

**Minutes from the Danish SDC board meeting, 26 June 2015, 16.00-18.00 in Minutes
Beijing, China**

Present: Brian Bech Nielsen (AU, Chairman), Jørgen Staunstrup (ITU), Kjeld Erik Brødsgaard (CBS), Thomas Bjørnholm (KU), Peter Kjær (RUC), Martin Zachariassen (SDU), Lauritz B. Holm-Nielsen (SDC), Morten Laugesen (SDC), Søren Walbum Høst (SDC).

Absent with notice: Inger Askehave (AAU), Martin Bendsøe (DTU).

- 1. Approval of Agenda**
- 2. Approval of Minutes from the SDC board meeting, 17 February 2015**
- 3. Briefing from the SDC Director**
- 4. Evaluation of the SDC collaboration**
- 5. Financial Forecast 2015**
- 6. Any other business**

The Danish SDC-secretariat

Date: 10. September 2015

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The Chairman initially welcomed SDU's newly appointed member of the Danish SDC board, Mr. Martin Zachariassen.

1. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved

2. Approval of Minutes from the SDC board meeting, 17 February 2015

DTU finds the reference to nationality under item 6, Guidelines for Danish SDC PhD scholarships problematic.

Morten Laugesen explained that UCAS has several times informed the Danish side that national regulations in China state that Chinese citizens in foreign PhD positions cannot be awarded a Chinese PhD double degree, which is a prerequisite in the Partnership Agreement. Chinese citizens must pass the national PhD entry exam to be registered as PhD students in China.

The board agreed that nationality should not be a formal criterion for selection of PhD scholars but took notice of the information provided by the SDC secretariat. The minutes were then approved.

3. Briefing from the SDC Director

3.1 *Recruitment, applicants and enrolment 2015*

A record number (147) of students have applied through the Danish universities for enrolment in the SDC Master's programmes in 2015. At present 60 applicants have accepted, up from approximately 50 students in previous years. Filling up the available seats on the natural science programmes remains a challenge even though positive tendencies can be detected here too. For example 5 students have accepted their seat on the CBE programme.

The board took note of the information and made the following remarks:

- All but one SDC Master's programme (PMSD) have full intake of Chinese students, which is positive as these will all visit Denmark and be open to the possibility of pursuing a career in a Danish company or institution of research.
- There is a significant interest from Danish employers in employing graduates from some of the science programmes.
- The board agreed that increasing the number of students enrolled through the Danish side has a high priority and the following suggestions to improve recruitment were made:
 - The universities should inspect the programmes and consider whether some of them are too narrowly defined. Furthermore, it should be considered whether the recruitment base for some of the programmes could be broadened.
 - All efforts must be made to ensure the visibility of SDC and its Master's programmes both in the national media, university media platforms etc. The board members also have a role to play in ensuring that SDC gets attention at their respective institutions
 - The board encouraged the SDC secretariat staff to meet with local board members and recruitment group members during recruitment activities at the different universities.
 - The board invited the SDC secretariat to inform the relevant board members of any obstacle to recruitment activities at the various institutions
 - It is important that the short-term study possibility is implemented

Finally, the SDC Director mentioned that in order to revitalize the SDC recruitment group the universities should perhaps reconsider whether they have appointed a representative with the necessary institutional backing.

3.2 *Study visits for Master students at SDC in Beijing*

The SDC Director informed that the Ministry of Higher Education and Science has sent a letter to the SDC secretariat in which they accept the model of short-term stays at SDC for DK students in case there are empty seats. The board welcomed the decision and asked the SDC Director to discuss the details with UCAS as soon as possible.

3.3 *Status on the development of a Food & Health Master's programme*

The SDC Director informed the board on the progression of developing Food and Health Master's programme.

At the moment, Professor Klaus Grunert from Aarhus University is identifying relevant Danish research environments across the Danish universities. There is strong interest from Danish industries in a programme of this nature.

DTU has stressed the importance of designing a Master's programme with a broad recruitment perspective.

Jørgen Staunstrup suggested that the research environment at University of Copenhagen for IT in agriculture be explored.

Thomas Bjørnholm stressed that University of Copenhagen is reluctant to support the implementation of a new SDC Master's programme at a time when many resources are invested in further developing the existing seven Master's programmes.

Brian Bech Nielsen concluded the discussion and stressed that the board has not made a final decision yet whether to start up a Master's programme in Food and Health. The board invited the SDC Director to provide more information at the next board meeting in September.

