Date	Forum	Time	Place	Meeting #
6 February 2024	Academic Council	15:15-17:45	1520-737 Sky Lounge	01-2024

Participants	Dean Eskild Holm Nielsen (EHN), Sabine Ravnskov (AGRO), Frants Havmand Jensen (ECOS), Hanne Lakkenborg Kristensen (FOOD), Jens Malmkvist (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) Litte Dalsgaard (TAP, ECE), Anna Elisabeth Kristoffersen (PhD) Frederik Lindberg Callesen (student), Lærke Dueholm Jensen (student), Riad Sahli (postdoc), Zahra Esfahani (postdoc) Brian Vinter (vice dean), Mie Lundgaard (chief advisor) Hanne Vester Rasmussen deputy head of administration
Absent without substitutes	
Apologies for absence	Muhammad Mohsin Nawaz (PhD), Louise Fischer Koue (TAP, QGG)
Guests	Finn Borchsenius (item 2), Peder Damgaard (item 6)
Minutes	Ida Rudolph Greisen

Item #	Time	Item and appendices	Owner
1	15:15-15:20	**Approval of agenda and minutes** (appendices) (5 min.)	**AJ**

Anne gives a welcome. She will be leading the meeting until a new chair is elected. She welcomes the new and old attendees.
She notes that it would be nice if everyone would say their name before stating something.

Agenda for today and minutes from last meeting are approved.

2	15:20-15:35	**Education report –** (appendices) (15 min.)	**AJ/FBO**

Anne invites Finn to represent.

Finn presents the annual "TECH Education Report". The purpose of the report is quality control of all educations. Education evaluations the AU accreditation are conducted every five years.

The report contains:
- Summary of the year's quality assurance processes at TECH
- Follow-up on action plan from 2023 from last year's report
- Action plan for 2024

Finn says students are always welcome with comments for this report.

The main conclusions are:
- First-year drop-out rates at Bachelor level
  o This number is very high. Finn notes that it is not an easy thing to fix. You must work on preparing the period before the students enroll, and at the beginning of their education.
- Teaching evaluation can be improved for some Bachelor's and Master's programs.

- o Departments will work on enhancing the evaluation system based on the evaluation.
- Employment of candidates
  - o Employments are always important and there can be fluctuations. It is important to keep an eye out for those where employment is not high.
  - o TECH is in a situation, where there are no programs with too high unemployment.

Comments to the report:
Thomas Sørensen: asks what they do about these conclusions.
- Finn says drop-out is difficult because you must work in many areas. It is also difficult to measure the efforts of the administration.
- Two things they do systematically about employment: 1) systematic dialogue with students and 2) systematic dialogues between educations and managements
  - o They are rethinking employment. Finn mentions the mentorship-program.

Riad: asks about the drop-out
- Finn notes that the effect of initiatives to reduce first year drop out it is not very high.
- Eskild adds that we should to meet the students from where the students come from instead of saying "back in my days..".

Riad: asks about the engineering programs:
- There is not a high demand for the education and TECH wants to educate as many as possible

Students are asked if they have any questions.
- Frederik adds that drop-out rates are quite high in some areas of the TECH studies.

Jens: asks if the reports are publicly available. Finn states that they are. Links to the reports will be included in the minutes.
Anne: Asks about lecturer evaluations and what to do about them.
- Finn says that a discussion about how to follow up is important.

Frants: Asks about the evaluations, if it possible to make it mandatory for students to fill in evaluations. He gives an example where the student would have to fill out the evaluation before they can see their grade. Finn notes that it is not necessary. The teachers reserve time at the end of the last lectures of the semester and that is sufficient.

3	15:35-15:45	**Round of introduction** (appendix) (10 min.)	AJ
A round of introduction. Everyone introduces themselves and their department.			
4	15:45-15:55	**Election of Chair** (10 min.)	EHN
Anne mentions no one has given interest in the role of Chair. Anne is elected again by everyone. Eskild has the word and says a warm welcome. - He appreciates the diverse members and acknowledges the students. - Eskild mentions that Anne is elected for four years unless she steps back. Eskild is appreciative of Annes role. - He mentions that he wants TECH to be a collaborative faculty and the Council is also a part of that. He wants a democratic approach where there is room for discussions.			
5	15:55-16:20	**Information for new members** (appendices) (25 min.)	AJ/EHN

Anne mentions that it is not a given that the Academic Council is collaborative. Anne mentions it is in part due to the culture supported by the management styles of Eskild and Brian Vinter, but also Ida Marie Gerdes and Mie Lundgaard.

