

<b>Meeting of the UFI Board of Directors</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	February 6th, 2022
<b>Time:</b>	3 hours (8:30-11:30)
<b>Place:</b>	NÁD, Faculty of Education, Frælsið, Room 73
<b>Participants:</b>	<p><i>Board members:</i>  Ólavur Ellefsen (Chair)  Marita Rasmussen (Deputy Chair)  Anders Bjarklev (External Member)  Elaine Munthe (External Member)  Marin Strøm (Staff Representative)  Jónrit Halling (Staff Representative)  Anita Hansen (Student Representative)</p> <p><i>Deputy board members:</i>  Anna Kirstin Sigurðardóttir (Deputy External Representative)  Magnus Gaard, (Deputy External Representative)  Firouz Gaïni (Deputy Staff Representative)  Páll Magnus Dam í Baianstovu (Deputy Student Representative)  Paul Kjartan Matras (Deputy Student Representative)</p> <p><i>University administration attendees:</i>  Martin T. Zachariasen (Rector)  Johan Hansen (University Director)  Brynleif Poulsen (Interim Head of Finances)  Jákup Samuelsen (Finance Department)  Louisa A Fjallsbak (Executive Secretary)</p> <p><i>Could not attend:</i>  Heidi Poulsen (Deputy External Representative)  Anna Sofía Lava (Deputy Staff Representative) is on maternity leave</p>
<b>Minutes by:</b>	Louisa A. Fjallsbak



*Agenda for Board Meeting: Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February, 8:30-11:30 (with coffee/breakfast from 8:00 and lunch at 11.45 in Frælsið)*

*Venue: The meeting was 'in person' at the Faculty of Education, Frælsið, Stova 73. Some members joined remotely.*

*Main purpose of the meeting: For Board Members to receive the usual updates, including a final update from the Rector on progress against the commitments and priorities of our Strategic Plan, 2020-2024, as well as updates on key projects on which he has been leading as Pro Rector (Education).*

*Proposed Agenda:*

<b>Coffee/breakfast from 8:00</b>	
<b>Part 1: 08:30-09:40</b>	
<b>Item</b>	<b>Recommendation to the Board</b>
1. Chair's welcome and approval of Agenda (Paper 1)	To approve agenda subject to any amendments.
2. Approval of minutes from meeting of 24 November 2022 (Paper 2)	To approve subject to any additions/changes
3. Finance Report (Paper 3).	To note, subject to discussion.
4. Report on consultations since last meeting (Paper 4)	To note the contents of the paper.
5. Rector's report on the period since last board meeting: - New rector introduces himself, and describes his strategic priorities for the near future - Updates from Quality Unit, including work on flexible learning paths - Updates from Research and Enterprise Unit - Updates on campus issues - Other activities and updates	To note, subject to discussion.
09:40-10:00: Comfort and Refreshment Break	
<b>Part 2: 10:00-11:30</b>	
6. Joint Letter of Response from Ministry and University to the International Review Team (Paper 6: draft)	To note, subject to discussion.
7. Approval of revised regulations for Study Boards (Paper 7a,b,c,d,)	To approve subject to any additions/changes
8. Report on latest retention and progression data (Paper 8)	To note, subject to discussion.
9. Timeline on work for new strategic plan 2024	To note and approve
10. Chair's summation and concluding remarks	None
11:45 Lunch in canteen at Frælsið	



### **1. Chair's welcome and approval of Agenda (Paper 1)**

The chair of the board welcomed the members. Although all participants speak a Scandinavian language, it was agreed that the language in the meeting should remain English.

The Chair noted that this is the first meeting with the new Rector. Also new is Poul Kjartan Matras, elected deputy student representative.

Brynleif Poulsen, Interim Head of Finance, and Jákup Samuelsen, Finance Department, attended the meeting for part 1 to be present for the Finance Report.

Louisa A Fjallsbak, Executive Secretary, is filling in for Súsanna Jógvansdóttir Golan who is on maternity leave.

The agenda for the meeting was approved.

### **2. Approval of minutes from meeting of 24th November 2022 (Paper 2)**

There were no comments to the minutes from the Board Meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

The minutes from the previous board meeting were approved.

