

Meeting	Forum	Time	Place	Meeting #
22 november 2023	Academic Council, Technical Sciences	15:00-17:30	1525-626	2023-5

Participants	Dean Eskild Holm Nielsen (EHN), Anne Jensen (ANJ/ENVS), Jens Malmkvist (JEM/ANIS), Björn Andresen (BJA/ECE), Søren Wandahl (SWA/CAE), Thomas Lykke-Møller Sørensen (TLS/BCE), Emre Karaman (EMA/QGG), Aske Høj Merrild (AHM/BCE), Maria Holst Kjeldsen (MHK/ANIVET), Mathieu Lamandé (for René Gislum (REG/AGRO)), Matouš Najman (MAN/stud.), Hanne Lakkenborg Kristensen (HLM/FOOD), Martin Heide Jørgensen (MHJ/MPE),  Ahmad Madary (AHM/TAP), Stine Wendelbo BJORHOLM (SWB/TAP), Louise Fischer Koue (LFK/TAP),  Stine Munkholm Jespersen (SMJ/stud.), Matouš Najman (MAN/stud.)  Brian Vinter (BVI/Tech dekn.), Mie Lundgaard (MLU/Tech DKN) Hanne Vester Rasmussen (HVR/ADM)
Absent without substitutes	Annette Baattrup-Pedersen (ABP/ECOS), Emil Lunau Bentsen (ELB)
Apologies for absence	
Guests	Lotte Bach Larsen AUFF (and FOOD) for item 3
Minutes	Ida Marie Gerdes (IMG)

Item #	Time	Item and appendices	Owner
<b>1</b>	<b>15:00-15:05</b> (5 min.)	<b>Approval of agenda</b>	<b>AJ</b>
Approved			
<b>2</b>	<b>15:05-15:10</b> (5 min.)	<b>Approval of minutes</b>	<b>AJ</b>
Approved			
<b>3</b>	<b>15:10-15:40</b> (30 min.)	<b>Visit from AUFF Presentation by Lotte Bach Larsen and questions</b>	<b>AJ/EHN</b>

Prof Lotte Bach Larsen is Techs representative in AUFF.  
Her presentation is attached to the minutes.

Lotte informed the Council about the composition of AUFF, the funding from AUFF (different grants types and other kinds of support). Lotte explained that there is a tendency to give more smaller grants and they have a larger success rate.

The primary evaluation criteria is quality. The committee also looks for “the bright idea”, but is also conscious not to double other grants for the same proposal/idea, i.e. the chance of AUFF funding is reduced if the applicant has received other grants for the research proposal.

It was mentioned by a member of the Council that for Tech, large grants are important in order to make experiments. Lotte mentioned that there is a small opening to cover TAP activities and infrastructure. From 2024 there will be a 20% overhead in the Nova grants, meaning that there will be fewer grants approved, as the total sum will not be changed.

Brian Vinter mentioned that recruiting grants have meant a lot to Tech and thanked AUFF for this possibility. He also thanked for the possibility of spending some of the 3M for mobility grants (for our PhD students).

Søren Wandahl mentioned as a comment to AUFF in general that when we (the Council) are requested for nominations for the AUFF awards, they should change the wordings from: Nominating one of both gender to nominate “more than one gender”.

The Dean mentioned that it is very appreciated that AUFF has adopted the principles about flat rate from NNF. Everybody was encouraged to use Hejmdal and to use Sandbjerg more for PhD courses – it is a beautiful place, a great venue and a good opportunity to let our PhDs see something so unique.

4	15:40-16:10 (30 min.)	Dfir report	AJ/EHN/BVI
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Thomas and Hanne each gave a presentation of the report from each their point of view:

Hanne informed that the DFIR report has been discussed in all sections and committees at FOOD, and mentioned three areas received special attention and that has been discussed in detail: “democracy” e.g. how to become member of internal committees, get into the machine rooms etc.; “freedom of research” which is controlled by the funding, affected by the lack of long term sustainable funding (including the creativity and the exploration of new areas; and “economy” (where too little is basic funding etc, the balance is not right, salaries of permanent staff should be covered by ‘hard money’. Hanne agrees with many of the conclusions of the report.

Thomas started by mentioning that his department has not discussed the DFIR report and only very few were aware about it. He commented that it is positive that external collaboration is now a central part of the academic DNA of the universities. He also acknowledged democratic culture with involvement as a way of fostering productivity. Thomas mentioned in relation to the departments, that involvement is to be seen and not only be invited for a yearly retreat, and that involvement and engagement also could be better in the Academic Council, where the members perhaps should/could be better at bringing up topics to discuss so that it is not a one-way communication. Thomas then focused on two things in the report: Firstly, the dynamics of management (researchers want Heads of Departments that lead and support research and set directions, plus the importance of involving the researchers in the decisions), and secondly the future challenges (political, misinformation, university/academia bashing, too many reforms, the funding system undermines research autonomy).

