

Board of Studies (BoS) – 6 September 2021, 12:30-13:45

Present: Stine Gotved (chair, directly elected faculty), Martin Pichlmair (faculty, SAT Games), Patrick Bahr (faculty, SAT CS), Signe Louise Yndigegn (faculty, SAT DD),

Annamaya Halskov-Jensen (student, SAT Games), Thomas Flodgaard Kaufmanas (student, SAT DD)

Pernille Rydén (assigned guest, Dean of Education), Dorthe Stadsgaard (secretary, SAP)

Absent: Baki Cakici (faculty, SAT Buss), Mads Christiansen (student, SAT Business), Theodor Christian Kier (student, SAT CS), Alexander Lytton (student, SAT Business), Lene Rehder (assigned guest, SAP)

Not enough student members were present at the meeting for BoS to make decisions. The day after the meeting, the draft minutes were distributed, and absent members (particularly students) asked to weigh in.

Minutes

1. Approval of agenda

The agenda was approved.

2. Approval of minutes from meeting 24 June 2021

The minutes were approved.

3. Information: BoS members Autumn 2021

Dorthe: It is unfortunate that the directly elected student has stepped down. As he has no substitute, the seat remains vacant until next year. Fortunately, BoS still has enough student members to be able to make decisions.

Stine: I have asked Ea Feldfos from SAP to look into the SAT / BoS structure together with the Dean of Education as I think it could be a good idea to review the current structure with one BoS and four SAT.

4. Discussion: diversity officer

Items 4 and 5 were merged.

Pernille introduced the ITU Strategy for a Thriving Learning Environment and explained her position on the need for a diversity officer focused on students.

Pernille: The strategy has also been presented in a Dean's Digest in spring 2021. This is not a traditional strategy, rather it is a set of lenses through which we should look when creating a thriving learning environment. Seeing strategy as a socio-cognitive process is relevant because being student-centered requires perspective-switching, which is a meta-cognitive skill. This strategy as cognition dates more than 25 years back: A vast stream of research has established cognition as a legitimate factor in strategic management, elucidated the causal relationship between cognition and strategic outcomes. Recent work is developing more complex models of the dynamic relationships between cognition, capabilities, and incentives and expands from the firm level of analysis to the impact of interpretive processes (micro-foundations of strategy). We obligated

ourselves to be student centered a long time ago. The strategy is a result of ITU-data (qualitative and quantitative), talks with stakeholders etc. It is a bottom-up product. The strategy for a thriving learning environment is tied to the ITU strategy 2022-2025, the part on wellbeing.

Rather than talking about diversity, I talk about inclusion. I consider diversity to be part of inclusion. Inclusion is one of the 6 drivers, that are synergetic elements to create a thriving learning environment. Inclusion is what you experience when being in an environment where you can thrive. Diversity is a political agenda where we compartmentalize (e.g. gender categories). We want to move away from that.

Martin: The demographic of the workforce is rather non-diverse in many fields and would benefit from diversity-increasing efforts. Do you cut off that agenda by focusing only on students?

Pernille: No, I do not cut it off. I see it as part of the political agenda and goal. Inclusion is seen from the students' perspective. If we want to work student centered, we must focus on more than diversity.

Patrick: Diversity in the workforce is a main concern in CS dept. I would not want focus away from this. Both perspectives (diversity and inclusion) are important.

Pernille: Just looking at binary gender categories is outdated.

Stine: The needs from HoSP – as I remember them – was a lot about inclusion, so it makes sense.

Pernille: The strategy is not static; it should be an ongoing discussion. I would like some constructive feedback from BoS – do we have alignment or is it 'my' project?

Thomas: I agree that this is needed. In my opinion it starts with having time to participate in more than lectures. This would shift ITU to being an institution that is more than a place where you go and listen to lectures.

Martin: It is a good idea and a pragmatic approach. I like the way you think about it and I support it completely. I think we have the same goals. The political activities are often too detached from day-to-day teaching. It is good to bring things together.

Thomas: So, we should create an environment where students feel comfortable drawing their boundaries with each other.

Pernille: I provide a set of spectacles for all of us to wear. I hope you will (re)read the strategy and discuss it – also across departments. Hopefully that gives us tools for reflection.

Signe: I have discussed it at my department already, briefly. It is a bit fluffy, and I am a bit scared it will not tell us what to do and who is responsible. As a teacher I felt stressed when reading it.

Pernille: We need to get the competencies to act. It is an ongoing process. we must work from a definition of what it means to be student centered.

Martin: I still have a challenge. I agree to this, and it will resonate with many teachers. But for other teachers it will be seen as a lot of extra work, not part of their tasks etc.

Pernille: I get that.

Signe: I agree with Martin.

Pernille: That's why I talk about being a learning organisation. We all have to learn: students, teachers, management, administration. Working to become student-centered is a continuous cultural and personal learning process and not a walk in the park, but as a learning institution we should be willing to do so – even when it is tough, because that is what we expose our students to during their time at ITU.

Stine: Which tools do e.g. HoSP have?

Pernille: Conversation, contextualization, support from inclusion officer – and all of us do not need to agree on everything. If we keep having aware and reflected decision.

Thomas: Much like doing the Mutual alignment of expectations in class?

Pernille: Exactly.

