Summary of the spring 2019 Evaluations

Study Board for International Affairs (SNIF)

Courses, semester and supervision evaluations at Development and International Relations (DIR), European Studies (ES) and Global Refugee Studies (GRS)

General reflections:

- The response rate was lower than previous semesters – we will try to address this by making sure that the students get time to fill in the questionnaires in class. There are perhaps simply too many questionnaires to fill in – no wonder the students do not complete all of them.
- There seems to have been a general feeling across study programs that project supervisors were too busy this semester. This may be due to all the personnel changes as well as the unusually high number of supervisors on sick leave at GRS.
- In all three programs, we see a tendency for students to spend too little time (less than 30 hours) on their studies. We have to consider how to make it clear that these are full time Master’s programs.
- In addition, as usual the students are eager for more information, especially about the ninth semester. We already provide a lot of information, but we have to consider the channels we use to make this available to the students.

DIR

Course Evaluations

The evaluation of International Political Economy was very positive; the students were enthusiastic about the teachers of the course although some found the course to be repetitive of what they had had on their bachelor’s, during previous classes on the course, or earlier in the master program. On the other hand, some students ask for more classes and/or going more into depths about the different topics.

Students were satisfied with the module on Globalization, Rising Powers and Emerging Markets, especially the teachers, teaching material and power point presentations, but they would like more discussion in class and a clearer connection between the lectures. Some students felt that the module repeated content from the BA level and/or the 7th semester courses. Students also suggested broadening the scope of the course and focusing less on China.

In Project Management, the students were very positive about the use of practical cases and group work in class, and the passionate way in which these classes were taught. Cases should cover other sectors than civil society, such as business and international organizations. Some students would like the course to be shorter, whereas others suggest to expand on the theoretical frameworks in order to enhance the academic (and not just practical) relevance of the course. 22% found the academic level of the course to be too low or far too low; this is similar to Globalization, Rising Powers and Emerging Markets (20%) as well as Civil War (23%).
The course in *Civil War* was considered well-structured and relevant to the study program. The students are very positive about the teacher, the examples provided, the reading material as well as group work in class and common discussions. However, some students felt that the group discussions took up too much time and that the group were too large (10 persons) to be effective. Students also request more concrete focus on theories and examples and cases that do not refer only to the Middle East.

As for the *specializations* they were all evaluated positively. All respondents from Chinese Area Studies were satisfied; students like the interactive teaching style and the diversity of teachers although some asked for more neutrality in the points of view on the subjects and one suggested to give a more complete background on the history of China to enhance coherence. Respondents from Latin American Studies were in general satisfied; they liked the topic but some requested more discussion in class and adding international relations perspectives to the social and political focus of the course. Regarding Global Gender Studies and Arctic Studies only two students responded for each specialization; they were all satisfied and no complaints were raised.

**Semester Evaluations**
36% of the students responded to the semester evaluation. 76% agree or completely agree to the statement “I thrive at my education and only 3% (one respondent) disagree with this statement. Most students found the overall benefit of the semester to be very large or large (54%), whereas 36% found it to be average, and 9% (three respondents) found it to be small or very small. Some of the more critical comments referred to the low variety of skills and competences acquired during the semester, and some students did not find the courses to be challenging enough.

Half of the respondents reported having used 30 hours or more on their studies, whereas 24% used 20 hours or less (and 27% between 20 and 30 hours). Some students asked for more time for the project work. Some felt that there is a need for more information and communication, especially regarding internship.

**Project Evaluations**
Overall students are satisfied with the project supervision that they receive. Accessibility is an issue, however; several students note that they felt that their supervisor lacked time, was too busy, had too many groups to supervise, and was able to have too few supervision meetings. The students also perceive a difference between supervisors regarding this point. Regarding the content and quality of the supervision, most students are satisfied; the only critique, which is raised, is that some supervisors do not accept diverging opinions or try to steer the project too much in a particular (theoretical) direction.

**ES**

**Course evaluations**
In general, the students were satisfied with the courses. The response rate was, however, rather low.

*EU Politics*: 9 respondents, most find the level appropriate, 2 though found the level too low. One pointed out that the examination via attendance list does not create incentives to read.

*EU Law and institutions*: 7 respondents. All agreed or completely agreed that they had a good learning outcome. Some explicitly praised the teachers; some found the subject matter difficult and proposed more lectures.
Globalization, Rising Powers ... Only 4 students answered, 2 of them were quite critical expressing that there was not much relevant content for students of European Studies. Teachers from the DIR-program were criticized for not being aware that the class included students from European Studies.

Semester evaluations
The response rate was 43%, but not all respondents completed the questionnaire. The students were generally satisfied with the semester. There was some confusion about the question about a ‘study period in Denmark or abroad’, which seems to have been understood to include studying at AAU by some students.

The students seem to spend too little time on their studies as only half of the respondents replied that they had spent 30 hours or more on their studies. As only six students answered the question, it is difficult to generalize. Four students were satisfied or very satisfied with their own work.

Project evaluations
Six projects were evaluated, supervised by four different supervisors. In general the evaluations were positive, there were only minor issues raised as described below.

As regards input for methodology and theory, the evaluations were generally positive (agree/completely agree). A few students gave neutral answers regarding input for the work process, which could be discussed at the next teachers’ meeting. There was a single comment on the availability of one supervisor, who was out of the office for two weeks.

GRS
Course evaluations
The response rate was 51 %.

Applied Methods for development work. While more than half of the respondents were satisfied with the learning outcome, a relatively large proportion (29%) of the students found the level of the course too low. There was also some confusion about the learning objectives of the course, and the linkage between the course and the rest of the study program. There were a lot of positive comments about the teachers, but a general wish for more information.

Globalization, forced migration and refugees seen in a developmental, historical and political perspective. Overall, there was a very high level of satisfaction with this course both in terms of content, structure and communication. A few comments on the differences between the teachers, but overall a very popular course.

International Political Economy. Overall satisfaction was high, there were however 27 percent of the respondents who felt that the level of the course was too low. Some comments noted that there seemed to be a lot of repetition from last year’s classes, while others found the course extremely interesting.

Politics, Culture, Identity. Again, a very high level of satisfaction with the course and with the teacher. There was a few comments on the apparent need for a BA in anthropology in order to fully appreciate the course, but overall the comments were extremely positive.

Semester evaluation
The response rate was only 29 %. There was a general satisfaction with the study program, however again the students spend too little time on their studies as 42 % of the students spend less than 30 hours per
week studying. Also, the confusion caused by staff changes and sick leave is reflected in the answers. In addition, the physical study environment and especially the air quality in the class rooms was rated not satisfactory by 54% of the respondents.

**Supervision evaluation**

There were 17 evaluations 13 of which are about the same supervisor. The evaluations to a certain effect reflect the huge burden caused by the number of absent supervisors in the spring, which put a lot of pressure on the remaining supervisors. This is reflected in a number of comments about the great workload of the supervisors. Overall, the evaluations indicate room for improvement, which should happen as most supervisors are now back at work, but we will continue to monitor the situation.