



BALTECH MINUTES

Board Meeting, September 25, 2008

Location: TKK Main Building, Room H3, first floor

Time: 09.00 – 12.30

Participants:

Maret Hein, TUT

Outi Krause, TKK

Jakob Kübarsepp, TUT

Toomas Käbin, TUT

Ulf Nilsson, LiU

Liudvikas Rimkus, VGTU

Linas Svilainis, KTU

Minna Söderqvist, TKK

Hedvi Valgemäe, TUT

Guest: Professor Hans G Forsberg, ÅF Forsk

Formalities:

Professor Outi Krause welcomed the guests.

Jakob Kübarsepp was elected chairman of the meeting.

Toomas Käbin was elected secretary of the meeting.

The annual report was approved of.

1. Activities

Jakob Kübarsepp asked all participants to give a thought to future activities.

1. 1. Collaboration in Education

Erasmus Mundus developments - in general

No Erasmus Mundus call was opened this year. Erasmus Mundus will be replaced by Erasmus Mundus 2 (EM2). Application deadline is March 30, 2009.

EM2 will be extended and cover:

- all higher education on master and PhD levels. (inclusion of PhD is a new feature)
- exchange of academic staff.

Three programs will be open:

- scholarship
- three universities, including third country partnership (new feature)
- marketing of universities

The tentative 2009 - 2013 budget is 950 MEURO (490 for master and PhD programs, 460 for partnership programs).

EM2 is meant for three years, although PhD programs run for four years.

Erasmus Mundus – reflections on earlier qualification rounds?

Lennart Nilsson pointed out that all applications that have been approved of have included at least one applicant from an old EU country!

Should we prepare a new proposal and extend it to doctoral studies? The Baltech graduate school?

Some comments and ideas:

Linas Svilainis: Should BATLECH be expanded in order to have better chances for EM2 funding? For example with Poland and Germany.

Outi Krause: Should we look for Nordic money/Nordplus instead of EM2?

Lennart Nilsson: The Baltic Sea environmental issues are financed by the EU and hot topics.

Outi Krause: Should Russia be included, if we start talking about Baltic Sea issues?

Jakob Kübarsepp: Russia could be included as a third partner.

Jakob Kübarsepp: Would it be feasible to apply for EM2 funds for a graduate school within nanotechnology?

Lennart Nilsson: We should aspire to become part of the Baltic Sea region strategy. The next meeting is the Baltic Development Forum Annual Summit in Copenhagen in November.

Toomas Käbin: Sweden will give highest priority to The Baltic Sea during its EU chairmanship in 2010 through the so called Baltic Sea Initiative program.

Decision:

1. Toomas Käbin will investigate details of the Baltic Sea Initiative and the Baltic Development Forum.

2. No formal decision was taken regarding an Erasmus Mundus 2 application. From the secretariat we propose the following:

- to renew the application for the master's program within environmental management and cleaner production
- to add an application on the PhD level within Baltic Sea studies. The topic has to be further defined and be coherent with the priorities of The Baltic Sea Initiative.
- to develop the joint master e-study program in mechatronics, which so far has been financed by Leonardo.

1.2 Cooperation in Research

Lennart Nilsson

At present the following task forces are working:

- Nanomaterials/ -technology. A specified proposal for summer courses and work shop on PhD level have been presented. Budget: 10.000 + 7.000 Euro.
- Eco Design
- Clean energy. A PhD course, similar to the one in Kaunas in 2007 has been presented. Budget 12.000 Euro.

Decision:

The initial idea of task forces was to provide seed money, this should also be the guideline in the future.

Dormant task forces will not be activated.

1.3 Collaboration between administrative units

Maret Hein

In January 2008 a meeting was arranged for staff from the international units at the BALTECH universities. Based on the positive outcome, a similar meeting for staff members from admissions offices will be staged.

Comment:

Ulf Nilsson: LiU and Lund have no specific admissions offices; they are under the university umbrella. Thus it might be more difficult to attract these universities.

Decision

The meeting will take place on November 24 and 25 in Tallinn.