The Dean mentioned how a culture and environment at the Faculty where people feel secure and do not abstain from speaking up about any topic is very important to him. Another important thing is to provide more information at department level about the economy as this gives a better understanding of e.g. the management prioritizations and decisions. It is also important to be open about recruitment plans. The Dean also mentioned that it is important to use “Institute Forum” at the departments and that these meet at least twice a year, and that it is driven by the staff/faculty (both VIP and TAP) who should set the agenda, rather than the management. The Dean then asked the younger members of the Council how they see the democratic culture of the university and what is important as some of the views of the DFIR report perhaps reflects the experiences of researchers who have been in academia for a long time.

Maria mentioned that younger researchers perhaps do not engage as much – maybe because they are hired as PostDocs or PhDs who are not affiliated with Tech/AU for so long and perhaps because sometimes they experience that feed-back from younger researchers is not taken into account. Jens agreed and mentioned that sometimes the processes are so short that even though you are asked for your opinion, the decision has already been made. The Dean mentioned that if the inputs are not taken into account, then it makes no sense to initiate a dialogue. It is important that the Heads of departments are aware of the difference between giving information and real involvement/dialogue. Thomas mentioned that democracy isn’t to get everything you want but it is to be involved and that it is important that management communicates in a clear way also about unpopular decisions.

Hanne asked how the Board of AU is appointed, and the Dean explained how the Board is elected. (After the meeting the following was added to the minutes by Ida: The University Board consists of 11 members. 2 members are elected by and from the academic staff, 1 member is elected by and from the technical/administrative staff, 2 members are elected by and from the university’s full-time students and the remaining 6 members are external – see more here:

<https://international.au.dk/about/organisation/management/thearhusuniversityboard>)

5	16:10-16:20 (10 min)	Annual follow up: Responsible conduct	AJ/BVI
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		<b>of research and freedom of research</b>	
<p>It is one of the tasks of the Council to annually look into the activities of the responsible conduct of research area. Anne Jensen mentioned that the Academic Council should discuss the follow-up from the departments and the two suggestions from the Faculty management regarding a joint workshop every two years and the alignment of onboarding to integrate responsible conduct of research.</p> <p>The Council should also discuss any other ideas and input for how to support the departments in keeping a continuous focus on the area.</p> <p>Anne Jensen asked the Council for activities there have been at the departments and for ideas for keeping a focus on the area. The Council was also asked to consider if we are doing enough for our junior staff. Aske mentioned that it seems to be very much up to the individual PI. Jens mentioned that some of the departments have only reported few or no activities, even though they have had activities, and that we should help the departments both with a catalogue of ideas and a template for reporting activities. Louise mentioned that it could be a help for the young researchers to be guided more on how to get started. There are probably more activities going on than we think. Thomas asked for a package that could be used for retreats, meetings and so on. How to organize it etc. The Dean mentioned that we have an ISO 9000 system which is a very important part of the quality insurance. We have considerable research in controversial issues – and thus may be challenged – so it is very important that these research activities adhere to the principles of responsible conduct of research. We must have a very high level of responsible conduct of research. Jens mentioned that it is important with management support for the staff who are under the pressure from external actors, resources, etc.</p>			
	<b>16-20-16-30</b> (10 min.)	<b>BREAK</b>	
<b>6</b>	<b>16:30-16:50</b> (20 min.)	<b>PhD: Assessment committees, recruitment and degrees since last meeting</b>	<b>MHK and BVI</b>
<p>The item has three different aspects:</p> <p>First part concerned Assessment committees: Potential assessment committee members with large international networks and thereof following joint publications based on databases cannot be members of assessment committees. The PhD students find that this rule block the best assessors, especially within a narrow subject area. The intention is to protect the PhDs. Brian wants a discussion of this rule – even though it gives a problem it secures an arm’s length between the PhD student/supervisor and the assessment committee members.</p> <p>The Council agreed that it is an important principle – the Faculty should keep the rule. It is here to protect the PhD students and the University. In some cases, an exemption could be given – but only in special cases.</p> <p>Anne introduced the second part of the item concerning PhD recruitment. She asked the council to give inputs to two questions:</p> <p>How do we identify other universities that have qualified potential PhD students that live up to our requirements?</p> <p>How do the departments work with recruitment of PhD students and do the departments consider the flexible model (4+4) when discussing PhD recruitment?</p> <p>Brian added that we need more and better applicants. Across all programmes, we have PhDs who drop out either because they don’t fit in the environment or because they lack the qualifications, so we need better quality control. It is bad for both the PhD student and the research group when a student leaves us. Jens Malmkvist suggested that we should make it easier for students from Biology to take our courses such that students from biology see Tech as a possible place to do conduct a PhD. It should be more flexible to take courses. It should be clearer how the economy of getting a 4+4 student could look, and how much external funding is needed. Not all at the economy sections knows the model. We should be better at informing the students that this is an option. Aske mentioned that not all know about the 4+4. The supervisors should be better at pushing the students that are already connected a research group. Søren mentioned that the students are aware of the possibility. The departments and programmes should provide more information about the 4+4 to the students.</p>			

