Meeting SAT Computer 08-05-2024

Present:

- Dan Witzner Hansen (HoSP BSWU)
- Therese Graversen (HoSP BDS)
- Luca Maria Aiello (HoSP KDS)
- Alessandro Bruni (substitute HoSP KCS)

- Malthe Rødsgaard Pabst Lauridsen (KDS)
- Nicklas Ostenfeldt Gardil (BSWU)
- Lena Winther Jensen (KSD)
- Cristina Avram (BDS)

- Paolo Tell (guest)
- Mette Holm Smidt (ProCoor BDS/KDS)
- Allette Bjørn Bundgaard (ProCoor SWU/CS)
- Marc Kellaway (ProCoor SD, Secretary SAT CS)
- Viktoria Hofbaur (DoE support)

Absent:

- Louise Meier Carlsen (Co-HoSP BSWU)
- Theodor Christian Kier (KCS)
- Patrick Bahr (HoSP KSD)

Minutes:

1. Approval of agenda:
The agenda was approved.

2. Approval of minutes from meeting 10-04-2024
No comments to the minutes received within the 10 working days period. Minutes approved.

3. Discussion of draft for study environment action plan

Viktoria: We have looked at the input from the workshop, and the point of today is to talk about the draft for the action plan. Do you find the selected subjects relevant? Is anything missing? Which areas should be prioritized? After having gathered input for the plan, it will go back to BoS, who will decide on a 4 year plan for 2024-2028. This also means that in two years we will get data again, and have the option to revise the plan at that point.

Therese: I think the FM related things are good points. I also had some good discussions with them at the workshop. Most should be easy fixes and improve wellbeing for everyone. The same goes for the issues with the toilets.

Malthe: I find that a lot of the same things apply for RLV as for EHK. It can be difficult to find a spot to sit and work, especially in the exam period.

Cristina: If we need to prioritize, I think the least important one is the one about a more welcoming atrium. All the others are very relevant, and I would prioritize by the one we are doing the worst at.

Viktoria: Some are more short-term – especially the ones regarding FM, the cleaning of the toilets and similar. But we are also talking longer the visions. Perhaps we should go through them one by one.

Dan: Can you tell more about the meaning of "Constructive feedback mechanism. Better feedback on course changes."?

Therese: I think this is about how to communicate when we make changes based on feedback. A new cohort should know when something has been fixed.

Malthe: This might improve the problem that people do not feel their feedback makes any difference. It would be good, if people could better see the actual changes based on feedback from the previous semester.

Dan: We do try this a bit already, but a teacher might decide not doing what students say.

Therese: We already do this in the Study Programme Report.

Marc: As I see it, giving feedback is not the same as always we need to do everything the students suggest. To give the students a reason for why we chose not to do it is also feedback.

Therese: I agree we might want to look into ways of giving feedback, but we have to find a way where it does not backfire into the teaching. If we start a new course by going out there and saying everything has been changed due to this feedback, we might look weak. So, we also need to protect the teachers, and make it work for everyone.

Dan: I just wish it was possible to communicate, that the reason we want feedback, is for the teacher to facilitate in the best way what should happen in the course. It is not asking for small details like "I do not like the way he makes the slides" or similar.

Therese: It also puts pressure on the teacher, if we always need to present a reason for not following suggestions, like always having to explain yourself. I think it has gone overboard a bit, and I would like to get back to normal, with more trust in the choices the teacher makes.

Luca: I think a place where the students can see things happening can create a positive dynamic. The student then knows that things can be changed, and might be more willing to give feedback.

Nicklas: When I talk to my co-students, the perception is that the evaluations do not change anything, so something needs to change in this regard.

Luca: We need a more visible way to show change.

Therese: But we do not need to take everything into consideration. We do make informed choices as teachers already.

Niclas: I agree that not every idea is good. I am just repeating what I hear people say.

Paolo: Perhaps we could make the surveys a mandatory activity. The problem as is now is that the data is not reliable with so small a percentage of the students answering.

Lucas: It would be impossible to enforce it as mandatory in general, but we can do it individually by making them do it in class.

Viktoria: So, feedback mechanisms are relevant to discuss?

Therese: Maybe some external input would be good?

Dan: Would it be possible to specify to the students what the goal of the course evaluations is? To say they should focus on *this*, not on *that*? Perhaps have some guidelines for what we want to achieve?

Therese: The current questions are not very useful.

Lucas: This is not simple to change, but perhaps it could be an action point?

Viktoria: Group work was another discussion big point. Any comments on this?

