MAIN REPORT

ACCESSIBLE MANAGEMENT, INVOLVEMENT AND

The internal problem analysis at Aarhus University

Expert group

June

2014

AARHUS
UNIVERSITY

Preface

In late January 2014, the senior management team appointed an expert group to perform an internal analysis of problems at Aarhus University. The decision to appoint an expert group was made on the background of the discussions and problems that have been associated with the reorganisation of the university that took place in the wake of the academic development process in 2011.

The objective of the analysis is to identify significant problems in order to provide a solid basis for the senior management team's decisions on changes in the administrative and organisational area. The expert group was therefore given a relatively short deadline, being asked to present its report on 2 June 2014.

The expert group conducted interviews with a number of focus groups that included students, employees and managers at the university. Interviews were also conducted with all department heads, and all students and employees were asked to complete a questionnaire. We would like to thank everybody for their willingness to provide input to the expert group, and also for the written input received by the group. Even though the objective of the expert group's work was defined as identifying the extent and degree of problems at the university, the amount of 'constructive criticism' contributed by all is striking. Students and all staff groups have demonstrated a strong commitment to and engagement in improving conditions at Aarhus University.

The expert group has been able to work completely freely and independently with the analysis. In our work with the analysis, we have been assisted by Trine Bjerregaard Larsen, Iben Nelson and Louise Kjær Guul from the secretariat. We would like to thank them for their important input and high level of dedication through an intensive work process.

With our analysis and this report, we hope to contribute to identifying the main problems and thus to creating a basis for a constructive debate and the senior management team's decisions.

Torben M. Andersen
Chairman

Table of contents

Summary

The expert group was tasked with identifying, prioritising and analysing the extent and degree of significant problem areas related to the administrative and managerial support of the university as well as the organisational and managerial structure of the main academic areas. Issues related to accessible management, the inclusion of staff and students in decision-making and administrative support were the primary focus of the problem analysis.

By way of introduction, it is important to emphasise that the university has undergone major changes. Some of these changes have been triggered by external conditions, while others have resulted from the academic development process. The 2011 mergers created a new Aarhus University, and maintaining the status quo was not an option. Rethinking the university - including its academic and administrative organisation - was a necessity.

Aarhus University is a large organisation with an extensive portfolio of activities related to teaching, research and public sector consultancy. At the same time, the university is a geographically dispersed organisation with activities on 19 campuses. Variation in the extent to which the different parts of the university are affected by these changes is therefore to be expected. For this reason, it would be misleading to describe the effects or evaluations of the change process in uniform terms.

The expert panel's analysis identifies centralisation and standardisation as common denominators of the university's problems in relation to accessible management, inclusion and administrative support.

There has been extensive centralisation, and great emphasis has been placed on standardisation, joint initiatives and the presentation of the university as a unified whole. The survey shows that the university's employees have not accepted this strategy and the initiatives derived from it as the best responses to the challenges the university faces. The change process is perceived as the management's project, and the university's employees feel very little sense sense of ownership over it. As a consequence of centralisation and standardisation, it has been difficult to exploit the the university's considerable diversity as a strength, especially in relation to campuses outside Aarhus. Insufficient space has been allowed for the expression and development of professional, academic and functional differences.

Under the University Act, the managerial structure of Danish universities is hierarchical. But at the same time, the Act places crucial emphasis on the importance of student and employee inclusion and co-determination. The expert group's survey reveals that employees and students at Aarhus University feel that the university only honours this requirement to a very limited extent. An independent survey indicates that a lack of student and employee inclusion and co-determination is a particularly serious problem at Aarhus University as compared to other Danish universities. When the solutions that have been adopted by management are not perceived as matching the situation and tasks facing the employees, a sense of powerlessness and frustration develops in the organisation. And interestingly, this sense of powerlessness and frustration can be observed at all the levels of the organisation that the expert group has studied. This indicates that the problem is due in part to certain structural conditions at Aarhus University.

The survey also shows that the change process has underestimated the significance of professional identity and the factor of intrinsic motivation for both academic and technical/administrative staff members. The

university's new organisational structure has not resulted in units that are experienced as meaningful collegial groups in all areas. A number of departments have to incorporate major differences, and a large proportion of academic staff members at the departments in question do not experience the current structure to be appropriate. Presumably, this reflects the fact that meaningful shared objectives and aims have not developed. At the same time, with the formal separation of academic and administrative staff, central, meaningful collegial networks were dissolved. This dissolution was justified with reference to an extremely narrow view of administrative quality as 'professional specialisation'. While this is an important dimension of administrative quality, the centrally significant aspects of accessibility, coordination, the exchange of information and adaptability have been overlooked. As a consequence, the changes have taken insufficient account of the significance of 'co-production' involving academic and technical/administrative staff in a number of core activities. The institutional distinction between academic and technical/administrative personnel has widened the divide between 'us' and 'them' as seen from both sides, and it has decisively reduced the potential for shared ownership of shared successes. The expert group has registered considerable scepticism regarding the organisation and dimensions of the resources allocated to administrative activities among employees and students. The analysis shows that there are a number of problems associated with the administration's new structure. For example, it is difficult to establish flexible, efficient processes in new situations, especially where several administrative divisions are involved. Such situations will arise constantly at any well-run university, and the administrative organisation should provide the necessary support to handle them rather than working at cross-purposes.

According to the expert group's survey, many employees and students agree that it is important for the university to be presented as a unified institution. At the same time, employees and students have little understanding of the current strategy. This summarises the central conclusions of the internal problem analysis. But it also reveals one possible way forward. A unified university is the product of the interplay between centrally defined visions and goals on the one hand, and strong, meaningful local units on the other hand. Through this interplay, the university's core activities - research and public sector consultancy, education and talent development - can be strengthened; and a motivating collaboration between academic, technical and administrative competences can be created.

The report's diagnosis of the problem points towards a number of possible solutions. These proposals are all aimed at decentralising power and resources within a framework of centrally determined goals and requirements and the existing overall managerial structure. The focus of the proposals is the establishment of meaningful units and strengthening identity and motivation for all staff groups. In addition, proposals to ensure that the university's core activities receive competent, user-oriented support are also presented, including proposed changes in how decisions regarding the allocation and distribution of resources for administrative activities are to be reached.

1. Terms of reference and work of the expert group

In recent years, Aarhus University has undergone major organisational and administrative changes, based on the so-called academic development process. In the light of the experience gained and discussions of these changes, a group of experts was appointed and charged with undertaking an internal analysis of the problems associated with the new organisational and administrative structure.

1.1 Purpose of evaluation

The terms of reference for the evaluation are enclosed as Appendix I, according to which the main purpose of the evaluation is

> *"The objective of the internal analysis of problems is to identify, prioritise and analyse the extent and degree of significant problem areas related to the administrative and managerial support of the university as well as the organisational and managerial structure of the main areas. This will be achieved on the basis of a study aimed at identifying the concrete systems, procedures and resource allocations that are not receiving a satisfactory level of support. The analysis will be carried out with due consideration being given to the university's financial and academic constraints and conditions. The analysis will include general organisational problems in the administration and at the main academic areas, with the understanding that the university's overall structure with four main academic areas and a single unified administration is not in question."*

The terms of reference highlight three key problem areas, which must be covered by the evaluation.

- Accessible management: The need for accessible and holistic management must be described in more specific detail. For this purpose, an analysis must be performed of the extent to which formal, real, structural or cultural barriers exist which hamper the appropriate delegation of authority and good managerial practice at all levels of management starting with the senior management team.

- Staff and student involvement in decision-making: The opportunities for and barriers to true staff and student involvement in decision-making must be analysed, and the actual practice with regard to involvement must be investigated.

- Administrative support: An analysis must be carried out of the administrative practice and the problems that have arisen as a consequence of the new administrative structure, including an analysis of barriers to the unified, effective support of the university's four core activities: research, education, talent development and knowledge exchange.

An appendix to the terms of reference provides further details about these key problem areas.

The evaluation must involve relevant and representative students, staff and managers at all levels of the university.

1.2. Members of the expert group

The members of the expert group are:

- Torben M. Andersen, Professor, Department of Economics and Business (chairman)
- Lotte Bøgh Andersen, Professor, Department of Political Science and Government
- Jens Blom-Hansen, Professor, Department of Political Science and Government
- Steen Harrit Jakobsen, Administration Centre Manager, Health
- Andreas Roepstorff, Professor with special responsibilities (MSO), Department of Culture and Society and Department of Clinical Medicine

The expert group was assisted by an independent secretariat consisting of:

- Trine Bjerregaard Larsen, consultant
- Iben Nelson, research assistant
- Louise Kjær Guul, research assistant

An analysis panel was appointed, which together with the senior management team appointed the expert group. The composition of the analysis panel can be seen from Appendix II. The expert group was appointed and the evaluation work commenced in late January 2014 with the deadline for reporting being 2 June 2014. The analysis panel was briefed regularly about the progress of the expert group's work. The expert group's report is published concurrently with it being submitted to the senior management team and the analysis panel. The work of the analysis panel concludes with a discussion of the report prepared by the internal expert group and the setting-out of the panel's comments in a separate document which will be sent to the senior management team.

All members of the expert group are employed at Aarhus University, and the evaluation is thus internal. The expert group has worked independently and is thus solely responsible for the content of this report.

1.3. Evaluation method

As part of the work of the expert group, a number of focus group interviews were held with various staff groups as well as groups of managers and students. A total of 27 such interviews were held with participants who were selected with a view to ensuring fair coverage across the main academic areas and administrative areas. The interviews also purported to identify differences within the university associated with geographical location and the nature of the activities undertaken (education, research, public sector consultancy, relations with the business community etc.). Appendix III provides an overview of the focus group interviews held, including information about the themes for the meetings, the number of participants and selection criteria. Prior to all interviews, the participants were informed that the statements and views made and presented at the meeting would serve as inspiration and background information for the work of the expert group, and that no explicit reference would be made to the statements of individuals in the expert group's report. Discussions focused on general structural issues and not on individuals.

Interviews were held with all department heads[1]. A background report provides an overview and summary of these interviews.

Questionnaire-based surveys were conducted among all staff members and among all students at Aarhus University. The results of these surveys are reported in detail in background reports for this report. The main results of the surveys are included in this report. In the questionnaires, respondents were able to enter comments. Many staff and students seized this opportunity, and their comments will be published (subject to permission by respondents) in appendices to the above-mentioned background reports. Main points from the comments are summarised in Appendix IV. The appendices contain a number of comments on specific aspects or areas and therefore constitute an important source of information in relation to a number of specific problem areas.

The expert group has also had access to some written material and has received written input from individual members of staff as well as staff groups.

Finally, the experts consulted academic experts with a view to involving the academic expertise represented at the university.

1.4 Scope of evaluation

The problem analysis looks only at the organisational and administrative conditions and thus not at the objectives set out in the academic development process. An independent international evaluation of the academic development process as a whole is planned for 2016.

The purpose of the evaluation is not to clarify decision-making processes and the implementation of the organisational and administrative changes. The changes have resulted in some running-in and implementation problems, while the considerable scope of the organisational changes and their concurrent implementation have given rise to a number of challenges. Some of these have been addressed, while others are being resolved. The evaluation is based on the current situation at the university.

A psychological workplace assessment (WPA) was published in February 2013. The WPA included questions relating to the academic development process. The plan is for a new psychological workplace assessment to be carried out in 2015. Central issues from the WPA relating to accessible management, communication and staff and student involvement have been included in the staff and student survey. An attempt has also been made to integrate the current follow-up on the WPA into the internal analysis. The expert group knows that an action plan has recently been adopted as part of the follow-up on the WPA. This plan contains a number of initiatives which are closely associated with the issues discussed in chapters 3-5, among other things in relation to accessible management, communication, focus on working conditions, collegial recognition and administrative support.

Aarhus University currently finds itself in a difficult financial situation, which has led to a number of cutbacks, including redundancies. Evaluating the causes of the changed financial situation falls outside the scope of the expert group's terms of reference.

---

[1] Interviews were conducted with the department heads of all the units defined by Aarhus University as departments. Bioscience has two department heads who were both interviewed.

The evaluation looks exclusively at management, staff and student involvement and administrative support at Aarhus University. The terms of reference do not mention, nor have resources been made available for, a more detailed mapping of experience with the organisation of universities in Denmark or internationally.

The evaluation has thus centred on the extent to which expedient (organisational and administrative) steps have been taken to achieve the objectives set out in the academic development process. Choices have been made between several options both as regards the organisational structure and the design of the administrative systems. Several of the elements forming part of the changes are independent of each other, and thus do not constitute a 'package solution', whereby all the elements must necessarily take the chosen form in order to support the university's core activities. Part of the purpose of the evaluation is to identify the advantages and disadvantages of the choices made. Some of these were known assumptions underlying the chosen approach, but there may also be aspects which have not been considered as part of the decision-making process to the necessary extent. In particular, some changes may have had unintended consequences (for example negative impact on research, staff motivation etc.) or may not have been sufficiently aligned with the university's positions of strength. The effects of the organisational/administrative changes cannot be viewed independently of the academic culture and traditions at the university. The evaluation thus includes an assessment of whether some positions of strength are unintentionally weakened or shattered without being replaced by something else. This applies, in particular, to the handling of core activities associated with research, education and public sector consultancy.

2. Aarhus University's objectives and principles

Like all other Danish universities, the university is tasked with conducting research and offering research-based education at the highest international level. For example, the university must disseminate knowledge of the methods and results of science, as well as exchanging knowledge and competences with society. The university must encourage its employees to take part in the public debate (see the University Act)[2].

2.1 The academic development process

The academic development process (see report from the senior management team, Aarhus University, 9 March 2011)[3] laid down a new strategy for the university, as a result of which a number of organisational changes were introduced both for the main academic areas and for the administration.

The academic development process sets out a radical change of the university's strategy based on two main tracks:

> *"*The high standards of excellence in the traditional disciplines which have always characterised the university must be maintained and developed. At the same time, we will seek out new possibilities and connections across disciplinary boundaries and in close collaboration with the world around us." (Senior management team, Aarhus University, 9 March 2011, 4).[4]

The strategy for the university's development defines the following core activities: research, knowledge exchange, talent development and education. As part of the strategy, a stronger focus will be on interdisciplinary research, including strategic top-down initiatives. There is a wish for holistic thinking and branding of the university. In the educational area, the establishment of a well-functioning inner education market is a significant objective.

The academic development process has resulted in considerable changes to the university's organisational and management structure, so that it is now organised into four main academic areas consisting of 26 departments as opposed to the former 55 departments, in addition to three national centres (with special responsibilities in the field of cooperation and knowledge exchange with government agencies and the business community) and various centres and schools. The administration has been transformed into a single administration unit consisting of various functional pillars, see below.

The main argument for these organisational changes and the creation of fewer and larger departments has been a general wish to strengthen academic development:

> *" … for the department heads to mainly concern themselves with academic issues … a new framework for the administration will ensure that the department heads will to a considerable*

---

[2] Any references to the University Act here and in the rest of the report is to Act no. 403 of 28 May 2003 with subsequent amendments, see Consolidation Act no. 367 of 25 March 2013.

[3] Senior Management Team, *Den Faglige Udviklingsproces, Aarhus Universitet, rapport* (The academic development process, Aarhus University, report), 9 March 2011.

[4] Senior Management Team, *Den Faglige Udviklingsproces, Aarhus Universitet, rapport* (The academic development process, Aarhus University, report), 9 March 2011.

extent be released from administrative duties." (Senior management team, Aarhus University, 9 March 2011, 26).[5]

---

[5] Senior Management Team, *Den Faglige Udviklingsproces, Aarhus Universitet, rapport* (The academic development process, Aarhus University, report), 9 March 2011.

Including the possibilities for interdisciplinary collaboration:

> *"The realisation of these wishes is based on the decision to combine the academic areas into significantly fewer units, the aim of which is to contribute to the increased use of the academic synergies and contribute to professional and cultural integration across the previous disciplinary boundaries. In addition, the management structure will be reorganised to ensure a shared focus on academic quality."* (Senior management team, Aarhus University, 9 March 2011, 26).[6]

These changes must be seen in the context of the objective of ensuring "that Aarhus University is perceived as a unified university with a strong interdisciplinary focus". This is reflected in a branding strategy aimed at marketing the university as a single institution rather than specific subject matters, departments or main academic areas.

The purpose of the new organisation of the >AU Administration is to centralise the administrative functions to ensure uniform solutions for the entire university (standardised solutions) as well as more competent administrative support through the specialisation of the administrative functions. In the long term, this was also expected to ensure a more cost-effective administration through the realisation of economies of scale. The vision for the standardisations of the administrative area has been:

> *"... for 90% of the administrative tasks to be performed according to standard procedures, while the remaining 10% must be performed on the basis of academically dictated variations."* (Senior management team, Aarhus University, 9 March 2011, 45).[7]

The academic development process must be seen in the context of the merger of Aarhus University with five other research and educational institutions in 2006 and 2007. This enriched the university with a range of new disciplines and broadened our contacts with the society Aarhus University belongs to. It also meant that Aarhus University became a somewhat larger university with a broader portfolio of assignments. In other words, it was a new situation, and carrying on like before was not an option. At the same time, it should be noted that a number of changes have been introduced in recent years to the backdrop against which the university performs its activities. The University Act from 2003 introduced changes to the management structure and powers, including the role and powers of the collegiate bodies, see below. The basis for the financing of research activities is changing, resulting in more competitive funding. This also applies to government research. Finally, external requirements for registrations and reporting are becoming consistently stricter. All in all, the university is affected by a number of factors in addition to the academic development process. It can be difficult for individual staff members to distinguish between effects created by the academic development process and other factors, and in the evaluation it is also a challenge to separate elements in the academic development process from external factors. Similarly, it is difficult to separate phasing-in problems and teething difficulties from more fundamental structural implications of the

---

[6] Senior Management Team, *Den Faglige Udviklingsproces, Aarhus Universitet, rapport* (The academic development process, Aarhus University, report), 9 March 2011.
[7] Senior Management Team, *Den Faglige Udviklingsproces, Aarhus Universitet, rapport* (The academic development process, Aarhus University, report), 9 March 2011.

changes. Not all phasing-in problems have yet been resolved, but the evaluation focuses on the structural implications. It should also be noted that changes have been made to the original structure laid down in the academic development process. For example, Arts has introduced a sectional structure at department level, at university level a decision has been made to reduce the four AU committees for research, education, talent development and knowledge exchange to two, and the number of administrative divisions has also been adjusted along the way.

2.2 Organisation of the university

The framework for the organisation of the university is laid down in the University Act. The Board is the supreme authority of the university. The Board looks after the university's interests as an institution of education and research and determines guidelines for its organisation, long-term activities and development. The Board employs and dismisses the university's rector and employs and dismisses the university's senior management team on the recommendation of the rector. The rector appoints and dismisses deans, and the deans appoint and dismiss the department heads.

The University Act sets out a framework, but also leaves some degree of freedom to choose between different types of organisation in relation to the main academic areas and the division of those areas into departments as well as in relation to the administrative area. This does not include vertical and horizontal dimensions. The vertical dimension relates to the degree of (de)centralisation, and the horizontal dimension concerns the size and composition of departments and administrative units.

The current organisational structure has strong elements at the central level. The senior management team consists of the rector, the pro-rector, the deans of the four main academic areas and the university director. The deans are responsible for one main academic area each, to which funds are allocated by the senior management team and which can allocate these to the departments. Within the area of research, a bottom-up principle applies to the activities at the individual departments, but as a result of the academic development process, a higher priority is given to interdisciplinary activities and interdisciplinary collaboration. Similarly, there is a wish to strengthen interdisciplinarity within education through the development of the inner education market.

The administration is divided into administrative areas under the management of a deputy director. The administration serves the Board, the senior management team, the main academic areas, standing committees and other decision-making bodies. As mentioned above, the guiding principle for the administrative functions is the delivery of standardised solutions, i.e. centrally determined and common administrative standards and solutions.

The administration is divided into functional pillars, which are split into 'front offices' and 'back offices'. The front offices handle ongoing contact with and the performance of administrative tasks in connection with the university's core activities (education, research and public sector consultancy), while the back offices are more specialised backup functions. At faculty level, the administrative solutions are coordinated across the administrative divisions via the administrative centres, each with an administration centre manager. Each administrative centre is structured based on roughly the same template (with geography being taken into account in connection with the allocation of resources). The administrative areas are HR, IT, Finance, Building Services (AU Planning), Knowledge Exchange, Research and Talent, Communication and Studies Administration.

Over the Danish Finance Act, financing is provided for the university's educational, research and knowledge dissemination activities as well as other tasks assigned to the university. The grants for the university are measured based on its teaching activities (taxameter subsidies), and other funding for, for example, research and knowledge dissemination activities is awarded to the university as a whole. The university can engage in income-generating activities and grant-financed activities. Resources are allocated to the main academic areas according to the same criteria as are applied under the Danish Finance Act, while other revenues are distributed directly to the main academic areas depending on where the income is generated. At faculty level, where the department and centre budgets are prepared, a number of different resource allocation models are used. They all have an activity-based element, which means that the income is allocated depending on where it is generated, but there is some variation between the main areas. The university director is responsible for the management of the central administration at Aarhus University and for the determination of and compliance with the overall administrative budgetary framework.

The central administration/back-office functions and management pools are financed via 'administration contributions' levied on faculties and departments, and the level for the central administration is determined by the rector in consultation with the senior management team. A budget is prepared for each administrative division's back-office unit, which is then included in the senior management team's discussion of the level. The budgets include both funds earmarked for ordinary operations and resources for administrative development projects. Each administrative division's back-office budget (as adopted) is financed by contributions from the main academic areas determined by a distribution key. Depending on the administrative division, the contribution depends on turnover, gross floor area and the number of student full time equivalents (student FTEs/annual students). In addition to the back-office budget, a number of joint costs for Aarhus University as a whole (part of the rent and joint initiatives such as for example AIAS, support for museum, canteen operations etc.) The main areas pay for their 'own' administration centre (front office) on a one-to-one basis, i.e. without an actual key. Once a year, the deans negotiate with each of the deputy directors to decide on the capacity requirements of the various administrative divisions. Prior to the negotiations, a budget is prepared for each administrative division's front-office unit, and this forms part of the main area's total front-office contribution. As regards external funding, an overhead is generally paid to cover draws on the administrative resources and contributions to the university's joint expenses.

3. Delegation of managerial responsibility and accessibility

The need for accessible, coherent management is emphasised in the mandate for the expert group as a central issue. The mandate directs the expert group to perform an analysis of the formal, real, structural or cultural barriers to an appropriate delegation of authority and good managerial practice at all levels of management starting with the senior management team.

The organisation of the main academic areas, including the structure of the departments, academic identity, motivation and the specific problems linked to geographical separation are treated in chapter 4.