The third part was about approving the PhDs awarded since last meeting: There were no comments, so all PhD candidates were approved.			
7	<b>16:50-17:05</b> (15 min)	<b>New model for research support (Status)</b>	<b>BVI</b>
<p>In the future the research support office will only help with EU applications and not the rest of the funding bodies (80%). An analysis of the area shows that all departments do the fundraising in different ways. Tech will hire three new fundraisers to support the new model. From now on there must be a research coordinator at each department. The model will be adapted as soon as we find out what work and what doesn't.</p> <p>The fundraisers should also work in the start-up phase of building up larger consortia in the phase of identifying potential partners. The support office will support the administrative part while the science must be written by the scientists.</p> <p>The Dean mentioned that some departments MUST upgrade at the local level.</p> <p>Anne asked if the fundraisers at the faculty level will help with Horizon etc. – Brian stressed that the RSO will still take care of the EU funding.</p> <p>A plan for communication has been made.</p>			
	<b>17:05-17:20</b> (15 min)	<b>Research evaluation (Status)</b>	<b>BVI</b>
<p>Stine Wendelboe Bjørnholm gave a status of the Tech research assessment and the guidance principles: A lean process; fruitful discussions at the departments; full transparency; a group-based evaluation rather than of the individual researcher; flexible frameworks; no pre-defined themes that we have to assess; and a looking forward-perspective. She showed the timeline of the process which the Council has also seen in a previous version. There are three waves: Four departments start early 2024 just after the Christmas holidays (ECOS, ENVIS, QGG, FOOD). Second wave is by the end of 2024, and the third wave in April 2025. The Council was asked for comments for the Terms of references for the external panels. Comments can be sent to Anne no later than December 6<sup>th</sup>.</p> <p>Anne thanked for the introduction and the fine overview.</p> <p>Louise asked how the external panels will be composed. Stine mentioned that the departments will receive more information about this and that the departments will be asked to appoint between 8-12 potential members. The external panel should represent diverse groups, with both high-end researchers but also young upcoming researchers, and also researchers from industry. Based on the department's list, the Deans office will decide on and invite the members. Anne asked how departments can suggest members and Stine answered that each department can decide the process for appointing candidates for themselves.</p>			
9	<b>17:20-17:25</b> (5 min.)	<b>New advisor for research practice (Appointment)</b>	<b>AJ</b>
<p>Academic Council discussed the candidates and decided who to appoint. The discussion on this item is confidential and will not be published in the minutes as the Council discussed colleagues by name. The Council decided that it would be good not only to read the nominations but also the candidates' own motivations for a position like this. This should be taken into account next time the Council appoints a candidate for this or similar positions. In the deliberation on the nominated candidates, the Council considered high academic standards and expertise, and also diversity, research areas, location etc. of the candidates. The Council voted and reached a decision on who to appoint.</p>			
10	<b>17:25-17:30</b> (5 min.)	<b>AOB</b>	<b>AJ</b>
<p>Anne encouraged everybody to engage with their institute fora. This is a good place to discuss the items raised in the Council.</p> <p>Jens Hartvig Danielsen, recent chair of NVU, has kindly offered to come and give a presentation on NVU from the inside. This may be of interest across AU faculties, across Tech institutes and/or across the five Academic Councils, i.e. beyond our own Council, such that we will invite across.</p> <p>Anne also mentioned that the follow up from the search committee and the meeting plan for 2024 will be circulated later.</p>			

Stine thanked for her time in the council.

Announcements

Item #	Time	Item and appendices	Owner
11a		Search committees	AJ
11b		Advisory Board	AJ
11c		Meeting dates 2024	AJ