

Meeting on: 18.12.2018, 15:00 – 17:45
University of Southern Denmark
33rd meeting of the Danish board of SDC

Minutes

Present: Philip John Binning (DTU, Chairman), Inger Askehave (AAU), Kjeld Erik Brødsgaard (CBS), Peter Kjær (RUC), Nils O. Andersen (IKU), Jørgen Staunstrup (ITU), Morten Laugesen (SDC), Kristian Vork Jensen (SDC) and Søren Walbum Høst (SDC)

Present via Skype: Lars Bo Nielsen (AU)

Apologies: Martin Zachariasen (SDU)

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1. Approval of the agenda

The board approved the agenda for the 33rd meeting of the Danish Board of SDC.

2. Strategy for the Danish side of SDC

The Chairman invited the members of the board to each present their most important comments to the strategy framework document. The comments from each board member was followed by a discussion.

Comments from members of the board

Jørgen Staunstrup:

- The focus areas selected for the strategy are too vague and non-committal
- Balanced recruitment between Denmark and China is a key part in any strategy for SDC
- It is a strategic goal to involve all relevant faculties at all universities

Kjeld Erik Brødsgaard:

- With regard to increased impact, creating a stronger research community in the Huairou area should be a priority of the strategy. This could include formalized events, where researchers, teachers, and others meet in Huairou.
- Furthermore, systematized efforts to map presence by Danish researchers at SDC in China and stronger reporting by individuals receiving support through SDC would be beneficial to increase impact.
- Other foreign universities present in China such as Berkley and Stanford should be included in the scope of strengthened collaboration

Nils O. Andersen:

- Consider the notion "Gateway to China". Is it a gateway for all Danish researchers, is it a gateway to China or only a gateway to UCAS?
- Make the building attractive to both Danish and Chinese partners
- Dissemination of results and promotion of SDC is crucial

Philip John Binning:

- The focus areas are too fluffy and resemble mission more than vision.
- The vision should be more clearly defined.
- We must be much more clear about our ambitions for the strategy, e.g. "SDC is the most important international collaborator for UCAS", or "Full enrolment in all degree programs in five years".

Inger Askehave:

- From Project to Institution is our vision. We should dwell on this notion and let it permeate the strategy.
- The guiding principle for broader involvement initiatives should be a 'what's-in-it-for-me' approach.
- The commitment of the universities to SDC is essential. Define what it means for the universities to be part of SDC.

Peter Kjær:

- SDC is also a gateway to collaboration with other universities. An opportunity to connect with academic partners outside UCAS.
- Suggests a tour of the Danish universities. The purpose should be to secure informal contracts on what each partner wants to focus on the coming years.

- Consider the possibility of alignment with Chinese policies such as “Made-in-China 2025”

Lars Bo Nielsen:

- Clearly define who our key stakeholders are.
- Conduct a SWOT analysis.
- Introducing summer schools has great potential to strengthen the educational activities.
- As part of the efforts of turning SDC into a hub for Sino-Danish research collaboration, events should be institutionalized and described in an annual wheel for SDC.
- Consider establishing employer panels for each MSc Programme.

Conclusions from the discussion

Vision

The vision headline “From Project to Institution” is well chosen, but the vision itself should be elaborated upon. The vision should define the goals we are working towards.

Initiatives tailored to our stakeholders

The initiatives should be directed at stakeholders at different levels, e.g.

- as a teacher you experience you become part of the SDC community, that you are affiliated with the SDC
- not only tell the institutions about the opportunities, but also ask them what they want to get out of their involvement in SDC
- work toward making it legitimate for the university managements to place an employment with SDC
- introduce executive programmes for industry and institutions – both Danish and Chinese, e.g. welfare programmes for Chinese public servants.

Recruitment of students to the MSc programmes

Recruitment remains a key point of concern also when it concerns the strategy. The goal should be to have more applicants than available seats five years from now.

To achieve this we need to find out what the student really find attractive and focus on what the students want. We must make sure that the programmes have the potential to attract applicants.

Initiatives could include:

- Establishment of employer panels. Find out what the employers want and communicate it to possible applicants
- Organize summer schools
- SDC must be more visible at the Danish partner universities. Introduction of summer schools also could contribute to this.

