Meeting: 19 May 2015, 13-16
Room: Rector’s Office Conference Room
Meeting of the Education Committee

Members: Berit Eika (chair), Peder Østergaard (BSS, vice-chair), Tom Vindbæk Madsen (ST) and Charlotte Ringsted (HE)
Secretarial support: Kristian Thorn, Gitte Stavad, Kirsten Brusgård
Absent: Marianne Ping Huang (AR) and Jan Ifversen (AR)
Guests: Item 2: Ulla Gjørling and Kurt Jensen, Theme: Kirsten Andersen, Christian Koch Ramsing, Anna Bak Maigaard, Liza Strandgaard, Sarah Kjærgaard Pedersen and Line Fristrup

1. Follow-up on the previous meeting
The minutes from the meeting on 30 April were approved.
Kristian Thorne informed the committee that he would pass on information about the discussion of calculation of teaching hours to Universities Denmark’s Team Education.

Mandate for the working group on students as data source was approved with one correction. The mandate will be circulated, and the vice-deans are responsible for appointing members for the working group.

Discussions
2. The study progress reform - Summer University
Berit Eika began by pointing out the Committee on Education’s previous conclusion that summer university can be regarded both as an internationalisation initiative and as a third semester, and that we wish to work with both of these functions.

Kurt Jensen and Ulla Gjørling gave a status report on summer university:
- The vast majority of the course offerings are carried out
- The course offerings do not reflect the academic breadth of Aarhus University
- There is a 20 per cent increase in the number of students, and our own students account for the majority of this increase
- A few popular courses attract a lot of students, e.g. the BA courses

The Committee on Education discussed how the Study Progress Reform will result in an increase in applicants for courses at summer university:
- With more international students, we can expect an increase in activity at summer university
- When the Study Progress Reform begins to affect all students starting next semester, we can expect an increase in applicants for summer university 2016
- Several elements make it difficult to predict the development. For instance the potentially large increase in student FTEs as a result of the Study Progress Reform
• Especially the talented students are expected to apply for summer university in order to earn ECTS in advance
• Summer university can be used to make it possible to carry out an internship/field study worth less than 30 ECTS in the next semester
• There is potential for attracting tuition-paying students

The Committee on Education would like clarification of:
• Whether summer university can count on both semesters or just the spring semester?
• How participation in summer university in-between the Bachelor’s and Master’s level will be handled so that it does not affect the registered completion time negatively?

The Committee on Education concluded:
• The vice-deans will consider in which faculty-level contexts it would be relevant to discuss summer university
• It would be of great value to make PhD offers more visible by placing them alongside the other summer university activities, even though they are organised differently
• The students’ reaction to the Study Progress Reform will be monitored closely so that the course offerings can be adapted accordingly
• If summer university is to be used to recruit more full-degree students, it needs to offer more BA courses
• Summer university will be put on the agenda again at a meeting in the autumn

Decision
3. Longer thesis periods at Aarhus University
Berit Eika began by outlining the task and elements of possible solutions:
• Is it possible to reduce the assessment period?
• It is possible to streamline the writing period? - and what is the role of the supervisor in this context?
• Is it possible to expedite the approval of the thesis statement?
• Is it possible to work on employability by cooperating with companies, government agencies and institutions, upper secondary schools etc.?
• Which degree programmes can make adjustments? - and which degree programmes are willing to test entirely new models?

The task and solutions must be rooted in the search for answers for these questions.

The Committee on Education discussed how a dialogue with the academic environments may inspire different solutions that can fulfil the ambition of more in-depth study and more time to involve external partners, i.e. more integration with the research environment as well as the labour market.
The different initiatives and ideas will be outlined before a new discussion.

4. **Appointment of representative for Arbejdspolitisk Forum Aarhus**
The Committee on Education appointed Jette Hammer.

5. **Strategic projects**
Berit Eika emphasised that it is crucial for our strategic projects to:
- Have specific effect goals
- Clearly contribute to fulfilling the strategic top priorities

Strategic projects that contribute to department-based educational competency development:
- Must be clearly rooted in the departments
- Must be connected with systematic educational competency development in relation to the requirements for institutional accreditation

**Briefing**

6. **Status of top priorities (fixed item)**
Strategic projects and status of top priorities will be discussed in the Committee on Education as soon as possible in order for the overall strategic initiatives to make a visible contribution to the development.

7. **Communication from the meeting (fixed item)**
It was decided that nothing specific from the meeting needed to be communicated outwardly.

8. **Announcements and next meeting**
Among other things, Berit and Peder informed the meeting participants about:
- 1st meeting in Studenterpolitisk Forum on 21 May
- Figures from director of studies that show development in progress
- Employment survey with some interesting results that will have to be brought into use, e.g. through dialogue with the employers

9. **Any other business**
Peder Østergaard gave a brief status report on institutional accreditation at the other universities.
10. **Theme: Teaching evaluation**

The theme discussion of teaching evaluation with a view to establishing a joint system for teaching evaluations was divided into three topics: system support, formulation of questions, and evaluation procedure.

**System support**
Peder Østergaard talked about Aarhus BSS's experiences with joint system support of teaching evaluations integrated with Blackboard. These experiences will be taken into consideration during the election of joint system support. We expect to be able to make a decision on which system to use as soon as possible.

System ownership will be placed with AU Student Administration and Services. The departmental processes will be supported by the administration centres.

**Formulation of questions**
The pro-rector and vice-deans will prepare 3-4 mandatory, cross-disciplinary questions to be repeated in all evaluations, as well as specify the initiative described in ‘Joint action on good education.’

Experiences with and analyses of current questions at the different faculties will be taken into consideration.

The questions will be ready within a month.

**Evaluation procedure**
The vice-deans are responsible for preparing and implementing a faculty-level procedure which, among other things, contains preparation of questions at faculty and/or course level, as well as communication and follow-up to ensure high response rates.

In the long term, it may be examined how a joint system for teaching evaluations, possibly with the addition of individual questions, could replace the study environment survey, since it will allow for closer monitoring of the development.

A joint system for teaching evaluations should also cover the further and continuing education area, so the different elements need to address these activities as well.