### **3. Finance Report (Paper 3)**

The University Director presented the Finance report. The fiscal year 2022 has not been finalized yet (expected to be finalized on February 20<sup>th</sup>) but we are expecting a surplus of DKK 1.8M. The surplus is mainly due to the renovation of Lindberg's Hús being halted, pending an approval by the Ministry of Finance to allocate funding to the project. The approval is required, since the house is owned by a self-governing institution under Setrið. If the renovation is approved, then the surplus can be allocated to the renovation work.

The university has paid out significantly less than projected in salaries in 2022. This is mostly due to difficulties with filling new faculty positions.

ÓE asked about the lower figure for Sales of Products & Services. BP explained that there is significantly less revenues from courses sold. ÓE asked if the university can sell empty seats outside the university.

FG asked about account nr 54: Funding of other activity, to which BP and JS explained, that this is spent on internal financing of two PhD projects and one research project.

JH informed the board that the new Head of Finance will start on 1st March 2023, and that BP has agreed to stay on for a period of time to ensure continuity.

The Financial Report for 2022 will be completed by 20th February.

### **4. Report on consultations since last meeting (Paper 4)**

The Chair and Secretary for the Names Committee have resigned, and the new replacements have yet to be appointed.



Noomi í Dali has been proposed as member in the Nordplus Programme Committee.

Magni Mohr, Dean and Pro-rector, has been chosen as the new representative for to the Forum for Arctic Research (FAF) under the Ministry for Education and Research (UFM).

### **5. Rector's report on the period since last board meeting**

The new rector introduced himself and presented his educational background (see Paper 5).

Rector has set up three main strategic priorities for the near future.

- University Campus at Frælsið/Debesartrøð
- Faroe Islands University becomes part of the Bologna process
- Significantly increased volume of research

Rector clarified that he suggests that no educational programmes are started before a new programme validation model has been developed.

ÓE asked what the Rector will not prioritise during this period and whether the university will focus on growth. The Rector explained that he intends to focus on consolidation rather than growth in the first couple of years. He further explained that there are too many ad hoc solutions set up to make the University run. He wants to focus on a consolidation phase to ensure quality and a solid base before moving forward.

Rector then gave an update on ongoing work:

- Update on University Campus plans. Budget of kr. 144 MDK has been allocated to renovation over the next 5 years. DHS and NVD will move from Sjóvinnuhúsið within the next 2-3 years. Temporary offices are needed since there will not be enough space during the renovation period. The process will be complex. Work groups have been set up in-house to coordinate the renovation and the move. The architectural competition on the main building is on-going and the winner will be announced in June.
- Update from the Quality Unit. The work saw significant results in 2022 with a new and improved course catalogue, better course evaluation, quality assurance and revision. Milestones for 2023 are the revised regulations for Study Boards and credit transfer, the framework for programme descriptions, periodic reviews and the joint follow up with the Ministry on the international review team recommendations.
- Reorganisation of the study administration. New goals for the study administration have been approved. Milestones for 2023 are to have all current staff in local study administrations to organisationally be part of Student Affairs; furthermore, a common regulatory framework is in the process of being written.
- Flexible learning paths. A working group is established and in 2023 the focus is on further development, possibly offering more part time programmes and going into negotiations with Studni on grant options.
- Update from Research and Enterprise Unit. The Rector provided the numbers of applicants and grants provided in 2022, the number of PhD's and plans for 2023 (see



paper 5). The University currently has agreements for funding with the companies Bakkafrost and Fiskaaling and has other leads for funding for the year 2023

ÓE asked for comments to the Rector's report, including the plan to consolidate the education area with less focus on new educational initiatives in the next couple of years. MZ clarified that new educational initiatives should wait until the foundation for growth is ready, but the volume of students on existing educational programmes can and should increase.

MR agreed with MZ on the three main focus areas, especially on the last area of increased research. She mentioned the issue of the poor financing of the administration a few years back and asked if the administration has since been strengthened. MZ confirmed that the administration has been strengthened but still needs to be further strengthened.

MS mentioned that wellbeing of students and staff is not directly mentioned but is linked to the focus area of development of a Campus on Frælsið. Last week gave a good example of the current state of the facilities, which students experience at Frælsið: The heating wasn't working, and they experienced several power losses. A new campus development is strongly needed. It was discussed that the result of the student survey will be available next week. Since student wellbeing is very much connected with the campus, it will surely be reflected in the results.

AKS welcomed Martin Zachariasen as the new Rector and offered her expertise as an experienced user of a distance learning approach.

