

Meeting on: 15 December 2020, 10:00 – 13:00

Conducted as online meeting

41st meeting of the Danish Board of SDC

Minutes

Present: Lars Bo Nielsen (AU, Vice-chair), Rasmus Antoft (AAU), John Renner Hansen (KU), Bjarne Graabech Sørensen (SDU), Dana Minbaeva (CBS), Georg Dam Steffensen (ITU), Peter Kjær (RUC), Morten Laugesen (SDC), Søren Walbum Høst (SDC)

Apologies: Philip Binning (DTU)

- 1. Approval of the Agenda**
- 2. Enrolment of Students 2021**
- 3. Action Plan 2021**
- 4. The SDC Building**
- 5. Economy – Forecast 2, 2020**
- 6. Economy – Budget for 2021**
- 7. Annual wheel of the Danish board of SDC**
- 8. Approval of Rules of Procedure of the Danish board of SDC**
- 9. Board meetings 2022**
- 10. Subjects for discussion at future board meetings**
- 11. Messages from the SDC Director**
- 12. The Annual Report of the Director**

1. Approval of the Agenda

The board approved the agenda for the 41st meeting of the Danish board of SDC.

2. Enrolment of Students 2021

The board decided at its meeting in October to postpone the decision regarding enrolment of Danish and international students for the meeting in January 2021. However, in order to continue recruitment of students and provide possible applicants with relevant

and timely information the board agreed that a decision must be made now even though it is extremely difficult to foresee the near future.

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The board acknowledged that the issue presents difficult dilemmas and that the expected number of Danish and international applicants for SDC in 2021 will most likely decrease compared to previous years.

In a comprehensive discussion, the board took into consideration

- 1) that SDC's educational and research activities involving Danish university employees will have to continue in 2021 irrespectively of corona-related travel restrictions.
- 2) that some Danish students are still interested in spending semesters abroad. Hence, Danish and international students should not be prevented from applying for SDC programs.
- 3) that the survey conducted among students from cohort 2020 to assess the impact of Covid-19 measures on their satisfaction, teaching quality, study environment, etc. It is evident that Covid-19 has had a significant negative impact on many aspects of SDC student life.
- 4) that it will be virtually impossible for SDC to deliver 'what students might rightfully expect' as long as Chinese borders are closed and the international element of SDC is mainly achieved by online interaction with Chinese classmates.

The board agreed to continue recruitment of Danish and international students for SDC's eight master's programs. The decision was made to accommodate the interest of the students, with the following preconditions:

- Possible applicants must be fully informed of the risk that courses, semesters or even the entire program may be conducted as online teaching.
- All applicants must also be encouraged to apply for alternative MSc programs
- Applicants must be provided with a time frame for decisions regarding online teaching and other relevant matters so they can act accordingly

The board asked the Danish SDC office to prepare a timetable/decision calendar listing deadlines for important decision throughout 2021 so all relevant parties, e.g. applicants, students, HEPs, teachers, PC, etc., can see when they can expect information.

The board asked the Danish SDC office to contact the Danish Ministry for Higher Education and Science to explore the possibility of allowing Danish applicants to SDC programs to transfer to alternative programs at Danish universities as late as August if China continues to close its borders. Naturally, such a model will apply to Danish applicants only.

3. Action Plan 2021

Implementation of the approved action plan for 2020 has been seriously affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and many initiatives has been put on hold. Given the uncertainty of the near future it is deemed pointless to approve on an action plan for 2021. However, strategic initiatives already initiated including evaluation of the educational portfolio, development of a recruitment plan, improvement of administrative support for PhD students and many more initiatives will not be suspended.

The board asked the SDC director to present an updated action plan and (if needed) a revised strategy at the next ordinary meeting in April.

4. The SDC Building

A framework agreement between the contractor, SDC, and the contractor consultant, Arriema/COWI, is in the process of being finalized. As soon as the partners have signed the agreement, the process of identifying defects and repair these can commence. DTU Campus Service has provided valuable assistance in the final stages of the process.

Morten Laugesen informed the board of the dialog between UCAS and the Danish Ministry for Higher Education and Research related to the payment of the final two rates of the donation from the Danish Industry Foundation.

The board took note of the information.

5. Economy – Forecast 2, 2020

Due to the adjustment and transfer of funding for the SDC Building from 2020 to 2021 and to the impact of Covid-19, a considerable surplus is expected for 2020.

The board discussed the forecast and decided to allocate funding from 2021 onwards for strategic initiatives so future budgets reflect the high level of ambitions incorporated in the SDC strategy 2020-25 and at the same time provide a financial opportunity to follow the recommendations of the evaluation group for SDC's educational portfolio.

6. Economy – Budget for 2021

The presented budget for 2021 reflects the assumption that no travelling to China is allowed for Danish teachers and researchers during the spring semester and that China will

gradually open up for visits during autumn 2021. The board acknowledged that many budgetary factors are uncertain and asked that a revised and updated forecast is presented to the board at the meeting in June.

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The board asked that budgets from 2021 onwards reflect the board's decision to allocate funding for strategic initiatives and asked that future income predictions reflects the most recent PL-regulations.

With these comments, the board approved the budget for 2021.

7. Annual wheel of the Danish board of SDC

The board decided to revisit the strategy and subsequent action plan for 2021 at the ordinary meeting in April. There may be a need to revisit the long-term strategy following the findings and recommendations of the evaluation group and the current international situation.

8. Approval of Rules of Procedure of the Danish board of SDC

John Renner Hansen suggested a few specific adjustments to the Rules of Procedure. The suggestions will be forwarded to the SDC office. A revised set of Rules of Procedure will be presented to the board for approval at the meeting in April.

9. Board meetings 2022

The board will decide on meeting dates for 2022 at the next meeting in April.

10. Subjects for discussion at future board meetings

Going forward, the board members have the opportunity at every meeting to suggest subjects for analysis/decision/discussion at coming meetings. In addition to the suggested subjects presented in the meeting material, the board members mentioned the following:

- The role of SDC and the board in relation to the ongoing Danish debate about collaboration with China. The Danish universities face challenges in their collaboration with Chinese universities. SDC could play a more visible role in showing how a balanced collaboration is possible.
- The intake of EU/EØS and international students at SDC

11. Messages from the SDC Director

Morten Laugesen informed the board of his dialog with the Danish Ministry for Higher Education and Science to allow access for Danish and international SDC students at Danish universities.

SDC celebrated its 10 years anniversary on December 11 during an online event that also included the launch of the first volume of a joint research report focusing on Energy Transition. The event was hosted in the SDC Building in Beijing.

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The board took note of the information.

12. The Annual Report of the Director

Morten Laugesen informed the board of the activities on the Danish side of SDC in 2020 focusing on strategic initiatives, economic performance, the Danish SDC office and its administrative support, and finally the partnership and collaboration with UCAS.

The board took note of the information.