3.1 Delegation of managerial responsibility and accessible management

The University Act lays down a hierarchical managerial structure for the Danish universities which Aarhus University has realised in an academic managerial hierarchy with three levels (cf. chapter 2): the rector/the senior management team, the deans and the department heads. The structure of Aarhus University is special in that the deans are part of the senior management team. In this structure, the rector/the senior management team are responsible for strategic management, setting overarching, long-term goals and priorities, while personnel management and the management of research, teaching and public sector consultancy take place at departmental level. Administrative management is primarily exercised within the administrative hierarchy (see chapter 5).

It is possible to distinguish between *inclusion* (at a minimum, employees are kept informed and their views are heard) and *co-determination* (employees have an influence on what decisions are made). [8]Figure 1 below shows how students, technical-administrative staff and academic staff evaluate the possibilities for co-determination and inclusion. All three groups evaluate the real possibilities for co-determination and inclusion as lower than the formal possibilities. In other words, many think that the existing possibilities for allowing students and staff co-determination and including them in decision-making possibilities are not exploited in reality. There is also a weak tendency among academic staff to respond more negatively than students and technical-administrative employees.

For all employee groups and students, there is a clear majority of respondents who think that the senior management does to a sufficient extent provide information about coming decisions and provide grounds for these decisions, cf. the background reports on the questionnaires. Similarly, there is a general perception of a lack of responsiveness to employees' and students' viewpoints. The same pattern applies to the deans.

There is a majority of positive evaluations from academic staff members to the same question about information, the provision of grounds and receptiveness with regard to department heads, and from technical-administrative staff members with regard to deputy directors and division managers. The tendency is thus that evaluations are more positive the lower the manager in question is positioned in the decision-making hierarchy. This is also to be expected, as personal contacts and relationships are closer at this level of day-to-day operations. However, there are problems at departmental level, as the establishment of a more formalised internal managerial structure at the departments attests, cf. chapter 4. This has taken place in response to a lack of accessible management and possibilities for inclusion. As the background report on the department head interviews shows, there is considerable variation at the departments with regard to how

---

[8] Technical/administrative staff members are exclusive of staff employed at the departments.

and the extent to which employees are included in decision-making. This is also reflected in very marked variation at the departments with regard to employees' experience of inclusion by their departments; see the background report on the employee survey (in Danish).

Figure 1: Overall formal and real possibilities for co-determination and inclusion

How good are the formal possibilities for being included?
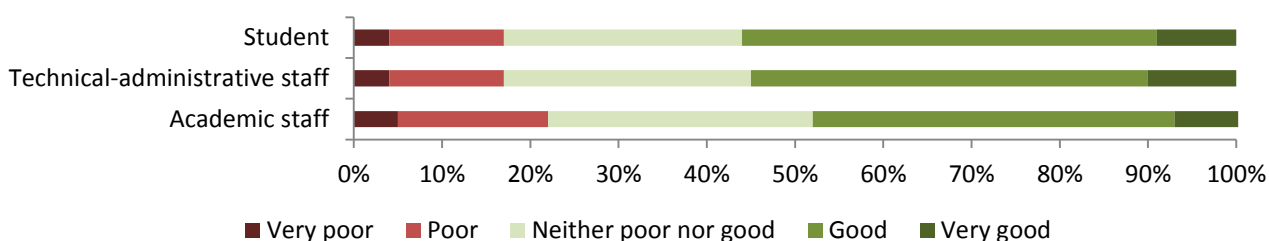
How good are the real possibilities for being included in decisions and processes?
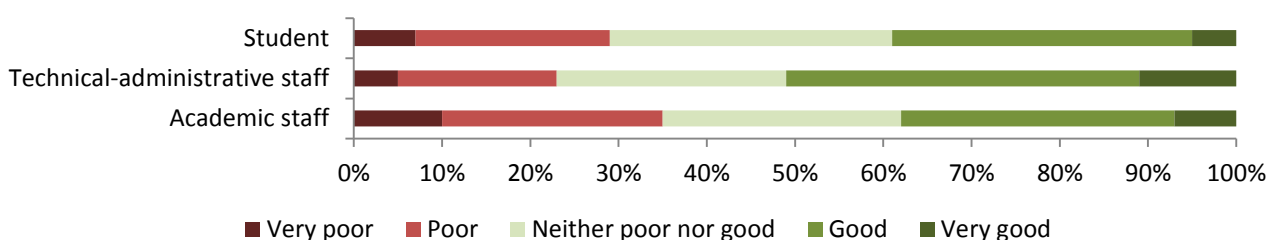
Overall, how good are the real possibilities for co-determination?

How good are the real possibilities for co-determination?

Note: Academic and technical-administrative employees were asked to respond in relation to their work, and students were asked to respond in relation to their studies. Technical-administrative staff members are exclusive of staff employed at the departments. For other staff groups, see the background report (in Danish)
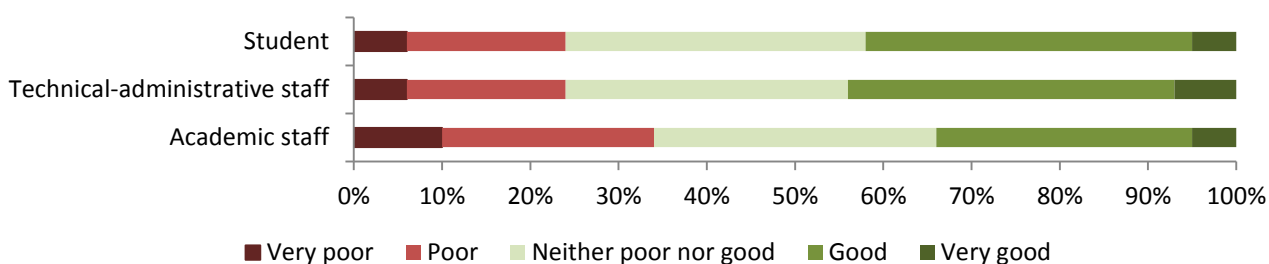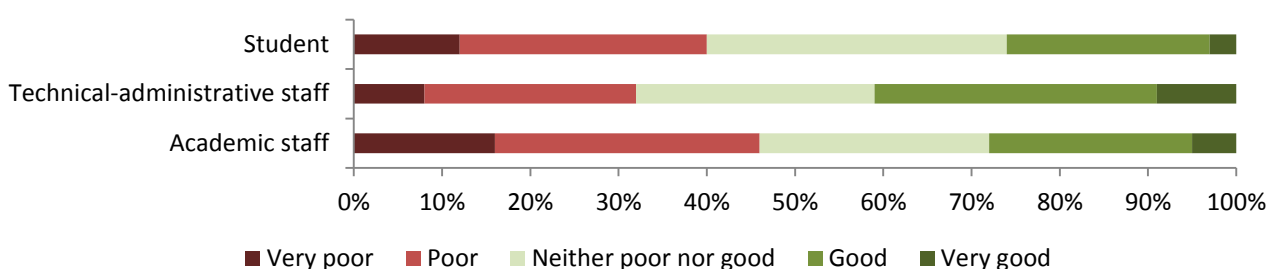Source: The background reports on the employee and student surveys.

The interviews also confirm a widespread perception that the decision-making hierarchy contains possibilities for including employees, but that these are not taken advantage of to a sufficient extent. There is also a widespread perception that information flows downward through the system, but without including employees in the process. There is respect for managers' authority to make decisions, but employees experience that their points of view are not sought out and responded to. When well-founded points of view and proposals are presented from lower levels of the organisation, employees experience that they are not explicitly taken into consideration, and in cases in which it has not been possible to accommodate these points of view and proposals, no clear explanations are given.

There is a widespread perception of a distance issue: management is not sufficiently in contact with employees 'on the front lines'. The deans' positioning in the senior management team - and physical location in the same central building - is viewed by many as a symptom of this problem. The majority of academic staff do not think that the department heads have good possibilities for relaying employees' views upwards in the managerial hierarchy (49% against 24% who think that they have good possibilities.). The same is true regarding the question of whether management listens to the department heads.

Quote box 1

> *They sit over on the other side of Ringgaden, and people are aware of the symbolic implications of that - now they sit up there in 'the Fuhrer's bunker'.*
>
> *The distance between the senior management team and the rest of Aarhus University is too wide.*
>
> *Decisions are made centrally, but they forget to involve others and ensure their quality before announcing them to the next level [of management]. This is not an optimal situation.*
>
> *In several cases, the senior management has made decisions about something that we in the administration proceed to implement, until it becomes clear that isn't what the departments and centres want. There's a missing link between the senior management team and the departments and centres.*

Source: The quotes stem from comments made at interviews or comments made in connection with the questionnaire-based survey. The quotes have been anononymised.

A top-down decision-making process that does not involve employees leads to a lack of understanding of these decisions, which in turn leads to a lack of co-ownership and responsibility in relation to the decisions that have been made. Many staff groups have expressed feelings of powerlessness and frustration leading to a lack of ownership and responsibility in relation to making things work. This is exemplified by statements such as 'It's their decision, so they're going to have to make this work,' and, in relation to making objections, 'It doesn't help anyway'. The opinion has also been expressed that this is not a culture that encourages participation and engagement - in fact, in some cases it even encourages the opposite. A comparison of an index containing the results for formal and real inclusion and co-determination with employees' job

satisfaction reveals a strong and statistically significant correlation: employees who report that they experience a high degree of inclusion and co-determination tend to have higher job satisfaction. The same positive correlation exists between students' satisfaction with their studies and the degree to which students view Aarhus University as a meaningful whole.

The perception of limited co-determination and inclusion cannot be explained exclusively with reference to the university's legal framework, as confirmed by a survey of employee inclusion and co-determination at all Danish universities (the Danish Agency for Higher Education, 2014) that shows Aarhus University to be the university at which management is least receptive to employee input and where employees have the lowest degree of influence on university-wide and faculty-level decision-making.[9] The same is true with regard to students. The same survey shows that a significantly smaller proportion of the employees at Aarhus University without regard to organisational level consider that they are in a position to influence management in 2014 than was the case in 2009.

3.2. Communication
In both interviews and surveys, the opinion has been expressed that insufficient information on and explanations for management's decisions reaches employees.

Communication includes both information transmitted and an opinion about/interpretation of/rationale for given initiatives. Communication is not only a matter of disseminating knowledge; communication is also about creating an understanding of change processes among employees that in turn can inspire motivation and engagement. Internal communication contributes to creating and maintaining relationships between the management and the employees. It is therefore potentially an instrument for creating a more accessible management and comprehension of management's decisions.

There is a widespread perception that while employees receive large amounts of information i the form of newsletters, pamphlets and various documents, as a general rule, the content of this communication is limited to the presentation of facts without explanation or justification. This flow of information is perceived by many as excessive and one-sided. At the same time, there exists a lack of basic knowledge about and understanding of important changes at the university, for example in relation to general initiatives (branding, interdisciplinarity, etc.) and standardised administrative solutions. However, the expert group would like to note that there have been major challenges in connection with the merger process and the adjustments necessary to establish a new, unified institution.

The flow of information has not achieved sufficient success in creating motivation and engagement among employees. When employees do not understand the backgrounds and motives for such initiatives, support for and ownership of these projects does not develop. The changes are perceived as something the management is forcing on the organisation from above; something that does not contribute to the performance of the university's core activities; or even as something that diverts resources from the performance of those activities.

---

[9] Danish Agency for Higher Education. *Medbestemmelse og medinddragelse på universiteterne*, Copenhagen. May 2014.

There are also indications that a conflict of values exists in the sense that the conception of and vision for the university's activities and functions that has been defined by management is not shared by the employees (cf. also chapter 4 on identity and motivation). New values have been launched that are not rooted in the organisation. Interviews and surveys indicate clearly that many employees do not consider Aarhus University's overall strategy to be meaningful (24% of academic staff and 38% of technical/admistrative staff). If the employees do not share the management's visions and goals, problems and frustrations will inevitably arise. The image the management attempts to present of the university through its communication is inconsistent with the image that employees have of the university. Many employees do not think that there is anything that binds AU together across administrative and academic boundaries (this is true both of employees at the Aarhus campus and employees at other campuses). Nonetheless, many consider it important for the university to present itself as a unified institution, and this condition appears to be closely linked with employee job satisfaction (cf. chapter 4).

There are strong indications that the flow of information has not contributed positively to creating comprehension of the change processes taking place at the university or the visions for Aarhus University contained in the academic development process, either in form or in content. Employees have not been led to understand to a sufficiently high degree that these organisational changes are one answer to the challenges the university faces, and that they can ultimately contribute to strengthening the university's core activities. Neither has space for employees to present their criticism and proposals for change to higher levels of the hierarchy been created. The chosen information strategy may have contributed to creating uncertainty, misunderstanding and resistance to the entire process. The solution to these problems is hardly more information from the top down. Rather, it is a question of recognising that clear communication goes both ways, and that a condition for reaching a shared understanding is that both parties have an opportunity to understand each others' situation and motives.

Quote box 2

Employees:

Focus on the everyday. Drop the idealisations. Focus on cooperation and realism.

I have the sense that internal communication lacks insight in what goes on at the local level and to a high degree sends out a constant stream of irrelevant success stories.

Trivial branding done by people who don't know anything about research.

Students:

....seems more like ads for Aarhus University's delights than solid information about what actually goes on.

...it's condescending to sell a degree programme to students as if we choose on the basis of where we can party most, not where the best degree programme is.

...the homepage keeps getting more and more 'slick' and looks more like an ad than a source of information for students, researcher, etc.

Source: The quotes stem from comments made at interviews or comments made in connection with the questionnaire-based survey. The quotes have been anonymised.

These problems are also clearly reflected in evaluations of the university's external communication, which is closely linked to the branding strategy and the goal of representing Aarhus University as a unified whole. Employees have very little understanding of the university's external communication, and only recognise themselves in the image of the university presented to a very slight extent. There exists a perception that the university is presented as something other than what it is, and that the image of the university that is projected is unrecognisable, cf. chapter 4 on identity. Students share this perspective to a large extent.

3.3 Employee and student inclusion through participation in formal bodies

Under the University Act, employees and students must be guaranteed inclusion in and co-determination in relation to important decisions at Aarhus University. The act requires that this take place in bodies such as the academic councils and boards of studies. The provisions of the act are put into action by Aarhus University's by-laws, which requires that academic councils be established at all main academic areas along with an unspecified number of boards of studies. The by-laws also stipulate that a departmental forum consisting of staff and student representatives is to be established at each department. Finally, like other public sector institutions, Aarhus University has established a liaison committees where conditions relevant to the workplace are discussed by management and employees. Liaison committees have been established at central level (LSU, the main liaison committee), at each main academic area (faculty liaison committees, FSUs) and at all departments (local liaison committees, LSUs). The intention in the academic development process was for these bodies to function to ensure that staff and students are included in and have real influence on the management of Aarhus University.

The expert group's survey shows that the formal structure for co-determination and inclusion of employees and students has been fully established. No examples have been found of failures to establish academic councils, boards of studies, departmental fora or liaison committees. And no examples of failure to make use of these bodies in practice have been found. Meetings are held on a regular basis in all cases. In addition, the expert group has found numerous examples of the existence of more informal forums where employees and management meet. Examples include research groups, local degree programme committees, teaching coordination units, section coordination forums, administrative network groups and knowledge exchange committees. The expert group has examined two aspects of these formal bodies. On the one hand, the actual content of the formal bodies has been investigated. On the other hand, the expert group has also sought to analyse inclusion and influence more generally as exercised through both formal and informal channels.

The expert group's interviews show that in general, staff and student representatives perceive that meetings of the formal bodies - academic councils, boards of studies, departmental forums and liaison committees - take place according to the rules, but that meetings have the character of briefings where management informs rather than a forum for genuine inclusion and co-determination, cf. the comments below.

However, to a certain degree, employees and students understand that real inclusion and co-determination are difficult to practice in a hierarchical system with a clear-cut chain of command.

Quote box 3

> *We are listened to now, but often we are told that what we say is incompatible with what has already been decided in the area.*
>
> *The management often arrives meetings with a decision under their arms.*
>
> *Important decisions have, however, bypassed us, and policies have been discussed without any possibility of being able to change the essence of such decisions, but only the wording.*
>
> *The academic council works well as a discussion forum, and members are listened to, but we do not have much real influence.*
>
> *Members of the academic council are informed once the decisions have been made, but are not involved in the decision-making process.*
>
> *When decisions have already been adopted by the senior management team, it is difficult for the deans to present the topics for discussion by the academic council.*
>
> *Today, we react to decisions made by the senior management team, while formerly it was possible to address issues with the dean.*
>
> *Everything disappears as it moves upwards in the system.*

Source: The quotes stem from comments made at interviews or comments made in connection with the questionnaire-based survey. The quotes have been anonymised.

The interviews with employees and students indicate that there are differences in how inclusion and co-determination function at the university, both between the levels of the managerial hierarchy, and between the main academic areas. Inclusion and co-determination are perceived to function better at departmental level than at main academic area and senior management team level. The highest level of management is perceived to be characterised by a very low degree of employee co-determination and inclusion. Among the main academic areas, Arts returns particularly low scores. Both the interviews and the surveys indicate that the possibilities for inclusion and co-determination are perceived as markedly poorer at Arts than at the other main academic areas. In this connection, it is important to note that Arts is one of the main academic areas that has been most affected by the change process.

The expert group's employee survey has explored employees' perception of the possibilities for inclusion and co-determination more generally. In other words, the survey covers both formal and informal channels. The survey confirms the impression provided by the interviews. In the first place, employees experience that the formal channels are not exploited fully. Both in response to questions about inclusion and co-determination, the real possibilities are perceived as being poorer than the formal, cf. figure 1. In the second place, the possibilities for inclusion are evaluated as better than the possibilities for co-determination. These patterns apply to both academic staff and technical/adminstrative staff.

The expert group recognises the challenges connected to ensuring true co-determination for and involvement of staff and students. On the one hand, the University Act prescribes an unequivocal

hierarchical chain of command consisting of the board, the rector's office, the main academic areas and the departments. On the other hand,the Act also stipulates that staff and students must be granted involvement and co-determination in the running of the universities. The Act includes no directions as to how these conflicting management mechanisms are to be harmonised. Aarhus University has established all of the forums in which involvement and co-determination are to be exercised. The expert group sees no need for additional structural initiatives.

However, in the expert group's view, there is a significant need to improve real inclusion and co-determination. The expert group acknowledges that management at the departments and main academic areas make considerable efforts to involve employees and students. At the same time, there are a number of indications that better use might be made of the existing framework for inclusion and co-determination.

First, the expert group has noted that in comparison with employees at the other Danish universities, who have the same structures to ensure inclusion and co-determination, employees of Aarhus University experience their actual opportunities for inclusion and co-determination as markedly poorer.[10] According to the expert group's assessment, the university's hierarchical management sets limits on how much real involvement can meaningfully take place at the main academic areas and departments. When the central decisions are in reality made by the senior management team, it is difficult for the deans and the heads of departments to ensure genuine involvement of staff and students at their levels. A precondition for more genuine inclusion and co-determination is therefore an increased decentralisation of power at Aarhus University, cf. the expert group's reflections in chapter 5.

Second, the expert group has observed marked differences in the employees' experience of inclusion and co-determination at the different main academic areas. Arts in particular stands out. At Arts, employees perceive their possibilities for inclusion and co-determination as markedly poorer than at the other main academic areas.

And finally, the expert group finds that there are also significant differences among the departments with regard to the evaluation of how good possibilities for inclusion and co-determination are.

According to the expert group's assessment, the two last two conditions named above demonstrate that some deans and department heads could do more to exploit the existing framework for involvement and co-determination.

3.4. Possible solutions

According to the expert group's assessment, improving of management's accessibility and of employee and student inclusion and co-determination will require an effort on several fronts. But fundamentally, the situation is linked to the distribution of authority and responsibility at the university. Within the given framework, however, there are certain possibilities for improvement. Specifically, the expert group would like to point to the following initiatives.

---

[10] Danish Agency for Higher Education. *Medbestemmelse og medinddragelse på universiteterne*. Copenhagen. May 2014.

Decentralisation of decision-making authority and responsibility

Genuine involvement and co-determination would require the involvement of employees and students at the levels at which influence is exercised. The centralisation of power in the university's senior management team makes it difficult for deans and department heads to involve employees and students in a meaningful way at main academic area and department level. A precondition for increased genuine inclusion and co-determination is therefore a decentralisation of power, cf. the expert group's reflections in chapter 5.

Improved exploitation of existing structures

The expert group's assessment is that there is room for improvement for a number of deans and departments in relation to academic councils and departmental forums regarding quite basic conditions, such as sending out meeting materials well in advance of meetings, respect for disagreement, acknowledgement of constructive criticism and ensuring a reasonable degree of openness with regard to the basis for decisions. I addition, the expert group sees possibilities for more systematic dialogue between the deans and the chairs of the academic councils in relation to how the work of these bodies is organised and the division of labour between the dean and the chair.

Better communication

The expert group has observed that communication regarding the organisational changes that have been introduced in connection with the academic development process has not been successful. The expert group wishes to recommend a fundamental reconsideration of the university's communication. The goal should be for internal communication to function to a higher degree as a forum for the exchange of views and to a less degree as 'sales' of management's decisions. Similarly, the expert group recommends that external communication represent the university in a more serious, nuanced way.

4. The organisational and managerial structure and operation of the main academic areas

At main academic area and department level, major organisational changes have been implemented. Academic activities are now organised in four main academic areas, and the departments have generally become larger, which means that there are fewer of them. With regard to the academic organisation, a premise of this evaluation is that division into four main academic areas is not in question.

The following discussion thus addresses conditions related to the organisation structure within the main academic areas - the departments - including issues of academic identity and employee motivation. The diversity of the university's geography and portfolio of activities has increased as a result of the merger process, and the particular problems and challenges associated with this are discussed in the following chapter.

4.1 Departmental structure

At departmental level, there are very large differences in the extent of organisational change as a result of the academic development process. Some departments have only been marginally affected, while others have been created as a result of a major merger, in some cases with activities at several geographical locations. There are also considerable differences in several dimensions in relation to the individual departments' portfolios of activities. In relation to degree programmes, some departments have a clear profile oriented towards a particular degree programme, while others are involved in several degree programmes. There is also considerable variation with respect to the size of the role played by research and public sector consultancy at the departments. As a consequence of all of these factors, there are also major differences in the extent to which employees identify with their department.

The academic employee survey included a number of questions about the current structure. Figure 2 shows the distribution of answers to the question "My department constitutes an appropriate unit" by department. As the figure shows, there is quite considerable variation from department to department. The academic staff at a large proportion of departments think that their department constitutes an appropriate unit. However, at a number of departments, a very large proportion of academic staff do not agree with this statement. This wide variation in employees' perceptions of their departments as appropriate units is confirmed by the interviews performed by the expert group. The survey also contains questions about whether the departments have unclear academic profiles, employees' sense of responsibility in relation to the department, and whether the department's tasks are clearly understood. By and large, the answers to these questions provide the same picture as figure 2 of which departments are more homogeneous and which are more heterogeneous.

There is a strong positive correlation between viewing your department as a meaningful unit and high job satisfaction. Although the material does not make it possible to identify the precise nature of this correlation, the result emphasises the potential that lies in working to ensure that the university's units are perceived as meaningful.

