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Summary of the meeting of the Main Joint Consultation Committee on 15 December 2023

Participants: Per Michael Johansen (PMJ), Anne Marie Kanstrup (AMK), Søren Lind Christiansen (SLC), Thomas Bak (TB), Lars Hvilsted Rasmussen (LHR), Jesper Lindgaard Christensen (JLC), Frederik Hertel (FH), Louiza Bohn Thomsen (LBT), Thomas Lykke Andersen (TLA), Lars Bo Larsen (LBL), Palle Steen Hansen (PSH)

Unable to attend Mogens Rysholt Poulsen, Rasmus Antoft, Klaus Kjær, Casper Tobias Toft, Lotte Brunø

Other participants: Linda Ibsen (LI), Helle Hjortnæs Kristensen (HHK), Gitte Hartung (GHA), Camilla Skjødt Jakobsen (CSJ) (secretary)

Re item 1. Approval of the agenda

Recommendation: The Main Joint Consultation Committee (HSU) approves the agenda

The Main Joint Consultation Committee (HSU) approved the agenda.

Re item 2: Information from the rectorate

Appendix 2.1: Orientation from the rectorate

Recommendation: HSU takes note of the briefing

PMJ reviewed the written briefing and subsequently gave the committee the opportunity to ask further questions.

In relation to the candidate reform, PMJ added to the written briefing that the Candidate Committee has been established as an authority. This means, among other things, that access to the committee's work cannot be requested and that the members of the committee are bound by professional secrecy, which is why communication about the committee's work cannot be made. It is only possible to quote what one has said oneself, but not what others have said at the meetings of the committee. PMJ expresses it as problematic.

PMJ stated that a working group has been set up at AAU to prepare the meetings of the committee. The working group at AAU has only five members; rector, pro-rector, university director and two members from the rector's secretariat and Study Services, respectively. Only in this group meeting papers for the meetings of the candidate committee can circulate. PMJ had wanted more enrollees in the authority at AAU, including the dean's circle, but this has been rejected. The committee's work is not expected to be completed until October 2024, but it is unknown whether the work of the group will be published.



FH notes that the national club (landsklubben) is investigating how staff members are being completely excluded from the committee's work. It is important to discuss the issue of influence on the staff members side. FH also questions the universities' equal opportunities to coordinate at this time.

PMJ and AMK point out that this is also an attention on their part and that it is articulated in the committee's work. AMK adds that it is a challenge with coordination and it is only in the preparatory group and in the committee itself that it is possible to coordinate. AMK also notes that it is not possible to involve more than has already been done. AAU has, for example, asked all study boards to suggest which programmes they think could be reorganised. It has been a good process, which among other things has entailed that students have been involved in discussions and that we have good input to the work from all study programmes.

TB informed about discussions in the academic council, where positive indications had been expressed that some would like to pursue business-oriented Master's degrees. Thus, one should not be completely dismissive of the possibility and whether it can be done if the university takes a positive approach to it. At a meeting with DI, there was also a positive approach to the possibility and it was expressed that you could find some models for it.

LBL welcomes PMJ's briefing on implemented personnel adjustments at the Department of Materials and Production and the Department of The Built Environment, including that PMJ also expresses that the process after the redundancies has been messy. LBL emphasizes that this has created great uncertainty among several staff members and that IDA would have had three lawsuits pending if the redundancies were not withdrawn, as it does not appear that the criteria set up have been followed. It has been perceived as an arbitrary and uncertain selection.

SLC supplements the briefing on AAU's climate plan with a review of the involvement and consultation process that has been carried out in 2023. The process started in January 2023 in the Executive Board, followed by workshops from May to October and a consultation phase in October and November. The draft climate plan was discussed by the Executive Board on 11 December, where there were some views that led to the process being postponed for another quarter.

JLC questioned whether The Main Joint Consultation Committee (HSU) was properly involved in the process of establishing sustainability councils as a replacement for the Sustainable Campus Forum, as this is established by HSU and HSU is thus a stakeholder. SLC fully agrees but emphasizes that it is currently considering the right governance and that the Sustainable Campus Forum has not been closed, but that it is suggested that something else should happen. If this time comes, HSU must of course be involved.

