT, VIP/teaching+SICT, external business, Ph.d, various ad hoc. All figures with 6 digits are of interest.

We have terminated lease of part of the building and the rooms committee is looking into how we can reorganize.

We have informed the Faculty that the situation is difficult, and that we may have trouble meeting our requisitions for 2014. All defense mechanisms can come into play in order to avoid staff reduction. It is still stressed, that the department has no intentions of reducing staff due to savings and there are no signs that the Faculty should have a different agenda regarding our department.

The head of department is aware that we need to prevent possible consequences from the dullness when the contracts for our temporary staff expire. We can end up having 5-6 VIPs less to teach 100 extra students by 2015. We should be careful not to address problems before they arise, however, the possible consequences of continued stop for hiring should be examined.

The study secretariat would like to know UPU's position on how many students are required for providing courses in E14. The students are about to choose their courses for 5th semester.

KGO: That is for the study board to decide.

HH: If we lose 4-5 VIPs due to contracts not being renewed, we may have to limit the number of small courses – instead of spending our limited resources.

We need more information from the AAU management in order to avoid rumors.

KGO: At local level, we can inform about the situation at our department. In that way, various discussions can be made based on facts and accurate figures rather than rumors.

The members of SAMU agree to have extraordinary meetings about the economic situation in collaboration with the department council. There may be yet another extraordinary meeting in 2013.

3) Traveling policy

Cf. minutes from last ordinary meeting, we need to address the principles for the department's traveling policy. Traveling is also one of the hot topics in various discussions about savings; therefore, we need a specific policy on this matter.

Spontaneously, the following items are mentioned as points for discussion: increased encouragement for seeking external funding, more structural restrictions, distinction between conference articles and journals. Please note that these topics should not be seen as an exhaustive list, and until we have a better informed basis for discussing the general principles more detailed, the department encourages staff to continue publishing as usual.

4) Career planning

Career planning is on the agenda according to the yearly cycle.

Discussions on career planning are primarily concerned about the weight of research vs. teaching. In order to increase focus on teaching, we need to increase the number of measuring points to match the number of measuring points for research.

We are already using various means to reach equilibrium. We have had research leader hours, bank book system, and reduction of work load on external funding. Are those the correct measuring points, are they satisfactory, and is it clear how they should be financed?

The department is heading towards a more systematic career planning by making MUS interviews mandatory. It may be relevant to look at how it can be scheduled. As an example, department i8 has defined 3-4 main areas, where the employee receives a grade according to performance (high, medium, low). The grade should be seen as assistance on where to prioritize your effort. There are different opinions on how to implement this – if at all.

One opinion is that we should be careful about this sort of grading as long as the situation is causing insecurity among the staff.

The head of the department agrees that the timing is bad concerning grading, but even in crisis, it is important to consider career planning and development. It is important to know the facts and not to keep dreaming about unrealizable goals.

Another opinion is that the current situation makes it even more important to encourage younger employees to start planning their future career now. Increased focus on teaching and more experience with PBL is not the best way for them; they need time to do research and make publications. At AAU, focus is shared 50/50, but that is not the case for other Universities. Therefore, if employees should increase their possibilities for finding jobs outside AAU, they need more time for research.

The head of department finds it relevant to discuss points of measures, but now is not the time. The introduction of mandatory MUS every 2nd year is the first important step. Currently, we do not have means to implement further actions.

5) Physical and psychological working environment, including visit from the Danish Working Environment Service

The Danish Working Environment Service will pay the department a visit Thursday November 21. UØ has arranged meetings with various groups representing bot VIPs, TAPs and the management. Focus is on work load and stress. Action plans are updated.

Environment: the local environment coordinators at AAU have urged the AAU management to hire an environment manager. The coordinators meet at a regular basis.

JSr: Is it legal to make working spaces in the corridors/printer rooms?

UØ: Only as temporary work spaces for a few hours. There are specific demands for light , ventilation and security (lock)

Rooms: We have terminated parts of the contract. Currently, a group is investigating how we can reorganize causing a minimum of trouble for our employees.

The head of department will inform the staff ASAP, as the situation causes a lot of questions. The best solution is to find general principles.

HeF: make sure the comments about unsatisfactory physical working conditions will be mentioned again.

6) Stress and work load

The APV (ArbejdsPladsVurdering – Assessment of work space) shows that the increasing work load is becoming a problem for many employees.

It affects the work satisfaction (arbejdsglæde) when we are urged to take on more tasks, that are outside the normal job description. We do not have the time to reflect on how we can increase our own effort – and in the long term, that can cause long-term illness.

What can we do? We can talk about the situation, have input from external advisors, possibly at a seminar in the future, be more aware of each other, increase knowledge of various authorities that are prepared to handle such issues, e.g. prevention and treatment of stress related illness. There is also a specific authority to deal with issues Ph.ds may have. This should be mentioned at arrangements for Ph.ds.

Information on the intranet:

HW will make sure the relevant links are made visible again.

A document from 2007 should be made visible again and put on the agenda for next SAMU meeting – it may need to be revised.

The work environment representatives will discuss a revision of the website.

7) Environment

See item 5)

8) Other business

9) Meeting evaluation

The meeting ended at 14.30. The committee welcomes change of starting time to 12.30.

It is depressing that the economic situation affects all discussions, but we need to address the current circumstances when discussing our everyday work situation.

Referat: MKA