1.4 E-learning

When BALTECH was initiated one of the ideas was to set up a virtual university with e-learning.

Decision

A meeting with e-universities will be arranged parallel with the BALTECH conference in Lund in March 2009. This will be in line with the International Baltic Sea Virtual campus, as supported by Interreg. 20 universities are part of the consortium, out of which three are Baltic universities.

2 Scholarships

The demand for the BALTECH scholarships and the ÅF-Grant has been limited; one of the reasons being that interest for mobility within the region is quite small. An overview of the 2007 – 2008 scholars is presented in the attachment.

Prof Hans G. Forsberg made a presentation of ÅF Forsk, which allocates 10 MSEK annually, research projects within large variety of fields such as safety, forestry etc
In 2007, 40-50 stipends were given to master and doctoral students, covering costs for 3 – 4 months. As from 2008, the Baltic region has been included in the program. In the spring 2008, four applications were submitted to the BALTECH secretariat that administers the applications. All candidates were from Lithuania and all qualified. Two students concluded their master studies at KTH and two were finalizing their master thesis at ÅF in Stockholm. One of these has later been offered a position with ÅF in Vilnius. ÅF-Grant was most pleased with the students.

In order to go ahead, the board of ÅF Forsk needs input from BALTECH on how to make the scholarships more attractive and visible. Should the money be made available also for PhD students? The ÅF Forsk board is open for any new ideas. Deadline for an answer is the end of November.

Comments:

Linas Svilainis: 1) Master students have difficulties in leaving during the final year of studies. Most students arrange their 12 week practice through Erasmus or private means. 2) Doctoral students should be more or less free to go, thus stipends should be attractive. 3) Master students should be informed about the scholarship at least two years in advance.
Outi Krause: in Finland students go to research labs in the summer period, would this be of interest?

Decision:

- A proposal on how to best handle the ÅF-Grant will be sent to professor Forsberg.
- Examples of successful scholarships will be posted on the web-page.
- Scholarship money will be made available for teaching staff up to 35 years of age.
- Scholarship money will be available for bachelors, master and PhD students and administrative staff.
- The opinion of students will be asked for.

3. Students

Katariina Nyman, TKK student union representative

The BALTECH student union body convened parallel to the board meeting.

The BALTECH student union would like to continue the Baltech Student Exchange program in 2009. The main targets is to involve more student unions and have more field-specific associations taking part of the exchange. In 2008 four out of eight student unions have taken part in the program, within altogether eight two-way exchanges.

The students have asked for some revision of the allocation of funds in order to make the BALTECH support more flexible. This has been approved of by the secretariat.

4. Budget

The budget proposal as worked out by the secretariat was looked into. Changes according to the board decision have been made and a new version is attached.

Decision

- In the future task forces will only be supported with seed money, which also was the original intention. Task force networks will not be funded.
- Lecturers for the task forces can be financed from the BALTECH and ÅF scholarship funds.

5. BALTECH Conference, March 2009

The topic of the BALTECH spring conference on March 26-27, 2009 in Lund will be "Problem oriented learning/Problem based learning, Quality Assurance – quality of teaching and innovative teaching methods". Preparations have started.

6. Next rectors' and board meetings**6.1 Rectors' meeting**

The next rectors' meeting will take place on Thursday March 26, 2009 in Lund in connection with the BALTECH 2009 spring conference.

6.2 Board meeting

No date was agreed upon for the next board meeting.

From the Secretariat we propose to arrange a virtual board meeting a week before the rectors' meeting, ie on Thursday March 19, 2009 at 15.00 hrs (Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) and 14.00 hrs (Sweden).

7. Web-page**Decision:**

The web-page has become outdated and a thorough review will be made in order to make it more user-friendly. Not the least a forum for students will be made available and the documents section will be divided into sub groups.

8. Cooperation with Nordtek

A short resume from the Nordtek annual conference at Svalbard was given.

End of board meeting.

The board meeting was followed by a conference on Life Long Learning and Quality Assurance. The seminar formed an integral part of the TKK 100 anniversary celebrations.