Follow-up:

The HSU secretariat sends out fact sheets with potential consequences for North Jutland of the Candidate Reform to the members of the Main Joint Consultation Committee (HSU).

Re item 3: Orientation from the staff representative

Recommendation: HSU takes note of the briefing

FH began the item by informing about upcoming changes in HSU's composition of staff representatives. Palle Steen Hansen (DJØF) leaves The Main Joint Consultation Committee (HSU) and is replaced by Jakob Skovrup Stampe (DM). It is a fixed appointment / routine replacement between DJØF and DM. Palle Sten Hansen will continue to be an alternate.

Lars Bo Larsen will also retire from The Main Joint Consultation Committee (HSU) on 1 February 2024. Thomas Lykke Andersen becomes new joint union representative (FTR) for IDA. Rikke Huulgaard steps in and takes over ass staff representative from Lars Bo Larsen in HSU.

FH then informed about his wish for stronger cooperation between the staff representatives in the various committees at AAU. Initially, a meeting with the staff representatives on the Board of Directors is planned. Subsequently, it is desired that the academic councils and the occupational health and safety organization should be reached out to so that a good cooperation is also created here. FH is aware of the wishes of the Deputy Chair of the Main Occupational Health and Safety Committee (HAMiU) to have an observer role in the Main Joint Consultation Committee (HSU).

PMJ replied that it was positive to have better cross-collaboration. PMJ also mentioned that what he encountered in the organization was that there is not enough feedback to staff members about what is happening in various committees, which the staff representatives also play a part in. FH agreed that this also needs attention going forward.

FH then reviewed the other orientation points, including the union representative (TR) meeting in Kolding, where a presentation on responsible and value-creating use of employee data in particular had given rise to a desire for a forward-looking discussion in the Main Joint Consultation Committee (HSU) about security and the possibilities in the IT area.

SLC pointed out that the Main Joint Consultation Committee (HSU) will discuss transparency in data as a result of discussions in the Information Security Committee, as it can be noted that there have been areas where security is not good enough, e.g. in relation to mobile phones. Transparency and security are an important discussion.

FH informed about an article in ForskerForum regarding the new time registration requirements, which are expected to be adopted by law shortly. FH drew attention to the different opinions on whether researchers should be exempted or not. FH wants it to be a topic that the Main Joint Consultation Committee (HSU) should discuss at an appropriate time.

SLC noted in this connection that this is something that is discussed in the university directors' circle under DK UNI and that no one thinks it is a good idea if researchers are going to time register. However, the challenge is that it is not our own ministry, but the Ministry of Employment that interprets the rules and they have already expressed the opinion that you cannot exempt an entire group. In the administrative area, we will have to time register, so regardless we must have some systems that can handle it.

FH then informed about a survey conducted in Nordic Cooperation among union representatives and health and safety representatives in Denmark, which concluded that they want elected leaders.

Finally, FH informed about Frame the political agenda. A4 (DM) has taken a closer look at the development of tuition grants to universities and vocational education.

Re item 4: Briefing from the HR Department

Appendix 4.1 Minutes, HAMiU on 14.09.2023

Appendix 4.2 Agenda, HAMiU on 20.11.2023

Appendix 4.3 Influenza vaccination inventory

Recommendation: HSU takes note of the briefing

LI begins the briefing with a proposal for a fixed item on the Main Consultation Committees (HSU) agenda that relates to written briefings, so that it is possible to gather all that is merely for orientation in the HSU under one item.

LI then informs about the decisions made in the area of digitalization area. There has been a meeting in the ALF group (head of administration + heads of secretaries) on 1 December 2023. At the meeting the group was briefed on the digital initiatives. In 2024 and beyond, the focus is on making HR more digital. A new HR system

must be found as well as a new recruitment system with the aim of creating a much better digital landscape as well as more agile and professional processes. Steering groups have been set up to work across disciplines.