Signe: I do miss a distribution of responsibilities. Responsibility has a bad habit of landing on the teachers.

Pernille: I am not taking a functional approach. We cannot allocate responsibility to functions. Teachers are responsible. Students are responsible. We should think beyond functions. But it is relevant to talk to faculty and teachers about how we do this. Now we know what makes students thrive, we must talk about how to do it.

Signe: What is the process?

Pernille: The strategy will be published on www.itu.dk and it will be a living document, not static. In two years or less or more the text will probably have changed.

Stine: There seems to be a need to talk more about how to do this in practice, what tools do we need etc.

Stine: The last two times we asked for a diversity officer to e.g. help HoSP work on diversity issues, management turned us down. How is it different now?

Pernille: I argue for adding an inclusion officer to the DoE support. I do not expect Executive Management to allocate resources for this, so we will need to make it make a difference with the budget we have.

Stine: So, are you asking BoS to ask for an inclusion officer instead of a diversity officer?

Pernille: Yes. I also ask BoS to give me input on the skills and competences this person should have.

Stine: Let us try to wrap up. I encourage all BoS members to contact Pernille with contributions.

When do you need feedback from BoS for a job advertisement?

5. Information: ITU Strategy for a Thriving Learning Environment

Merged with item 4, see above.

6. Information: Delayed grades

Theodor (by email prior to the meeting): In the past, it seems SAP has noted grades to be on time if just one (or more) of the students got their grade on time. That meant multiple students could receive their grades late without it showing in the overview of delayed grades. This mix of some students receiving their grades while other has not, seems to have happened multiple times in the past. Does SAP still note it this way? If they do, then the numbers for delayed grades are incorrect. This means the "Average number of days delayed" is also incorrect.

Either way, it is clear to see from the numbers that something still needs to be done. It causes students unnecessary stress when the grades are delayed and arrive close to the re-exam.

Ea Feldfos from SAP (by email prior to the meeting): No, the numbers are not a mix of on-time and delayed grades and to the best of my knowledge, SAP has never noted grades the way Theodor describes.¹

Stine: Reading the text on the overview of delayed grades it can be understood the way Theodor wrote. I think SAP needs to clarify to avoid misreading. Either way, looking at the overview we seem to have the same problem semester after semester.

Patrick: Indeed, and it seems Department of CS continuously has the highest frequency of delayed grades. We have discussed it at a department meeting. Perhaps faculty could receive more prodding from SAP when the deadline approaches? Also, we have very large classes with up to 240 students

¹ At the BoS meeting 22 September, Theodor contested SAP's response, saying that SAP have previously confirmed to him that they register all grades on a course as being on time if at least one (or more) of the students get their grade on time. The BoS secretary brought this back to SAP. At the time of finalising the minutes (27-09-2021), SAP had not gotten back with a reply.

in one exam. Perhaps that is too high a volume for one examiner? Could an idea be to have more than one examiner on large courses?

Thomas: It is very demotivating for students not to receive their grades. It works against student engagement.

Pernille: Is there a cultural aspect among (some of) faculty? Is it somehow accepted by some to deliver grades late?

Annamaya: Could it also be the format? I mean, do we over-examine in some courses? A 7.5 ECTS point course often involve both a written project and an oral examination.

Decision: *BoS agreed that the issue must be dealt with. BoS tasks SAP and Dean of Education with taking action to improve the situation. SAP and Dean of Education are to report back to BoS during Autumn 2021 on how they have approached the issue and what has been / will be done to improve numbers.*

7. Decision: Credit transfer applications

Stine: Does BoS want to re-delegate treatment of and decision on credit transfer applications?

Decision: *BoS renews the delegation for a calendar year.*

8. Requirements for progression

Thomas: SAT DD have a question for BoS. Some DD students have asked why ITU keep the requirements for progression at 30 ECTS-point per semester (plus rules on how many ECTS-points must be passed each semester). We are the only university to uphold this. SAT DD wants to open a broad discussion of why we keep the requirements and if they should be changed.

Stine: Perhaps we should include Ea Feldfos from SAP in the discussions? Or SAP in general. SAP knows a lot about the consequences for students (and administration/ITU) and the pros and cons of keeping requirements as they are.

Thomas: I think we need to include both SAP and students in the discussions.

Martin: Before discussing it in BoS, I think we should discuss it in SAT.

Thomas: We might be able to use data from surveys, e.g. questions on workload from Uddannelses-zoom/LÆRBAR.

Martin: I think we should gather some information for SAT and BoS to use as point of departure for discussions.

Stine: Thomas will look into data and we could ask SAP for information.

Decision: *BoS asks SAP to provide information on:*

- Consequences of the requirements for progression (for both students and administration/organisation)*
- Pros and cons of keeping the requirements for progression (for both students and administration/organisation)*
- The legal wiggle room*
- Arguments used for upholding the requirements for progression when ITU decided to keep them (when it became possible to loosen them)*
- Current arguments for upholding the requirements for progression*

The information is to be sent to BoS and SAT for discussion. SAT are to communicate their discussions and recommendation for ITU's future requirements for progression to BoS. Based on the information from SAP and discussions + recommendations from SAT, BoS will discuss the area and make a recommendation to ITU Management.

9. AOB
None