Anne goes through the rules of procedures:
- Firstly, we must formally approve **the rules of procedure** (forretningsordenen) before the Dean signs it. It is made from an AU template and has been filled out with the number of formal seats/members. Currently, the Council still has two student seats vacant.
  - The rules of procedures must be signed by Eskild. As new amendment Post Docs have been included with two observer seats. The PostDocs have at a meeting in December elected their two representatives.
- Secondly: Formally the Academic Council has a task **to award all PhD degrees at the Faculty**. It is a formality as the awarding is based on an in-depth assessment by an assessment committee, and is thus mainly concerned with procedural issues.
  - Anne mentions that if anyone know anything about PhD irregularities, whether on quality or procedures, and especially within the area of one's own department and expertise, then you should mention it.
- The Council has delegated the task to the Head of the PhD School Brian Vinter
  - Brian mentions that it is very rare that there are irregularities with PhDs – there was a case last year. Anne thanks Brian for taking this task for the assessment committee.
  - Brian mentions that he will approve the PhDs because experts have decided that the PhDs are good. If there are any irregularities he will act. But he trusts the people giving the PhDs are competent.
- At every meeting the Council gets a list of names for approval. If the Council is made aware of exceptional reason(s) not to award the degree, the award of the degree will not be a standard case.
- The procedure is described in the appendix in FirstAgenda.
- Thirdly: The Academic Council has an important task of **approving assessment committees** in connection with the assessment process for academic positions
- This means that the Council must assess, on an overall level, whether the assessment committee covers the academic field described in the job advertisement and whether the proposed members have sufficiently high scientific expertise and integrity. HR must supply information on scientific merits of the candidate; independence of management at the department; and no joint publications with applicants.
- The Council receives two separate emails via the AU recruitment system first an email about the chair, then an email about the members of the assessment committee
  - Litte asks if emails about this will be labeled in the top line of the email "TECH Academic Council". Anne confirms.
  - Anne mentions that the members don't have to pay attention to all the emails, but that each member is expected to assess the candidates proposed for assessment committees of own departments.
- The job advertisement is also forwarded to the Council.
- The Council has up to three working days to submit any comments concerning the assessment committee.
  - These comments are to be provided by replying to the email received.
  - If you have no comments you should not reply to the e-mail
  - Hanne mentions that often people have comments. She says don't hold back
  - Thomas mentions that the applications are very simple. He mentions that it is okay to questions the applications. It is the Academic Council's responsibility.

Eskild mentions that if you reject an application then the rejection is recorded as made by the Council rather than by the individual member.

Anne mentions if you don't respond to an email about this it means that you agree. If no responses have been received within three days, then the proposed member(s) of the assessment committee are accepted.

Frants ask if being in the assessment committee will be a problem if you are also member of the Academic Council. Brian says it is not a problem. Only if you are one of the people that chooses who is on the committee.

Anne talks about confidentiality:
- Sometimes the Council will have confidential discussions or receive material that is confidential. This means that the Council must not share the information we get with anyone outskide the Council
- It is important that the Council maintains this confidentiality and we are obliged to comply with it according to the rules of procedure
- Anne mentions that confidential details will be left out of the minutes.
- Riad asks if you can talk to people in the Council about the confidential topics. Eskild notes that you could talk to other members about it, if they attended the meeting.
- Eskild mentions that often the confidential material will only be confidential for a period of time.

Anne goes through the tasks: She notes that apart from the task with approving assessment committees, the Council has tasks in connection to the meetings. She mentions that the members should be prepared and read through all relevant material. The members provide input to consultations and suggest items for discussions (just send an e-mail to Anne and/or Ida Marie Gerdes). She also warmly invite for active discussions during meetings, and that the members should keep their colleagues at own departments informed about what is going on in the Council, as well as serve as channel for input from their colleagues. She notes that the members should remember that in the Council, they are elected in individual capacity but also serve as link to the departments, and that our focus is the faculty as a whole.
- Anne mentions that diversity is important in the Council. Including gender diversity. She mentions that it makes a better university and better research.

