

Date	Forum	Time	Place	Meeting #
18 Juni 2024	Academic Council	15:00-17:30	1525-626	03-2024

Participants	Dean Eskild Holm Nielsen (EHN), Sabine Ravnskov (AGRO), Frants Havmand Jensen (ECOS), , Karen Thodberg (ANIVET), Anne Jensen (ENVS), Thomas Lykke-Møller Sørensen (BCE), Charles Møller (MPE) Søren Wandahl (CAE), Björn Andresen (ECE) Emre Karaman (QGG), Ahmad Madary (TAP, MPE) Louise Fischer Koue (TAP, QGG), Litte Dalsgaard (TAP, ECE), Anna Elisabeth Kristoffersen (PhD) Muhammad Mohsin Nawaz (PhD), Frederik Lindberg Callesen (student), Lærke Dueholm Jensen (student), Riad Sahli (postdoc),  Brian Vinter (vice Dean), Mie Lundgaard (chief advisor)
Apologies for absence	Hanne Lakkenborg Kristensen (FOOD), Anna Elisabeth Kristoffersen (PhD); Gertrud Lindberg Tefre, Zahra Esfahani (postdoc)
Guests	Michelle Williams item 8, Peder Damgaard item 3
Minutes	Ida Marie Gerdes

Item #	Time	Item and appendices	Owner
<b>1</b>	15:00-15:05	<b>Approval of agenda</b> (5 min.)	<b>AJ</b>
The agenda was approved			
<b>2</b>	15:05-15:10	<b>Approval of minutes</b> (5 min.)	<b>AJ</b>
<b>The minutes were approved</b>			
<b>3</b>	15:10-15:50	<b>ØR 1</b>	<b>EHN/PD</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peder presented the</li> </ul> <p>Peder gave an overall presentation about:</p> <p>The general process for TECH's ØR and the budgets (attached).  The revenue and the costs for TECH – we have a solid and healthy economy  The financial results of 2023  The external funding for 2023</p> <p>Ahmad asked about the economic situation for MPE. Peder explained that the department has a four year plan to improve MPE's result.</p> <p>Peder explained that the <i>research reserve</i> is dedicated to strengthening the research capacity. The Dean mentioned that it may also be used for infrastructure and for recruiting the next generation VIP. The funds must benefit TECH in the long run.</p> <p>Increased share of external grants is driven by increased external funding brought home from both public and private sources, including the EU.</p> <p>Peder mentioned the six private funds that currently can cover fixed costs: NNF, Villum, Lundbeck, Carlsberg, LEGO and Velux.</p> <p>The Faculty has an available amount of approx. DKK 2.5 billion on ongoing external projects. This corresponds to about 2.5 years on external funds.  This illustrates that we are quite dependent on external funding.  External funding provides coverage for fixed costs through overhead. However, the external funds do also finance direct costs for the administrative department (like HR, economy etc), Senior VIP,</p>			

just as the finances of the departments' facilities and laboratories are dependent on internal purchases from the external funds.

The Dean mentioned that compared to the other faculties, we have received the highest overhead as our researchers are good at obtaining funding with overhead.

Thomas asked if there is a tipping point, where we get to much funding from external funds. The Dean answered that if there is a large share of senior VIPs, who attract the most funding, then there will be a too high turnover per senior VIP. There need to be a balance, which is approx. a turnover between 4 mio. and 6.6 m per senior VIPs. The departments where the senior VIPs have the lowest internal turnover are the ones with the most solid economy. There is a higher risk in taking in salary paid by external funding.

Charles asked if there is a stagnation or decrease in the number of students we can produce. The Dean answered that because of the new educations at AU Viborg, we expect to grow until 2027/28 and after this our economy will stabilize. The Dean anticipates that we will still have a growth of 200 to 400 mio. DDK in the years to come. The Dean also mentioned that the departments must have a complete and accurate overview of financing of labs, square meters and buildings.

Sabine mentioned that the challenges are to ensure that the facilities are fixed and appropriate staff recruited in due time. It is difficult to recruit fast enough and to recruit highly qualified within strict time frames.

The Dean mentioned that it is important to actually spend the external funding in the year where it is allocated – we are in a good place, and need to keep the momentum. We have a large diversity in our funding, and there is a significant amount of funding within our areas. We have a lot of possibilities.

