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Final*

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Minutes of Department Council Meeting on March 24, 2021

Participants: Dalin Zhang (DZ), John Stouby Persson (JSP), Jiri Srba (JSr), Tim Meritt (TM), Giovanni Bacci (GB), Gabriela Montoya(GM), Frederik Møller (FM), Lone Vriborg (LEA), Arthur Osnes Gottlieb (AOG) (student). Minute taker: Diana Plejdrup Frank (DPF). **Absent:** Helle Schroll (HeS)

Item 1. Welcome to new student member

Welcome to Arthur Osnes Gottlieb, software student on the 2.semester. We should have been two students in the council, but the other student who was elected has stopped his education. We are in the process of finding a substitute, who should then be approved by the Dean etc.

Item 2. Approval of the agenda

The agenda was approved.

Item 3. Status on the new research unit in PBL and the establishment of the SSH faculty

Appendix: Available in FirstAgenda (in Danish only).

JK presented status on the new research unit in PBL and the establishment of the SSH faculty. Slides have been sent to all units at AAU with status of the project to heighten the communication.

In short the SSH organizational change does not involve us apart from indirectly via our education portfolio but expect that the involved parties in the faculties are busy with the reorganization. The teaching side of it means that STEM competences will be included in our educations and vice versa. We have already done this historically via BAIT, INF and IDA programmes. We expect to put the STEM competences primarily in relation to projects and SDG's where we will have input from other disciplines. We are also experienced to deliver our competences in other areas e.g. computational thinking (not programming courses) though keeping in mind we are short on hands.

Comments:

- JSr: On the SW programme we already have the new IT law course which has been very well evaluated. We should prioritize our courses if we should include something further.
- GB: Another option is to introduce quantitative analysis.
- JP: What is the idea of the PBL Research unit is the PBL staff going in this new unit? According to JK it is not like the old PBL agreement. The idea is that PBL is in all our DNA and to establish a PBL unit without economic strings attached. The resources will be organized under Rector but situated in their

own department. At CS we have a new PBL development group that ensures that new staff is educated in PBL - also tasked with requirements for our new supervisors (e.g. introducing mentors etc.) It takes some effort but a good investment and the group will also be our bridgehead into the new PBL unit.

- GB: Hope UCPBL will organize the digital courses better next semester. According to JK, the new PBL workshops are new and it takes time to implement new things.
- TM: Good idea with mentors for new supervisors especially international employees to know the culture and nature of our students.

Item 4. Corona restrictions

Status on department life under corona restrictions.

We await further information about the reopening soon. We hope for a longer span of decision and to act fast on the information we are given. We are better off this year were everything is less chaotic than in the first lock-down period.

Management instructions regarding home work

At a meeting on February 10 2021, the Executive Board has reassessed the need for the design of office home workplaces due to the duration of the corona shutdown. The immediate manager and employee must discuss whether the working conditions are satisfactory and what possible measures can support this.

At CS we have discussed how to implement the decision in the coordination group. We decided that to clarify in the groups if there is lack of it equipment/or office chairs and if this is the case it will be sorted out.

Comments

- When do you expect a decision about exams? UK is pushing for a decision soon together with other TECH deputy department heads. We hope that students somehow can get back to their groups.

Item 5. CS establishment in Copenhagen

JK travelled to Copenhagen yesterday to see the offices at Campus where CS employees are to be placed. He expects the rebuilding to be ready for September 1. We will grow to about 20 employees over the next 4 years – so we need to plan this as good as we can and expand gradually. Currently we have two staff members and Daniel Russo is moving to Copenhagen. All three research groups are new represented there and we are looking for a secretary. Our study regulation will decide what we are to teach in. Apart from that it is going well and our student area looks fine though more open student work places than here in CS Aalborg. Moreover, we have received extra funding from the Dean on 2 million among other things to support Copenhagen.

Item 6. Rebuilding of Cassiopeia

On return to Cassiopeia you will see the result of improvements: New meeting room above canteen, new meeting rooms per cluster, refurbishing of the Claudio room and the lab rebuilding has started.

Big rebuilding: Still cannot agree who should pay. We will continue using department funds even though this is not strategically wise on the long run as we pay for the rent. JK has applied for 1.9 million for establishing our department lab. He expects that in the future there will be focus on using labs for students so there is partly a political agenda but it is also good with lab environments for our master students in particular. We cannot wait doing this as it is important.

