

MINUTES

Aarhus Universitet

Meeting	Forum	Time	Place	Meeting #
20 juni 2023	Academic Council	15:00-17:30	1525-626	2023-3

Participants	Dean Eskild Holm Nielsen (EHN), Anne Jensen (ANJ/ENVIS), René Gislum (REG/AGRO), Jens Malmkvist (JEM/ANIS), Björn Andresen (BJA/ECE), Hanne Lakkenborg Kristensen (HLM/FOOD), Aliakbar Kamari (for Søren Wandahl (SWA/CAE)), Thomas Lykke-Møller Sørensen (TLS/BCE), Martin Heide Jørgensen (MHJ/MPE), Emre Karaman (EMA/QGG), Maria Holst Kjeldsen (MHK/ANIVET) Ahmad Madary (AHM/TAP), Stine Wendelbo BJORHOLM (SWB/TAP), Stine Munkholm Jespersen (SMJ/stud.), Aske Høj Merrild (AHM/stud.), Matouš Najman (MAN/stud.) Brian Vinter (BVI/Tech dekn.), Mie Lundgaard (MLU/Tech DKN)
Apologies for absence	Louise Fischer Koue (LFK/TAP), Hanne Vester Rasmussen (HVR/ADM), Emil Lunau Bentsen (EWLB/stud.); Annette Baattrup-Pedersen (ABP/BIOS), Hadi Sehat (HAS/ECE)
Guests	Peder Damgaard Item 3 (ØR1)
Minutes	Ida Marie Gerdes (IMG)

Item #	Time	Item and appendices	Owner
1	15:00-15:05 (5 min.)	Approval of agenda	AJ
The agenda was approved, but Item 3 was postponed until Peder Damgaard arrived at the meeting			
2	15:05-15:10 (5 min.)	Approval of minutes	AJ
The minutes were approved			

For discussion

Item #	Time	Item and appendices	Owner
3	15:10-15:50 (40 min.)	ØR1	EHN
<p>Peder Damgaard presented the 2022 TECH financial accounts:</p> <p>In relation to the revenues Peder had the following remarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The result is 1M DKK higher than anticipated in ØR3 • External revenue is 14M DKK higher than ØR3. The increase covers a higher realized external revenue per senior VIP • Sales revenue is 21M higher than expected in ØR3. The increase can be attributed to increased sales prices from sales of grain and other experimental products, as well as more incoming contracts. • The increased income from external grants and sales has contributed 5M DKK of the overhead increase. 			

The following remarks followed the presentation of the costs:

- Salary has ended up 10M DKK lower than anticipated in ØR3 due to postponement/reduction in employment, reinforced by the partial hiring freeze.
- Operating cost has ended up 46M DKK higher than anticipated in ØR3.
 - Partly derived from the increased activity (revenue) from external grants and sales.
 - Partly derived from advanced costs for building construction. In ØR3, it was expected that a larger share of the construction costs would be incurred over several years in the form of depreciation. In the accounts, it has turned out differently, so that a larger share is immediately held. This decreased the result for 2022, while also reducing cost for the coming years.

The Council discussed overhead, and how too small overhead risks to erode the economy of the departments/the Faculty. The Council asked for a guide on how to put expenses in the budget, which would also be very helpful for new staff. It was clarified that overhead means real overhead, while other small costs are called indirect costs.

The bottom-line shows:

- Tech has implemented a very tight budgetary discipline in 2022 which shows strenght
- As a result, almost all units have a positive deviation on the bottom line, regardless of rising energy prices and building-related costs.
- Hiring retention, increased salary coverage on external funds, and increased overhead revenues have helped ensure that.
- The departments and the building unit have also enthusiastically reduced energy consumption by 25%. In particular, the departments at AU Viborg have significantly reduced energy consumption.
- The deficit in the building sector is due to the advanced costs of building construction.

Peder Damgaard mentioned that overall, the salary share is decreasing over the period, but for Tech, a larger decrease is expected than for the other faculties.

