



AALBORG UNIVERSITET

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Udkast

Minutes of the employer panel meeting, Sound and Music Computing

Monday, 5. oktober 2020

MS Teams

Participants: Jesper Udesen, Neo Kaplanis, Stefania Serafin (chair of the meeting), Nis Ovesen

Cancellation: Klik eller tryk her for at skrive afbud fra faste medlemmer/deltagere.

Other participants: Anne Christoffersen (referent)

Minutes

1. Approval of the agenda

The agenda was approved.

2. Welcome to the group

Stefania welcomed the participants.

3. Description of curriculum

Stefania informed that there isn't much to tell since the last meeting of the employers' panel. At that meeting the upcoming curriculum changes were discussed and the new curriculum is implemented this year.

Stefania stated that the purpose of the sound and music education is to educate engineers with a practical approach. The students can program and work with real problems.

Students are working with different aspects:

- Some students work at GN and are very happy with that, and the curriculum helps them to work in this field.
- Some students work with music and synthesizer for which there is not a large market in Denmark. And therefore students take on internships to Germany, and it often ends in an employment.

The number of students in the program is around 20, and that number is appropriate. It provides an opportunity to follow and support the individual student. It also gives a very low dropout rate among the students. Stefania informed that there is a challenge around the gender distribution, where the majority of the students are men. However, it should be addressed at the university level.

Another challenge is the communication set-up and lack of resources to update web-sites and disseminate through SoMe channels. It has been noticed several times, Stefania told. But the interaction between colleges and across disciplines are good.



Stefania informed that there is a colleague who is not specifically found in the musical computer team, but is an assistant professor, working with Machine Learning, who is now going to become an associate. This will be a way to support the students, who is interested in ML and in the research area.

More students choose projects that the lecturer suggest to them, which is nice for the student, because the lecturer is an expert on the matter, but also for the lecturers, who can use the project as part of their own research.

Stefania asked if there was anything someone would like to add.

Neo pointed out that the gender issue is very interesting. He suggested that maybe the reason why there isn't as many females as men on the program could be due to bad communication. Stefania also suggested that the name of the program may have an effect; "design" seems to attract women more than "computer". Neo advised Stefania to show people, what it is they will get taught, by convincing people to watch the video online.

Neo also pointed out that the students have different approaches on what program they use for study. Regarding the Machine Learning, Neo agrees with Stefania that it is a hot topic, and it is important for the students to know. Neo also find it positive that students get proposed projects.

4. Collaboration with industry partners

The fact that "Sound and Music Computing" has good collaborations with industry partners, show that the course is very interesting and that there are some cool things happening on the program. Neo suggest that it could be a good idea to have the students who have internships make a video about their experience; either make the student do it themselves as an assignment or push for the university to pay for a small crew that can make the videos.

Jesper want to know how the project ideas generally come together. Stefania answers that it is a mix; sometimes it is already planned by the university, sometimes the students find one themselves and other times they collab with a professor. Jesper suggest "project days" where people from the industry present different project ideas. Stefania believes this is a good idea. The industry benefit from it and the students get to work with 'real life issues', which is valuable on the work market.

Neo confirms this and talks about his own experience having interns and working with students, who benefit from the collab. Neo also points out that sometimes they'll use a product that a student created, which makes the student very proud. Stories like this could be a way to motivate younger students and convince other people to select the course. It is a way to let them know, that the course has practical value and can be of good use.

Jesper suggest an internet page where companies who want to collaborate with AAU can contact AAU. There may also be different opportunities to choose like "collaboration with master students", "internships projects 1st semester" etc. Stefania believes this is a good suggestion, again for both the companies and the students.

Neo looks for pdf. example on how it could look like and sends it to Stefania.

A different way to get peoples interest instead of making a video, could be to write down the different collaborations former students have made, ex; "Dania now works at Britain's Got talent". It's cheaper and easier, and it makes the students able to see themselves through the project.

Stefania tells that they are making a map of where students have had internships, and who they can contact. Stefania also agrees that the webpage "collaboration" should be improved.



5. Employability

- Labour market 2025 – what are the important competences for the graduates?

Stefania sees Aalborg being put on hold because there aren't enough students. There are already 3 educations in music technology in Aalborg, which may be too many for a small city.

SMC has a good collaboration with acoustics DTU. They exchange a lot of science source but have different profiles. DTU is more humanistic. SMC is more about programming and engineering. Stefania points out that SMC is a course where you don't learn to play music, but where you learn the algorithm and design behind it.

Neo tells that his company don't collab with professors from DTU anymore because of Corona. He also tells that he knows that DTU has downsized since, and that they have had problems recruiting students. However, he finds that students are more interested, when they are being lectured by people who are an expert on the field. He asks Stefania if it is possible to have some lecturers at acoustics DTU come and teach at AAU. Stefania replies that they have tried to make it happen, but they won't come to AAU.

It is positive that the Dison network is up and running again. It gives more possibility for collaborations and employment.

Jesper has one more thing to point out about the internship projects at the university; it says that they aren't allowed to pay the student, but for the company Jesper works for, it is required for them to pay the student, so this is kind of problematic. Neo confirms this.

Stefania agrees and will discuss it with the Study Board.

6. Completion and evaluation

Jesper lets Stefania know that his company have had some good experiences with interns from SMC, and he really like the combination of different skills the curriculum gives to the students, especially the tendency of students being very self-driven.

Neo agrees, and points out that haven a wide background with different skills and knowledge is very valuable on the work market. Neo finds SMC to be a unique course.

Jesper lets Stefania know, that he could ask former student from AAU working at GN what it is like, and ask the one who employed them, why they hired these students. This feedback he will give to Stefania.

Nis Ovesen has joined the meeting. He lets Stefania know that next year they will start planning the next self-evaluation circle, which is a 6-year circle. Which will work as an action plan for the developers.

Nis asks Neo and Jesper, if they have discussed the education in the longer perspective, with employability and the Labor market 2025 in mind. What are the important competences for the graduates in 5 years?

Neo responds that the hybrid idea of bringing classical signal processing and artificial intelligence is happening. The fact that the course is hybrid is a good idea and should stay. But maybe evaluate what's currently a topic we should keep, and which one to erase, depending on the trends.

Stefania informs Nis that students cannot be paid when doing internships, which is problematic for the companies. Nis responds that the reason why is because the students aren't leaving the university, they are still students and get SU, therefore they can't get paid. Nis acknowledge the problem and will try to talk to the faculty about the matter.