At the same time, it should be noted that the departments that are not perceived as a unified whole are also the departments that have been most affected by the reorganisations. Similarly, some of the departments that have been least affected are perceived as very homogeneous. The proposition that the roots of the

problems at a number of departments are structural is supported by the absence of the same consistency in the employees' assessment of department heads' understanding of employees' work responsibilities, visibility or inclusion of employees. Among the departments that are assessed as least cohesive by employees, there are department heads who receive very positive evaluations from employees. Note that the possibility of the establishment of sections/departments etc. below departmental level has been introduced since the original implementation of the academic development process, and this may mitigate some of the problems discussed here.

Figure 2: Does your department constitute an appropriate unit - question for academic employees
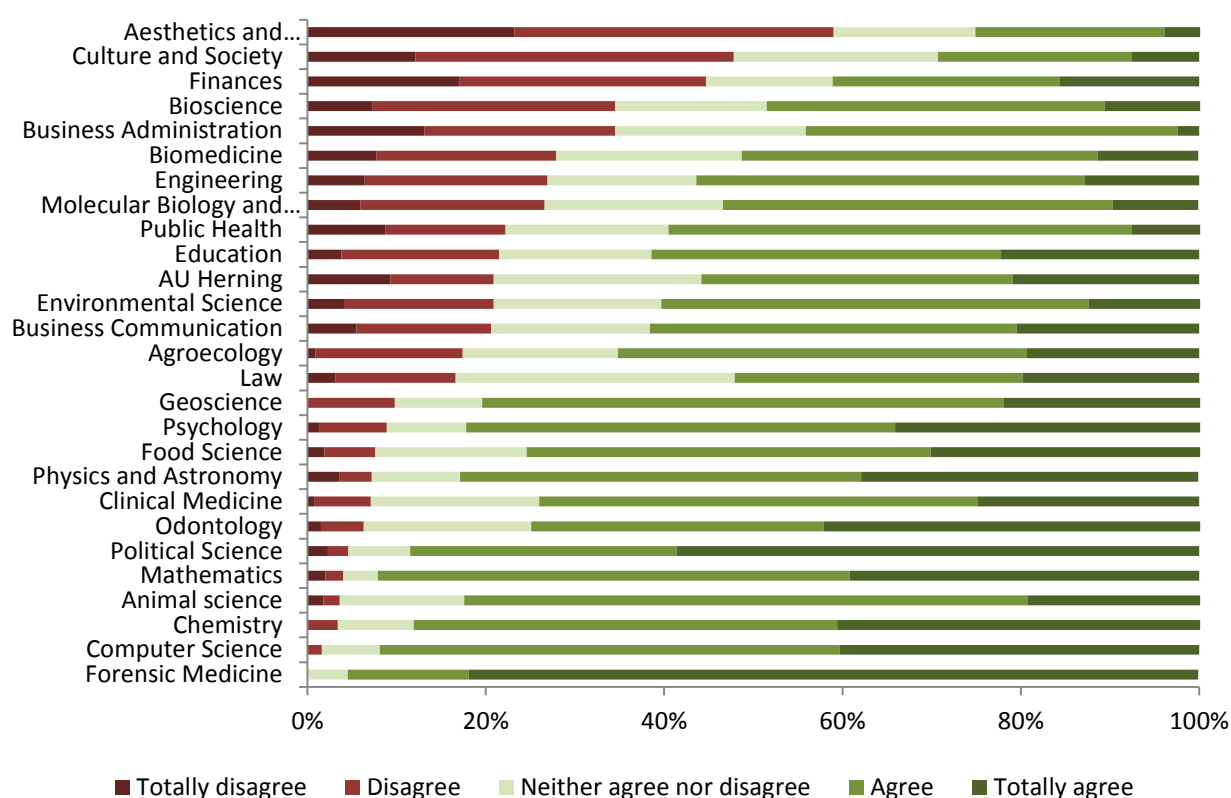
Note: The answer to the question "My department constitutes an appropriate unit".
Source: Background report concerning questionnaire-based staff survey.

This confirms the impression that different parts of the university have been affected by the change process in very different ways, and that some areas still face major challenges in regard to ensuring that their structure is appropriate in relation to strengthening the university's core activities. An assessment of the more specific academic/professional conditions related to individual departments and groups is not included in the mandate for the expert group's work. However, the problems explored in the analysis (illustrated in figure 1) clear demonstrate that some of these problems require a focused effort.

Although an internal departmental managerial hierarchy was not allowed according to the academic development process, this has since become an option. The precise nature of the internal structure of the departments varies (deputy departments head/section managers/subject heads/degree programme group heads etc.), with very different functions and powers, cf. table 1. These structural differences imply major

differences among the departments with regard to the precise form and degree of employee co-determination. In some cases, the internal hierarchies which have developed at the departments lead to lack of clarity regarding the division of responsibility and an unclear organisational structure that constitutes a parallel structure in relation to co-determination through the departmental forums.

Table 1: Internal structures and delegation of authority at departmental level by main academic area, cf. the department heads

	Science and Technology	Health	School of Business and Social Sciences	Faculty of Arts
	13 department heads	5 department heads	7 department heads	3 department heads
Departmental structure	Sections Research groups Sections	Sections Sections Centres Research groups	Sections Research groups Subject-specific groups Sections	Departmental structure
Delegation of SDD	++++++÷÷	(++)	++ (+++)÷	+
Delegation of financial responsibility	+ (+)÷÷	+÷	+÷÷	
Financial compensation	+++ ÷÷÷÷	+÷	+++++++	
Praise, recognition, values	++++++	+++++	++++++(+)	÷

The + sign indicates that the department head has used the instrument in question. The ÷ sign indicates that a department head has explicitly stated that he or she does not use the instrument in question. Parentheses indicate limited use of the instrument in question.

Empty cells indicate that the department heads at the relevant main academic area have not commented on the subject in question during the interview.

Source: Background report concerning interviews with department heads

This haphazard development is inconsistent with the original intentions of the academic development process. To the extent that these adjustments reflect the fact that the new departments are too large/heterogeneous, it makes sense to ask whether it would have been more appropriate to reconsider the departmental structure itself. One of the goals of the reorganisation of the structure of the departments was the internalisation of academic relationships. This structure does not appear to have achieved this goal in all cases, which is one of the justifications for the subsequent adjustments made to it. It is very uncertain whether the establishment of larger departments has been conducive to strengthening the core activities.

There is considerable variation in the role of the department head at the various departments. There are major differences with regard for managerial traditions and needs between classical university departments and departments that perform more public sector consultancy. The department heads generally emphasise the special demands knowledge institutions place on the managerial role. There is widespread support for a bottom-up model (see the background report on department head interviews) and all of the department heads emphasise how important it is for researchers to have space in which to develop their research and teaching. In this perspective lies a recognition of the fact that academic staff members often only

demonstrate interest in questions of organisation and management when they create barriers for research, teaching and public sector consultancy.

The traditional university departments are based on the Humboldtian university tradition, which affords individual researchers a high degree of freedom. Naturally, departments which perform public sector consultancy have a more traditional managerial tradition, as they are governed by market conditions and the terms of contracts with clients. Both in relation to the university as a whole and in relation to some of the newly established departments, these two traditions meet in a way that has not been clearly thought out in the structure of the organisation and administrative support (see section 4.4. and chapter 5). This causes a number of problems, and there is no overall strategy for handling this issue (see below on geography and activity portfolios). Does the university want to have a diverse portfolio of activities that includes both research and public sector consultancy, and does the university want to have different types of degree programmes? A clearer strategy is need that clarifies how these various elements can be strengthened and developed.

The academic legitimacy of the department heads is rated highly by academic staff. Seventy-nine per cent think (agree or totally agree) that the department heads have a good understanding of what it means to be a researcher (only 9% completely disagree). The situation is similar in relation to teaching and public sector consultancy (Here there is a larger proportion of 'neither agree nor disagree', which must be attributed to the fact that public sector consultancy there are many of the academic employees who do not engage in public sector consultancy.). However, there is a certain degree of variation with regard to employees' perception of their department heads' knowledge of the core activities. This corresponds to some degree to what the department heads themselves say about their priorities as managers.

One of the aims of the academic development process was to more or less completely exempt department heads from administrative duties to allow them to concentrate on academic management This has not happened, as interviews with department heads and the survey confirm. Both employees and managers report that the department heads spend a great deal of their time on administrative management. Although the early phases of the implementation process have created special problems in relation to administration, it is not realistic to expect that the intentions of the academic development process will ever be realised, particular not at the very largest of the departments, unless structural changes are implemented that ensure that department heads can focus on academic management. This issue should be considered in connection with the remarks on academic profiles below.

Our analysis underscores the importance of the academic dimension of the department heads' managerial practice. there is a strong positive correlation between department heads' prioritisation of time spent on academic management (especially in contrast to administrative management) and the academic employees' job satisfaction. In addition, there is a strong positive correlation between job satisfaction and employees' assessment that their department head is visible in their daily working lives, is easily accessible and is well acquainted with the department's core activities.

The individual faculties apply different principles for the allocation of resources to their departments, cf. chapter 2. Several department heads find that their managerial authority is in reality limited because of the lack of connection between department activities and resource allocation. The financial contribution from the academic organisation to the administration is generally viewed critically. There is also generally

considered to be a disproportion between the overheads awarded for external research grants and the actual costs associated with administering such grants. The system is perceived as over-taxation of or 'penalisation' of those who actually bring in external research funding.

One of the goals of the academic development process was that the larger departments were to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration. Interviews do not indicate that the new departmental structure has created better conditions for interdisciplinary activities. In interviews,the point has been made that departmental structure is not a significant factor (barrier or catalyst) in interdisciplinary work generally speaking.

4.2 Academic identity and meaningful collegial networks

The university is a complex organisation with many different perceptions of and forms of affiliation. The individual employee or student may have affiliations at many levels simultaneously, both in relation to Aarhus University and in relation to a specific degree programme, a subject, a main academic area, a department, a centre, an administrative division, and so on. The meaning of these levels is context-dependent.

One way of investigating affiliation is to ask what 'label' you would assign to yourself in an everyday situation such as a dinner party. In response to this question, technical/administrative staff emphasise their affiliation with Aarhus University (69%), while students primarily emphasise their particular degree programme (75%). Academic staff are less homogeneous: 54% identify themselves with the university, and 45% identify themselves with their department/section/centre. This is applies both to the Aarhus campus and the other campuses.

However, there are major differences between the departments. The degree of primary identification with Aarhus University ranges from very high (for example, 80% at Engineering and at Business Administration) to very low (for example, 26% at Political Science and 0% at Forensic Medicine). These differences are evident at all main academic areas. However, primary identification with departments/sections/centres tends to be strongest at the departments on the Aarhus campus that have undergone the least degree of reorganisatin, for example Political Science and Forensic Medicine. The situation is more complex on the other campusses, from AU Herning with 67% identification with AU to the Department of Education, with 30% identification with AU.

Responses to the question about the extent to which employees and students agree that "AU is supportive of my academic/professional identity" were interestingly uniform. A little over half of the employees agree, and almost three-fourths of students agree. Academic employees were equally divided over the question about whether there is a "special spirit" at AU, while more technical/administrative staff and students in particular agree with this statement. There is a preponderance of respondents in all three groups who do not agree (disagree or totally disagree) with the statement that opportunities for developing professional/academic competences are inadequate at Aarhus University. Finally, there is general agreement that it is important for Aarhus University to be presented as a unified institution. Taken together, these responses must be interpreted as a positive evaluation of professional/academic competences at Aarhus University. However, only about one-fourth of the academic employees and a little over one-third of the technical/administrative employees consider Aarhus University's strategy to be meaningful, cf. chapter 3. This disproportion indicates that there has not been success in creating a shared identity and support for the image of the university the academic development process promotes.

In many cases, the new departmental structure has had consequences for both academic and educational reputation and image, cf above. All of the department heads emphasise the importance of the department's reputation and image. Large, heterogeneous departments can make it difficult to establish a shared identity, and can therefore reduce employees' engagement or sense of responsibility. Several department heads indicated that there were problems in relation to projecting a coherent image and identity, and they are aware of the importance of this both internally (motivation, teamwork, responsibility) and externally (recruitment, marketing of degree programmes, distinctive academic reputation/image). In addition, other considerations may be relevant, for example 'critical mass' (in other words, avoidance of academic environments that are too small) and the possibility for 'meaningful social interaction' (in other words, avoidance of environments that are too large).

It is still to early to evaluate whether the change process has had positive or negative effects on these conditions. It is critical to address the question of whether the change process contributes to creating meaningful collegial networks and to strengthening identity and by extension motivation and engagement. In this connection, it is important to note the major differences in the answers from academic staff at different departments to the question regarding the extent to which one's department constitutes an appropriate unit, cf. figure 2 above.

Even though the dinner party question forces respondents to chose one identity at the expense of all others, in practice students and employees often feel that they have several affiliations at once. The extent to which a given affiliation is experienced as significant and meaningful is reflected in the experience of cohesiveness, clear identity and shared responsibility.

A more detailed analysis of the survey responses reveals a clear statistical correlation between the degree of job/degree programme satisfaction and the extent to which Aarhus University is perceived as a meaningful community. This applies to students as well as both technical/administrative and academic staff. With regard to academic staff, there is also a clear but slightly weaker correlation between job satisfaction and the extent to which the department is perceived to be meaningful, as well as the extent to which the department head is perceived to be inclusive and visible in the everyday life of the department. The less the department is perceived as an appropriate unit, the more often Aarhus University is selected as the primary affiliation. Finally, there is a clear positive correlation between perceiving Aarhus University as a meaningful unit and perceiving one's department as a meaningful unit.

Some departments are unified by the fact that many of their employees have similar academic backgrounds (for example, Chemistry and Political Science); others by the fact that employees work on shared themes (for example Environmental Science). Still others have a shared history and/or geography (for example the Department of Education). There are strong indications that there are different possible ways of creating cohesiveness at the departments. However, the departments at which Aarhus University and the department are perceived as the least meaningful units tend to be the departments that have undergone major organisational and/or physical changes. This is remarkable, and it indicates that the major reorganisations have been made at great cost.

There are additional factors in play in relation to creating identity and meaningful collegial networks, and it is not possible to determine causal relationships on the basis of the data at hand. The results discussed above indicate that it is quite crucial for academic staff that both the department and the university are perceived

as meaningful communities. The same is true for technical/administrative staff in relation to the university. The expert group's results indicate that there is no opposition between a strong departmental identity and a strong AU identity - on the contrary, in fact. This entails that the university's units must be experienced as meaningful in order to anchor identity, both at department level and university level. It also demonstrates that two-way communication between management and staff is a necessary but not sufficient condition for creating an understanding of the goals and visions that are to guide the university.

4.3 Employee motivation

For Aarhus University to perform its work in the best way possible, employee motivation is important. Motivation is defined in a broad sense as the potential energy an employee is willing to invest in reaching a given goal in connection with his or her work.

As in other parts of the labour market, employees at Aarhus University are motivated by a range of external factors linked to salary and managerial monitoring of employee performance. Academic staff in particular have strong career incitements (promotion depends on previous performance), just as researchers at some departments receive bonuses for publishing in particular journals. The external motivational factors are often linked to external conditions, for example in the case of funding allocated to the university on the basis of the number of publications. Current research also points to the importance of inner motivation for employees in the university sector. Inner motivation in relation to work is also linked to the work process itself: Teachers enjoy teaching, researchers are motivated by the exciting aspects of the research process itself or of seeing their results applied, and technical/administrative staff find their work tasks exciting and challenging. Another kind of inner motivation is linked to the results employees achieve to the benefit of other people and society. This type of motivation, termed 'public service motivation' in the literature on the subject, is typically defined as an orientation towards contributing to society and other people by providing public service. Although public service motivation is not the experience of having a calling, there are similarities.

The results of the expert group's survey contain several indications that employees at Aarhus University have a high degree of inner motivation. One example is the widespread willingness to contribute to enabling Aarhus University to perform its work in the best way possible. For example, over 70% of the employees affiliated with the departments agree that employees have a great sense of responsibility towards the department. The many supplementary comments contributed to the survey (834 pages of comments that will be published in abbreviated form on condition that the contributors have given their permission) testify to this willingness to contribute to improving Aarhus University. Many have made great efforts to contribute to this survey, and having Aarhus University function better is clearly very important for all staff groups. Several other analysis also indicate that inner motivation is more important to university employees than other groups. This is true not least for academic staff.

At many departments at Aarhus University, management is already being exercised on the basis of a clear understanding of what motivates employees. The expert group's interviews with department heads made it very clear that their practice as manager takes considerations of employee motivation into account. They emphasise the importance of ensuring freedom of research and diversity, of avoiding micromanagement and of trusting the employees. Many department heads see themselves as creating a framework with the involvement of employees (a bottom up approach). The expert group's interviews also confirm that researchers themselves consider salary to be less motivating than do other highly educated groups.

Quote box 4

> *The more staff members are treated as wage earners, the more they behave as such.*
>
> *Primadonna management is not completely off the mark. They must be humoured and feel that they come up with the good ideas – it helps.*
>
> *Values and strategy play a role in people's working lives, and the employees are extremely committed…because they feel a sense of ownership.*
>
> *The work is its own reward. It's more motivating than short-term financial motivation. Letting people do something they really love is much better.*
>
> *Top-down management stands i contrast to freedom of research.*

Source: The quotes stem from comments made at interviews or comments made in connection with the questionnaire-based survey. The quotes have been anonymised.

According to the literature on the subject, imposing more direct management on university employees (in the form of financial incentives and the imposition of rules) depends on how employees perceive this control. If direct management is perceived as support (in the sense of contributing to academic performance and legitimate), research shows that control can have positive effects. But if direct management is perceived as an illegitimate form of control, research shows that employees' inner motivation declines, resulting in poorer performance. These finds are relevant to this survey, because the expert group has found indications in both the survey and the interviews that the form of direct management being exercised at Aarhus University is perceived as controlling by many employees.

An example of direct management that many employees at Aarhus University perceive as controlling is the requirement that all employees present themselves as employees of Aarhus University rather than with reference to their departmental affiliation. Employees report that they feel that they are being controlled against their will rather than perceiving the clarification of their affiliation to Aarhus University as an aid in promoting their research results. This may be related to the university's implicit view of affiliation to the university and the department as in opposition. On the contrary, the expert group's material indicates that there is a positive correlation.

The perception of direct management as control appears to stem from a conflict of values: the parties involved do not have the same conception of what the university should be. Comments on internal and external communication are particularly revealing: here, staff and students criticise what they perceive as the central management's autocratic definition of the university in a way that is perceived as frivolous. Expressions like 'the branding police' are used, and there is a strong resistance to the so-called visual identity. Interviews confirm that many employees perceive centralised direct management as an expression of control and a lack of trust in employees. Some academic employees feel that they are 'talked down to'. The attempt to represent the university as a unified whole and the repression of subject-specific/departmental identities is also perceived as demotivating, as it is interpreted as expressing that management de-emphasises central goals and values. When a lack of co-ownership in relation to change has a demotivating effect, this can potentially harm the university's core activities. However, it is important to

emphasise that both the available research and the expert group's survey at Aarhus University indicate that direct management can be exercised in a supportive, motivating way.

The expert group's survey has investigated the visibility of department heads and division managers in relation to day-to-day operations. As described above, there is a positive correlation between this factor and employee job satisfaction which may be due to the ability of more visible managers to exercise direct management in a constructive, legitimate and meaningful way.

It can be difficult if employees perceive the centralised exercise of management at Aarhus University as a form of control. As one department head expresses it, "Control is experienced as a limitation rather than support. It's about trust, and don't think that you can cheat people - they're not stupid. Manipulation doesn't work. The only thing that works is the power of argument." Another department head argued that you loose a lot if you believe that you can manage research in a top-down way, while a third department head points out that the more you treat [academic] employees like wage-earners, the more they react like wage-earners which isn't in anyone's best interest.

Department heads at all main areas emphasise the importance of management instruments such as shared values, praise and recognition. Opinions regarding the use of direct financial incentives vary, and a number of department heads are directly opposed to the use of financial incentives. The department heads agree that the conditions for conducting good research and teaching (academic environment, facilities, project financing etc.) are of crucial significance for academic staff.

Motivation and job satisfaction are closely connected, and there are high levels of job satisfaction at Aarhus University. Figure 3 shows the students' and the academic and technical/administrative employees' responses to the question about job satisfaction in the expert group's survey. It should be noted that some employees report high levels of job satisfaction even though they are critical of a number of conditions at the university. As mentioned above, there is a correlation between employees' job satisfaction and how management is practised at their unit, and with the extent to which they think that they work at a meaningful, coherent unit. The same positive correlation exists between students' satisfaction with their studies and the degree to which students view Aarhus University as a meaningful whole.

Figure 3: Job satisfaction and satisfaction with studies
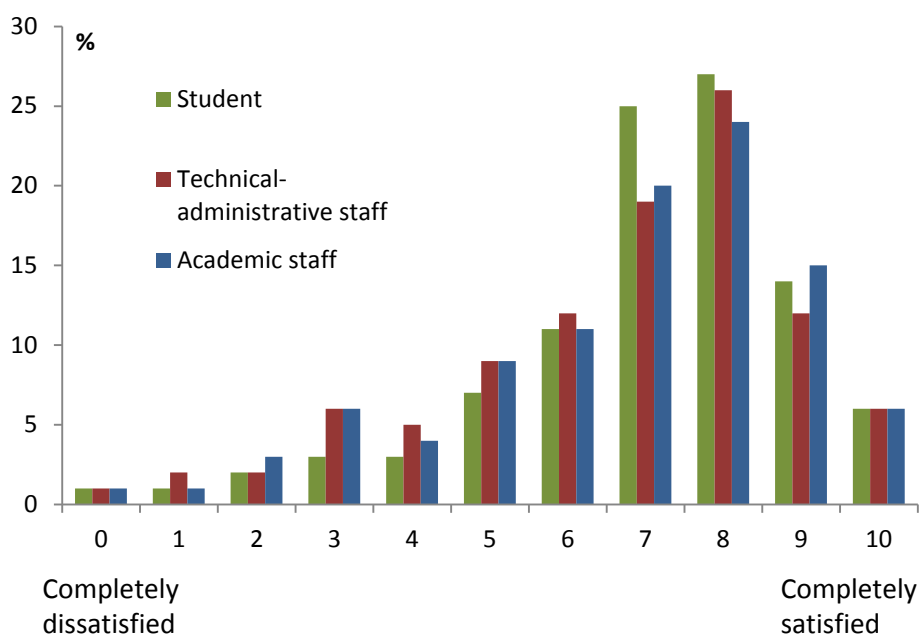
Note: Students were asked "How satisfied are to you to be studying at AU" and employees were asked "On the whole, how satisfied are you with your current job". The answer categories can be seen in the figure.
Source: The background reports on the employee and student surveys.

