

Meeting on: 9 October 2020

Online, 10.00-12.00

39th meeting of the Danish board of SDC (extraordinary)

Minutes

Present: Philip John Binning (DTU, Chair), Lars Bo Nielsen (AU, Vice-chair), Rasmus Antoft (AAU), John Renner Hansen (KU), Bjarne Graabech Sørensen (SDU), Dana Minbaeva (CBS), Morten Laugesen (SDC), Søren Walbum Høst (SDC)

Absent with apologies: Peter Kjær (RUC), Georg Dam Steffensen (ITU)

1. Approval of Agenda

2. Approval of minutes from the 38th meeting of the Danish board of SDC

3. Evaluation of SDC's educational portfolio – meeting with the working group

4. Alternatives to start-up in China

5. Meeting with the Rectors' Conference

6. Alternative procedure for budgeting 2021

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1. Approval of Agenda

The board approved the agenda.

2. Approval of minutes from the 38th meeting of the Danish board of SDC

The board approved the minutes.

3. Evaluation of SDC's educational portfolio – meeting with the working group

Philip Binning initially asked that the terms of reference for the working group is updated in accordance with the board's decision at the last meeting:

- It must be stated explicitly that termination of MSc programmes is an option.
- The working group should preferably also look into the potential of alternative models such as the 1+1 model and semester-stays in China.

Philip Binning stressed that recruitment of more Danish students is a top priority for the Danish SDC board as well as for the rectors of the Danish universities. If the analysis by the working group eventually reveals that the recruitment potential of a specific MSc program is too low then the SDC board must react, e.g. by broadening the academic scope of

the MSc program to open for more applicants with different academic backgrounds or ultimately terminating the MSc program.

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The working group presented the scope and ambitions of the evaluation and the likely approach to the analysis. The board praised the work of the group done so far and expressed its confidence in the future process.

The board asked the group to consider the following points:

- Academic quality of the MSc programs should be taken into consideration and the board suggested appointing a group of academics to provide input with regard to academic quality and relevance.
- Is there a global trend that fewer international students decide to go to China for their studies?
- Important that the employers' perspective is taken into account. Are the programs recognised? Are the graduates in demand, i.e. do they have the right set of competences that employers need?

The working group inquired about the following:

- The possibility of seeking the involvement of external experts, e.g. at EAIE.
 - The board supports involving external experts
- Due to corona restrictions the group has lost a little momentum and thus asked whether the planned halfway meeting with the board could be postponed till mid-January
 - The board supports the suggestion. A meeting will be scheduled as soon as possible.
- The working group considers hiring an external partner to do a survey
 - The board notes that the experience with surveys among students shows that students are less likely to respond compared to surveys handled by the universities themselves. Therefore, the board does not recommend hiring externals to this end. However, when it comes to a survey among alumni, it is relevant to consider external assistance. The group has a budgetary frame of DKK 100.000

4. Alternatives to start-up in China

Cohort 2020

The board agreed that there is no realistic alternative for the 2020 cohort. If cohort 2020 cannot go to China, the teaching will be conducted online. SDC in collaboration with SDC's pedagogical unit SMIL (Study Milieu and Intercultural Learning) has developed a

concept for support of the study environment, which will continue during the spring semester if students are unable to go to China. It is important that the decision is made together with UCAS and announced to all relevant parties as soon as possible allowing students, staff, etc. to plan accordingly.

Cohort 2021

The board considered three options if the students cannot start their studies at SDC in China:

- Teaching the MSc programs online
- Establishing a physical hub in Denmark for Danish and International students
- Pausing intake of students for a year

The board concluded that establishing a physical hub in Denmark is neither a realistic nor an attractive alternative.

Recent surveys among students in Denmark show that students are not satisfied with online studies although some initiatives may help to alleviate the downsides of online studying. SDC would have to make an ambitious plan for how to provide an added value from studying online at SDC. Recruitment, however, will be very difficult.

The board agreed that the risks of pausing the intake of students for a year are hard to foresee. Furthermore, this decision cannot be taken without the Chinese partner. The board asked the director to contact the Chinese partners informally to better understand how they see the situation. It is also important that the Ministry is consulted before and if such a decision is made.

The board decided to postpone the decision until feedback has been received from the Chinese partners and the Ministry. The decision should be made as soon as possible and thus the board will correspond on e-mail or convene for an extraordinary board meeting if necessary.

5. Meeting with the Rectors' Conference

Philip Binning informed the board of the meeting with the Danish Rectors' Conference. The rectors stress that China is still very important to Denmark and that collaboration has high priority. The rectors are concerned about the situation faced by SDC's current and coming students and stressed the importance of providing attractive alternatives if the students cannot go to China for their studies.

6. Alternative procedure for budgeting 2021

Morten Laugesen informed the board about the alternative procedure in light of the effect the pandemic has on SDC's activities. The board agreed with the recommendations from the SDC office.

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Morten Laugesen informed the board of the new draft legislation concerning collaboration with universities in China and how this may potentially affect the partnership.