On the point of grants from Studni, JH clarified that we know that many of our students are part time students. They work and have families etc. Therefore, they are also good candidates for distance learning. The head of IT and ITC are in Iceland this week to learn more about distance learning.

MZ clarified that the University has not been able to secure enough PhD positions. AB asked where the problem is, to which MZ replied that it is mainly due to lack of funding. He clarified that research funding is sparse on the Faroe Islands. Granskingarráðið has very limited funding. ÓE asked, if we are doing anything about that and if the University can fund students internally. AB asked if any projects are funded through "innovationsfonden" (DK). JS replied that we have two or three projects funded that way. EM also emphasised the importance of private sector PhD's.

On the item of other activities, JH explained that the University is in the process of moving to Kervi+/Skúlanet which is a student administration system intended for the entire educational sector in the Faroe Islands. The current system is old and difficult to maintain. The current system 'Próvbókin' is relying on a single developer and this is too risky. The plan is to start using the new system this fall.

Simultaneously, the plan is to raise the level of IT security. The upside is that the expenses on external providers of IT services will be lowered. JH explained that the University is on a burning platform and really needs a new system.

On the point of moving out of Sjóvinnuhúsið, JH clarified that it looks like the move is delayed until summer or fall of 2025. Tórshavn Municipality, which owns the building, is keen to take over on time. Maybe it will be necessary to move out of one of the floors of Sjóvinnuhúsið early.

The University has set up a work group to coordinate the move, with LAF as a point of contact. The renovations and building on Frælsið, and not least parking, will be a complex operation.



## **6. Joint Letter of Response from Ministry and University to the International Review Team (Paper 6)**

The Rector presented the proposed Joint Letter of Response from the Ministry and from the University to the International Review Team. He emphasized, that this is the University's reply, which is to be merged with the reply from the Ministry.

The Board approved the Joint Letter of Response.

## **7. Approval of revised regulations for Study Boards (Approval of Paper 7a, b,c,d,)**

The Rector presented the final Regulations for Study Boards of the University of the Faroe Islands (Paper 7a) for approval. A summary of the main changes in the Regulations compared to the Articles of Association (paper 7b/7d) was also presented to the Board.

The Board approved the Regulations for Study Boards of the University of the Faroe Islands.

## **8. Report on latest retention and progression data (Paper 8)**

JH presented the student progression and retention report.

Jónrit H explained that she had asked students who had dropped out of the biology programme why they had decided to do so. The reason given was predominantly because it was not right for the student; they didn't mention finances as a cause.

SSD has problems with small classes. PKM explained that his class began with 8 students and is now down to 3. The reasons from this class were that the transition from upper secondary school to university can be difficult and personal and financial issues and also contributing factors.

JH highlighted the good news, that those who stay on are doing well, and we have more graduates.

To summarise, there are too many dropouts especially in NVD and SSD. We must look at possibilities to be flexible in programmes. Action: result presented at next board meeting.

FG highlighted that at least in SSD there is an increasing number of special needs students who require extra support. The student counsellor has voiced her concern, including the increasing workload.

MZ suggested that attendance requirements should be looked at to set standard of expectations. MZ pointed out that NÁD already has attendance requirements and the lowest drop-out numbers. Another option is to let the course responsible measure student engagement in Moodle and offer help if needed.

AKS commented that this is a very good report and is surprised with the finish on time rate and warned that flexible learning programmes might result in lower on-time graduates.

AB agreed that this is a good and clear report, and clarified, that too high dropout rates is a problem for this and many other universities. One solution could be to ask students to present a plan of study. JH explained that the university does a student tally on October 1<sup>st</sup>, meaning that those who enrol but don't show up are not included in the statistics.



ÓE commented that we should learn from faculties with low drop-out rates, e.g. NÁD and DHS, and see if additional student counselling and required attendance would help at other faculties.

AKS clarified, that for the student it is not necessarily a waste of time to drop out from one course.

There was agreement in the Board to be careful not to demand better grades to avoid putting too high pressure on secondary school's grades instead of learning.

#### **9. *Timeline on work for new strategic plan 2024***

The Rector presented a timeline for developing a new strategic plan for 2025 – 2028 which begins with a Board of Directors seminar from 31st August to 1st September 2023. The aim is to approve a new strategy in June 2024.

The timeline was approved by the Board.

#### **10. *Chair's summation and concluding remarks.***

The Chair of the board thanked members for attending the meeting.

**The meeting ended at 11:15.**