PSH asks if there is a place where you can keep up with the work. SLC notes that the Digital Master Plan will be communicated soon, but that it is a good point and that they will look into that possibility.

LI then gave a briefing on the work of the Staff representative of the Staff Policy Committee (PPU). Good and serious work is being done on staff policies, and PPU will relatively soon reach the finish line of the first part. After that, the second part awaits, where the HR department drafts the further work. The meeting in PPU before Christmas had to be postponed as many was unable to attend. PPU is ready to look at revising the introduction and preamble itself, and then PPU will work on the respective guidelines. At the next Main Joint Consultation Committee (HSU) in 2024, the work can be presented in more detail.

LI has invited the universities union representatives to a meeting on 5 February 2024. LI held a similar meeting after she took office at the start of the year. The agenda will be sent out in the new year.

LI then informed about the salary negotiation process. It is still not a fantastic process, but a process that is complicated by inadequate data, lack of IT solutions and handheld processes, etc. Attempts have been made to exploit low-hanging fruit in this year's salary negotiations.

Feedback has been that it has been a little less troublesome. The salary negotiation process has been experienced as smoother than before, and it is positive that managers can notify staff members of the results faster due to optimized approval processes. Data support has improved. This means that there are fewer errors in data, but manual error correction processes are still required, i.e. errors are detected manually through checking, and these errors must then be corrected manually. It is a resource-intensive process in HR.

The general system support provides a lot of extra work for everyone involved, but work is underway to make the system support more user-friendly. Legality checks of the negotiation results remain in focus, i.e. a lot of time and resources are spent on validating justifications on wage supplements. This creates a lot of backflows between HR and management.

LBL acknowledged that his experience this year has been that you quickly got a response from the HR department if you experienced errors or anything else.

JLC asks if you will look at adjusting the VIP Salary-agreements for SSH and EST, respectively, to reflect the new research indicator.

LHR replies that it has been some years since there was a discussion about the VIP Salary-agreements. Whether it should be revised is uncertain, but it may not be a bad idea to look at it again. Finally, the deans discussed it jointly with HR. Such a process could be relevant again.

LBL asks about the minutes from the latest meeting in the Main Occupational Health and Safety Committee (HAMiU) and evaluation of the theme day, which he hopes reflects the experience. LBL didn't think the day was good. LI notes that it was discussed in HAMiU. It was expressed that there was great satisfaction with the themes, but that the conduct of the theme day could be better. This is expected to be reflected in the minutes.

Follow-up:

The Main Joint Consultation Committee (HSU) agreed to follow the proposal for a fixed item on the HSU agenda relating to written briefings. Going forward, a fixed item on the HSU agenda will be added for written briefings, if needed.

Re item 5: Information from the Committee on Equality and Diversity

Appendix 5.1 Presentation of the status of AAU's work with gender equality and diversity
Appendix 5.2 AAU Strategic Action Plan for Equality and Diversity 2022-2026
Appendix 5.3 Equality and diversity – reporting 2023

Recommendation: HSU discusses and takes note of the briefing

LHR began by noting that the area is in focus in many places, and that it is therefore also relevant that it is part of the Main Joint Consultation Committees (HSU) annual cycle.

LHR then reviewed the efforts from AAU's strategic action plan for gender equality and diversity 2022-2026, which works with diversity and inclusion as the university's two focus areas. LHR then reviewed the main results from the inclusion survey, which are reproduced in the 2023 reporting.

LHR then reviewed the implementation strands "management, administration and committee" chosen by AAU. The committee strand is an important element, and the Main Joint Consultation Committees (HSU) is part of that. HSU was then asked to consider how HSU can help promote diversity and inclusion. There was then a short group discussion.

LBL noted that several departments hold plenary meetings where it would be advantageous to bring in more cultural work.

JLC followed up with a reflection on the language policy ctr. the fact that international employees after a three-year period are expected to have accumulated a certain level of Danish language. It is therefore important that the Danish language is not forgotten in everyday life.