Regarding the energy costs, the budget for 2022 at ØR3 was based on an expected energy saving of 1,349 MWh over the last 3 months of the year. The costs in the financial statements for 2022 ended close to the ØR3 expectations. The budget for 2023-26 is based on a continuation of the energy-saving measures corresponding to 5,595 MWh in 2023 and rising to 6,895 from 2024.

After the presentation of the 2022 accounts, Peder Damgaard introduced ØR1 for 2023. In the process budgets for all projects are revised. It is a long process with multiple steps.

In relation to the ØR1 financial act funds, Peder Damgaard had the following comments:

The educational revenue is reduced by DKK 3M. This is due to lower intakes of students and higher dropouts than expected at the time of setting B23 (end Aug. '22).

For the contract funds it applies that fewer contract funds than expected are implemented in B23. In ØR1, the level of contract funds is maintained due to good revenue opportunities in the National Research Reserve. The departments have prepared their budgeting for the event that a share of the research reserve is not obtained.

Unfortunately, the 2% saving on the public contracts with the state has not stopped yet. The Dean still hopes and expects that a permanent solution will be reached.

Peder Damgaard had the following comments for external grants and sales in relation to ØR1:

- **External grants** are expected DKK 30M higher than in B23.
- At faculty level, a budget reduction of the grant (and associated costs) of 87M has been included in relation to the departments' budgeted expectations. The write-down is based on a historical revenue trend for the year. However, the faculty write-down does not take into account the overestimated overhead. The amount may be around DKK 17M. However, it is estimated that most departments can adjust the budget accordingly.
- Sales revenue is adjusted upwards by DKK 25M due to more contracts taken home. The upward revision is mainly at ECOS.

The Dean mentioned that EU both accepts full costs and a variety of indirect costs, but this requires a good budgeting. It is important to have a total overview of the economy in the project.

For the ØR1 cost, Peder Damgaard mentioned:

- With the increased income from external grants and sales comes increased costs for salaries, operations and depreciation.
- Under 'other operation cost' line an extra 22M is used for building establishment. It is primarily related to the establishment of Campus Viborg.
- The budgeting of energy costs remains subject to uncertainty. For example, it is assessed that the heat in Foulum is set 4M too low in the data that has formed the basis for the budgeting of the energy costs under the institutes in ØR1

The Dean mentioned that due to the coming increase in activities, it is **necessary and very important** that the departments start the recruitment processes early. We need to recruit 7-8 % more staff in the years to come. The administration will need more resources in order to handle the 200 positions in the pipeline (due to more external funding and the growth at AU Viborg). The increase applies for both for tenured and non-tenured staff. Especially Agroecology has expanded.

Peder Damgaard had the following comments for the ØR1 - VET and Campus Viborg:

- In parallel with ØR1, Tech has worked with the budgeting of the Vet-education and the establishment of Campus Viborg until 2027.
- The budget is in balance between revenue and expenditure
Work is still ongoing on the design of the study programmes and campus, and the budget is therefore planned with this uncertainty.

For the building establishment of Campus Viborg:

- Expected to cost a total of DKK 65M
- In the short term perspective, the cost of building establishment is being financed by the finance act fund granted to the establishment of the Vet-education, and which has already been transferred to AU. This grant is otherwise being eroded by inflation.
- In the long term perspective, the faculty returns the DKK 65M to the Vet-education via a permanent annual grant of 5% of the amount
- The establishment of solar cells and joint student recruitment efforts for the educations at Campus Viborg will also follow this funding model

ØR1 bottom lines:

- Tech has been granted a deficit of DKK 21M in 2023, of which:
- DKK 17M is covered by AU's equity as a grant to the engineering initiative.
- DKK 4M is covered by the Ministry's grant for the Vet education, which was included in the Faculty's accounts 2022.
- In ØR1, the departments either maintain or improve the result from B23.
- Regarding MPE, an analysis has been initiated to identifying how to balance the budget.
- A surplus under the Faculty pools is an expression of a restraint in grants, due to that otherwise the Faculty will exceed the overall result requirement.

- The departments improvements in ØR1 give the pools room to distribute (and thus reduce profits) an extra DKK 5M.
At ØR1, the faculty pools have a reserve of 5M.