Research has shown that it can be very motivating for employees with a high degree of inner motivation to be able to make a genuine difference. This can be about making a contribution to society through their job and about contributing to the individual students' academic development. The correlation is stronger for employees who have contact with those who benefit from their work. This is related to accessibility, and has been emphasised in many interviews and survey responses in the expert group's survey at Aarhus University. Most notably, the survey of technical/administrative staff reveals a strong positive correlation between experiencing one's unit as responsive to user needs and the individual's job satisfaction. There are also positive correlations between both of these conditions and the visibility of division managers in relation to day-to-day operations.

The concept of accessibility includes not only the purely practical significance of physical proximity (easy to find and contact people), but also participation in 'group production' with the responsibility and motivation this entails. As discussed in greater detail in chapter 5, there are indications that the current organisation has created a greater divide between academic and technical-administrative personnel. Students also emphasise the importance of accessibility as an important factor.

4.4 Geographical separation and activity portfolios
Quote box 5

> *It's as if communication is sent to Aarhus, but there is never any reply from Aarhus.*
>
> *Instead, Aarhus comes along and feels that it can teach us something even though we're way ahead in this area.*
>
> *We must constantly draw attention to ourselves, and we're often left out of the information flows.*
>
> *You feel isolated and marginalised. The prestige is associated mainly with Aarhus.*
>
> *The distance in kilometres often matters less than the cultural distance. The management has not always seen us as equals …*

Source: The quotes stem from comments made at interviews or comments made in connection with the questionnaire-based survey. The quotes have been anonymised.

The merger process has entailed a significant expansion of the university, both in terms of size and in relation to the breadth of its activity portfolio. At the same time, these activities take place at locations that are farther apart (The university consists of 18 campuses according to www.au.dk.). This geographical spread creates special problems in relation to the changes that have been implemented as a consequence of the academic development process.

The activities at many campuses differ from the traditional core activities at the Aarhus campus in a great variety of ways, as they range from classical university activities such as teaching and research to public sector consultancy and advisory services and outreach activities in close contact with industry and local communities.

The employees at the campuses located outside Aarhus call attention to major problems in fitting their portfolio of activities in the framework that has been established for the university. There is a general perception that the these areas' positions of strength have been insufficiently integrated into the development process. This is perceived as an indication that the value generated by incorporating these activities in Aarhus University either is not appreciated or is not appreciated as highly as the other activities at the university. However, it should be noted that both employees and students at several of these campuses have pointed out that there are positive aspects of being part of Aarhus University, as the 'university brand' is important in some contexts as a sign of independence and quality.

Large departments make it more difficult to establish a clear departmental academic profile. This is the case both in relation to representation: the people qualified to represent the department academically are not necessarily managers. This is also the case in relation to academic profile (in relation to conferences, public consultations, etc.), contact to grant-givers and clients, and in relation to recruitment of students. An attempt has been made to solve some of these problems through the establishment of the national centres, which have specialised functions related to cooperation and knowledge exchange with government agencies and institutions and industry. Despite this, the institutional structure still causes problems.

Any strategy to promote uniform standards will in the nature of things be adapted to conditions at the Aarhus campus. For this reason, such a strategy may not be most appropriate for institutions with a different

activity portfolio. As a visible symptom of the problem of establishing clear academic profiles, the survey responses point out the place assigned the campuses outside Aarhus C on the university home page and in other promotional materials. In the area of administration, the survey responses point out registration and financial management systems that are not adapted to the specific needs and functions of these campuses, just as there are problems with the flow of information from the central administration.

Geography is also significant. The standardisation and centralisation of the administration means that many administrative functions have been moved from satellite campuses and located at Aarhus Campus. This causes practical problems related to travel and participation in meetings. These problems are intensified by the failure to take geography into consideration when planning meetings (3-4 hours' travel time is out of proportion to a 1 or 2-hour-long meeting; video conferencing links is often not provided, etc.) and the fact that employees at peripheral campuses outside the Aarhus Campus often do not have the informal contacts that many Aarhus C employees draw on to solve problems of access to administrative support and information, cf. chapter 5. At the same time, it is interesting to note that employees at campuses outside Aarhus Campus state that geography is less significant than the lack of consideration for the particular conditions related to their activities.

There is a general tendency towards a higher degree of competitive research funding and a reduction in basic funding. While this problem affects the entire university, it is particularly acute for departments that perform a lot of public sector consultancy, as their research is financed by contracts with government agencies and institutions. To perform research-based public sector consultancy, it is important to have a broad knowledge base that is kept up-to-date, even though there may not currently be a demand for the expertise in the field in question. This is financed within the framework of the contracts, not by the university's basic research funding, which is a grant from the government. The mandate for the expert group's work does not include the analysis of the question of financing. However, it should be noted that many respondents have expressed a great deal of frustration about this issue. In the expert group's view, a dialogue aimed at reaching an understanding regarding a model for research funding would be the natural next step.

There are also problems in relation to how positions are filled and career opportunities. [11]The job structure circular requires that academic qualifications be documented. This causes transitional problems for governmental research institutions, as different requirements applied previously. For example, this means that employees have either not had an opportunity to publish in scientific journals, or have not prioritised this. This makes integration into the new system difficult and creates a risk of 'stalled' career opportunities as well as problems in filling new positions.

4.5 Possible solutions

According to the expert group's assessment, the problems revolve around the centralisation of power and responsibility, the reasons behind the departmental structure, the approach to handling geographical and cultural diversity and the lack of consideration for the university's diversity. The problems are of very different character at different parts of the university, and for this reason, local solutions should be found in

---

[11] State Employer's Authority, *Cirkulære om stillingsstruktur for videnskabeligt personale ved universiteter (*Memorandum on Job Structure for Academic Staff at Universities), no. 055-07 of 13 June 2007.

many cases. The expert group's proposals are therefore closely linked with the proposal to decentralise power and authority to a larger degree discussed in chapter 5.

The expert group recommends that the attempt to address the problems described here should be based on the following principles:

- Identity and academic/professional affiliation must be anchored in units that are perceived coherent and meaningful, both internally and externally.

- Recognition of the fact that very different success criteria may exist at different units and main academic areas.

- Recognition of the fact that a strong AU identity and an strong locally anchored identity are not incompatible - but rather reinforce one another.

- Recognition of the fact that there can be many different parameters for the cohesion of units, for example disciplines, fields of inquiry, history and geography.

- Recognition of the fact that university employees have a very high degree of inner motivation, and that they want to feel that they share responsibility for performing tasks with employees from different staff groups and units for.

On the basis of these principles, the expert group proposes:

- That the structure of the departments that employees do not describe as meaningful units be reconsidered. This must take place through a close dialogue between the dean and the departments in question.

- That the university's diversity be respected through the establishment of flexible forms of institutional scope for action that take geographical and academic differences into account. All departments do not need to be identical and be managed in the same way.

- That a systematic effort to collect information regarding the nature of the challenges and opportunities faced by the individual units in relation to the performance of their core functions be made. The degree of difference makes it possible to experiment with different kinds of interfaces with employers of the university's graduates and businesses, for example.

- To ensure that the focus of internal communication is on bringing management and employees into close contact.

- Through dialogue, to ensure that direct management and leadership are perceived by employees as supportive of the university's core activities.

5. Administrative support

One of the main objectives of the academic development process was to create a more professional, uniform and cost-effective administration. The centralisation of administrative functions and a standardisation of administrative processes have been important means to this end. There has also been an increased focus on pan-university and interdisciplinary activities (the inner market for education, interdisciplinarity, internationalisation, branding, communication etc.). The organisation and financing of the administration are described in brief in chapter 2.

A variety of problems are associated with the changes in the area of administration. The psychological WPA from February 2013 showed a marked increase in stress levels in the administration as well as academic staff members expressing criticism of the administrative support. Parts of the WPA action plan from March 2014 describe a number of problem areas and initiatives which, going forward, aim to ensure better administrative support, while at the same time improving the well-being among technical/administrative staff members.

The expert group's survey and interviews confirm these problem areas, see the background reports. Although academic staff members are generally more critical of the administration than technical/administrative staff members, the latter group does point to a range of problems as well. Through its work, the expert group has gained the clear impression that there is great dedication and commitment among all staff groups, not least the technical/administrative staff members. There is a great sense of professional pride and a clear wish to be able to develop strong solutions and facilitate progress. A number of factors indicate structural and systemic sources to the problems in the administrative area. The point of departure for the subsequent discussion and analysis is that the players act on the basis of the framework and incentives they are facing. The technical/administrative staff members have not suddenly become less qualified or less service-minded, neither have the academic staff members become more demanding. The organisational framework creates a number of problems in respect of the administrative service offered to the university. As concerns administrative services, personal circumstances also play a role, but this evaluation focuses on identifying systemic factors in relation to the new organisational framework.

First, it is important to stress that the administrative area covers a broad range of activities. An important distinction is made between a) the provision of services for the university's core academic activities, such as education, public sector consultancy and research, and b) cross-organisational needs and initiatives as well as general administrative support of the university. The academic development process has set targets for both types of administrative activities in the form of greater professionalisation, uniformity in the core administration and increased focus on strategic focus areas.

The nature of the administration ranges from highly person-related activities to purely technical activities. There are thus considerable differences in the nature of the activities in the administrative area. For this reason, the administration cannot be lumped together, which is also evident in the interviews and the questionnaire-based surveys, see the background reports.

In connection with the expert group's work, various staff groups have come up with examples of specific areas in which the administrative practice creates problems, and many proposals for improvements and adaptations have been made. The surveys also indicate the areas which academic staff members,

technical/administrative staff members and students find are in need of an individual overhaul. It has been possible to comment on this, and (subject to permission by respondents) the comments are gathered in anonymised form in an appendix to the questionnaire-based surveys. The most important and most common main points are summarised in appendix IV. Reference is made to this appendix for the more specific proposals. For the specific administrative areas, the survey therefore in effect comprises a user survey with user feedback, which should be assessed within the individual areas. It would be natural for the management within the individual areas to take a closer look at these observations and comments. This chapter aims to identify the structural causes of the problems in the administrative area in order to define a scope of possible action for the senior management team.

The following is based on the main aspects related to changes in the administrative area, namely professionalisation and administrative quality, standardised solutions and centralisation of the administration as well as separation of payment and allocation of resources to the administrative area. The chapter ends with a discussion of possible actions in relation to the problems identified.
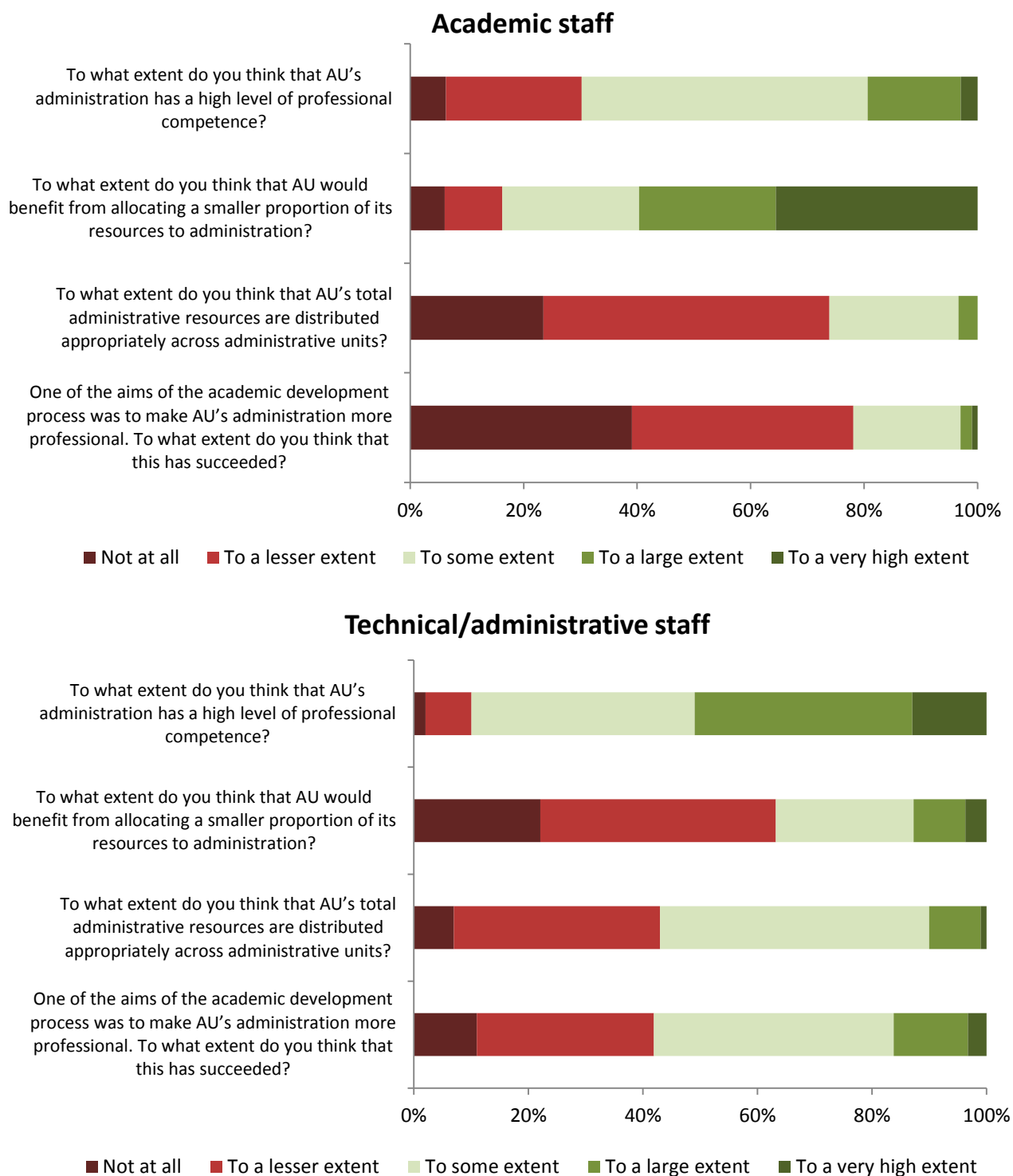
5.1. Assessments of the administrative area – questionnaire-based surveys and interviews

The survey contains a number of questions associated with the administrative area. These questions clarify how different staff groups assess and experience the administrative conditions. The responses therefore reflect the subjective assessments of the conditions. An assessment as such of work routines and processes within specific administrative areas falls outside the scope of the expert group's terms of reference.

As might be expected, perceptions of the administrative conditions vary across staff groups, see figure 4. Generally, academic staff members have a less positive view of whether the professional expertise of the administrative area has been boosted, and only few respond that the resources are distributed appropriately. Similarly, a larger share of the academic staff members than of the technical/administrative staff members are of the opinion that fewer resources should be allocated to the administrative area, and that the resources are distributed inappropriately within the administrative area. Most of the technical/administrative staff members find that the administration has a high level of professional competence, while the academic staff members are more divided, with almost equal shares finding the professional competence level high and problematic, respectively, see figure 4 below.

It is particularly noteworthy that, among both academic and technical/administrative staff members, a larger share of the respondents feel that physical proximity to the performance of the administrative activities is more important than whether technical/administrative staff members have the same manager as academic staff members. There is a considerable focus, especially among academic staff members, on the significance of proximity and whom to contact for specific administrative tasks. There is widespread agreement that the performance of administrative tasks often falls between two stools, and that the workflows are too slow.

As concerns the provision of services for the university's core academic activities, the typical view among academic staff members is that "it simply has to work" and "anything that works well goes unnoticed". If the provision of services for the university's core academic activities is not working properly, does not meet the needs, takes time and is laborious, the core activities education, research and public sector consultancy suffer. In relation to the administrative part of the university, there may also be potential in increasing user responsiveness, as there is a positive correlation between this factor and the technical/administrative staff members' job satisfaction.

Figure 4: Results from questionnaire-based staff survey of administrative conditions

Academic staff

	Not at all	To a lesser extent	To some extent	To a large extent	To a very high extent

Technical/administrative staff

	Not at all	To a lesser extent	To some extent	To a large extent	To a very high extent

Note: Technical/administrative staff members are exclusive of staff employed at the departments.
Source: Background report concerning questionnaire-based staff survey.

Only 11% of the academic staff members totally agree or agree with the statement that "there are clearly articulated standards for what kind of administrative support I can expect to receive from the parts of AU's administration that are not part of my department", while 62% totally disagree or disagree. The academic staff members are more divided on whether they receive the support they need and whether the administration is friendly and helpful. As might be expected, technical/administrative staff members generally have a more positive perception of the administrative service offered.

In interviews with both department heads and technical/administrative staff members, many expressed a wish for more proximity and for a single point of contact in relation to the administrative service offered. The distinction between front-office and back-office functions is not clear to the majority of the staff members at department level. This is not a functional necessity either. On the other hand, you need knowledge about who can perform specific tasks, and at present this knowledge is not readily available at Aarhus University. Although adjustments have been introduced following the original implementation of the new principles for the administration via, among other things, partnership models and 'deployment' of technical/administrative staff members, this is deemed not to have been done systematically or in a way that satisfactorily solves the problems.

Technical/administrative staff members are divided about the extent to which it is easy to involve other administrative areas in the performance of a specific task. Many find the workflows too slow and that the performance of tasks falls between two stools. A small majority of the technical/administrative staff members find that the administrative procedures and structures are tailored to user needs, and they believe they have a good understanding of the needs. A small majority of the technical/administrative staff members do not find that user needs are underprioritised, and find that tasks are performed quickly. However, the technical/administrative staff members also think that it is important to know whom to contact with problems in other administrative areas, and that having a single point of contact is important.

A slight majority of the students have a positive perception of the course-centred administration and a very positive perception of the library services. Proximity and a single point of contact are important factors to the students, but competence is assessed as being more important than physical proximity. The students are relatively positive in their assessment of the responsiveness of the administrative system. In general, there is satisfaction with the department-centred administrative support, but uncertainty as to the standards that can be expected. The assessments of the administrative support in other areas vary more than for the course-centred administration, and there is uncertainty as to where to enquire/whom to contact.

In interviews, many have expressed the view that the administration has been professionalised in a number of areas in the form of greater professional expertise, and that a more uniform administration has been created (which means that rules and policies are administered more justly). On the other hand, a simpler and more cost-effective administration has not necessarily been achieved. A large number of problems are pointed out in relation to quality and flexibility and in relation to the standardisation/single unified administration having gone too far. Generally, the question is raised whether the administration has reached a size beyond what is reasonable. At department level, there is a widespread feeling that 'nice to have' has been given a higher priority, while 'need to have' maintains the status quo, at best, or has been downgraded.

Quote box 6

> **Academic staff members:**
>
> *Relations deteriorate when staff move away from the department. The personal relations evaporate.*
>
> *The administration climbed through a hole in the ceiling and pulled up the ladder.*
>
> *The administration often forgets to take academic staff members' and students' views into consideration and runs its own show.*
>
> *The loyalty among technical/administrative staff members lies in the administrative hierarchy. Administrative 'pillars' have been established.*
>
> *The administrative system protects itself – it's not possible to reply to emails, and you don't know when you'll get an answer.*
>
> *Black box – what exactly is happening?*

Source: The quotes stem from comments made at interviews or comments made in connection with the questionnaire-based survey. The quotes have been anononymised.

A certain tendency towards a 'them and us' division between academic staff members and technical/administrative staff members is sensed. In the view of the academic staff members, the administration is self-protecting and insular and fails to perform its service tasks, while technical/administrative staff members perceive academic staff members as 'conservative' and without any understanding of the new framework, conditions and priorities in the administrative area. There also seems to be a communication problem, with many academic staff members not being aware of the reasons for the administrative changes (including those dictated by external requirements), see chapter 3. Few academic staff members see any value being created by strategic considerations and the establishment of common functions in the strategic area, while technical/administrative staff members feel that the need for and the value of the efforts are not appreciated.

Quote box 7

> **Technical/administrative staff members:**
>
> *We bow our heads as administrative staff members. The administration has a bad reputation in the academic environments.*
>
> *Before, we shared successes with the academic staff members. That's a loss of job satisfaction.*
>
> *Back-office functions are misunderstood in the organisation.*
>
> *The elitist spirit at Aarhus University (the authoritative culture) is the problem in relation to the tone used between academic and technical/administrative staff members.*
>
> *Lack of respect for the administrative expertise is a problem – there's no interaction between the academic environments and the administration.*
>
> *There's a lack of mutual recognition between academic staff members and technical/administrative staff members at Aarhus University. But we all want the same for this university. As a technical/administrative staff member, it's aggravating that you're made to feel sorry that you're a member of the technical/administrative staff.*
>
> *Separating the administration from the department creates two worlds with each their own logic and without knowledge about each other.*

Source: The quotes stem from comments made at interviews or comments made in connection with the questionnaire-based survey. The quotes have been anononymised.

5.2. Professionalisation and quality

Exploiting large-scale effects via specialisation could be used as a means to professionalise the administration. Specialisation requires a certain degree of centralisation to attain critical mass. It is certainly true that there is a need for highly specialised knowledge in some areas, which speaks in favour of handling these activities centrally. The individual department will typically not have a sufficient and constant need for more specialised functions, and building such expertise at department level would therefore be more costly, while the quality would be lower. The larger size of the departments, however, makes it easier to attain a critical mass of activities and thus maintain the more specialised functions.

However, administrative quality is not just about specialised knowledge. Other important dimensions of administrative quality include local knowledge, quick response times, coherence, understanding, responsibility and initiative. These factors should, of course, be seen in relation to the professional quality of the specific administrative tasks performed.

The survey shows that many of both the academic and technical/administrative staff members find that it is unclear whom to contact, and that the administrative tasks often fall between two stools. Several respondents point out that the division of the administrative organisation into pillars (the administrative divisions) constitutes a barrier to solving problems across administrative areas. There is also a widespread perception that the administration 'protects itself' by not clearly indicating points of contact. It is, for

example, difficult to find information via the website, which is often out of date, and cases are returned without any information on where to enquire instead.

Input from both academic and technical/administrative staff members also emphasises that a single point of contact plays an important role in respect of administrative quality. Such a principle would make it easier for academic staff members to find points of entry to the administrative system, and this would strengthen the overall case handling process.

This is closely linked to the issues of responsibility and initiative. Prior to the organisational changes, the department-centred administration was essentially an integral part of the departments' activities. This ensured a single point of entry for academic staff members as well as personal relations between different staff groups, which helped create a shared sense of responsibility for the performance of tasks. It also created a common identity around the individual departments or specific degree programmes, which also has a significant bearing on initiative and responsibility. By removing the 'department-centred' administration, these ties were cut, and this affects the overall quality of the administrative service offered. In interviews, this has been expressed as "service offered from a distance can create a feeling of control and no sense of ownership". The changes implemented in the administrative area have been very narrowly linked with an understanding of administrative quality as being constituted by specific competences, and to a lesser extent other aspects of the administrative quality concept.

Quote box 8

I have to draw on the old boys' network to get the task done.

With the help of former colleagues, we find a solution.

We use informal channels to navigate the system.