4. Evaluation of the SDC Collaboration

Purpose of the evaluation

The board agrees that it is aiming for an evaluation, which can give impetus to the SDC-collaboration by pointing to areas where improvements can be made and provide constructive suggestions on how to move forward. In conclusion the evaluation should not point to a transformation of SDC, but to ways of making adjustments with the aim of fulfilling the visions described in the Partnership Agreement.

Self-evaluation

A self-evaluation group will be appointed to author a self-evaluation report to be presented to the board and subsequently an external evaluation panel. The self-evaluation group can use focus groups to collect data and input for the self-evaluation report. The focus groups should be tasked with presenting proposals for improvement of aspects of the SDC-collaboration. This is in line with the SDC board's intention of implementing a solution-oriented evaluation.

The self-evaluation group will consist of 5-7 individuals involved in the SDC, i.e. teachers, course coordinators, HEPs and PCs. Birthe Holst Jørgensen (DTU), Principal Coordinator of Sustainable Energy has been asked to chair the self-evaluation group. Representatives from the SDC secretariat will support the self-evaluation group in its work

The board invited the SDC Director to continue the process of composing a self-evaluation group and suggested the Ministry of Higher Education and Science is also invited to participate in framing the evaluation.

Scope of the evaluation:

The board agreed that the purpose of SDC should be key to the evaluation, namely:

- Achieve excellence in graduate education and research by combining the best competencies, teaching traditions and research environments in the two countries.
- Increase the mobility of students, teachers and scientific personnel between Denmark and China.
- Enhance Sino-Danish scientific and technological collaboration by creating a platform for joint education and research activities and for bilateral cooperation between CAS/UCAS and the Danish universities.

Furthermore Thomas Bjørnholm suggested that the following areas should be included in the evaluation:

- How the economic incentives serve to fulfil the main purposes of the SDC
- How to promote and strengthen the research base

The board members have throughout their service on the Danish SDC board continuously received input from many sources. Likewise, the SDC Director and the SDC secretariat are in continuous dialogue with the Ministry and the universities. In the course of this process, numerous challenges and issues have come to the knowledge of the board and the secretariat. Many of these issues have already been discussed at board meetings while others have been identified, but remain to be addressed.

The board asserts that issues, which have already been identified by the board as issues of high priority, need to be addressed as soon as possible and should not be part of an evaluation thereby delaying their solution. The board thus concluded that a list of the issues to be addressed by the board, rather than in an evaluation, must be prepared.

The board therefore decided that the following issues will be addressed by the board, exclusively:

- Continued development of mechanisms for involving excellent academic partners supplementing the competences of CAS and UCAS
- Governance structure as defined in the Partnership Agreement
- Recruitment for the Master's programmes
- Involvement of industrial partners, including the role and function of the Industrial advisory board (IAB)
- Distribution of PhD funding

The board invited the SDC Director to prepare a more detailed list of issues to the board before the next board meeting in September.

Composition of the external evaluation panel:

The external evaluation panel should consist of international experts. It was suggested that members of SDC's International Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB) could be invited to be panel members. The board asked the SDC Director to present a list of candidates at the next board meeting.

5. Financial Forecast 2015

The financial forecast shows a few deviations compared to the latest forecast presented at the previous meeting. The forecast is still within the approved budget framework.

The following changes warrant remarks:

- Educational activities in Denmark. UCAS has allocated CNY 240.000 per programme to finance Chinese SDC students' visit to Denmark. The Danish side has decided to support the initiative by allocating DKK 5000 per visiting Chinese student to the Danish host institutions. The expenses have been added to the budget item "Uddannelsesaktiviteter". This explains the rise in expenses on this item.
- Sustainable Energy. Budget for the second half of 2015 has awaited approval from the SDC secretariat as further clarification on a few issues was needed. The budget for the second half of 2015 will be approved shortly and will be within the budget frame approved by the board.
- Due to the recent delay in the building process of the House of the Danish Industry Foundation there will be no expense for operating building in 2015. Nor will expenses for IT equipment.

The board took note of the information.

6. Any Other Business

No issues were discussed.

2015 meetings of the Danish SDC Board

22. September 2015: SDC board meeting (AU with videolink to CPH) 14.00-15.30

15. December 2015 SDC board meeting (Danske Universiteter, Fiolstræde) 16.30-18.00

2016 meetings of the Danish SDC Board

1. March 2016: SDC board meeting (AU with videolink to CPH) 14.00-15.30

25-27 June 2016: SDC Graduation and board meeting in Beijing (date and time tbd)

27 September 2016: SDC board meeting (AU with videolink to CPH) 14.00-15.30

13 December 2016: SDC board meeting (Danske Universiteter, Fiolstræde) 16.30-18.00