Ahmad Madari asked why the difference is so large between MPE and the other engineering departments' bottom lines. The Dean explained that an analysis is on-going, but departments in Herning is not as efficient as the other locations. Here, the costs are higher (equipment etc.), the departments use more staff to generate the same income as the other departments. A five year plan is made.

The Dean also mentioned that we must still save energy both to benefit the environment/contribute to climate mitigation, and also for economic reasons.

4	15:50-16:00 (10 min.)	Consultation, report on merits	AJ
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The item concerns the principles framework for merits. Anne will collect the comments just after the meeting.

Comments:

- Overall, it is very good that we get these principle and that the merits you get for knowledge sharing are set forward; universities have a lot of tasks that need to be acknowledged
- The part about entrepreneurship should be stronger and more detailed
- The document stressed how important of the universities are in the role as provider of new knowledge
- The part about open science is not very detailed/strong
- The principles should not only cover the universities, but should include the entire chain behind the research (funding etc)
- The wording and the concepts used are sometimes confusing
- The diversity and inclusion perspective are not well included/described
- It should be more transparent how the principles should be used for hiring and promotions
- It is also applicable in hiring processes if it is described and acknowledged how you get merits for other tasks than research
- What are the international perspectives of such a document?

The process for implementation has not been decided yet. It will be a long process and it will not be something that we have to do, but something that we can do.

5	16:00-16:05 (5 min.)	Sandbjerg seminar	AJ
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The meeting at Sandbjerg 24-25 August targets the increasing impact on the core activities of the AU of external funding and the research foundations that provide the external funding. The funding is increasingly tied to specific areas and topics, which do not consider teaching. There will be guest speakers. Anne encourages everybody to participate.

Stine MJ asked if the seminar is relevant for student members. Anne mentioned that teaching and thus students are also affected by the increasing role of external funding. Vice chancellor Berit Eika will give a presentation on this. Jens Malmkvist noted that since AU education is research based, and hence funding always has impact on the teaching.

6	16:05-16:10 (5 min.)	Honorary doctorate	AJ
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Anne Jensen reminded the Council that it is the Council that suggests two candidates for the further selection process. This is a very good way to substantiate, expand and solidify academic relationship and working collaborations. The Council members should support their departments in identifying and suggesting relevant candidates. In the selection of the candidates, it is attempted to balance gender, scientific areas, geography etc.

<p>Anne Jensen mentioned that she sends an e-mail to the research committee members or the Heads of Sections to prompt them to come up with candidates. The procedures that the Council decided earlier will be followed in the discussion/selection at the September meeting. The deadline is September 1,2023. Eskild Holm Nielsen mentioned that Flakkebjerg has just had 25 years anniversary and should have some relevant collaboration partners that could be recommended. Eskild Holm Nielsen also urged to consider diversity. Anne Jensen also mentioned that we do not want to focus on one part of the world alone.</p>			
7	16:10-16:15 (5 min.)	Junior Researchers in Academic Council	AJ/EHN
<p>The item concerns formal representation of junior researchers in the Council. Currently, the junior researchers at postdoc level are not specifically represented in the Council. The junior researchers take up a larger and larger share of the VIP staff at the Faculty. The postdocs can run for election via the representation area of their department, but usually those seats go to senior VIP. In order to secure representation of postdocs in the Council, the Council can decide to grant the junior researchers an observer's seat. It should be up to the junior researchers to decide how they will elect an observer. To ensure fair and democratic processes and representation, all junior researchers should have the opportunity, not only members of the JRA.</p> <p>The Council supported the idea. The Council suggested that it would be a good idea if there are two seats and the candidates overlapped in time. Ahmed Madari mentioned that we should have in mind that the postdocs are only here for short periods of time and this must be included in the proposed proces.</p> <p>It was decided that at the next meeting, a formal proposal will be discussed and the junior researches will be contacted for arranging representation.</p>			
8	16:15-16:20 (5 min)	Students' item (new procedure)	AJ
<p>It was decided that the students will have their own item on the agenda in order to raise and discuss students matters with academic relevance. This is both to have a formal way of integrating concrete items while it also can be used for the students to present observations, which they would like to share with the Council. The items must be sent in in due time before the meeting. Anne encouraged the students to coordinate it in the student group prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The students appreciated the idea and mentioned different items that can be taken up like exams, AI, Chat GBT (tool or threat?).</p> <p>Anne thanked Aske for his engagement in and contribution to the Council. He will start a PhD after the summer vacation.</p>			
	16:20-16:30 (10 min.)	BREAK	
9	16:30 - 17:00 (30 min.)	Research evaluation (group work)	BV
<p>All faculties at AU will go through a research evaluation over the next years. For the preparation of the evaluation, three questions have been prepared for discussion in groups. Brian added that this will used for preparing the board to make a new strategy for AU but we should benefit from it ourselves as well.</p> <p>The Faculty has decided the basic principles for the research evaluation of the Tech departments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be a lean process • Must be full openness and transparency • A framework consisting of a self-evaluation and an evaluation by the board • A template – with individualized features • Impact is the overall goal for AU research • Government advisory work is research 			