Source: The quotes stem from comments made at interviews or comments made in connection with the questionnaire-based survey. The quotes have been anononymised.

The necessary information flows to the local level (e.g. finances and project management) are deemed by many to be particularly unsatisfactory, and this has created a need for local 'shadow activities', see below. Many statements corroborate the structural problems in these areas. Asymmetric information flows are also mentioned, where requirements 'from above' must be satisfied quickly, but where the impression is that enquiries 'from lower down' are not given the same attention. It is also frequently mentioned that you have to circumvent the system to find solutions, and this is often done by using informal channels (former colleagues). The value of such contacts decreases over time, and they are not available to new staff. A similar dilemma can be identified in relation to the rotation of technical/administrative staff members for various types of tasks. Such rotation benefits the professional development of the staff members in question, but results in a continuous dissolution of local circles of contact and information channels to the users.

Quote box 9

> *We solve the problem by going under the radar.*
>
> *We have to use parallel local systems to make it work.*
>
> *We're building up a shadow administration.*
>
> *We keep our own tallies.*

Source: The quotes stem from comments made at interviews or comments made in connection with the questionnaire-based survey. The quotes have been anononymised.

For academic staff members, the perceived quality of the administrative support also depends on the extent to which the performance of a task is up to the individual staff member, for example via self-service solutions, or is handled by technical/administrative staff members. The decisive criterion for academic staff members is the issue of time use. A new administrative practice which means that it takes longer for academic staff members to locate the relevant technical/administrative staff member or which means that they end up performing the task themselves is perceived as a reduction in quality. Whether having academic staff members spend more time on performing administrative tasks is expedient, depends on a more general prioritisation of the resource consumption, see below.

Attempts have subsequently been made to address some of the above-mentioned problems associated with proximity to the administrative processing by ensuring that the front-office staff spend time (e.g. one day a week) at the departments and by establishing partnership models etc. It has also turned out that the department secretariats play a significantly greater role than intended in the organisational structure established as part of the academic development process. This solves some of the above problems, but it might be argued that it complicates an already complex structure. The expert group is of the opinion that one should be cautious about jumping to the conclusion that these kinds of stop-gap solutions are sufficient.

5.3. Uniformity

In the administrative areas, a significant number of standardised processes and solutions have been chosen based on the vision that 90% of the tasks can be performed according to standard procedures, while 10% must be performed on the basis of academically dictated variations (one size fits all), see chapter 2.

However, the report behind the academic development process provides no justification for the vision that 90% of administrative tasks can be performed according to standard procedures, or why this standardisation requires the centralisation of the administration. Centralisation is not a precondition for uniformity in administrative procedures and structures; it can also be achieved by requiring that local units perform their administrative tasks in a uniform way. There are a number of legal, administrative and supervisory conditions that require uniform procedures and structures across the entire university. But here again, this requirement can be met by defining standards and requirements for local solutions.

Economies of scale could warrant centralised solutions. In the academic development process, there is no explicit recommendation as to which administrative activities and functions should be centralised or handled by local units, respectively, for reasons of necessity or expediency. This is particularly noteworthy, as the larger size of the departments in itself creates more opportunities for economies of scale. The requirement

for uniformity has been implemented in a very drastic form, with limited scope for taking academically motivated differences into account. The argumentation seems to be that the administration must be centralised unless special circumstances call for local solutions. A number of fundamental arguments point towards the opposite principle, see section 5.4.

There are very considerable differences across the departments. Some of the differences are historical, while others are academic. The merger process has caused the differences within the university to increase. Two important dimensions are classical university activities and public sector consultancy, but there are also considerable differences across disciplines and degree programmes. There is also the geographical aspect. The expert group does not find that there are grounds for a general 90/10 norm for the organisation of the university's administrative functions. The organisation's needs vary considerably across the administrative functions and the underlying core activities they support.

A uniform solution will, of course, be better suited for some parts of the university than for others, and the degree of satisfaction with the tasks performed will therefore vary. This problem will be especially pronounced for units whose functions differ from the common activities at the university, see below. Interviews of department heads have identified satisfaction with some parts of the administrative solutions and dissatisfaction with other parts, see the background report. It is noteworthy, however, that the department heads do not emphasise the same conditions as being positive and negative, see table 2. This reflects the fact that standard procedures cannot satisfy everyone, and that different models have been selected in the main academic areas (for example in relation to financial management, see chapter 2).

Table 2: Department heads' assessment of the various administrative areas broken down by main academic area

	Science and Technology	Health	School of Business and Social Sciences	Faculty of Arts
	13 department heads	5 department heads	7 department heads	3 department heads
Model in general	+++ ÷÷÷÷÷÷	+ ÷	÷÷÷÷	÷÷
IT	+ ÷÷÷÷÷÷		÷÷÷÷	
Finance	+ ÷÷÷÷÷÷	+ ÷÷	++++++ ÷	++
HR	++++ ÷÷÷÷÷	+++	+++++ ÷÷	++
Communication	+ ÷	+	÷÷	
Studies Administration	++ ÷	÷	÷÷÷	+
Knowledge Exchange	÷		÷	
Research and Talent	÷			
PhD				+÷

'+' indicates that comments on the area are positive, while '-' indicates that comments on the area are negative. Empty cells and fewer pluses (+) or minuses (-) than the number of department heads indicate that the department heads within the relevant main academic area have not commented on the subject in question during the interview.
Source: Background report concerning interviews with department heads

Uniformity in the performance of tasks not only eliminates the possibility of differentiation, but also reduces the sense of ownership and responsibility in relation to the task performance. Uniform solutions can be an intentional or unintentional management signal denoting that 'deviating' activities are undesirable. The expert group notes that a lack of consideration for the special conditions surrounding, for example, public sector consultancy is perceived as a signal that a lower priority is given to such activities by the senior management team.

The uniformity is also linked to the branding policy according to which only the university is mentioned at the expense of departments and units. This is a priority in the academic development process. For the individual department, this results in less visibility and a decline in the academic identity. The branding policy does not seem to take the need for profiling sufficiently into account, and this affects the sense of ownership and thus responsibility and motivation. Uniformity which seems unwarranted, incomprehensible or dysfunctional has a negative effect on motivation and causes civil disobedience, for example when it comes to the use of the Peto alphabet in slide templates. Staff are unhappy with the fact that they cannot state their departmental affiliations. This is due to the fact that the decisions made centrally are not sufficiently justified and are not perceived as promoting the core activities.

Cutbacks are necessary, but do not in themselves dictate uniform solutions. If differentiation is desirable in relation to the university's portfolio of activities, differentiated administrative solutions may be warranted, despite the fact that this may result in an increase in total administrative costs. Uniform solutions do not guarantee cost minimisation if fundamental differences exist which must subsequently be compensated for, for example through shadow administration or increased local time use (see below).

It should be noted that there is no general documentation showing that the changes in the administrative area have contributed to cost savings (for a given quality). There is dissatisfaction with the services provided in a number of areas, and the establishment of local 'shadow activities' is a strong indication of an unsatisfactory structure and of the administrative resources not being optimised.

5.4. Centralisation

There is probably no perfect organisational structure or perfect organisation of the administrative system. There are strengths and weaknesses in different organisational and administrative systems, and identifying these in light of the changes implemented in the organisational/administrative area is one of the main objectives of the evaluation.

A main issue in this evaluation are the advantages and disadvantages of (de)centralisation. This is a general issue in relation to the organisation of companies and institutions, including in the public sector. The type of organisation determines the factors which must be taken into account and given (higher) priority.

Simply put, the strengths of centralisation are the weaknesses of decentralisation – and vice versa. The strength of centralisation is that it ensures uniformity, which in itself may be an objective. This may also have an impact on equal treatment, legal rights and impartiality. A centralised structure heightens controllability and decision-making power for the organisation as a whole. Centralisation thus enables an overall prioritisation and allocation of resources based on the overall objectives of the organisation, including adjustments in relation to the general framework conditions for the university's activities. Centralisation is also appropriate in cases where activities have so-called external effects, i.e. where decisions made by a unit

is of relevance to other units (underprioritisation of common tasks, undesirable internal competition for students etc.). In such a situation, everyone's interests are best served through centralisation or coordination of task performance. Centralisation of task performance may also offer benefits in the form of economies of scale, but may, on the other hand, also result in diseconomies of scale due to the complexity of the organisational structure resulting in high information and administration costs. A decentralised structure offers greater local freedom of action and thus the possibility of adapting to local needs and conditions, as well as faster accommodation of new conditions which are first observed at a local level. A decentralised structure requires less information exchange and less coordination in connection with the decentralised task performance, but entails a risk, on the other hand, that uncoordinated activities conflict with the organisation's overall objectives and interests. A decentralised structure ensures a closer link between input and results and thus a clearer incentive structure for the individual players. Local decision-making power results in greater co-determination and thus a stronger sense of ownership, which can be conducive to motivation and a sense of responsibility.

Numerous hybrids between the pure versions of centralisation and decentralisation can be imagined. In a decentralised structure, uniformity of task performance can, for example, be ensured if the central level specifies requirements for the task performance (as we know it from, for example, local authorities and private franchise enterprises). Similarly, a central organisation does not necessarily imply standardised solutions, as a choice between different solutions may be offered with regard to both scope and quality.

The balancing of advantages and disadvantages of (de)centralisation must thus be carefully considered, depending on the specific activity or task. The balancing of various considerations and objectives can thus result in centralisation being desirable in some areas, while decentralisation may be desirable in other areas.

These issues are closely related to administrative quality and uniformity in the task performance, but there is no one-to-one correlation. As mentioned above, a need for uniform solutions is not in itself an argument in favour of centralisation of administrative functions.

There is a good argument for centralisation in areas with a potential for significant economies of scale. Several cross-organisational activities and staff functions are therefore obvious centralised activities. On the other hand, the centralisation of a number of activities more closely associated with the core activities education, research and public sector consultancy is less obvious. Centralised solutions reduce flexibility and the possibility of adapting to user needs. As mentioned above, centralisation gives rise to a need for information and knowledge about what is happening at the decentralised level. A lack of information can hamper adaptability, reduce the quality of service and increase costs. Many statements have pinpointed these problems and thus imply that the administrative centralisation has gone too far.

The analysis also shows that a vacuum has been created in the administrative service in many areas. In the original organisational structure, the department secretariat was not meant to play a very significant role. However, it has turned out that there is a considerable need for this particular function in the communication and coordination of the administrative support for core activities. The same applies in relation to the physical location of employees in front-office functions and partnership models, see below. These problems have also resulted in different local solutions that reflect substantial local differences as well as implying greater differences across the university.

From an organisational point of view, the structure of the administrative activities has become extremely complex, see figure 5. The structure has resulted in a blurred decision-making structure and a lack of responsiveness. This can be illustrated by looking at a typical situation where contact is made between a technical/administrative staff member and a department staff member with a view to handling a specific task/case. The department staff member reports to the department head, who reports to the dean, who is also part of the senior management team. The technical/administrative staff member in the front-office function reports to a division manager, who reports to a deputy director, who reports to the university director, who is part of the senior management team. The administration centre manager, who formally reports to the university director, is responsible for coordination in the administrative centres in the main academic areas and also plays a key role as a link between the local and central technical/administrative staff members. The chain of command is vertical and therefore converges at top management level only.

Figure 5: Stylised organisational structure – administration
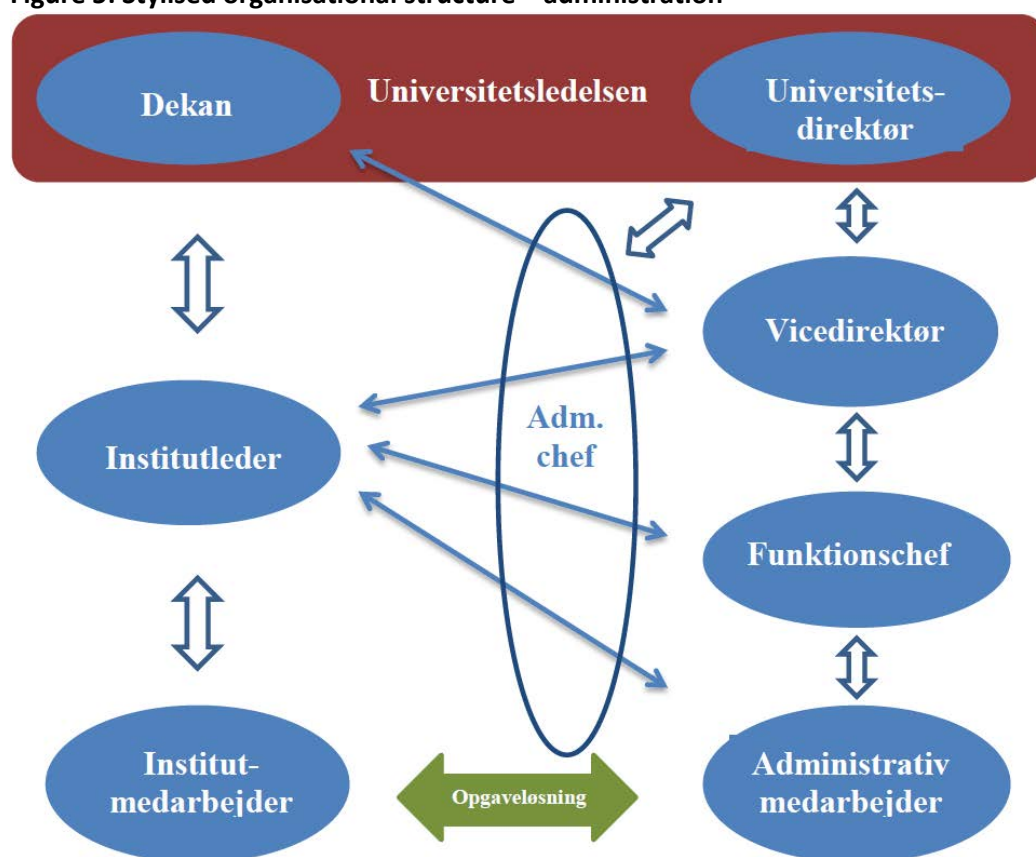
Note: The formal chain of command is indicated by ⟺ and possible points of contact are indicated by ↔

Contact between the various players is possible at several levels, and these points of contact have been strengthened via partnership models etc. It is crucial, however, that all questions concerning resource allocation and thus funding have to go all the way up through the respective chains of command.

The centralised administrative structure leads to slow and heavy processes, a lack of transparency and problems with coordination.

From when a problem is observed at the local level and until a solution is found, it will have been considered at many intermediary levels, which makes for a long decision-making process. The case handling process is thus very heavy. This leads to a risk of a lack of adaptability and flexibility. There is also a risk that the staff performing the work perceive the top of the hierarchy as being out of step with reality, while the top feels that the local level is unresponsive. The model reduces the scope for balancing needs and services (scope, quality). The problems are exacerbated when it comes to cross-organisational tasks, which require the involvement of several administrative divisions. Lack of flexibility and increased coordination problems are accentuated by the wish/demand for uniform solutions at central level. Many interests must be combined into one decision at the top level.

The system results in a very heavy process, and even simple tasks involve many employees. This is illustrated by ridiculous examples, for instance when a member of the IT staff in Herning or Emdrup is not allowed to solve an acute problem in a lecture theatre until the IT department in Aarhus has registered the case and delegated the job. Or when the booking of rooms for changed teaching hours involves four or five employees (lecturer, department secretary, front-office employee, employee responsible for the relevant task) and a corresponding email flow. In many cases, the staff solve these types of problems by bypassing the system. Of course, this demonstrates considerable local flexibility, but also highlights structural problems which mean that solutions are not found thanks to the systems, but in spite of the systems!

Tasks involving administrative services from more than one administrative pillar have to go up through several pillars, which exacerbates the above-mentioned coordination and adaptation problems. The centralised structure means that many players can be involved in handling a single case. The division of the organisation into pillars also creates coordination problems in relation to points of contact (a case involving several administrative areas) and in relation to the case handling itself (when handling individual case elements without considering the whole picture or 'package').

The structure is complicated, which makes it difficult for the individual employee to navigate the system. This is true not only of department employees and department heads/department secretaries, but also of technical/administrative staff members (including front office). The division of the administrative organisation into pillars and the division between front office and back office lacks transparency. Who does what, and in what situations? This is a transparency problem in more than one sense, namely in relation to the handling of certain administrative tasks as well as in relation to the understanding of the entire system and thereby the confidence in the system.

The question of accessibility is linked to the lack of transparency. There is widespread agreement that the administration has a problem with accessibility (it is difficult to find people on the university's website, mails are not replied to, no-reply mails etc.).

The organisational structure can also place technical/administrative staff members in a difficult situation. On the one hand, they are met with requirements and needs from department staff members, and, on the other hand, they must follow the standards and procedures laid down by the administrative managers. The possible conflicts, caused by the lack of alignment between the two 'tracks' in the organisation, are first thrust upon the technical/administrative staff members. Several have indicated to the expert group that they often find themselves in a conflict of loyalty. Should they listen to the department staff, or should they comply with the requirements laid down in the administrative system?

From an organisational perspective, a structure has been created with a very strong propensity for the status quo. Once an administrative practice/solution has been established, it has a built-in inertia. It is very difficult to propose any change that will survive this decision-making structure. At the same time, the organisational structure makes it difficult to integrate solutions that involve multiple elements from different administrative divisions.

The administration's managerial separateness from the university's core academic activities also creates the risk of an insular administration that fails to register needs and signals 'from the shop floor'. At departmental level, there is a widespread perception that the administration is overly focused on needs and signals from its own upper management. This is not surprising, considering that the organisational structure and the funding model for administrative services encourage precisely this situation. Conversely, the administration may perceive the situation as a cross pressure.

One of the goals of the reorganisations that have taken place as a consequence of the academic development process has been to produce a less complex managerial structure. This was achieved by merging former faculties and schools into four main academic areas and by reducing the number of departments. But at the same time, a more complex structure has been developed for the university's administrative functions, with several (semi-)autonomous units that report to the senior management team, not the departments.

5.5. Separation of payment and services provided

Put simply, the relation between administration and user is as follows: The user needs a given administrative service, and the administration makes administrative solutions available. The interaction between the two parties takes place without direct financial consequence (payment). Payment takes place indirectly via the department's payment for administrative solutions (special tasks are 'ordered' from the back-office function and are paid for separately). This amount is fixed based on the department's budget contribution to the administration. Payment for and the formulation of requirements for the scope and quality of the administrative solution are thus separated. This creates a number of problems:

(i) The individual user/department may have exaggerated expectations for the service level. The user does not see a price/cost for the specific administrative function, and expectations with regard to the level of service (quantity/quality) may therefore be too high. The type of service (scope and clarity) to be delivered is not clear. There is a latent risk that individual users systematically regard the administrative solutions as lacking.

(ii) The administration has no direct incentive to meet user requirements (scope and quality). The user has nowhere else to go! This places a special obligation on the administrative staff member who must assess the scope and quality of the task to be performed in relation to the user's needs. Scope and quality requirements are laid down by the administrative management, as described above, and are included (implicitly) as a parameter in the overall resource allocation, but no explicit quality requirements are specified in the agreements.

(iii) The administrative system looks only at its own direct costs, and costs may therefore be passed on to other parties. Solutions that require greater efforts on the user's part may in some cases lead to cost savings for the university as a whole, while in other cases, such solutions primarily involve a changed cost allocation

between user and administration or an increase in total costs despite lower registered administrative costs. The latter is the case if, for example, academic staff are required to spend more time doing registrations or navigating through the administrative system (many IT solutions have no defaults; who can you contact if there are problems?; travel expense reports are rejected without explanation, without contact information and with a message that this is a no-reply mail). This saves time in the administration, but it is not necessarily cost-effective from an overall perspective.

The tension between the funding and the services provided is clearly expressed in our interviews with the department heads. Generally, the administration contribution is perceived as a tax levied on the departments rather than a user's fee. This shows that the departments see a mismatch between what they pay and the level of administrative service they receive, and the explanation for this may be found in all three conditions discussed above. In addition, questions have been raised regarding the principles governing the payment for so-called back-office services.

The problems outlined above are connected with both the organisational structure and the division of budget responsibility and managerial functions between the main academic areas and the administration. The most important problem is that, when the link between financing and the services delivered is cut, central mechanisms are lost in terms of ensuring a proper balance between user needs and willingness to pay on the one hand, and the administrative services delivered on the other hand. A less centralised structure would diminish these problems.

A pure market model with the departments ordering administrative services from the administrative units and paying according to usage will ensure an ongoing assessment of needs in relation to costs. In this way, an appropriate allocation of resources is ensured. However, this model has the disadvantage that Aarhus University's common activities and objectives will not to a sufficient extent be taken into account, and this could therefore lead to a more divided university.

The organisational problems in the model chosen are further aggravated by the fact that no explicit targets have been laid down for how the administrative units are to meet user needs and are to be measured on user satisfaction. The administrative staff members have incentives upwards in the system and not in relation to the departments' core activities.

In this context, it is curious that, in the implementation of the organisational changes, user surveys of the quality of administrative activities have been dropped. In the academic development process, it is mentioned that an annual Service Level Agreement (SLA) survey should be conducted for the administrative centres to investigate user satisfaction and to ensure ongoing user involvement. This has not been done as such a system was deemed to be heavy and time-consuming. Instead, implicit focus is on information via the chain of command. The long lines of communication mean that the chain of command does not function as an appropriate information channel. As mentioned above, there are many indications of problems created by the lack of systematic monitoring of user satisfaction. The crucial point is that there are no systematic mechanisms in place for assessing the administrative activities, the ways in which they support activities at the university and the resources spent, see below.

As part of the academic development process, a higher priority is given to cross-organisational activities (branding, communication etc.). Based on the expert group's work, it is evident that this is not clearly

communicated to the employees, and that staff and department heads also question the higher priority given to these activities. From a departmental/decentralised perspective, it can be difficult to see the value of these activities, and the impression is therefore that a lot of this is not important (nice to have). There is also a risk of such activities growing as they are not linked to locally formulated needs and wishes, see below. Conversely, there is also the possibility that the value of such activities is underestimated at local level, see below. This emphasises the need for clear objectives and follow-up mechanisms in this area.

5.6. Allocation of resources to the administrative area

The allocation of resources to the administrative area depends partly on the scope and composition of the core activities and partly on service level and strategic focus area priorities. Large parts of the administration are involved in core activities and are therefore activity-driven and thus to a certain extent proportionate to the activity level. The most important priorities that must be determined for such activities concern the service quality level, including the division of work between the academic and technical/administrative staff members. Significant parts of the general administrative support of the university are also linked to the level of activity, but to a lesser extent proportionate to this as they include emergency response and cross-organisational staff activities. For these areas, priorities must also be determined for scope and quality. Finally, resource requirements are associated with more cross-organisational initiatives, development etc.