LHR drew attention to the importance of the role value of the Main Joint Consultation Committees (HSU) members and that these should help ensure that diversity and inclusion are brought up in all relevant forums.

AMK drew attention to the challenges surrounding unconscious bias and the importance of focus and understanding of it.

LI noted that inclusion is about work environment and about management and the management level and that it is crucial that management understands inclusion.

LBL mentioned that making onboarding more personal is an important element. For example, by using a buddy system, as it allows the possibilities to form relationships, which can make new staff members more likely to ask for advice.

LHR concluded the discussion by noting that, as chairman of the Committee for Equality and Diversity (ULD), he was pleased that there was always great support from the Main Joint Consultation Committees (HSU), but that unfortunately it is not the same experience in other committees – such as the academic councils. LHR therefore urged the HSU members to be aware of their important role and great value as a culture bearer in relation to other committees.

FH noted that more ambitious objectives might be desirable, e.g. at the top management level.

LHR commented that fortunately it is legislative, so we have some goals to comply with, but implementation is tricky. It is a focus area.

Re item 6: Revised competency strategy

Appendix 6.1 Case Statement for revised Competency Strategy
Appendix 6.2 Principles for competency development at AAU

Recommendation: HSU discusses and approves the revised competency strategy

HHK began by picking up from the last discussion in the Main Joint Consultation Committees (HSU). As a result of AAU's new strategy – "Viden For Verden" – work has been done on revising AAU's competence strategy. HSU was presented with a draft of the revised competency strategy at its meeting on October 3, 2023.

At the meeting in October, the title and form were approved, but the Main Joint Consultation Committees (HSU) had proposed small adjustments to the wording of the document. These proposals have been incorporated.

HHK then reviewed the principles of the revised competency strategy at AAU.

HSU approved the revised competency strategy.

In continuation of this, JLC followed up on the desire for more focus on more competence development for scientific staff members that could support them in situations where they have a student in the class with disabilities, etc. External providers have been used in the past, but the question is whether more can be done internally.

JLC referred to the opportunities through SPS (Special educational support), which are aimed solely at the students, where there is the possibility of support hours by academic support teacher and student mentor. JLC is looking for help for scientific staff members.

AMK commented that there is a national focus on issues with the SPS arrangement. SLC added that the grant for SPS funding was discussed at a meeting of the Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science last week, where challenges were addressed. It was agreed that it is also relevant to look more closely at how teachers can be supported.

In conclusion, PMJ noted that further attention should be paid to skills development for educators.

Re item 7: State of play of budget 2023 and discussion of budget for 2024

Appendix 7.1 Status of budget 2023

Recommendation: HSU discusses the implications of the budget for the coming year

GHA reviewed the state of the economy for 2023 as well as the draft budget for 2024-2026, which will be discussed by the Board of Directors on Monday, December 18, 2023.

Budget 2024 reflects several strategic focus areas, including continued implementation of AAU's strategy, adaptation of AAU's finances to a new reality and ongoing efforts to source and convert external research funds. GHA reviewed the individual elements of the budget.

Questions asked by the Main Joint Consultation Committees (HSU) prior to the meeting were then followed up, including; What is the effect of scientific performance indicator and how is the relationship between the main areas' finances and contributions to different types of common expenses. GHA presented in the presentation summaries and calculations in response to the questions asked.

The individual sub-elements were then discussed.

As for the "FU" and "FF"-contributions SLC commented that it is important to have nuances in the discussion about contributions, as one cannot look at the development of the figures isolated. Among other things, decisions have been made where activities have been moved from departments to Joint Service, e.g. IAS PBL and Communication and Public Affairs. This has implications for the development in the figures. There is always an attention to streamlining the administration – even when the university becomes smaller, as the figures show. What this does to the contribution rates is unclear until we know where the tasks will lie and what the administrative cost is, and we must be careful not only to talk about contributions, but also about what the overall administration costs. Ultimately, it is the service provided that is crucial.