- All Tech departments are developing rapidly at the moment. Want to look at Leading KPIs – not trailing KPIs (i.e. forward in time rather than backwards).

The questions for the group work:

How do we make sure to benefit from this?

How do we measure research and impact in a broader sense, not only H-indexes?

How do we become more group oriented?

A short summary of the discussions:

Group 1:

- At what level should it be done?
- Must make strategies – also for self-evaluation – on both departmental and section level
- Targets should be very clear

Group 2:

- Could align with the discussion from the merits discussion
- The groups should comment on the evaluation – where are we and where do we want to go? What do we look forward to?

Group 3:

- Look at the number of guests – the more guests the more attractive as a group
- Development in diversity
- Accumulative sum of H-indexes
- Scopus network for the group
- Have a look at the staff turnover

After the group work, it was decided that the groups had one week to finish the comments and send them to Anne/Ida. Inputs will be circulated in the council.

10	17:00-17:10- (10 min.)	Annual follow up - PhD area	BV
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Previous it has been decided that an annual follow up on the PhD should be presented in the Council:

Brian Vinter mentioned:

- A year with some turmoil, too many PhD students left in 2022
- Tech has around 300 PhD students, whereas we would like to grow to 400
- We receive fine reviews, but Tech is the AU faculty with the highest number of extensions
- Would like to have more 4+4 as PhD option. There are still money for the first years

It was decided to discuss recruitment of PhD at a later meeting.

11	17:10-17:15 (5 min.)	Implementation of AU action plan for gender equality, diversity, and inclusion	BV
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Brian Vinter gave an update on the work with the action plan:

- All permanent positions must have a search committee (exact criteria follow)
- Career dialogue: Part of MUS, but if a person leaves or wishes to have a separate talk about career, this must be held
- EXIT-survey is in the pilot test phase

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The last to parts of the AU Action Plan will start in the autumn, will be initiated by the AU HR <p>The Dean mentioned that the survey is not a control, but a way to open our eyes to unknown barriers and opportunities</p>			
12	17:15-17:20 (5 min.)	PhD degrees since last meeting	AJ
The Council approved the nine PhD degrees appointed since last meeting.			
13	17:20-17:25 (5 min)	AOB	
<p>Anne Jensens mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AU Research will be changed this will affect the faculties. We will discuss this on the September meeting of the Council <p>DFiR report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the University Act from 2003, DFiR examines whether the sector's management and financing structure is future-proof. <p>Brian Vinter noted that the DFiR report shows that 35 % are worried that raising critical questions will have consequences for their employment. If anybody have problems with raising critical questions, please let the Deans office know. Researchers must be able to speak up. The Dean mentioned that the DFiR report does not cover the non-tenured staff. The report will be discussed at a future meeting.</p> <p>Maria raised a question for a future meeting: Collaborations between the assessors in the assessment committee and the supervisor.</p>			
		17:25-17:30	Walk to Kemisk Kantine

Announcements 17:20-17:30

Item #	Time	Item and appendices	Owner
10		AU Forskning	AJ
11		DFIR	