The many decision levels and the coordination problems between them make it difficult to prioritise the administrative efforts. Having no systematic knowledge of the users' perception of the administrative functions, it is difficult to assess the costs in relation to the results of the administrative efforts. This applies to both the level and composition of the resources spent. It is difficult for the central level to assess the extent to which the income-generating units receive adequate administrative support for their income-generating activities. In the long term, an imbalance could undermine Aarhus University's earnings potential.

According to the expert group's assessment, the current system for the allocation of resources to administrative services (front offices) between deans and the deputy directors does not allow for a sufficiently transparent distribution of resources. Under the current system, each dean must carry out separate negotiations with eight deputy directors, which leads to coordination problems. Another issue is the consistency between the agreements made and the decisions made by the senior management team regarding the administration's activities. In addition, the system has an unclear and inappropriate managerial structure. The individual dean makes service agreements with the individual administrative divisions. But at the same time, the deans are part of the senior management team, and as such are also the superiors of the deputy directors (who report to the university director, who is also part of the senior management team). Both deans and deputy directors have expressed dissatisfaction with this negotiation model. It is fragmented, and it does not allow for a precise prioritisation of how and where resources are to be allocated. One problem seems to be a failure to clarify at management level which solutions must be standardised and which solutions may take differences into account. The negotiations are also complicated by both deans and deputy directors receiving information and input from the department heads. The problems are exacerbated by the separation of management responsibility and funding.

There is also insufficient information available to enable a prioritisation of how resources are to be allocated for pan-university administrative activities (back-office functions). Prioritising such activities is a task for management, but the allocation of resources should be based on clearly defined objectives. It is difficult to assess how efficient the university's back-office functions are, and thus to determine the appropriate scope

of these activities. The costs related to back-office activities are borne by Aarhus University as a whole, which leads to an asymmetry. From the perspective of upper management, back-office activities can appear to be relatively inexpensive, because the costs are borne by numerous units. But at the local level, they appear relatively more expensive, because at this level, costs are borne without the results of these efforts being directly visible. There is a risk that the primary stakeholders in back-office functions – the employees themselves – will have a relatively strong influence on the allocation of resources, because they are positioned close to the central decision-making process.

The expert group's analysis shows that the back-office functions have major problems with communication and legitimacy. At the local level, there is a great deal of uncertainty and scepticism regarding the value these activities create for Aarhus University. By the same token, technical-administrative employees find that the rest of the university lacks insight into and understanding of the importance of these activities, especially in relation to the general strategic initiatives that have been launched in the wake of the academic development process.

There is a lack of transparency surrounding the resources spent on the administration and how they are allocated to different activities (front office, back office, projects, joint finances). The university's annual report does not provide a breakdown of expenses that reflects the administration's organisational structure. This can give rise to the creation of myths. But it also raises questions about the basis on which decisions regarding the allocation of resources to administrative functions is made. If it is not possible to provide a clear account of the resources that have been spent, questions can be raised about the extent to which this reflects the result of a clear decision-making process, and whether the resources that have been spent have been considered in relation to the results of the activities in question (optimisation of resource allocation).

5.7 Possible solutions

The preceding discussion indicates that there is need to create room for more flexible solutions and adjustments of administrative solutions in order to support the university's core activities more effectively. At the same time, there is a need to ensure greater transparency regarding how resources are allocated in order to evaluate this in relation to how different administrative functions support the university's activities, and hereby to decide what resources should be allocated to these areas. A number of legitimate and partially contradictory considerations must be balanced in relation to one another, and no absolutely perfect system exists.

The extent of the problems highlights that the current system does not balance these consideration in an appropriate way. For this reason, changes are necessary.

Flexible administrative solutions: Our analyses show that the current degree of standardisation in administrative solutions leads to a range of problems. There is an absence of a clear policy to determine where and to what extent standardised solutions are necessary. The various administrative divisions are very different, and it is not meaningful to have a vision that 90% of all administrative tasks can be performed satisfactorily with standardised solutions. The appropriate extent of standardised solutions is heavily dependent on the specific type of administration. For this reason, the requirement to standardise should be based on an active evaluation of what conditions justify standardised solutions, including requirements regarding reporting and monitoring, economies of scale, costs and consideration for the university as a whole.

Administrative needs and services: In a variety areas, dissatisfaction with the quality of administrative support has been expressed, along with a general sense of uncertainty with regard to the extent that the resources spent are in balance with the results. The current system does not contain systematic mechanisms for evaluating adminstrative needs in relation to the administrative services offered. This is the case both in relation to administrative activities linked to the core activities of teaching, research and public sector consultancy and in relation to shared services (back office). In relation to administrative activities linked to the core activities, information can be gathered through various forms of user surveys and performance targets. It must be ensured that administrative managers are focused on users' situation. This can be done by means of systematic user evaluations and by making a proportion of salary dependent on performance targets.

Focus on total costs: Planned changes and initiatives in the administrative area, including self-service solutions and the like, should be evaluated from the perspective of the total costs involved - in other words, not soley with regard to direct effects on the administration's own costs, but in relation to the direct and indirect expenditure of energy and time such solutions require of other members of the organisation. When administrative solutions are designed, these derived costs for other staff groups - which involve taking time away from the core activities - should be explicitly taken into account. These costs include time spent on the performance of the operation itself, as well as time spent on finding contact persons and solutions, time spent on meetings, etc.

The allocation of resources to shared services: The premises for the allocation of resources to shared services are unclear, and there is general uncertainty with regard to how resources are spent and the results of these activities. The allocation of resources to true shared services (back office) in the administrative area should be determined by the senior management team in a more transparent way. There should be clear criteria for the allocation of resources and for performance evaluations. For all activities, there should be a clear description of what common goals the activity contributes to and in what way. The current decision-making structure is problematic, and it gives the deans a role both as members of the senior management team and 'clients' of the administrative divisions. This problem can be solved by involving the departments in a discussion of the back office functions, for example in a department head forum where the senior management team formulates goals, and policies and accounts for performance on an annual basis.

These initiatives will mitigate some of the problems that have been identified in relation to administration. However, the expert group is not convinced that they would be sufficient to create an appropriate structure and organisation in the area of administration. For this reason, more far-reaching measures should be considered.

The relocation of technical/administrative employees: Problems have been identified connected with the physical location of technical/administrative employees whose work is closely linked to the core activities at the main academic areas/departments. This is not only a question of physical proximity, but also of information-gathering and the ability to adapt when providing support of the core activities. The current structure of so-called front office functions is opaque. Some employees are located close to the departments, others are in the central administration, and some employees split their time between two locations. There are no clear criteria for this distribution of staff, which is both opaque and inappropriate.

The administrative area should be divided into 'shared functions' and 'user functions'. The former should be determined by the senior management team, cf. above, and the university director should be responsible for these functions, including the establishment of an appropriate division of the shared functions. User functions - uniform requirements for their performance to be established by units in the central administration, cf. point 1 above - should be performed at 'administration centres' located closed to each main academic area/department. AS a general rule, the administration should be located as close as possible to the departments in due consideration for their size and geographical location. This would provide flexibility in relation to large/small departments and geographically separate units.

Connection between management and financing: The analysis indicates that the divorce of financial responsibility (main academic areas/departments) and the managerial hierarchy for thetechnical/administrative employees (administrative divisions) who perform user-support functions creates a systematic problem in relation to adapting administrative needs and demands to financing. The current organisation of the administrative area, whereby management of the administrative area is not directly linked to financing, is inappropriate. Managerial responsibility and financing of user functions should be placed at the main academic areas, which would thus have both managerial and financial responsibility for the administrative 'user functions'. In this model, the dean would determined where technical/administrative staff are to be located (departments or main academic area) in collaboration with the department heads, as well as the utilisation of the financial contributions at the departments. This would ensure a closer connection between the administration and the core activities, which would in turn improve administrative support. While this model accords a higher degree of local responsibility and possibilities for local adaptation, it also requires a high degree of coordination. The model also presupposes that well-defined requirements with regard to standards, etc. are defined centrally, as well as a policy for shared functions and administrative support at the departments, cf. above.

6. Main conclusions

The expert group was tasked with identifying, prioritising and analysing the extent and degree of significant problem areas related to the administrative and managerial support of the university as well as the organisational and managerial structure of the main academic areas. Issues related to accessible management, the inclusion of staff and students in decision-making and administrative support were the primary focus of the problem analysis.

In this connection, is important to emphasise that the university has undergone major changes. Some of these changes have been triggered by external conditions, while others have resulted from the academic development process. The 2011 mergers created a new Aarhus University, and maintaining the status quo was not an option. Rethinking the university - including its academic and administrative organisation - was a necessity.

Aarhus University is a large organisation with an extensive portfolio of activities related to teaching, research and public sector consultancy. At the same time, the university is a geographically dispersed organisation with activities on 19 campuses. Variation in the extent to which the different parts of the university are affected by these changes is therefore to be expected. For this reason, it would be misleading to describe the effects or evaluations of the change process in uniform terms.

The expert panel's analysis identifies centralisation and standardisation as common denominators of the university's problems in relation to accessible management, inclusion and administrative support.

There has been extensive centralisation, and great emphasis has been placed on standardisation, joint initiatives and the presentation of the university as a unified whole. The survey shows that the university's employees have not accepted this strategy and the initiatives derived from it as the best responses to the challenges the university faces. The change process is perceived as the management's project, and the university's employees feel very little sense sense of ownership over it. The change process has underestimated the significance of professional identity and inner motivation for both academic and technical/administrative staff members. Insufficient space and freedom of development have been granted to academic diversity.

The University Act lays down a hierarchical management structure for Danish universities, but the possibilities afforded by the Act for staff and student inclusion and co-determination have not been sufficiently taken advantage of. When the solutions that have been adopted by management are not perceived as sufficiently adapted to situation and tasks facing the employees, a sense of powerlessness and frustration develops in the organisation.

The survey also shows that the change process has underestimated the significance of professional identity and the factor of intrinsic motivation for both academic and technical/administrative staff members. The university's new organisational structure has not resulted in units that are experienced as meaningful collegial groups in all areas. A number of departments incorporate major differences, and a large proportion of academic staff members at the departments in question do not perceive the current structure as appropriate. In the area of administration, the separation of academic and administrative activities resulted in the dissolution of meaningful collegial groups. This separation was in part justified with reference to a

narrow definition of administrative quality that downplays the significance of accessibility, information and adaptability. In addition, the extent of the 'co-production' involving academic and technical/administrative personnel in a variety of core areas was underestimated. There are a variety of problems associated with the administration's new structure, and there is considerable scepticism regarding the organisation and allocation of resources to administrative activities According to the expert group's survey, many employees and students agree that it is important for the university to be presented as a unified institution. At the same time, employees and students have little understanding of the current strategy. This summarises the central conclusions of the internal problem analysis. But it also reveals one possible way forward. A unified university is the product of the interplay between centrally defined visions and goals on the one hand, and strong, meaningful local units on the other hand.

We sketch a range of possible solutions based on our analysis. These solutions are outlined in the conclusions of chapters 3, 4 and 5. These proposals are all aimed at decentralising power and resources, but within a framework of centrally determined goals and requirements and the existing overall managerial structure. The focus of the proposals is the establishment of meaningful units and strengthening identity and motivation for all staff groups. In addition, proposals to ensure that the university's core activities receive competent, user-oriented support are also presented, as well as proposals regarding the distribution and allocation of administrative resources.

In the following, we attempt to flesh out the conclusions outlined above.

An extremely centralised organisational structure was selected for Aarhus University. The primary motivation for this was to create a unified, uniform university which is perceived as a single unit by the world outside, and within which academic synergies are able to develop across disciplinary boundaries and in collaboration with society. To help realise this goal, the intention was to create a uniform, unified administration for the entire university.

This has resulted in centralised management with very little local self-determination or scope for action. The University Act lays down a hierarchical structure for Danish universities, and there are a number of good arguments for placing responsibility for determining the strategy and framework for the university's activities and development with senior management. However, our analysis indicates that Aarhus University has become excessively centralised, at the expense of accessible management and the involvement of students and employees.

Students and staff members feel that they lack opportunities for involvement and co-determination. There is a general perception of the organisation as top-down and quite unresponsive to viewpoints expressed at lower levels of the hierarchy.

This should be understood in the light of the very limited success achieved in promoting an understanding of the visions behind the academic development process, and a perception that the changes that have been made are a solution to the challenges and problems the university faces. Even though students and staff receive a considerable amount of information from upper management, this has had only limited success in promoting understanding, motivation and engagement among staff. Employees do not have a sense of co-ownership in relation to the change process, and in many cases, they have difficulty in seeing how it contributes to supporting the core activities. The changes are perceived as something the management is

forcing on the organisation from above; something that does not contribute to the performance of the university's core activities; or even as something that diverts resources from the performance of those activities. The communication strategy - both internally and externally - is viewed critically by many employees, who do not recognise the image of the university it projects. As a result, there exists no general, shared understanding of the background and motives for the changes that have been implemented. And as a consequence, the changes have not received the support and co-ownership of the employees.

With regard to the perception of inclusion and co-determination, there are differences between the levels of the university's managerial hierarchy and across the main academic areas. Inclusion and co-determination are perceived to function better at departmental level than at main academic area and senior management team level. The highest level of management is perceived to be characterised by a very low degree of employee co-determination and influence. Among the main academic areas, Arts returns particularly low scores. In this connection, it is important to note that Arts is one of the main academic areas that has been most affected by the change process.

The expert group recognises the challenges connected to ensuring true co-determination for and involvement of staff and students. On the one hand, the University Act prescribes an unequivocal hierarchical chain of command consisting of the board, the rector's office, the main academic areas and the departments. On the other hand,the Act also stipulates that staff and students must be granted involvement and co-determination in the running of the universities. Aarhus University has established all of the forums in which involvement and co-determination are to be exercised. The expert group sees not need for additional structural initiatives. However, within the existing framework, there are opportunities to ensure real involvement and co-determination that are not being fully exploited. According to the expert group's assessment, the university's centralised management sets a limit on how much real involvement can meaningfully take place at the main academic areas and departments. When the central decisions are in reality made by the senior management team, it is difficult for the deans and the heads of departments to ensure genuine involvement of staff and students. For this reason, a precondition for a higher degree of genuine involvement and co-determination is an increased decentralisation of Aarhus University.

Management is generally experienced as more accessible the farther down the organisational hierarchy it is evaluated. For example, the evaluation of lower and intermediate-level managers' involvement of employees is predominantly positive. This also applies to department heads, even though academic staff do think that their department head has limited opportunities for affecting decisions taken at a higher level in the organisation. In this area as well, there exists considerable variation across the departments with regard to employees' evaluation of the possibilities for involvement and co-determination. According to the expert group's assessment, the deans and department heads could do more to exploit the existing framework for involvement and co-determination.

The academic legitimacy of the department heads is rated highly by academic staff. One of the aims of the academic development process was to more or less completely exempt department heads from administrative duties to allow them to concentrate on academic management This has not happened, as interviews with department heads and the survey confirm. Both employees and managers report that the department heads spend a great deal of their time on administrative management. Our analysis underscores the importance of the academic dimension of the department heads' managerial practice. there is a strong positive correlation between department heads' prioritisation of time spent on academic management

(especially in contrast to administrative management) and the academic employees' job satisfaction. In addition, there is a strong positive correlation between job satisfaction and employees' assessment that their department head is visible in their daily working lives, is easily accessible and is well acquainted with the department's core activities.

In many cases, the new departmental structure has had consequences for both academic and educational reputation and image. All of the department heads emphasise the importance of the department's reputation and image. Large, complex departments can make it difficult to establish a shared identity, and can therefore reduce employees' job satisfaction. Several department heads indicated that there were problems in relation to projecting a coherent image and identity, and emphasised the importance of this both internally (motivation, teamwork, responsibility) and externally (recruitment, marketing of degree programmes, distinctive academic reputation/image). A clear identity can contribute greatly to attracting students and personnel.

The changed departmental structures have affected different areas of the university in different degrees. At some of the new and large departments, the survey shows that a very large proportion of academic staff do not think that their department constitutes an appropriate unit. This points to significant challenges, and there is considerable uncertainty as to whether the current departmental structure contributes to strengthening the university's core activities. There is a great need for a carefully targeted analysis and evaluation of the departments at which a major proportion of the academic staff do not think that their department constitutes an appropriate unit.

Although an internal departmental managerial hierarchy was not allowed according to the academic development process, this has since become an option. The precise structure of this departmental managerial hierarchy varies from department to department, and there is considerable variation in the functions and and powers of the departmental management teams. These structural differences imply major differences among the departments with regard to the precise form and degree of employee co-determination. This haphazard development is inconsistent with the original intentions of the academic development process. To the extent that these adjustments reflect the fact that the new departments are too complex, it makes sense to ask whether it would have been more appropriate to reconsider the departmental structure itself. In some cases, the internal hierarchies which have developed at the departments lead to lack of clarity regarding the division of responsibility and an unclear organisational structure that constitutes a parallel structure in relation to co-determination through the departmental forums. Similarly, the establishment of plural hierarchical structures may create problems with the exchange of information and coordination. If this is not addressed, the departmental managerial hierarchies will be stop-gap solutions to more fundamental problems.

Identity and meaningful collegial networks are important for employees' work satisfaction. Any demands with regard to how managers prioritise must take this into account. To a great extent, this is the case at departmental level, and interviews with department heads make it clear that they take due account of the importance of employee motivation in their practice as managers. There is a general emphasis on the importance of ensuring freedom of research and diversity, of avoiding micromanagement and of trusting the employees. The managerial ideal is to involve the employees while creating a framework for the department's activities (a bottom-up approach).

Many employees and students perceive a considerable amount of the senior management team's centralised management as controlling. In particular, the comments provided in the survey indicate strongly that this view arises from a conflict of values about different perceptions of what the university should be. Comments on internal and external communication are particularly revealing: here, staff and students criticise what they perceive as the central management's autocratic definition of the university in a way that is perceived as frivolous and unscientific. The employees perceive top-down management as an expression of controland a lack of trust. Academic employees feel that they are 'talked down to'. The attempt to represent the university as a unified whole and the repression of subject-specific/departmental identities is also perceived as demotivating, as it is interpreted as expressing that management de-emphasises goals and values that used to be motivation factors. When employees perceive a lack of ownership of change as demotivating, their motivation is weakened, and this is potentially harmful to the university's core activities.

The mergers have meant a considerable expansion of the university in many academic directions. At the same time, the university's activities are geographically spread out. This geographical spread leads to some specific challenges.

The activities at many campusses differ in a variety of respects from the traditional core activities at the Aarhus campus. In addition to the classical university's activities (teaching and research), the university now includes public sector consultancy and advisory services as well as more proactive outreach activities involving close contact to industry and society. The problems related to a centralised structure with standardised administrative processes are expressed with particular clarity at these new campusses. The employees at the campusses located outside Aarhus call attention to major problems in fitting their portfolio of activities in the framework that has been established for the university. There is a widespread perception that the these areas' positions of strength have been insufficiently integrated into the development process. This is perceived as an indication that the value generated by incorporating these activities in Aarhus University either is not appreciated or is not appreciated as highly as the other activities at the university. However, it should be noted that both employees and students at several of these campusses have pointed out that there are positive aspects of being part of Aarhus University, as the 'university brand' is important in some contexts as a token of independence and quality.

One of the main objectives of the academic development process was to create a more professional, uniform, and more cost-effective administration. The centralisation of administrative functions and a standardisation of administrative processes has been important means to this end. For instance, that 90 per cent of administrative processes should be according to standard routines was the objective. As a consequence, the majority of the technical and administrative staff were relocated away from the departments. There has also been an increased focus on pan-university and interdisciplinary activities (the inner education market, interdisciplinary, internationalisation, branding, communication, etc.).

A variety of problems are associated with the changes in the area of administration. This is confirmed by the survey and the interviews. Although academic staff are generally more critical of the administration than technical-administrative staff, the latter group does point to a range of problems as well. Technical-administrative employees who rate their own units as less responsive to the needs of users also tend to have lower levels of job satisfaction.

In interviews, many employees have expressed that the administration has been professionalised in a number of areas in the form of greater professional expertise, and that a more uniform administration has been created (which means that rules and policies are administered more justly). However, in the survey, academic staff are critical of the administration. A very narrow definition of the quality of administration support has been applied. Other important dimensions of administrative quality include local knowledge, quick reaction times, coherence, understanding, responsibility and initiative. Many of the problems in the administrative area can be traced back to the devaluation of these dimensions.

Another important premise of the administrative reorganisation is that administrative support of the core activities should primarily be provided in the form of standardised processes and solutions (one size fits all). But the report provides no justification for the vision that 90% of administrative tasks can be performed according to standard procedures, or why this standardisation requires the centralisation of the administration. The expert group does not find that there are grounds for a general standardisation norm for the organisation of the university's administrative functions. The organisation's needs vary considerably across the administrative functions and the underlying core activities they support.

The administrative structure is complicated, which makes it difficult for the individual employee to navigate the system. This is true not only of employees at the departments and department heads/department secretaries, but also of technical-administrative employees (including front office). The division of the administrative organisation into 'pillars' (the administrative divisions) and the division between front office and back office lacks transparency. Who does what, and in what situations? This gives rise to concrete problems in relation to administrative support for concrete activities. At the same time, it is symptomatic of fundamental problems in relation to understanding the system as a whole - and by extension, in relation to being able to trust it.

The question of accessibility is linked to the lack of transparency. There is a widespread perception that the administration has a problem with accessibility (it's difficult to find people on the university's website, mails are not responded to, no-reply mails, etc.).

Centralisation is not a precondition for uniformity in administrative procedures and structures; it can also be achieved by requiring that local units perform their administrative tasks in a uniform way. There are a number of legal, administrative and supervisory conditions that require uniform procedures and structures across the entire university. But here again, this requirement can be met by defining standards and requirements for local solutions. Centralisation and standardisation require an active consideration of the advantages to be gained by their introduction.

The problems associated with the quality and standardisation of administration are closely linked to organisational conditions: the division of the administration into units defined by their function and the funding of administrative activities. The administrative activities have been given an extremely complex structure, with independently operating 'pillars' defined by their function. It is also difficult to gain a clear overview of administrative budgets. Administrative services are financed by a mandatory contribution from the main academic areas/departments. In consequence, funding (main academic area/department) has been divorced from managerial responsibility (deputy university director of an administrative division) in the administrative system. This creates a range of problems related to adaptation, coordination and

management, and it provides an unclear foundation for the allocation of resources to administrative activities.

An organisational structure characterised by a high degree of inherent inertia and reduced ability and opportunity to adapt has been created. When an administrative practice/solution has been established, it is very difficult to formulate a proposal for change that can survive the journey through a multi-channel decision-making structure involving both main academic areas and administrative divisions. At the same time, this organisation structure makes it difficult to integrate solutions that involve multiple elements from different administrative divisions.

The administration's managerial distinction from the university's core academic activities also creates the risk of an insular administration that fails to register needs and signals 'from the shop floor'. At departmental level, there is a widespread perception that the administration is overly focused on needs and signals from its own upper management. This is not surprising, since that the organisational structure and the funding model for administrative services encourage precisely this situation. On the other hand, local levels may underestimate the value of pan-university initiatives.