Furthermore, Anne says that there is an annual cycle of tasks and topics in the Council, but the members are welcome to suggest topics for discussions. Sometimes the Council has group work or presentations by the members. Sometimes Eskild and Brian will bring up items. Anne mentions that the Council will discuss items about ensuring the conditions for research integrity and free and good research. The items are about research, and research-based teaching, societal collaborations, public advisory work ect. She mentions that the Council is not the LSU.

Anne mentions that there can be theme discussions. If anyone has a theme, they can contact Ida Marie Gerdes and/or Anne and Ida will keep an updated list. Anne mentions examples of earlier themes: AI, diversity, freedom of research.

Anne mentions that there is a cycle of topics. Eskild mentions that the economics will be in the spring. Anne mentions that sometimes the discussions are routine and other times they are ad hoc.

Anne mentions a new item in the Council meeting agenda – the student item. This item will be fixed in the agenda, where students can bring up items for discussions. The students need to contact Anne and/or Ida Gerdes about suggested discussions points before the meeting. Post Docs and PhDs can also consider this.

Anne talks about the Sandbjerg Seminar. This seminar is a discussion with all members of Academic Councils at the end of August (it is the last Thursday and Friday of August before the semester starts). Anne says that it is a good conference, and she suggests that people attend. She hopes that everyone will come. Jens asks if we can make sure that it does not collide with DHL. Hanne Kristensen says that it is a really good time. Brian says that TECH Academic council is the only one that speaks English. Anne says that if anyone hasn't received an invite, they should contact Ida Marie Gerdes.

Eskild has the word. It is important for Eskild that there are good discussions to ensure a good and open-minded Faulty. He mentions that the Faculty is still young (young staff), and he wants to listen to the young people and students.

Eskild gives the word back to Anne. Anne says that if you have any questions, you should not hold back.

She suggests that we take item number 7 now before number 6 as the Council is ahead of time.

	16:20-16:25	**BREAK**	
6	16:25-17:05	**Status of new budget model (**40 min**.)**	**EHN**/Peder

Eskild says that the economic model has the purpose of making it easier for the heads of departments to manage finances.
Eskild gives the word to Peder, budgeting manager at Nat-Tech financial unit.

Anne introduces him to the new members.

Peder starts his presentation
- Peder gives a status
  - o Hanne Kristensen asks where the funding comes from (ministries or industry). This is from the ministry.
  - o Eskild adds that the funding from the industry is to be kept in the pockets of the departments.
- Peder goes through the general principles.
  - o It is important that the model is simple in order for employees to understand it.
  - o The model must not maintain status quo.
  - o There are fluctuations in the financial room of the department. There will not be permanent compensation for this.
  - o There are two groups of economic entities: self-financed units & non-self-financed units.
  - o The allocation of income and expenses follows (generally) the external/AU principles.
- The distribution of training grants may be based on either:
  - o A. Programme provider model
  - o B. Course provider model
  - o Right now, it is model A. It will be difficult to change to model B because TECH has to coordinate with NAT
- Basic research
  - o SE TABEL in PPP
  - o The new grant: a grant from the research reserve. Peder says that we don't know if we will get this grant routinely every year. Eskild adds that we do know that the reserve should be seen as a long-term grant (flerårig aftale) and it has to be decided every year.
    - ▪ The funding should support and strengthen research.
  - o Hanne Kristensen asks about the historic allocation of money.
  - o Riad asks if the 2% decrease in state grants is calculated with inflation. Peder says that it is adjusted for inflation.
  - o Brian mentions that the 2% decrease was decided because it was decided that digitalization could cut costs, but that has been going on for 15 years now so this is not valid any longer.
  - o Eskild mentions that a university the size of AU will not really feel the difference in funding.
- Contract funds.
  - o The Faculty Board wishes to investigate whether the contract funds should be distributed more appropriately than at present.
  - o There is a working group set with 5-6 members.
- Finance funds – other.
  - o These funds have not been given much though because it is a small grant.
- Building costs
  - o Many different costs are included.
    - ▪ The areas are grouped.
    - ▪ The buildings are grouped.

		o The building costs are distributed based on the averages of these categories.	