PMJ added that it is important that the savings achieved when we do such exercises are properly channelled to the departments. The savings are not hitting evenly at this time. In addition, a large part of the FU contribution is tied up in costs for e.g. licenses, "Nyt SIS", etc. These are costs that are discussed in the Executive Board from year to year and several of these costs cannot be changed.

GHA notes that attention is paid to the total contribution, not only FU and FF but also, for example, the Faculty and Department contribution. TB adds that there is also a Faculty contribution and that the challenge is that all these contributions are interpreted as if the individual project or the individual researcher has to pay taxes. The departments must contribute, and the other revenue must help to cover this.

LBL agrees with SLC and TB and points out that this is where the real communication task lies. The understanding from the staff members is based on the numbers they have available, and when you look at these isolated, these conditions are not clear. It is important to have this explained.

LBL asks about Innovate and whether the ambition is for Innovate to be cost-neutral as for buildings and activities.

PMJ replies that about 200 companies are started up every year, which must be said to be very positive. The building is used by a lot of people. Innovate is not intended to be viewed in isolation as self-supporting.

FH draws attention to the approximately 2,300 student places that are expected to be lost and the fact that there is not an equal distribution among the faculties. The equalisation agreement between the faculties will therefore hurt more in some areas than in others when you lose more students in one faculty. FH wants this concern to be taken to the board. The same applies to the increased equity capacity. It is an staff member point of view that it is more reminiscent of the way you run a private business. SLC notes to the latter that AAU does not differ significantly from the other universities.

PMJ adds that what FH mentions is a point of view that the board is aware of and that it is discussed regularly. It is about the budget model. It lies in the form in which it is, with the expediency and inconveniences that it entails. PMJ notes that it is his responsibility that the broad university is accommodated for. There is only the money there is, so we can only do something for someone by taking from others. This is a consideration that PMJ as rector must take.

FH strongly agrees and emphasizes that the broad perspective is an important perspective that should be communicated in the organization.

PMJ acknowledges that many runs fast and refers to the meeting in the department management the day before, where external repatriations were discussed. The problem with external funding is that we have researchers who take home very large grants, which makes the average very sensitive and that it is about getting more people activated in the external funding so that it does not hang on a group of individuals. In addition, the overhead is too low for the costs we have. It is important that we become better at factoring in all the staff members who help in the project.

FH had a question from an staff member regarding the following passage in Budget 2024: "*AAU vil arbejde fokuseret på en omstilling af universitetets aktiviteter, således der allokeres flere ressourcer til de tilskudsfinansierede aktiviteter med henblik på at øge omsætningen.*" and what is meant by this. It was clarified that it is about using supportive measures better than what is normally done, e.g. more staff members to support external funding. The wording therefore has nothing to do with the redistribution of basic research funds.

JLC comments that it is a really nice and more understandable budget than before. JLC makes a wish for future budgets, and whether it is advantageous to explain where we influence the figures - what is externally

determined and what can we do something about ourselves. It could also be interesting to be able to take a closer look at the connection between the external parameters and what happens when you change something.

Follow-up

In continuation of the questions that had been asked prior to the Main Joint Consultation Committees (HSU) meeting, the Finance Department will later prepare an overview of the 10-year development in AAU's contribution (co-financing) to external projects, with any reservations that may exist.

Re item 8: Evaluation of HSU's cooperation and working methods

Appendix 8.1 Evaluation form/questions

Recommendation: *HSU discusses and evaluates cooperation*

As time has elapsed, it was suggested that the item could be postponed to the next meeting or that the evaluation could be done in writing.

It was agreed that the evaluation could be done in writing.

Follow-up:

The Main Joint Consultation Committees (HSU) secretary sends out the questions for written evaluation.

Re item 9: Optionally

LBL thanked the committee for many good meetings and exciting discussions during his time as a member of The Main Joint Consultation Committees (HSU).

PMJ thanked both LBL and PSH for many good dialogues and discussions and thanked the whole committee for the past year and wishes a Happy Holliday and Happy New Year.