The seminar rooms on level 1 is now emptied and will be redesigned as in the design studio etc. JK asked if the walls to seminar rooms should be frosted glass or as they are now? Maybe only some of it so you can see what is going on inside. He might put the question to a vote among staff.

The moving of ITS out of Cassiopeia will not happen before 2022. We are running out of space and working out freeing up space together with research groups – moving visitor seats and converting meeting rooms into offices. The study administration is moving out of cluster 2 and a new study administration area above the auditorium will be established before the end of summer.

Comments

- JP: What is the definition of a lab? According to JK it is normally considered as equipment and the running of equipment including the physical lab space. JP: We should still push for “the non-physical lab” (e.g. software) as this can still be expensive to run.
- GB: We can use e.g. CLAAUDIA resources and we already have the usability lab etc. According to JK the CLAAUDIA setup is limited in some ways.

Item 7. Department economy

Appendix: See appendixes from HeS.

JK presented status on the economy as HeS was not present.

Our economy is overall in good shape.

Budget 2021 compared to re-budget 2021

- Income: Increased in external funding and on operating expenses. The prognoses for scientific staff has gone down due to more free purchase of permanent staff. Administrative staff gone up due to several new positions.
- Dean decided result on 0 ends on a surplus on 729,000 due to the adjustment percentage in government salaries. Overall the re-budget is close to the first version.

Financial statement in 2020 compared to budget 2020

- Income: We got more external funding due to corona projects. As for operating expenses we spend more on equipment and less on travel and more rebuilding was done on Cassiopeia. Scientific staff: We spent less due to more free purchase on e.g. the Beocovid project. Less than budgeted on TAP staff due to a delay in the recruitment of the lab technicians and a HR employee. Rent: We have saved rent for the basement.
- Dean decided surplus of 2 million ended in a surplus of 3.8 million partly due to Beocovid free purchase, stalled rebuilding costs due to corona and moving of it-vest funds to 2021.
- Copenhagen: Compared to budget we have not spend the money estimated. Study Board: No big surprises - a bit more censor expenses than expected.
- A lot of overhead in hiring new people. It is a big task to make good use on new people. We need to reconsider the future hiring strategy and hold back money for next year. We should grow slower in future.

Comments:

- JP: Good with a discussion of the strategy and capacity of the infuse we are given. Maybe point out to upper management that capacity takes time to build up and if not patient areas of growth will be destroyed. We should make sure we get time to implement the growth.

Item 8. CS strategy

JK presented the CS strategy based on the two seminars in August and November. The CS management group has merged the input for a long term strategy of 2-3 years.

Workplace: Important to focus on which kind of workplace we want to facilitate and have especially considering our expansion. Increasing focus on equality between teaching and research. Diversity and gender balance is being worked with. Include junior staff in research, education and administration.

Research: Mission driven research that support global society and balance. This is also seen in the surroundings outside these walls. Be agile and demonstrate excellence in application-oriented and foundational projects. E.g. within AI.

Education: Our ambitions are in line with strategy on faculty level. We want to educate candidates related to solving societal challenges via e.g. SDG's. We need to be more agile in creating the right graduates via designing our curricula and work on employability where we have hired an ambassador to work on this. Our master's programmes should be more attractive to students (via e.g. electives and extra-curricular activities). Work on getting more PhD's in our master's programmes. Our intake on the Data Science programme must be improved to get a sustainable education. Online course portfolio for further education (lifelong learning) to be developed.

Engagement with society: More engagement with partners for all staff.

Comments

- As for the profile of our candidates and solving societal challenges: "If you can code you can code everything" is normally what employers ask for. Maybe put more focus on students that can start own company?
- As for making our master's programmes more attractive: Maybe formulate our specialization areas so they are more attractive without changing our study regulations. JK: Specialization course revision is part of it but will not do it all.

Item 9. Hirings and department structure

There is no new developments in terms of department structure. As for status on hirings we have received a lot of applications for assistant professors and associate professors. The assessment for the assistant professors is soon done. The associate professor assessment is delayed due to incapacity.

Real shortlisting is requested by JSr. This is not allowed by our HR department due to legal requirements. There is maybe a bit of "checks and balances" in it.

Item 10. AOB

None other than the agenda will be adjusted a bit under item 9 – department structure will be removed.