Structure and content

Structuring the strategy around 3 areas works well.

Mission and vision must be clearly defined.

SWOT

Carry out a SWOT analysis.

Among the threats are:

- Failing recruitment

- Changing attitude towards China
- Absence of SDC's founding fathers

The absence of a permanent faculty is both our strength and a vulnerability. Look to institutions elsewhere in the world with a similar set-up. How do they create a sense of affiliation? How are you part of the faculty? How do they secure the support of the home institutions?

3. Industry Advisory Board (IAB)

New Terms of Reference for the Industry Advisory Board was presented to the board. The matter of nominating members to the IAB was referred to a subcommittee consisting of board members Kjeld Erik Brødsgaard and Nils O. Andersen. In order to recruit top-level company representatives the board will ask the minister to sign a supporting letter.

4. The SDC Building and a risk assessment

The Director explained the process of remedying defects in the SDC building. The Danish Industry Foundation has contributed funds to this end. SDC has hired professional expertise to manage and carry out the remedies. The Chairman and the Director will meet with the ministry in late January 2019 to discuss how to proceed with the task and how to divide responsibilities going forward.

The board will follow the situation closely. The SDC Building will be a fixed item on the board's agenda for future meetings.

5. SDC Finances, Forecast 2, 2018

The board took note of the forecast for 2018.

6. SDC Finances, Budget 2019

The board approved the budget for 2019.

The board agreed that SDC should not fund a research area in Astro- and Particle Physics. The area shows great potential for research collaboration between Denmark and China but establishing a Master's programme will be unfeasible because it will most likely not be possible to recruit a sufficient number of Danish students. In accordance with previous decisions of the board and JMC, SDC should not engage in standalone research activities and therefore SDC is not the right framework for such a collaboration.

The board noted an increase in salary costs. The increase is due to the employment of an event coordinator in the SDC building, who has been in charge of more than a hundred events in the building in the past six months. Furthermore, SDC is planning to station an employee at the Innovation Centre in Shanghai to strengthen our relations with companies in that geographical area of China.

The Director informed the board that the budget forecasts for 2020 and onwards show large deficits that must be addressed. The board agreed and decided to discuss this at the coming meeting in April 2019.

7. Template for SDC's Annual Report 2018

The Director presented a template for an Annual Report of the Danish side of SDC. The annual report will be SDC's pitch to especially the Danish universities. It does not include financial information since this information is an integrated part of Aarhus University's annual report.

The board noted that some data should preferably show the development over years instead of just one year. Furthermore, the data on student enrolment should not be disaggregated by university. The annual report should strengthen the spirit of joint-ownership among the Danish partners.

The board suggested aligning the annual report with the future strategy.

The board suggested that the following items be added:

- Overview of graduates
- Executive summary
- A total list of publications
- State obtainment of new research funding, start up of new projects if any
- Use a general map/section of the region instead of a China cut-out
- A section on the graduation ceremony, which is always a highlight of the year

A final draft will be presented at the meeting in April 2019.

8. Annual wheel of the board for 2019

The board approved the annual wheel.

One change has been made. It is expected that the JMC meeting will, like the meeting of the Danish Board of SDC, be conducted around the time of the graduation ceremony.

This will give board and committee members the opportunity to meet and also take part in the graduation event.

9. Evaluation of the board 2019

The board supports doing an evaluation, but in a less elaborate form than the example included in the material.

Inger Askehave will forward an example of an appropriate format to the SDC office for reference.

10. Announcements from the Director

The Director informed the board about topics of current interest in relation to SDC including the last JMC meeting, possible collaboration with Danish companies and Chinese local governments in Weifang county, Shandong province.

11. Approval of meeting times for the Danish Board of SDC 2020

First meeting of 2020: 3 April. Location: Porcelænsøen, CBS

Second meeting of 2020: 26 June. Location: Beijing

Third meeting of 2020: 15 December. Location: AAU

Board meetings 2019

- 5 April, 10:00 – 13:00. Location: ITU
- 28 June. Location: Beijing
- 11 December, 10:00 – 13:00. Location: RUC