Centre of African Studies
Employer Panel

Minutes from meeting

Time:       Wednesday 2 May 2014, 16.00-18.00
Venue:     Centre of African Studies, Købmagergade 46, 4.
           1150 København K., Room 039
Note taker: Julie Oxenvad

Present:  Søren Jeppesen (Associate Professor, CBS), Laurits Holdt (Journalist, Globalnyt),
          Mette Müller Kristensen (International Programme Manager, Socialdemokraterne), Camilla
          Torp Olsen (Programme Coordinator, SOS Children's Villages), Pernille Nagel Sørensen
          (Independent Consultant), Amanda Hammar (Director, CAS), Kirsten Busch Nielsen (Dean,
          Faculty of Theology), Carsten Selch Jensen (Head of Studies, Faculty of Theology), Stig Jensen
          (Chairman of the CAS Study Board) and Julie Oxenvad (Head of Administration, CAS)
Observer: Anders Bjørn Hansen (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Africa Department, stand-in for
          Birgitte Marcussen)

Agenda:
1. Welcome (Amanda Hammar)
2. Confirmation of minutes from previous meeting
3. Matters arising from previous minutes (Amanda Hammar)
4. CAS developments and challenges (Amanda Hammar)
5. Update on Accreditation process (Carsten Selch Jensen/Julie Oxenvad)
6. Update from the CAS Study Board (Stig Jensen)
7. Relevant Faculty matters (Kirsten Busch Nielsen)
8. Open discussion (panel members)
9. Any other business
10. Date for next meeting, autumn 2016
1. **Welcome by director**  
Amanda Hammar welcomed the present members of the Employer Panel. All participants at the meeting introduced themselves.

2. **Confirmation of minutes from previous meeting**  
The minutes from the last meeting held on 2 December 2015 were approved.

3. **Matters arising from previous minutes**  
Amanda Hammar updated on news from CAS since the last meeting including: status on the ongoing strategic planning process (still proceeding, but slowly); student mentoring system (had to be postponed due to lack of sufficient staff resources); working with opportunities for graduates to co-publish with academic staff; exploring market outreach in terms of employment of students (thinking through an appropriate strategy); working on research funding proposal(s); and considering a framework for possible CAS external associates.

Furthermore, Amanda informed that CAS has been working on possible new optional courses that would take into account employability. She also briefly commented on the very high number of thesis students (33 new contracts in the current period, in addition to ongoing students that haven’t yet completed) that has kept the supervisors/academic staff extremely busy. She also noted that CAS researchers have been active in publishing (Amanda said she would circulate an appendix listing CAS staff publications after the meeting – see attached) and in research networks, and that CAS has hosted several public events since last meeting including several in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

4. **CAS developments and challenges**  
Amanda also noted there has been some updating of the CAS website (and showed the new front page that was just published), noting that this was not yet complete.

The staff set-up at CAS has not changed since the last meeting. There are three full-time academic staff and one part-time (a permanent Faculty member within Church History), four PhDs (one has handed in and is awaiting the defense), one Emeritus Professor (Holger Bernt Hansen), one administrator (Julie Oxenvad) who also is quality assurance coordinator at the Faculty, and two student assistants. Due to overall national cuts in higher education and in the government research budgets this year for humanities and social sciences, there have been severe limits to being able to apply for post-doctr. Also, while acknowledging the overall economic situation, CAS hopes that eventually it will be possible to get additional permanent academic staff.

Amanda informed about the updated numbers for drop-outs (23.4 percent) and unemployment (30.5 percent) for CAS students which are still high. The Panel discussed the numbers and how to approach them (also concerning international graduates, international employments, project employment and part-time employment). Mette Müller Kristensen also added that she is concerned that the cuts in the organizations and NGOs will affect the chances of employment for CAS graduates.
The Panel also discussed the career counselling activities to date (these need some rethinking) and initiatives to increase the focus on creating and/or strengthening networks and identifying relevant student jobs already from the first semester. The Panel also drew attention to the dilemma with respect to encouraging the students to find relevant student jobs on the one hand and on the other hand to focus on faster completion in accordance with the Study Progress Reform.

Kirsten Busch Nielsen informed about the possibility for students to write the thesis with an external partner, thus creating links to a potential future working place/employer. The Panel agreed that it would like to review and discuss the Graduate Survey again, also in relation to looking into where the students get employed.

Mette Müller Kristensen asked whether the cuts and layoffs at the University had affected CAS and Kirsten Busch Nielsen informed about the process and how it has affected CAS. She noted that the firing of researchers at the Faculty has not affected CAS but there will be a reduction in PhD positions as there will be fewer advertised positions. There will also be a reduction in the administrative staff that will affect the CAS library. Furthermore, the Faculty has decided to make minor cuts in hours for student assistants and external lecturers. On a more general Faculty level, a number of employees had applied for voluntary redundancy.

5. Update on Accreditation process
Julie Oxenvad updated the Panel on the process for the University’s application for institutional accreditation that was handed in 15 April. Julie also informed the panel about the Faculty’s policy for quality assurance and the procedures that also include a Procedure for dialogue with the Employer Panel.

6. Update from the CAS Study Board
Stig Jensen updated on the work in the CAS Study Board and especially informed about the work on improving the evaluation of the teaching, which also is a key element in the quality assurance. The two Study Boards at the Faculty have established a working group that is working on revising the course evaluation forms which will also include evaluation of *Internship and Field Study* and *Thesis*.
Stig also said that he has experienced the Study Board receiving more applications for dispensations this past half year due to the new rules related to the Study Progress Reform.

7. Relevant Faculty matters
Kirsten Busch Nielsen updated the Panel on the revision of the Study Progress Reform. The government has proposed changes to the University Act and Kirsten expected the law to be adopted in this month. The revision includes that the requirement of forced course registration will be repealed. The University still has to improve the completion time but it can choose how to do it itself.

Kirsten also informed that the Faculty still focuses on employment and dimensioning as key issues. She emphasized that these are also issues where the Employer Panel can give good advice.
Furthermore, Kirsten informed about a new, joint concept for the evaluation of research that has been introduced at the University. The evaluation of research will take place at the Faculty from summer 2017 and last a year. The evaluation is run by the Faculty and carried out by an international panel. The evaluation focuses on the development of research and includes seven assessment categories (1. Quality and international impact of the research, 2. Interdisciplinary research, 3. Research-based educational activities, 4. Private and public collaborations, 5. Impact and innovation, 6. Governance and organization, 7. Resources and capacity).

Kirsten also concluded that the next meeting in the Employer Panel will be the last in Købmagergade as the Faculty will move to KUA3 in January 2017.

8. Open discussion
The Panel discussed recent developments within the development sector, and especially the just released report from Peter Taksøe-Jensen that includes an analysis of Denmark’s foreign- and security policy.

Mette Müller Kristensen raised the question about the role of the Panel. She encouraged CAS to be more specific in terms of what kind of input it needs from the Employer Panel (and to focus on the balance of giving information and making space for input from the Employer Panel itself). This includes making the agenda more focused with a few specific topics, for example a discussion of employment, or the content of the study programme, and less general reporting information from CAS.

The Panel agreed to discuss the employment rate and graduate survey at the next meeting and for example, possibly to invite students to participate.

9. Any other business
No other business.

10. Dates for meetings in 2016
Amanda Hammar proposed that the dates for next meeting will be in early November 2016.