

Departmental Forum Meeting: 09. December 2020, 13:00 – 14:00 via Zoom

Present:

Niels Haldrup (Chairman, Head of Department), Sune Lauth Gadegaard (Deputy Chairman), Jonas Nygaard Eriksen, Steen Andersen, Timo Trimbørn, Kristoffer Holst Ibsen, Charlotte Sparrevohn, Alexander Overdal Kjærsgaard Marin, Nicola Maaser, Trine Munk-Olesen, Katrine Studsgaard Albrektsen, Kristoffer Holst Ibsen, Zeynep Yilmaz, Anja Zimmerdahl, Karin Vinding

Absent: Bjørn Aagaard

Moderator: Sune Lauth Gadegaard

Note taker: Karin Vinding

Institut for Økonomi

1. Approval of the agenda

The agenda was approved.

Dato: 9. december 2020

Web: econ.au.dk

2. Approval of minutes from last meeting

The minutes were approved.

Afs. CVR-nr.: 31119103

Side 1/3

3. News from HoD

The HoD started by saying that we are back in lock-down. As for the upcoming exams, we now use "Plan B", i.e., online format for all exams in January and February 2021, which is positive as both examiners and students now know the guidelines and formats for exams.

All section councils have been established and they make up excellent groups that can aid the section head and provide valuable input in discussions.

The section councils are giving feedback to junior employees as to the prospects for getting a tenured position. Kristoffer Ibsen noted that it is not transparent what the good journals are, to which Niels Haldrup replied that the sections will be making journal lists ranking the individual journals.

The department is working on more precise guidelines stating how to qualify for different positions. These guidelines will be fairly generic such that each academic field can make them fit their special needs.

The department presently has some job openings: 5-6 at the junior levels (primarily externally funded), 1-2 assistant professors, and 1 professor in business economics. We will consider using shortlisting for those positions as this will reduce the workload on the assessment committees tremendously as they will only have to assess those who actually qualify. The criteria for the shortlisting will be stated in the job openings.

The AU action plan for gender balance and diversity has been finally approved. We are now required to make recruitment plans that support gender balance.

Work place culture is being discussed extensively at the department, and we will try to handle stress, recognition issues and inappropriate behavior.

Kristoffer Ibsen asked the HoD whether there will be initiatives to ensure the well-being of the employees – especially PhD and international staff - during the lock-down. The HoD hopes that we will be able to return to Fuglesangs Allé after 3 January 2021. If not – the section heads are responsible for ensuring the well-being of all section members.

Sune Gadegaard asked whether the physical well-being is an issue that is being discussed. The HoD replied that we cannot provide e.g. height-adjustable tables to all employees as the financial costs would be extremely high.

Steen Andersen asked whether it would be possible to get access to a class room and make Zoom-teaching there as blackboards etc. are in place. The HoD replied that that would be contrary to the official policies; only a few TAs may be allowed to do so and only if there are very special circumstances.

4. Reminder regarding election processes. Elections for the forum in November/December

Sune Gadegaard gave a kind reminder that in even years the Econometrics and Business Analytics section and the Economics section should elect representatives for the Departmental Forum.

5. Discussion point according to annual cycle: Vision and strategy for the department and for BSS based on the ECON whitepaper for 2021

The HoD informed the forum that a strategy meeting was held in November. The ECON strategy was discussed at the meeting, as it is important that it is aligned with that of BSS and AU.

Gender balance has become an important issue.

Our collaboration with companies and other external entities is extremely comprehensive, but we need to make it more visible to all parties. Our expertise is widely used and our students have extensive collaboration with companies.

Jonas Eriksen noted that gender balance is well covered in the White Paper, but diversity and climate are issues that are not included. Also, there seems to be a strong focus on publishing in BFI 2 and 3 journals. The HoD replied that publishing in the top journals is, in fact, very important – also from a financial point of view. An article in a BFI 1 journal

pays about DKK 35.000 and an article in a BFI 3 journal pays DKK 150.000. As regards climate it is hard to see which initiatives the department could make that would make a difference. And diversity in general is an issue in the action plan.

Side 3/3

Nicola Maaser asked whether initiatives will be taken to attract more PhD students. The HoD replied that to get more PhD students they will have to be externally funded, so applications for research funds should include one or more PhDs in the budget, if relevant.

The HoD acknowledged that presently, a number of qualified PhD applicants are not offered a position.

Sune Gadegaard noted that the possibility of reducing the teaching norm following a parental leave is very positive, but this is an issue that has to be negotiated for each individual employee. The HoD replied that one size does not necessarily fit all, so the negotiation is a means to find the best solution in each case.

Jorge Hansen was worried about the high drop-out rates, and the HoD replied that we have to distinguish between the undesired and the desired drop-out. In most cases, drop-out rates could be reduced by improving the matching of expectations as seen e.g. in the oecon.-programme that has put much more emphasis on the quantitative contents in its study programme.

6. Input from student representatives

Katrine Albrektsen noted that the lock-down has led to widespread frustration, but added that the students are grateful that exam formats for both January and February exams are known already. Many students do, however, fear that “if you don’t cheat, you will not do as well as those who do”. But Sune Gadegaard reminded her that grading is not relative. A number of technological ideas for how to counter cheating were mentioned, but none of them are supported by existing technology at the AU.

7. Miscellaneous

Sune Gadegaard informed the DF about the intended move of DF documents from Google Drive to Teams.