One of the goals of the reorganisations that have taken place as a consequence of the academic development process has been to produce a less complex managerial structure. This was achieved by merging former faculties and schools into four main academic areas and a reduction in the number of departments. But at the same time, a more complex structure has been developed for the university's administrative functions, with several (semi-)autonomous units that refer to the senior management team, not the departments.

The tension between funding and the services provides was clearly expressed in our interviews with the department heads. Generally, the administration contribution is perceived as a tax levied on the departments rather than as a user's fee. This reflects the fact that the departments experience a disproportion between what they pay and the level of administrative service they receive. In addition, questions have been raised regarding the principles for the settlement of so-called back-office services.

The problems outlined above are connection with both the organisational structure and the division of budget responsibility and managerial functions between the main academic areas and the administration. When the link between financing and the services delivered is cut, nothing ensures a proper balance between users' needs and willingness to pay on the one hand, and the administrative services delivered on the other hand. A less centralised structure would diminish these problems.

According to the expert group's assessment, the current system for the allocation of resources to administrative services (front offices) between deans and the deputy directors does not for allow a sufficiently transparent distribution of resources. Under the current system, each dean must carry out separate negotiations with eight deputy directors, which leads to major coordination problems. It also raises questions about whether the agreements made are consistent with decisions made by the senior management team regarding the administration's activities. In addition, the system has an unclear and inappropriate managerial structure. The individual dean makes service agreements with the individual administrative divisions. But at the same time, the deans are part of the senior management team, and as such are also the superiors of the deputy directors (who report to the university director, who is also part of

the senior management team). Both deans and deputy directors have expressed dissatisfaction with this negotiation model. It is disjointed and incoherent, and it does not allow for a precise prioritisation of how how and where resources are to be allocated. This is connected to the absence of a clarification on the part of management regarding where standardisation is necessary and where the need for specialised solutions can be accommodated.

There is also insufficient information available to enable a prioritisation of how resources are to be allocated for pan-university administrative activities (back office functions). Prioritising such activities is a task for management, but the allocation of resources should be performed with reference to clearly defined objectives. It is difficult to assess how efficient the university's back offices functions are, which makes it difficult to determine the appropriate extent of these activities. The costs related to back office activities are borne by Aarhus University as a whole, which leads to an asymmetry. From the perspective of upper management, back office activities can appear to be relatively inexpensive, because the costs are borne by numerous units. But at the local level, they appear relatively more expensive, because at this level, costs are borne without results of these efforts being directly visible. Unless users' needs are consulted, there is a risk that the primary stakeholders in back office - the employees themselves - will have a disproportionally great influence on the allocation of resources, because they are positioned close to the central decision-making process.

The expert group's analysis shows that the back office functions have major problems with communication and legitimacy. At the local level, there is a great deal of uncertainty and scepticism regarding the value these activities create for Aarhus University. By the same token, technical-administrative employees find that the rest of the university lacks insight into and understanding of the importance of these activities, especially in relation to the general strategic initiatives that have been launched in the wake of the academic development process.

There is a lack of transparency surrounding the resources spent on the administration and how they are allocated to different activities (front office, back office, projects, joint finances). The university's annual report does not provide a breakdown of expenses that reflects the administration's organisational structure. This can give rise to the creation of myths. But it also raises questions about the basis on which decisions regarding the allocation of resources to administrative functions is made. If it is not possible to provide a clear account of the resources that have been spent, it becomes possible to raise questions about the extent to which this reflects the result of a clear decision-making process, and whether the resources that have been spent have been considered in relation to the results of the activities in question (optimisation of resource allocation.)

APPENDIX I Terms of reference

The analysis of internal problems is a response to the organisational and administrative changes that have been implemented at Aarhus University since 2011 (as described in the senior management team's report of 9 March 2011). The objective of the analysis is to ensure "that the academic development process is anchored in the organisation" (as stated in the AU Board's framework for the problem analysis).

The sole object of the analysis is organisational and administrative conditions. An independent international evaluation of the academic development process as a whole is scheduled for 2016.

Objective

The objective of the internal analysis of problems is to identify, prioritise and analyse the extent and degree of significant problem areas related to the administrative and managerial support of the university as well as the organisational and managerial structure of the main areas. This will be achieved on the basis of a study aimed at identifying the concrete systems, procedures and resource allocations that are not a receiving satisfactory level of support.

The analysis will be carried out with due consideration of the university's financial and academic constraints and conditions. The analysis will include general organisational problems in the administration and at the main academic areas, with the understanding that the university's overall structure with four main academic areas and a single unified administration is not in question.

The objective of the analysis is to identify significant problems in order to provide a solid basis for the senior management team's decisions on changes in the administrative and organisational area. Before making any decisions on important changes as a result of the analysis, the senior management team will carry out an internal consultation at the university.

The study must involve relevant and representative students, employees and managers at all levels of the university. The psychological WPA published in the spring of 2013 included questions that were directly related to the academic development process. The relevant issues in the ongoing WPA follow-up evaluation, including the absence of accessible management, failure to communicate, the absence of employee and student involvement in decision-making and high levels of work-related stress, must be integrated into the internal analysis process.

The components of the internal analysis

The internal problem analysis must focus on the following three problem areas, all of which are described in greater detail in the attached appendix:

1. **Accessible management**
   The need for accessible and holistic management must be described concretely. For this purpose, an analysis must be performed of the extent to which formal, real, structural or

cultural barriers exist which hamper the appropriate delegation of authority and good managerial practice at all levels of management starting with the senior management team.

2. **Employee and student involvement in decision-making**
   An analysis of the opportunities for and barriers to true employee and student involvement in decision-making must be performed, and the actual practice with regard to involvement must be investigated.

3. **Administrative support**
   The focus of the analysis should be administrative practice and the problems that have arisen as a consequence of the new administrative structure, including an analysis of barriers to unified, effective support of the university's four core activities: research, education, talent development and knowledge exchange.

Organisation

An analysis panel was established that has appointed an internal expert group in cooperation with the senior management team. The chairman of the expert group is a respected researcher with extensive experience in university affairs. There are four members from the main academic areas and one member from the administration in the internal expert group, all of whom have a thorough understanding of organisational development. The expert group will present its analysis in the form of a report that will be submitted to the analysis panel. The analysis panel will comment on the report before submitting it to the senior management team.

The expert group is charged with producing an analysis with broad applicability that provides a well-documented description of the most significant problems. The expert group is free to select its own working methods and is expected to involve the necessary expertise at the university within such areas as organisational theory, organisational development, organisational anthropology, work environment and communication. The chairman of the expert group must ensure that the analysis panel is kept informed of the progress of the expert group's work. The expert group will complete its work with a report that will be submitted to the analysis panel and the senior management team on 1 July.

The analysis panel is responsible for assisting the expert group in its contact with the university's academic and administrative units, for example in connection with the selection of relevant and representative respondents for the surveys and in connection with involving staff members with expertise that supplements the group's own expertise. The analysis panel will conclude its work with a separate written commentary on the expert group's report. The deadline for the submission of the analysis panel's comments on the expert group's report is 15 June.

Working methods and conditions

The duty of confidentiality regarding personal information applies to the analysis. The expert group must be able to contact and involve representative employees and students to the degree the group find it necessary. In addition, the expert group must be given the necessary administrative and academic secretarial support for its work.

Appendix to the terms of reference: detailed description of the three primary topics of analysis

Accessible management
The need for accessible and holistic management must be described concretely. To achieve this, an analysis must be performed of the extent to which there are formal, real, structural or cultural barriers to an appropriate delegation of authority and good managerial practice at all levels of management starting with the senior management team. Examples of issues to be explored include:

1. Problems related to the delegation of authority, managerial authority and managerial practice

2. Problems related to the issue of accessible management within the framework of the established units and managerial hierarchy

3. Problems related to the experience of the existence of two separate chains of command for administrative and academic management

4. Problems with the management's communication and employees' experience of this

Employee and student involvement in decision-making
An analysis of the opportunities for and barriers to true employee and student involvement in decision-making must be performed, and the actual practice with regard to involvement must be investigated, with a special focus on such issues as:

1. Identification of at which management levels the problems with employee and student involvement are experienced as being most acute

2. Management's involvement of formal bodies and the transparency of their influence on decision-making processes (The Academic Council, departmental forums and the liaison committees, boards of studies, cross-university bodies etc.)

Administrative support
The administrative changes that have taken place in connection with the academic development process were implemented in order to professionalise the administration through the introduction of administrative divisions headed by deputy university directors that contain both shared services and the administration centres for each main academic area. The analysis of administrative practice and the problems that have arisen as a consequence of the new structure must focus on:

1. Problems related to the division of the administration into units defined by their function, and how to create coordination and coherence between the different administrative systems' performance.

2. Problems with forms of communication and cooperation, where objectives, criteria and standards for administrative support must be harmonised.

3. Problems with initiatives that have been taken with a view to involving relevant users in the development of administrative tools and systems.

4. Evaluation of whether the organisational and managerial platform for the administration contributes constructively to or forms a barrier to addressing the challenges associated with the university's geographically dispersed locations.

5. Evaluation of whether the division of labour gives rise to problems, including whether the centralisation of functions and services to 'front office' or 'back office' gives rise to problems.

6. Identification of what relationships among organisational units are particularly problematic (including lack of access to the administration and problems related to particular administrative procedure, for example procedures related to financial administration, the inner education market, etc).

APPENDIX II: The members of the analysis panel

The members of the analysis panel were selected by the academic councils, the Main Liaison Committee, the students and the administration.

The members of the panel are:

Nominated by the academic councils:

- Associate Professor Morten Raffnsøe-Møller, Arts
- Section Manager Mogens Vestergaard, ST
- Professor Jørn Flohr Nielsen, BSS
- Associate Professor Kamille Smidt Rasmussen, Health

Nominated by the students:

- Christian Kraglund - physics PhD student (enrolled as a student)
- Sune Koch Rønnow - students, classical archaeology

Nominated by the Main Liaison Committee:

- Joint union representative Aase Pedersen
- Joint union representative Per Dahl

Nominated by the administration:

- Deputy Director Louise Gade
- Administration Manager Niels Damgaard Hansen

Appendix III: Overview of focus group interviews

As part of the work of the expert group, a number of focus group interviews were held with various staff groups as well as groups of managers and students. A total of 27 such interviews were held with participants who were selected with a view to ensuring coverage across the main academic areas and administrative areas.

The purpose of the interviews was to assist the expert group in identifying relevant issues seen from different perspectives. The interviews also purported to identify differences within the university associated with geographical location and the nature of the activities undertaken (teaching, research, public-sector consultancy, relations with the business community etc.).

Table B.1. below provides an overview of the focus group interviews held, including information about the number of participants, selection criteria and the themes for the meetings.

Prior to all interviews, the participants were informed that the statements and views made and presented at the meeting would serve as inspiration and background information for the work of the expert group, and that no explicit reference would be made to the statements of individuals in the expert group's report. Discussions have focused on general structural issues and not on individuals.

Table B.1.: Overview of focus group interviews

No.	Time	Participants	Selection criteria	Themes
1.	7 March 8.30-10.30	4 department heads	We have selected one person from each main academic area, ensuring that the group reflects the different conditions prevailing at the departments.	Powers/managerial freedom of the department head The department head's resource allocation powers/budget responsibilities Internal organisation of the department, including delegation, sub-units etc. Division of roles and responsibilities in relation to administration and service, including the local department secretariat Relations with the dean and the senior management team Any knowledge of experience from units merged with Aarhus University
2.	19 March 8.30-10.30	5 directors of studies	We have selected one person from each main academic	How are resources (teaching staff) allocated to courses? To which extent do departmental and

			area as well as one person from the further and continuing education area, ensuring that the group reflects the different conditions prevailing at the departments.	course boundaries coincide? Relations with department head, board of studies, the AU Studies Administration and any programme coordinators/degree programme directors Experience of room administration and handling of examination complaints and credit transfer exemptions Interfaces between front-office and back-office functions in the administration Contact with students The inner education market and coordination of related subjects How is the requirement for research-based education met in practice?
3.	28 March 8.30-10.30	4 students	We have selected one person from the academic councils in each main academic area.	The inner education market Views on the administrative service available to students in relation to for example information about classrooms, exams, credit transfer cases, internships and exchanges, including the possibility of establishing personal relations between the administration and students Academic identity in relation to the degree programme, the department, the faculty and the university The possibilities for student involvement via, for example, the academic councils, departmental fora, boards of studies, associations and relations with the department head
4.	2 April 10.30-12.00	5 department secretariat heads	We have selected one person from each main academic area as well as one person from Science	Division of roles and responsibilities in relation to front-office and back-office functions, including any problems with the administrative organisation Need and opportunities for tailoring

			and Technology, ensuring that the group reflects the different conditions prevailing at the departments.	administrative solutions for department-specific conditions Need for parallel/alternative administrative solutions at departmental level Any knowledge of experience from units merged with Aarhus University
5.	2 April 12.30-14.00	8 technical/administrative staff members (front office)	The selection of interviewees was based on simple random sampling among all front-office staff in the administration at Aarhus University with an actual full-time equivalent of at least 0.8. Campus Service and AU Library staff were excluded. Two persons were selected from the administrative centres in each main academic area.	What are the possibilities for staff involvement via, for example, liaison committees, immediate superiors and deputy directors? How are relations between front-office and back-office functions perceived by the administrative centres? How is the collaboration between the administrative divisions perceived internally by the administrative centres? How is the interaction with the departments, the dean's offices and the senior management team perceived? How are the opportunities for establishing personal relations with academic staff members and students perceived in view of the geographical location of the administrative centres? How are the possibilities for tailoring the administrative solutions to the needs of users/departments perceived by the administrative centres?
6.	25 April 8.30-10.30	7 technical/administrative managers	The interviewees were selected so as to ensure that the group reflects front-office, back-office and as many administrative functions as possible.	How are resources allocated for specific administrative services? How are relations between front-office and back-office functions perceived? How is the collaboration between the administrative divisions perceived? How is the interaction with the

				departments, the dean's offices and the senior management team perceived? How are the possibilities for tailoring the administrative solutions to user needs perceived? What do you do specifically to ensure staff involvement?
7.	28 April 10.15-11.15 Emdrup	4 academic staff members from the Department of Education (DPU)	The interviewees were selected by the Department of Education.	In your experience, are there any special problems associated with being geographically separated from the rest of the university? What is your experience of the department head's powers, including the department head's resource allocation powers? What is your experience of the possibilities for contacting students? Internal organisation of the department, including delegation, sub-units etc. Relations with the department head, dean and senior management team What is your experience of the administrative service offered by the administrative division and the local department secretariat?
8.	28 April 11.15-12.15 Emdrup	5 degree programme directors from the Department of Education (DPU)	The interviewees were selected by the Department of Education.	In your experience, are there any special problems associated with being geographically separated from the rest of the university? How are resources (teaching staff) allocated to courses? To which extent do departmental and course boundaries coincide? Relations with the department head, board of studies, the AU Studies Administration Experience of room administration

				and handling of examination complaints and credit transfer exemptions Interfaces between front-office and back-office functions in the administration Contact with students The inner education market and coordination of related subjects How is the requirement for research-based education met in practice?
9.	28 April 12.45-13.45 Emdrup	4 students from the Department of Education (DPU)	The interviewees were selected by the Department of Education.	In your experience as students, are there any special problems associated with being geographically separated from the rest of the university? The inner education market Views on the administrative service available to students in relation to for example information about classrooms, exams, credit transfer cases, internships and exchanges, including the possibility of establishing personal relations between the administration and students Academic identity in relation to the degree programme, the department, the faculty and the university The possibilities for student involvement via, for example, the academic councils, departmental fora, boards of studies, associations and relations with the department head
10.	28 April 14.00-15.00 Emdrup	4 technical/administrative staff members from the Department of Education (DPU)	The interviewees were selected by the Department of Education.	In your experience, are there any special problems associated with being geographically separated from the rest of the university? What are the possibilities for staff involvement via, for example, liaison committees, immediate superiors and deputy directors?

				What is your experience of the relations between front-office and back-office functions? What is your experience of the collaboration between the various administrative divisions? What is your experience of the relations with the department, the dean's office and the senior management team? What is your experience of the possibilities for establishing personal relations with academic staff members and students? What is your experience of the possibilities for tailoring the administrative solutions to the needs of users/departments?
11.	28 April 10.15-12.15 Roskilde	8 academic staff members from the Department of Bioscience and the Department of Environmental Science	The interviewees were selected by the Department of Bioscience and the Department of Environmental Science.	In your experience, are there any special problems associated with being geographically separated from the rest of the university? What is your experience of the department head's powers, including the department head's resource allocation powers? What is your experience of the possibilities for contacting students? Internal organisation of the department, including delegation, sub-units etc. Relations with the department head, dean and senior management team What is your experience of the administrative service offered by the administrative division and the local department secretariat?
12.	28 April 12.45-14.45	6 technical/administrative staff members	The interviewees were selected by the Department of	In your experience, are there any special problems associated with being geographically separated from

	Roskilde	from the Department of Bioscience and the Department of Environmental Science	Bioscience and the Department of Environmental Science.	the rest of the university? What are the possibilities for staff involvement via, for example, liaison committees, immediate superiors and deputy directors? What is your experience of the relations between front-office and back-office functions? What is your experience of the collaboration between the various administrative divisions? What is your experience of the relations with the department, the dean's office and the senior management team? What is your experience of the possibilities for establishing personal relations with academic staff members and students? What is your experience of the possibilities for tailoring the administrative solutions to the needs of users/departments?
13.	29 April 9.30-11.00	7 technical/administrative staff members (back office)	The selection of interviewees was based on simple random sampling among all back-office staff in the administration with an actual full-time equivalent of at least 0.8. Campus Service and AU Library staff were excluded.	What are the possibilities for staff involvement via, for example, liaison committees, immediate superiors and deputy directors? How does the daily management work in your workplace? How are the possibilities for tailoring the administrative solutions to the needs of users/departments perceived? How are relations between front-office and back-office functions perceived? How is the collaboration between the administrative divisions perceived? How is the interaction with the departments, the dean's offices and

				the senior management team perceived?
14.	30 April 8.30-9.30 Herning	4 academic staff members from AU Herning	The interviewees were selected by AU Herning.	In your experience, are there any special problems associated with being geographically separated from the rest of the university? What is your experience of the department head's powers, including the department head's resource allocation powers? What is your experience of the possibilities for contacting students? Internal organisation of the department, including delegation, sub-units etc. Relations with the department head, dean and senior management team What is your experience of the administrative service offered by the administrative division and the local department secretariat?
15.	30 April 9.30-10.30 Herning	4 technical/administrative staff members from AU Herning	The interviewees were selected by AU Herning.	In your experience, are there any special problems associated with being geographically separated from the rest of the university? What are the possibilities for staff involvement via, for example, liaison committees, immediate superiors and deputy directors? What is your experience of the relations between front-office and back-office functions? What is your experience of the collaboration between the various administrative divisions? What is your experience of the relations with the department, the dean's office and the senior management team? What is your experience of the

| | | | | possibilities for establishing personal relations with academic staff members and students?

What is your experience of the possibilities for tailoring the administrative solutions to the needs of users/departments? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16. | 30 April

10.30-11.30

Herning | 3 programme coordinators from AU Herning | The interviewees were selected by AU Herning. | In your experience, are there any special problems associated with being geographically separated from the rest of the university?

How are resources (teaching staff) allocated to courses?

To which extent do departmental and course boundaries coincide?

Relations with the department head, board of studies, the AU Studies Administration

Experience of room administration and handling of examination complaints and credit transfer exemptions

Interfaces between front-office and back-office functions in the administration

Contact with students

The inner education market and coordination of related subjects

How is the requirement for research-based education met in practice? |
| 17. | 30 April

11.30-12.30

Herning | 4 students from AU Herning | The interviewees were selected by AU Herning. | In your experience as students, are there any special problems associated with being geographically separated from the rest of the university?

The inner education market

Views on the administrative service available to students in relation to for example information about classrooms, exams, credit transfer |

				cases, internships and exchanges, including the possibility of establishing personal relations between the administration and students Academic identity in relation to the degree programme, the department, the faculty and the university The possibilities for student involvement via, for example, the academic councils, departmental fora, boards of studies, associations and relations with the department head
18.	1 May 8.30-10.00	4 staff representatives from the Main Liaison Committee (HSU)	The interviewees were selected from among all HSU staff representatives; however, excluding members of the analysis panel.	The management's involvement of HSU, including the way in which the management's communication is perceived Transparency of HSU's influence on decision-making processes In your experience, at which management levels are problems with staff involvement most pressing? Do you see possibilities for and barriers to real staff involvement?
19.	1 May 10.30-12.00	3 chairmen of the academic councils	All the chairmen were invited.	The management's involvement of the Academic Council, including the way in which the management's communication is perceived Transparency of the Academic Council's influence on decision-making processes In your experience, at which management levels are problems with staff involvement most pressing? Do you see possibilities for and barriers to real student and staff involvement?
20.	8 May 9.00-10.00	7 academic staff members (professors and section managers) from the	The interviewees were selected by the Department of Agroecology, the	In your experience, are there any special problems associated with being geographically separated from

	Foulum	Department of Agroecology, the Department of Food Science, the Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics and the Department of Animal Science	Department of Food Science, the Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics and the Department of Animal Science.	the rest of the university? What is your experience of the department head's powers, including the department head's resource allocation powers? What is your experience of the possibilities for contacting students? Internal organisation of the department, including delegation, sub-units etc. Relations with the department head, dean and senior management team What is your experience of the administrative service offered by the administrative division and the local department secretariat?
21.	8 May 9.00-10.00 Foulum	5 technical/administra tive staff members from the Department of Agroecology, the Department of Food Science, the Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics and the Department of Animal Science	The interviewees were selected by the Department of Agroecology, the Department of Food Science, the Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics and the Department of Animal Science.	In your experience, are there any special problems associated with being geographically separated from the rest of the university? What are the possibilities for staff involvement via, for example, liaison committees, immediate superiors and deputy directors? What is your experience of the relations between front-office and back-office functions? What is your experience of the collaboration between the various administrative divisions? What is your experience of the relations with the department, the dean's office and the senior management team? What is your experience of the possibilities for establishing personal relations with academic staff members and students? What is your experience of the possibilities for tailoring the

				administrative solutions to the needs of users/departments?
22.	8 May 10.00-11.00 Foulum	4 academic staff members (associate professors) from the Department of Agroecology, the Department of Food Science, the Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics and the Department of Animal Science	The interviewees were selected by the Department of Agroecology, the Department of Food Science, the Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics and the Department of Animal Science.	In your experience, are there any special problems associated with being geographically separated from the rest of the university? What is your experience of the department head's powers, including the department head's resource allocation powers? What is your experience of the possibilities for contacting students? Internal organisation of the department, including delegation, sub-units etc. Relations with the department head, dean and senior management team What is your experience of the administrative service offered by the administrative division and the local department secretariat?
23.	8 May 10.00-11.00 Foulum	4 academic staff members (PhDs/assistant professors/postdocs) from the Department of Food Science and the Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics	The interviewees were selected by the Department of Agroecology, the Department of Food Science, the Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics and the Department of Animal Science.	In your experience, are there any special problems associated with being geographically separated from the rest of the university? What is your experience of the department head's powers, including the department head's resource allocation powers? What is your experience of the possibilities for contacting students? Internal organisation of the department, including delegation, sub-units etc. Relations with the department head, dean and senior management team What is your experience of the administrative service offered by the administrative division and the local

				department secretariat?
24.	8 May 12.00-13.00	3 administration centre managers	All administration centre managers were invited with the exception of a member of the expert group.	What is your experience of the collaboration between the administrative divisions and the possibilities for cross-organisational coordination? How are resources allocated for specific administrative services? What is your experience of the relations between front-office and back-office functions? How are the possibilities for tailoring the administrative solutions to the needs of the departments perceived? What is your experience of the relations with the departments, the dean's offices and the senior management team? In your experience, are there any special problems associated with units which are geographically separated from the rest of the university?
25.	9 May 8.30-10.00	4 deputy directors	All the deputy directors were invited.	How are resources allocated for specific administrative services? What is the division of roles and responsibilities between front-office and back-office functions like? What is the division of roles and responsibilities between the administrative divisions like? What is the division of roles and responsibilities between the administrative divisions and the deans like? What is your experience of the possibilities for tailoring the administrative solutions to the needs of users/departments? In your experience, are there any special problems associated with the

				geographical location of units which are separated from the rest of the university?
26.	12 May 9.00-10.00	Deans	All the deans were invited.	Accessible management Staff and student involvement in decision-making The administrative support of the university's activities
27.	14 May 11.00-12.30	4 deputy directors	All the deputy directors were invited.	How are resources allocated for specific administrative services? What is the division of roles and responsibilities between front-office and back-office functions like? What is the division of roles and responsibilities between the administrative divisions like? What is the division of roles and responsibilities between the administrative divisions and the deans like? What is your experience of the possibilities for tailoring the administrative solutions to the needs of users/departments? In your experience, are there any special problems associated with the geographical location of units which are separated from the rest of the university?

