May be freely distributed
Approved

Aalborg University
9220 Aalborg

Case worker:
Mikael Steensen Kristensen
Phone: 99403888
Email: mskri@adm.aau.dk

Date: 13-03-2025
Case number: 2025-021-02353

Minutes from the meeting of the Committee on Equality and Diversity on February 25th 2025

Participants: Lars Hvilsted Rasmussen (LHR), Linda Ibsen (LI), Trine Schultz (TS), Anne Estrup Olesen (AEO), Mette Mechlenborg (MM), Birgit Feldtmann (BF) and Mikael Steensen Kristensen (MSK – minutes keeper).

Cancellations: Claus Lassen (CL), Louise Møller Haase (LMH)

1. Approval of the agenda

Appendix: Agenda for the committee meeting on February 25th 2025

The agenda was approved.

2. Approval of minutes

Appendix: Minutes of the meeting of the Committee on Equality and Diversity on November 4th 2024

The minutes were approved.

3. Information from the meeting of the University Board on December 19th 2024

Appendix: Case presentation

Recommendation: It is recommended that the committee be briefed on the content of the committee's status report to the board from the most recent board meeting and discuss the board's input regarding the committee's focus in the coming years.

LHR summerized what he presented to the board in the annual report on equality and diversity at the board meeting on December 19th 2024. Here, there was a focus on completed activities in 2024, planned activities in the coming years and a status of the composition of both employees and senior management at AAU.

The Board discussed the proposal and the area. There were several specific comments on the measurement of the effect on initiated initiatives. The Board expressed a wish that initiatives are continuously measured and evaluated to ensure the best possible implementation. In addition, the University Board had specific comments on the preparation of language principles for parallel language, which has been at first reading by the executive management and is now being consulted in the organization prior to a final consideration by the executive management.

The Committee discussed the board's comments, and these will be considered in the future focus of the committee's work.

Follow-up:

The committee's secretariat continues the work of securing more data in the area and for the evaluation of efforts. The committee will receive regular updates on this at the upcoming meetings.

4. Revision of terms of reference

Appendix: case presentation
Appendix 1: Proposal for change of terms of reference

Recommendation: It is recommended that the committee discuss the content of the existing terms of reference with a view to possible amendments.

LHR recounted the reason why the terms of reference must be revised. This includes the fact that there has been an organizational change in the committees' secretariat and a desire to change to gender-neutral terminology in the terms of reference.

The committee discussed several possible changes to the terms of reference. It was discussed whether the current composition of members should be reconsidered to ensure that the right groups at the university are represented on the committee. It was also discussed whether the areas of responsibility defined in the existing terms of reference are in line with the focus that the committee has as of now and will have in the coming years.

It was proposed that the formal changes which were sent out together with the meeting material be approved. In addition, there were some linguistic formulations that also need to be changed. Discussions on the composition and focus area of the committee will be postponed to a later date, when thorough time has been set aside for the topic. One suggestion was that this discussion can be taken when the committee is to prepare an action plan for equality and diversity. The committee agreed with these proposals.

Follow-up:

The committee's secretariat incorporates the proposals received into the terms of reference. The terms of reference are then sent to executive management for approval.

5. Summary of local action plans from the inclusion survey

Appendix: Case presentation

Recommendation: It is recommended that the committee take note of the briefing. In addition, a discussion is requested on the overall process of local action plans with a focus on how the process can best be summarized and how similar processes can be advantageously planned in the future.

The item was postponed to the next meeting.

6. Discussion on the equality and diversity work at AAU

Appendix: Case presentation
Appendix 1: Article from Update Synspunkt

Recommendation: It is recommended that the committee discuss AAU's approach to the work with equality, diversity and inclusion, including how strategies and initiatives from the committee can best be disseminated to the rest of the organization.

LHR introduced the item and welcomed Malene, Caitlin and Nadieh, who participated in the discussion. They briefly introduced their experiences of gender equality and inclusion at AAU as a workplace when you are employed as a young, female and international researcher, as well as how they had organized themselves in a group at their department to create greater focus on the problems they experienced.

Several examples were presented of how initiatives and strategies that are processed and decided centrally are not always visible in the organization. It was also pointed out that there was not much knowledge of the committee on equality and diversity in the organization, and that it was difficult to find further information on the website and elsewhere. This can also be a problem in connection with the recruitment of new employees, as equality, diversity and inclusion for some will help to make AAU a more attractive place of employment. In addition, it was emphasized that much of the work in the area lies in the management strand and that employees do not have much influence in the area. A concrete suggestion in relation to this was to involve employees to a greater extent to ensure that the problems that take up the most space in everyday life were addressed.

The committee appreciated the presentation from the visiting researchers and praised them for their dedicated work in the area. The committee took the criticism to heart and expressed that it was good to hear how initiatives were received at the departments, as well as how a lack of communication in the area was a problem. The committee will take the points from the discussion into account in the future work as well as in the upcoming process for the preparation of a new action plan for equality and diversity at AAU.

Follow-up:

The committee's secretariat is investigating the possibility of ensuring more visible communication about the committee and its work. In addition, the secretariat ensures that the input from the discussion is included in the upcoming process for the preparation of a new action plan for equality and diversity at AAU.

7. Discussion on free hygiene products on campus

Appendix: Case presentation

Recommendation: It is recommended that the committee discuss whether an experiment should be initiated at AAU where AAU offers free hygiene products to students and staff at selected places on campus.

LHR introduced the item with an account of the background for the treatment of the subject.

The committee discussed arguments for and against the initiative. There was a consensus that the initiative could provide increased security to some students and staff on AAU's campuses. However, it was pointed out that there is not much knowledge from similar initiatives about how great a need there is for such a solution, as well as what financial costs will be associated with the initiative.

The committee agreed that it would be beneficial to gather more knowledge about how large of a need similar initiatives have covered in other organizations, as well as what financial expenses are associated with this. Therefore, the committee will not take a position on whether such an initiative should be recommended to be introduced at AAU.

Follow-up:

The committee's secretariat informs the rectorate of the committee's discussion and recommendation.

8. Announcements from the Chair
There were no announcements from the chairperson.

9. Announcements from the Committee

There were no announcements from the committee.

10. Any other Business

There were no comments.