Paolo: Different courses require different set-ups. It seems that standardizing the processes are the vision, but this might not necessarily be a good idea, as there a lot of considerations that are course specific. I am not sure group work contracts will be the answer in fixing things. I've both seen it being useful and not working at all.

Cristina: What it a group contract? I do not think I have met this.

Therese: I think this is what you do in the 1st Year Project. It is to ensure alignment of expectations among peers. What should the level be? What are we aiming for? Nothing more formal than that.

Viktoria: The discussion about group work at the workshop was also about who is responsible for it. The TAs? The teachers? The students themselves? It is also an aspect that ITU has a lot of group work. Are all students aware of this when they enter the university?

Paolo: If I understood correctly, it should be possible to go through a programme without doing group work.

Marc: Not if the group work is part of the ILOs for the programme - or part of the ILOs for a mandatory course on the programme.

Malthe: I haven't experienced problems in forming groups, but I noted when starting on the masters' that it was hard for the new people not already coming from ITU. So how do we ensure that people take care of each other, and help people we do not know already get into a group too? If we want a culture of people being more inclusive in the groups, contracts might help as a way of building trust, when taking a new person into your group.

Viktoria: Then we had the issue on wellbeing and harassment incidents. We still have a lot of incidents reported. The discussion at the workshop was a lot about the communication processes and roles.

Malte: I was tutor one year and we were instructed that we needed to talk about sexual discrimination and harassment since this was part of the themes that year, and I did not really feel prepared for that. It is a very huge thing to put on a tutor to tell other students how to behave.

Paolo: This is too complicated to put on shoulders on the tutors.

Viktoria: Last autumn we had a new campaign – "Here to help". It will be repeated this year – with information on where to go and who to talk to.

Malte: Asking a student to talk to other students on this is difficult. I do not feel we have the authority to do this.

Therese: We might also end up creating a problem when we have to mention it all the times.

Paolo: I had a new research assistant, and at the first day we noticed that there were no less than three posters in the room regarding this, and she asked if there was a problem she needed to be aware of. Making these posters and putting them up everywhere might not necessarily be the best approach.

Therese: We should consult people who do this professionally.

Luca: Who is the owner of this topic? It seems no one is really responsible.

Viktoria: We have different committees, but expect the new Dean of Education to take ownership. But this is good feedback: We need one person who is responsible. It is better than to delegate to committees, and then it is not clear where the responsibly lies.

Viktoria: Another subject was students with disabilities. We have a lot of students with various disabilities – some departments more than others – and not all of them feel included. How do we include them?

Paolo: From the teachers point of view, I feel unprepared for the exams. I know some cases I need to be aware of, but all we get is something like double the time, and we still do not know the needs, i.e. what solution is needed for the individual neurodiversity. In the CS department we ask the students: Please inform us. So open communication between students and teachers is a need.

Cristina: I think the extra hours do not apply for all activities within the course. When I took the programming course, there was not addition hours for the mid-way test.

Paolo: We are informed before exams, but not before MAs.

Allette: This has to do with GDPR, as this kind of information is very sensible. We encourage students to tell the teacher, but we are not allowed to tell ourselves.

Dan: I think there are things we can do. We do not need to reveal who it is, but can just inform that we have these needs.

Vik: Other countries have other procedures than Denmark. I think the UK has this system, with info given at the beginning at the course, but this is not available at ITU right now.

Lucas: This is an ITU decision, which means that we can change it. Let's make that an action point: With enough people in the class to make it anonymous, the teacher should be given this information at the start of the course.

Dan: Sometimes the teacher needs to know about special needs earlier than just before the class starts, to be able to prepare. An alternative could be that when people enter the programme, we could ask if this information was ok to be shared with teachers.

Viktoria: The last one was about the physical environment, which we have already talked about. So, to sum up: We are having a hearing round right now with the other SAT groups and the participants from the workshop. Then at the next meeting the BoS will decide on a Study Environment Action Plan, as well as a plan for adjustment and follow-ups. Thanks for all your input!

4. Information from SAT Members

No new information. Everyone is busy with the exams

5. AOB

Marc: I assume you have seen the mail on the new registration procedure, where students need to register themselves for all courses. We are not so worried about people not being able to figure out what to register for, but a bit worried about all the people not reading their emails! Please spread the words to your fellow students.

Marc: Another thing: The course evaluations run until May 12. Please also spread the word about this!

Luca: There was no mail to the HoSPs or teachers on the evaluations. I think the teachers need to be reminded.

Mette: I think it was a mistake this year – usually the DoE Support send this out, but due to changing personnel, they did not do it this year. I will bring back the feedback that this is important to do.