Appendix IV: Summary of comments from questionnaire-based surveys for staff and students

A questionnaire-based survey was conducted among all staff members and among all students at Aarhus University. The results of these surveys are reported in detail in background reports for this report.

In the questionnaires, respondents were able to enter comments, and these comments constitute an important source of information on a number of specific problems. Many staff and students seized this opportunity, and their comments will be published (subject to permission by respondents) in appendices to the above-mentioned background reports in mid-June 2014.

It should be noted that the comments on the administrative areas are given in response to a question about administrative areas which are in need of special attention. Respondents who feel that such a need exists have been given an opportunity to elaborate in a comment. The comments have thus primarily been written by employees who are critical about one or more administrative areas. The overall picture of the employees' assessment of the administrative areas is described in the background reports on the questionnaire-based surveys.

Below follows a brief summary of selected main points from comments on the largest and most important administrative areas. The summary has been prepared to provide a quick overview of the problems and issues most frequently cited, including similarities and differences between comments from academic staff members, technical/administrative staff members and students.

The comments reveal how different staff groups assess and experience the administrative conditions. They therefore reflect the subjective assessments of the conditions. An assessment as such of work routines and processes within specific administrative areas falls outside the scope of the expert group's mandate.

Internal communication

Internal communication is much criticised for taking up too many resources, while at the same time being far too one-sided, centralised and one-way. This view is expressed by both staff and students, although some variation is seen in the relative importance given to this issue by the two groups.

Staff survey:

No systematic differences are seen between the comments from academic staff members and technical/administrative staff members, except that only technical/administrative staff members mention the problem of a lack of internal communication between the administrative divisions (item 7 below).

The staff comments can be summarised as follows (ranked by frequency):

1. Too high internal communication costs
2. One-way/too centralised communication
3. Communication is too dominated by the management's views/painting pretty pictures/Newspeak
4. The website is inadequate (including the search function, which is heavily criticised), see comments on external communication

5. They are too busy making decisions rather than offering support and listening (a state within the state)
6. Unclear and unstructured procedures
7. Lack of communication across and within the administrative divisions (only technical/administrative staff members)
8. Often no English-language internal communication
9. Several respondents mention recent Omnibus improvements.

Student survey:

The students' comments can be summarised as follows:

1. Too late internal information about studies-related matters, e.g. exam dates
2. Different information from different sources
3. Too little and superficial internal communication
4. Too many information platforms
5. Communication to teaching staff on changes of teaching venue and cancellations is inadequate
6. Lack of communication between main academic areas about studies-related matters
7. Lack of communication between geographically separate units
8. Internal communication is a precondition for staff and student involvement and is called for in this respect
9. Centralisation is seen as negative
10. The website works very badly.

External communication

External communication is the area which is attracting the fiercest criticism. Almost without exception, students and employees agree that too many resources are spent on external communication, and that there is too much emphasis on superficial branding. The respondents make it clear that they cannot recognise themselves or their understanding of the university in the external communication. The degree of centralisation is also being criticised as well as the fact that some parts of Aarhus University are overlooked. There seems to be considerable conflict as to how the university should be presented to the outside world even though the argument that the communication should not be 'heavily academic' is only represented by one communication officer. The rest of the comments are very critical of the current way of communicating, but it is possible that the opposite view is not represented in the comments because these employees find that the current communication works well. However, it should be noted here that many respondents have commented on the internal and external communication.

Staff survey:

Statements from academic staff members and technical/administrative staff members are very similar. The most marked difference is that the technical/administrative staff members are most concerned about the lack of coordination, while academic staff members are more likely to call for more communication of research by academic staff members. Finally, there is one communication officer who (unlike everybody

else) views the communication as being too heavily academic and too dominated by departments and faculties. This quote is included under item three, and clearly stands out from the rest of the nearly 500 comments. Similarly, there is also a single comment calling for a higher priority to be given to the area, while other respondents commenting on the level of activity would like to see a reduction in resources.

The comments from staff can be summarised as follows:

1. Too many resources spent on external communication
2. Too strong an emphasis on superficial branding
3. Organisation too centralised, and consequently too low responsiveness
4. The fonts/visual identity send a completely wrong signal externally
5. Inadequate specific external communication for certain parts of Aarhus University (including Aarhus University outside 8000 C)
6. The current website design does not support the external communication
7. Too much control (including branding police)
8. Desire for shift in emphasis towards researchers communicating their own results
9. Coordination problems.

Student survey:

The comments from the students are very similar to those of staff. For example, many students are annoyed about being talked down to with too much emphasis on 'beer and parties' in the promotional material. Many students write 'we' about the university, whereas others see the communication to current students as part of the external communication. The latter statements are included under internal communication, but it is noteworthy in itself that some students see themselves as being somewhat external in relation to the university.

The students' comments can be summarised as follows:

1. Too much emphasis on superficial, patronising and/or indifferent branding
2. Inadequate specific external communication for certain parts of Aarhus University (especially the business area)
3. The current website design does not support the external communication
4. Too little openness to criticism
5. Too many resources spent on external communication
6. The fonts/visual identity are not considered suitable for the purpose
7. Organisation too centralised, and consequently too low responsiveness
8. Lack of visibility of Aarhus University externally.

HR

The area is mainly commented on by staff and to a lesser extent by students. In the condensation of comments, the comments from the two groups are not differentiated.

The criticism of the area is generally quite severe. In a considerable number of comments, detailed criticism is voiced of the HR function's ways of positioning itself between managers and employees. Also, HR's practice and professional foundation are described as old-fashioned and out of step with the times, both compared with people's experience from the private sector, and in relation to the theories about management, motivation and human resources development which are taught and on which research is conducted in a number of units. The model with an HR partner acting as a coordinator between users and back office is described as unduly complicated because far too many people need to be involved instead of just contacting back-office functions directly. Some find that the front-office function has seemed to be more well-managed recently.

Some criticism is levied about access to efficient HR services outside 8000 C. The model with a flying squad is described by several respondents as heavy and slow and does not ensure that HR has knowledge about individual people, cases and conditions.

1. HR should be a unit which focuses on the employees, their needs and development, not primarily an ancillary tool for the management
2. HR lacks understanding of the complex employment structure at the university
3. HR is a state within the state.

Finances

A lot of statements concern the difficult financial situation in which Aarhus University is currently finding itself. Statements range from "good that something is being done about it" to "management must assume responsibility" and "chaos at AU". A large number of statements relate to the system support for the financial management function. From department level, via the external projects to the handling of invoices and travel expenses. Academic staff members are particularly focused on the support available on a daily basis – and many point to a lack of insight into the spending of external funding.

Staff survey:

The comments from staff can be summarised as follows:

1. Access to financial information and control of external projects are often described as being insufficient; however, with some improvements beginning to take effect (approx. 20% of all comments)
2. Too many administrative resources and too large financial units
3. User-unfriendly systems and relegation of tasks to academic staff members (approx. 20% of all comments)
   a. AURUS
   b. INDFAK
   c. Travel bookings
4. No grip on the economy at Aarhus University, a lot of comments here (approx. 30% of all comments)
5. Optimisation of work routines is mentioned by both academic and technical/administrative staff members (very frequently by technical/administrative staff members)

6. Call for proper budgets (a large proportion of statements are from Arts)

7. The service culture is mentioned (alienation) and a lack of competences
8. Call for greater proximity (in conjunction with AURUS, INDFAK and travel bookings as well as insight into budgets/project management, possibility of retrieving data etc.)
9. The merger is mentioned ("It was possible in 2007 at my old institution, now I can't do anything!")
10. Procurement is mentioned a bit (useless tender processes, wrong agreements)
11. Geography is mentioned quite a lot (8000 C has not learned anything from the merged units)
12. Lack of collaboration across organisational boundaries
13. Useless systems and lack of system integration (especially with payroll) (approx. 20% of all comments)
14. The administration of the AU Administration is mentioned by technical/administrative staff members.

Student survey:

The students' comments can be summarised as follows:

1. Degree programmes are suffering as a result of the cutbacks
2. Webshop and possibilities for international students are extremely inadequate
3. Few possibilities for doing relevant subjects abroad, and cumbersome
4. Aarhus University teaches financial management – practise it!
5. No possibility of doing PhD due to cutbacks
6. AURUS is not working well
7. Confusion of priorities between the administration and academic environments
8. Good that the finances will get back on track at Aarhus University
9. The financial situation has an impact on the studies administration, which is evident in failure to respond to enquiries, muddled examination dates and room bookings
10. The discontinuation of events such as the MatchPoints seminars is a problem for Aarhus University. The MatchPoints seminars are excellent for profiling the university
11. Slow procedures – pay not disbursed.

Building Operations and Maintenance

Students focus a lot on the framework for their daily activities and study-related issues – rooms for project work, classrooms relating to their studies, double bookings etc. are some of the challenges mentioned.

The employees mention more involvement in construction projects and generally better management of construction projects. Noise and inadequate planning are also mentioned as problems. In addition, complaints are made about long case administration times for minor jobs.

Special challenges are moving schedules in relation to units outside Aarhus. There is scope for improvement with regard to communication and involvement in this field.

Communication is generally perceived as insufficient.

Staff survey:

1. More involvement in conversion projects
2. There is too much construction work going on, and it is noisy – affects core activities
3. Insufficient communication about conversions, renovation etc.
4. Energy waste is a problem – call for a green profile
5. Long-term planning processes in certain construction projects
6. Call for improved service and single points of contact to Building Services
7. Long case administration times
8. The many keycard systems are mentioned as a problem
9. Varying cleaning standards
10. Collaboration with local building services works well
11. Coordination between AU IT and AU Planning is important in connection with construction projects – examples of this not working
12. Coordination between front-office and back-office functions is mentioned as a problem
13. Several respondents mention the ownership of Aarhus University's buildings as a problem
14. Greater proximity
15. Better coordination with room booking function and Building Operations and Maintenance
16. Maintenance around and about at Aarhus University is described as insufficient
17. Project management of construction projects seems inadequate – does Aarhus University have the right competences?

Student survey:

1. Trøjborg ought to have been closed a long time ago
2. There is a lack places where you can offload your ideas and frustrations about the buildings
3. Study environment should be improved
4. Lack of sockets for laptops
5. Several respondents mention poor maintenance standards at Dalgas Avenue – connected with the move to Navitas
6. The many conversions, renovation projects interfere with everyday lives – call for better planning
7. Defective AV equipment in rooms
8. There is a lack of meeting places for students
9. Lack of involvement of students in construction projects
10. Lack of communication about renovation, relocations etc.
11. Not enough power outlets, for example in Nobel Park
12. Lack of study spaces
13. There is also praise for standards at Aarhus University.

AU Studies Administration

Both staff and students express considerable frustration and criticism about the studies administration. The criticism is levied against both specific and general aspects. In addition, many employees feel that tasks are

being thrown at them by the AU Studies Administration. However, many respondents are also concerned that AU Studies Administration staff are too pressurised.

Staff survey:

Academic and technical/administrative staff members basically express the same reservations; however, except for item 4.

The comments from staff can be summarised as follows:

1. Dissatisfaction with the administration of specific practical study-related issues (registration for exams and holding of exams, evaluations, co-examiners, internships, timetables, lists of participants and classrooms)
2. Job performance characterised by lack of proximity and flexibility
3. Bureaucratic job performance
4. Study administration tasks thrown at academic staff members (mentioned only by academic staff members)
5. Study administration tasks thrown at departmental technical/administrative staff members
6. Concern for the employees in the AU Studies Administration.

Student survey:

The students' comments can be summarised under three headings:

1. Dissatisfaction with the administration of specific practical study-related issues (registration for exams and holding of exams, evaluations, co-examiners, internships, timetables, lists of participants and classrooms)
2. Job performance characterised by lack of proximity and flexibility
3. Bureaucratic job performance.

Continuing/further education

Comments are mixed. Many respondents see a huge potential at Aarhus University for focusing more on continuing and further education and are worried that not enough priority is given to this area in comparison with traditional university programmes. Others are concerned that the activities are not financially viable and that the administration of these activities is too far removed from the academic environments.

Staff survey:

The comments from staff can be summarised as follows:

1. Concern that continuing and further education is not being given enough priority in comparison with traditional teaching assignments
2. Criticism of the fact that the administration is too far removed from the academic environments providing the courses
3. Concern that income and expenses do not balance.

Student survey:

The students' comments can be summarised as follows:

1. Aarhus University should focus more on continuing and further education activities
2. Information about continuing and further education is not sufficient.

IT

Statements on IT cover all the areas where staff and students encounter IT in their daily activities. Some comments are forward-looking and acknowledge the improvements which have been achieved, while others point to the challenges.

The website is heavily criticised as are the many different passwords which are needed to access the systems they use on a daily basis. Poor system integration, systems not tried and tested, not user-friendly etc. Several of the comments from students in particular concern the use of the systems by academic staff members for teaching purposes – this draws attention to another dimension of the IT systems, the actual implementation of new systems and the training of users on how to use the new systems. Particular focus is on Blackboard.

Staff survey:

The comments from staff can be summarised as follows:

1. The website is mentioned quite a lot as being a challenge
2. Service desk/service culture
   a. Both good and bad
   b. Long response times, not always competent employees
3. Useless systems are rolled out before having been thoroughly tested
4. Many passwords
5. Coordination between front-office and back-office functions
6. Purchasing IT can be a protracted process
7. IT project handling is lacking, and no priority is given to IT projects (senior management team is described as interventionist; for example new mail system was delayed for one year)
8. Specific systems are mentioned a lot: poor user-friendliness/AURUS useless/Blackboard does not work quite as intended
9. Proximity and issues relating to geography mentioned
10. Also positive feedback that some things have improved.

Student survey:

The students' comments can be summarised as follows:

1. Internet access up in the air
2. Call for a common system for students You have to log on to many different systems to get an overview

3. FirstClass, AULA and Blackboard etc. seem outdated and chaotic
4. Not enough power outlets in some classrooms/buildings
5. Long response times from the help desk
6. Chaotic website
7. Things have improved
8. Too many IT problems at Aarhus University
9. Too many passwords and platforms
10. Lack of competences
11. AULA has been hacked
12. Help desk is helpful
13. Call for better user guides
14. Call for digitisation of exams
15. Proximity is an issue for some geographical locations
16. Many lecturers are not familiar with Blackboard. They say that they go on courses, but they simply still do not know enough about it.

PhDs

The comments on this area reveal quite a bit of frustration with the AU Administration. Many employees experience the AU Administration as bureaucratic and too far removed, and specific administrative and organisational matters are in for some criticism. The students' comments are also largely critical.

Staff survey:

The comments from staff can be summarised as follows:

1. Dissatisfaction with specific issues: application procedures, semi-annual evaluations, travel, conferences, study abroad periods, courses and PhD Planner
2. Bureaucratic administration
3. Administration too far removed from the academic environments
4. Study administration tasks thrown at academic staff members (mentioned only by academic staff members)
5. Uncertainty about the 4+4 scheme
6. Unclear division of work between the gradate schools and HR (mentioned only by technical/administrative staff members)
7. Unclear division of work between graduate schools and departments.

Student survey:

The students' comments can be summarised as follows:

1. Dissatisfaction with specific issues: The Education Grant and Loan Scheme in Denmark, insurance, course offerings and PhD Planner
2. Bureaucratic administration
3. Uncertainty about the 4+4 scheme.

AU Library

There are relatively few comments on this, but they are heterogeneous and are therefore difficult to summarise.

Staff survey:

The comments from staff can be carefully summarised as follows:

1. Some criticism about centralisation
2. Some concern about lack of contact with the academic environments.

Student survey:

The students' comments can be carefully summarised as follows:

1. The website, in particular the search function, is criticised.

International Centre

The comments on the International Centre tend to be negative, with respondents being under the impression that spending is not matched by the centre's contribution to core activities such as research and education. However, there are also staff members who are positive about their collaboration with the International Centre.

Staff survey:

1. Is not of sufficient help due to centralisation (away from the departments)
2. Desire for less spending by the International Centre
3. Lack of knowledge about what the centre contributes
4. Lack of integration with the rest of the administration (only technical/administrative staff members)
5. Positive user comments.

Student survey:

1. Poor service
2. Lack of visibility.

The Rector's Office (the senior management team's support staff)

The area is mainly commented on by staff and to a lesser extent by students. In the condensation of comments, the comments from the two groups are not differentiated.

The area is accused of being out of touch with operations at the university and of only being involved in communication from the management down. Many also comment that they do not know what they actually do.

The area is described as expensive and, by the looks of things, immune to cutbacks. It is a widespread impression that the support staff work primarily with strategy, but that the strategy does not support the development of research, education and public-sector consultancy. Some general frustration with a lack of responsiveness on the part of the central management at vice-dean, dean and rector level is voiced under this item, and several respondents feel that they are responsible for the financial difficulties.

1) Lack of contact with operations
2) Unclear duties
3) Expensive and protected
4) Too much strategy
5) Responsible for financial problems.

Research Support Office

The area is mainly commented on by staff and almost not at all by students. In the summary of comments, the comments from the two groups are not differentiated.

The unit receives relatively few comments. Some would like the unit to be in closer contact with the actual research, so that staff can provide guidance with regard to formalities as well as acting as a professional sounding board, rather than just focusing on formal requirements. Others do not think that this would be a good idea.

There is a wish for closer integration with AU Finance and with HR. The support is described by some as being person-dependent, both in relation to researcher and consultant. There is a call for better support for humanities and social science projects and for interdisciplinary initiatives.

Some respondents are unclear what the unit has to offer, and several respondents want a more decentralised structure, particularly outside the Aarhus Campus. There is a call for more support for PhD students and early postdocs.

1) Closer contact with researchers
2) Better integration with, for example, AU Finance and HR
3) Expensive operations
4) Lack of academic insights
5) Focus on health and science subjects
6) Unclear fields of work
7) Additional focus on young researchers.

Room booking function

The students are calling for there to be more of a grip on room bookings at Aarhus University; double bookings, difficulties finding rooms for project work etc. are mentioned by many respondents.

Technical/administrative staff members would like to have an integrated room booking system, and the academic staff members are virtually in line with the students, calling for a better grip on this and more focus on the issue.

It is striking that some respondents comment that they (often?) see empty rooms at Aarhus University, while it is at the same time difficult to find/book rooms.

Staff survey:

1. Centralise the room booking function completely!
2. Centralisation has gone too far
3. Double bookings
4. Insufficient planning
5. Too many students in rooms which are too small
6. Having to book rooms in Copenhagen via Aarhus – crazy!
7. Lack of information about rooms
8. There are empty rooms, while it is difficult to find available rooms???
9. IT system is difficult and incomprehensible
10. Lack of service from room booking function
11. Too little space for social activities at Aarhus University
12. Call for new integrated room booking platform
13. Call for the issue of how to handle room bookings across Aarhus University to be addressed
14. Meeting rooms cannot be booked across the faculties/Aarhus University
15. Uncertainty about future location and the many relocations are mentioned.

Student survey:

1. Having to attend lectures and classes all over Aarhus University is not satisfactory – "I feel that we're running around AU, and we often have to jump on our bikes to make it. It doesn't give us much of a break."
2. Students experience double bookings of teaching rooms (a lot of comments)
3. Teaching in rooms with not enough seating
4. Lack of integrated system support for room bookings
5. Call for rooms for project work
6. Call for more flexible rules for booking rooms
7. Poor planning
8. Lack of cooperation across the faculties to improve the utilisation of rooms – several respondents mention empty rooms
9. Long response times in connection with room bookings
10. Lack of information and introduction to room booking function!

11. Booking of rooms for the next day may take place from midnight – why? Everybody is waiting, and the system is often down.

Technology Transfer Office (TTO)

The area is mainly commented on by staff and almost not at all by students. In the summary of comments, the comments from the two groups are not differentiated.

The unit receives relatively few comments, which paint a somewhat mixed picture. Some respondents cannot see the point of the unit and think that it is too costly. Others think that the unit is efficient, useful and not given a high enough priority. Some respondents call for faster response times and more integration both with the academic environments and with specific companies. Respondents report very mixed experiences, from useful and efficient to situations where the researcher has had to handle everything himself anyway. Some do not know what TTO does; this also applies to students working with innovation.

1) Faster response
2) Little insight into what the unit does
3) Better integration with academic environments
4) Closer corporate contacts.

Other

Under this item, both the staff survey and the student survey are dominated by issues which have been dealt with under other items (e.g. course administration). A single respondent says that there is a need for peace and quiet to get the university to work. Two wishes are evident in all the comments:

1. Less centralisation, especially of the management's decision-making processes
2. Less administration.

Appendix V: List of background reports

I: Background report concerning interviews with department heads

II: Background report concerning questionnaire-based staff survey

- Appendix: Comments from respondents (to be distributed only after editing mid-June)

III: Background report concerning questionnaire-based student survey

- Appendix: Comments from respondents (to be distributed only after editing mid-June)