Sabine mentioned that it is important to have awareness and nationally strengthen the focus on “*from science to policy*”.

The Council discussed the options of obtaining funding of VIP salary from AUFF.

Frans mentioned that we need seed money e.g. to form new interdisciplinary collaborations. The Dean mentioned that it is up to the departments to organize that and to discuss how existing projects can join in support of initiatives like this. This should also be discussed in the department forums (*institut forum*).

Charles mentions that “Digit” has a kind of seed money that supports young researchers.

Anne mentioned that young PhDs have problems when going abroad and that it should be investigated if AUFF could assist with more support for young researchers with small children going abroad. The estimate per year is: 10 PhD students (per faculty/in total?) need approx. between 100-150.000 DDK.

Peder presented the budget model as summarised in the slides.

Charles asked about the model for square meter prices. Aarhus C and Herning are grouped and have another square meter price than Skejby.

Peder summarised three changes in the model:

Regarding “the Finance Act grants” - > “Basic research”:

The Ministry implements new funds according to four parameters: Education + External grants + Bibliometrics + PhD, where bibliometrics have been frozen at the 2019 level. In Tech's new model, the bibliometrics parameter is included in external grants.

Regarding “Building costs”:

For lab/office buildings, an average m2 price is calculated for each location (Aarhus, Viborg, Roskilde, Skejby...) which is used to distribute the rent between the units located in the buildings. Nat-Tech Buildings' costs for cleaning and building operation are calculated for each location and distributed as part of the m2 price. This has so far been distributed as a key-distributed (nøglefordelt) contribution based primarily on turnover.

Regarding the Key-distributed contributions to AU and FAK Joint tasks:  
For both AU and FAK joint tasks, the TECH contribution is distributed between departments based on the departments' average turnover over a 2 year period and with 2 years delay (= AU model). This offers a simpler model.

The Dean mentioned that the changes for the departments are limited. We are in a good place.

Sabine mentioned that guest houses are quite expensive to run but that they are very necessary. How are the expenses for these calculated?

The Dean answered that we must find a low-cost way of running these buildings.

Anne thanked Peder for a very instructive way of communicating these complicated issues.

<b>4</b>	15:50-16:00	<b>Preliminary discussion about the honorary doctorate</b>	<b>AJ</b>
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The Council must nominate two candidates for honorary doctorates 2025.  
Anne reminded the members of the Council to discuss this with colleagues at their departments and scrutinize whom of our many distinguished international research partners that are qualified, and stressed how we are fortunate to have built an extensive and highly qualified network, prompted by our many international research projects.

Anne went through the criteria:

#### **Criteria:**

When proposing a candidate, the following criteria should be taken into account:

- The candidate's documented academic performance, recognized among peers (H-index, collaboration skills, diversity skills, academic societal engagement)
- How the candidate will add strategic benefits to Tech (e.g. profiling, joint research expertise, supporting the building of/strengthening strategic research fields, collaboration in research, talent development, education and public advisory, including future potentials)
- Existing collaborative links with Tech/the Department (beyond co-authorship)
- Diversity
- The PhD age of the candidate
- (Consider the geographic location of the candidate, such that she/he has the possibility of visiting the Faculty on a frequent basis)

Remember to coordinate with Heads of Departments.

#### **Process:**

- Names of proposed candidates incl. a short motivation addressing academic performance; strategic benefits; and existing collaborative links plus a 1-2 page CV, are sent to [img@au.dk](mailto:img@au.dk) no later than 30 August 2024.
- Will be discussed at the September meeting

The Dean mentioned that the departments should think about this on an ongoing basis such that they have a list of potential candidates when we reach this time of the year.

Louise mentioned that it seems to be a hard task, and the Dean answered that this is a culture we need to change, it should not be a problem to find people we would like to honor and strengthen our relation with.

Anne mentioned that it is a balance of both having been in the game where she/he has proved their academic skills on the one side, but on the other side they should not be too close to retirement (and hence not have much time left for collaborations with TECH).

Anne stressed that communication about the honorary doctorate degree is important – it is a very honorable degree that only five people receive every year.

It should be clear what the honorary doctorate implies and what will happen during the visit of candidate at the Annual AU Celebration (Årsfesten).

