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Vurdering av SFU-søknad MatRIC fra UiA

Det vises til deres søknad om status som senter for fremragende utdanning. NOKUTs styre besluttet 31.10.13 at følgende fagmiljøer oppnådde status som Sentre for fremragende utdanning 2014-2018:

1. Centre of Excellence in Music Performance Education (CEMPE) ved Norges musikkhøgskole

CEMPE skal videreutvikle og fornye musikkutøverutdanningen. Senteret skal utvikle kunnskaper og erfaringer som kan bidra til at studenter i musikk blir fremragende musikkutøvere, kvalifisert til yrkesoppgaver på høyt kunstnerisk nivå i et internasjonalt og konkurransepreget arbeidsliv.

2. Centre for Research, Innovation and Coordination of Mathematics Teaching (MatRIC) ved Universitetet i Agder

MatRIC vil være et nasjonalt senter som skal lede innovasjon og forskning innen læring og undervisning i matematikk innenfor naturvitenskap, ingeniørutdanning, økonomi og lærerutdanning, såkalte brukerprogram.

3. Centre for Excellence in Biology Education (BioCEED) ved Universitetet i Bergen, Universitetssenteret på Svalbard (UNIS) og Havforskningsinstituttet

BioCEED vil reformere biologiutdanningen i Norge som et svar på den raske utviklingen i de roller og oppgaver som biologien fyller i samfunnet vårt. BioCEED vil utvikle og integrere læring av biologisk fagkunnskap, praktiske ferdigheter og samfunnsrelevante oppgaver gjennom hele studieløpet.

Følgende vurdering ble gjort av deres søknad:

Centre

The declared aim of the Centre is to lead innovation and research in university mathematics teaching and learning within the programmes of other subjects such as engineering, natural sciences, economics and teacher education (so-called user programmes). The intention is to create a national rather than institutional centre of excellence by creating networks of colleagues involved in teaching mathematics within user programmes at institutions across Norway.

Strengths and weaknesses

There is strong support from the senior management of the university for this proposal and a commitment to be involved in the governance of the centre. Furthermore, it became clear at the site visit that there is a committed team of many colleagues, in addition to the nominated Centre leader, who will be involved in the delivery of Centre activities.

In its written submission and more so at the site visit, existing excellence was clearly established. The students who spoke to the NOKUT team during the visit were outstanding advocates for the teaching they receive. They spoke in eloquent terms of the way they are taught and gave concrete examples of how they had been able to use their mathematical knowledge in applications within their “home” discipline.

The stakeholders, representing industry, national bodies and internal user departments, were also very positive about the proposal – both in terms of the need to work in this area and of the proposers’ abilities to deliver the programme successfully.

The centre’s aims are appropriately ambitious and it is clear that considerable thought and planning has gone into developing approaches that should enable the centre to succeed. Fundamental to success will be the creation of networks and special interest groups involving colleagues from institutions around Norway and across Scandinavia. A key strategy in achieving this is to ensure that the centre’s activities in terms of meetings, workshops, conferences, etc will mainly not take place at the University of Agder but in locations around Norway. In addition, to encouraging participation from others at the outset of the centre, this should also be an effective part of the centre’s dissemination strategy. At the site visit, there was a discussion of additional ways of securing engagement of other institutions. These methods include staff from other universities leading some of the work packages (and being paid from SFU funds to do so), making the research “seed corn” funding available nationally and funding colleagues from other institutions to visit international centres of excellence. The proposers indicated that some of this was intended, although it is not explicit in the proposal.

Overall this was a strong, well-presented proposal with appropriate aims built on existing excellence and a clearly structured plan that gives confidence that there is a high likelihood of success.

There were two areas where the NOKUT team felt that the proposal could have been strengthened. The first area relates to involvement with schools. Issues around enjoyment and competence in mathematics do not start in higher education but have their roots earlier. The proposers already have strong links with many schools and teachers in the region. The Centre could build on these and share some of the resources it produces and its approaches with schools, running training events for teachers and “taster” events to enable school students to better engage with mathematics.

The second area relates to the involvement of students. The students the NOKUT team met were not only strong proponents of the quality of the teaching and learning at Agder, they were also enthusiastic to be involved in the activities of the Centre. This could take many forms such as a student user group to “beta test” new resources; students contributing to the development of resources under the guidance of staff; peer mentoring groups; students supporting the production of the proposed journal.

Notwithstanding these two suggestions, this was a very high quality proposal that merits being awarded an SFU.

Dokumentet med komiteens vurdering av alle søknadene er publisert på NOKUTs hjemmesider.

Gratulerer så mye med status som Senter for fremragende utdanning. Vi ser frem til å samarbeide med dere.

Med hilsen

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