- The model changes will take effect in budget 2025.

Hanne Kristensen ask if Peder was part of making the previous model. Peder says yes. When the previous one was made the focus was transparency. There was one faculty and three different models – therefore transparency was necessary. This new model should be simpler. Eskild mentions that there will always be someone who will gain while others lose when model change are implemented.

Frants asks how this model fits into the over-head model (made by Deloitte). Peder mentions that this is not a cost-based model. Deloitte's model is. This model is more of a revenue-based model.

Eskild mentions that there is a big surplus in the faculty over-head. He cannot mention the number as it is still confidential.

Anne and Eskild thank Peder.

7	17:05-17:10	**Status Research evaluation** (5 min.)	**BVI**

Brian gives a representation about the "Research evaluation at TECH". Tech is carrying out the evaluation in 2024 and 2025.

Brian notes that the evaluation report from Tech will be limited to 5 pages.

Brian notes that evaluation is about looking forward. Are we moving the right direction for the department?

The department should look at where they are going and if that is the right way to go.
Brian mentions that diversity is important and that it will be looked at in the evaluation.

Brian mentions that it not an exam – the purpose of the evaluation is to see what direction the departments are going and hope this can be strengthened.

Brian mentions that data on impact of department activities – not the number of published papers will be provided for for each department prior to the self evaluation..

Thomas Sørensen: Are the departments happy about the need for evaluation or are they not happy about the evaluation?
- Brian says that in the beginning, the departments were not happy about it. But the departments are on board now because the focus is on strategy and not about "grading" the departments.
- Eskild mentions that the evaluation is a part of a cycle, and it will be done again in five years. It is about how to start the cycle in the best way.

Jens asks if the evaluation is for the department, and the Board is on the sideline? Eskild says that it will end up in a few big strategy points for the University. Brian hopes that a green strategy is a part of that.

8	17:10-17:30	**Consultation of principles for academic career progression at Aarhus University** (appendices) (20 min.)	**AJ**

Anne mentions that the deadline is far away, but the Council will not have a meeting before the deadline.
Anne asks for comments: There is a discussion about the employments of Post Docs.

- Jens is concerned about the short-time employments of PostDocs. Jens says that the risk should be divided. It is a problem for the dynamics.
  - Brian says that you can only have 2 post docs positions. Brian says that the end of a PhD is not necessarily the start of a research career at this university. You can do research elsewhere, inside and outside of academia.
- Thomas Sørensen: adds that there are EU regulations to consider.
  - Brian says these stipulate a maximum of two post docs and four years of this type of employment.
- Hanne Vester asks if there should be more transparency about the rules. Riad says yes. Hanne Vester will take it up with HR because there is uncertainty.
  - Brian mentions that all employments under 2 years are taken directly with him from HR.
- Eskild mentions that the backbone of the university is funding.

There is a discussion about transparency in promotion to Associate Professor.
- Ahmad mentions that the promotion to associate professor is not clear and it appears that criteria are frequently changed. This demotivates the potential associate professors. Brian agrees that it is unacceptable, and that transparency is essential. Brian mentions that there should be a fair plan at the start of employment. Brian mentions that the individuals that feel this way can talk to him.

9	17:30-17:35	**PhD degrees since last meeting**	**Chair**

28 PhD degrees have been granted since last meeting. Some have been registered late so therefore the list is long. All are approved. Anne congratulates them.

10	17:35-17:40	**Announcements** (Meeting Plan/annual cycle of work – appendix) (Tech communication strategy - appendix) (10 min.)	**Chair**

Anne has two announcements:
The meeting plan – as mentioned you can suggest topics for discussion, and we will attempt to fit them in. As you can see in the plan, we have a list of topics to discuss at future meeting. Anne mentions that if you have any topics that you want to discuss please contact Anne or Ida Gerdes.

The TECH Communication Strategy – currently for information only. It will be discussed at a subsequent meeting.

11	17:40-17:45	**Any other business (5 min.)**	**Chair**

Anne asks if there are any last questions or comments.

Riad asks about postdocs – (I didn't catch the question me neither)

Jens mentions that he has a new job at Upsala University and therefor will be leaving the Council. Anne thanks him warmly for his work. The Council congratulates him.