Thomas mentioned that we should remember not to nominate candidates to receive their 5<sup>th</sup> honorary title and that we should award and attach excellent researchers when they are younger.

<b>5</b>	16:00-16:20	<b>Annual discussion of the PhD area</b>	<b>BVI</b>
<p>Anne welcomed Michelle Williams who is the new Vice Dean for Talent Development and internationalization. She will be the new head of TECH's PhD School as of August 15<sup>th</sup>. Michelle introduced herself. She comes from a position as Head of Department at Department of Food Science, where she has been for the last 13 years.</p> <p>Then Anne passed the word to Brian Vinter, current Head of PhD school to recap the PhDs area at Tech in 2023.</p> <p>Brian mentioned that during 2023, we have enrolled nearly 100 new PhD students, of which the majority is international rather than Danish. We conferred approx. 85 PhD degrees. We still recruit too few 4+4 even though we have "free money" for these. We have many PhD students at the engineering programmes, while Departments like ANIVET and FOOD ought to have more PhD students. We have – more or less – had a continuous intake over the past years.</p> <p>Anne mentioned that many PhD students experience stress and feel that they are under pressure. Brian emphasized that PhD students are parts of the departments and that it is important that they feel that they belong in the departments. Tech does not have serious problems with stress. Brian grants many extensions of PhD scholarships; more than half of the extension given at AU are given at Tech.</p> <p>Karen mentioned that the extensions are given without salary, and asked if they have enough time. Brian does not think that PhD students have enough time currently, and encourages that ECTS are given for activities closely related to the research project.</p> <p>Charles mentioned a PhD course on mental health for PhD students, which the PhD students themselves had arranged in order to be more able to deal with the pressure. Charles said that someone should try to change the model where you only have three years for the PhD. He also mentioned that it is hard to get funding for the flexible PhDs, and that many PIs prefer to hire postdocs instead as it is easier. Brian Vinter responded this that is not acceptable, as it is a university task and duty to educate PhD students AND that it is also a requirement in order to advance on the academic ladder.</p> <p>Frants mentioned that the lifetime of a grant is the limiting part for 4+4. Brian mentioned that at least in some departments, there is a tendency that dissertations end up too long.</p> <p>The Dean concluded that it is important that we hire more 4+4 – also because we are sending money back to AUFF if we do not.</p>			
	16:20-16:30	<b>BREAK</b>	
<b>6</b>	16:30-16:35	<b>Status on Programme for Sandbjerg seminar</b>	<b>AJ</b>
<p>The theme is AI in relation to AU's research, teaching, and interaction with society. There will be group work in the afternoon, where groups are mixed across the Councils, the students and the admin staff. The seminar will be conducted in Danish while TECH (thanks you Mie and Ida) has provided a translator, who will translate simultaneously to English for the benefit of our non-Danish colleagues.</p> <p>The agenda includes two presentations:</p> <p>First one about and how AI affects thinking and our perception of and relation to knowledge. The second theme presents AI and how it can be applied in research.</p> <p>The Council comments it is an exciting topic and agenda, though the timing this year is not so good as teaching begin on the selected dates.</p> <p>If people need translation let Ida know. If you can not come due to teaching, let Ida know as well.</p>			

<b>7</b>	16:35-16:40	<b>New member for the practice committee</b>	<b>AJ</b>
There were two candidates nominated candidates for the position. The Council voted, and Karen Thodberg was appointed. Karen left the room while the Council discussed the candidates and conducted the voting.			
<b>8</b>	16:40-16:45	<b>PhD degrees since last meeting</b> (5 min.)	AJ
12 PhD degrees have been awarded since that last meeting. No comments from the Council. A big congratulation to all our new PhD degrees.			
<b>9</b>	16:45-17:20 20 min præsentation 15 min drøftelse og spørgsmål	<b>Strategic collaborations WUR</b>	AJ
Anne welcomed Martin Scholten from Wageningen University who gave a presentation about the strategic collaboration between AU and WUR and the potential in this kind of collaboration/. Presentation attached.			
<b>10</b>	17:20-17:25	<b>Announcements</b>	AJ
No announcements.			
<b>11</b>	17:25-17:30	<b>Any other business</b> (5 min.)	<b>AJ</b>
No comments.			