

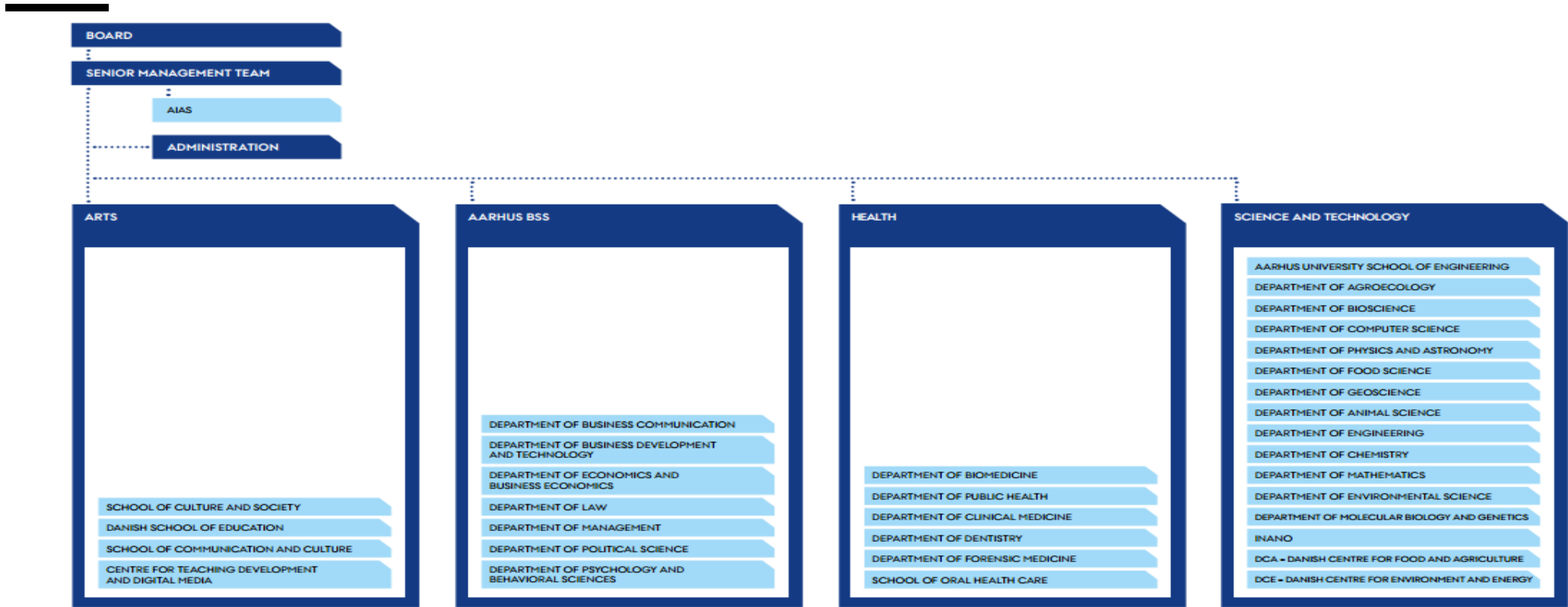
PROFESSIONAL RESEARCH SUPPORT – FROM A ROLE OF REACTIVE SUPPORTER TO PROACTIVE ADVISER

AARHUS UNIVERSITY – SOME FACTS

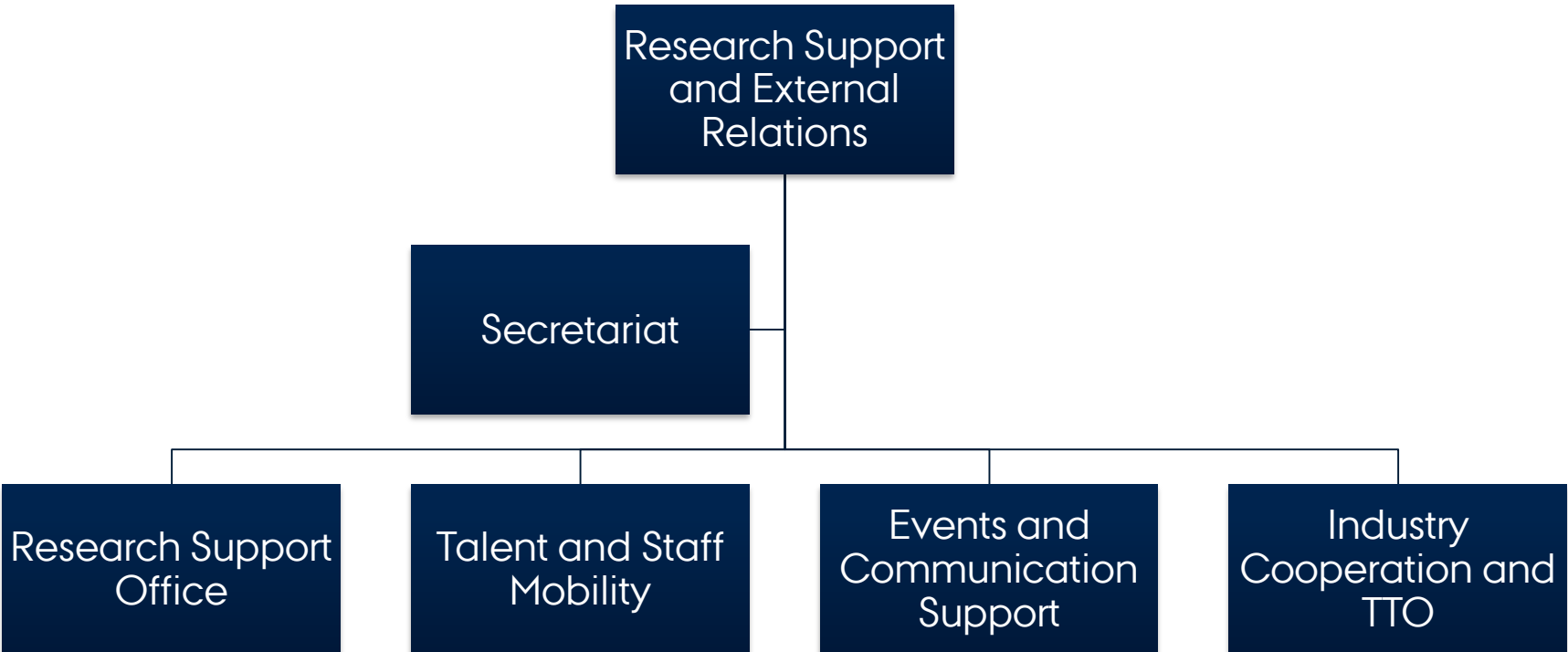
- Founded in 1928
- Main campus in Aarhus, Denmark
- Top 100 university in most rankings
- 40,000 students
- 3,000 international students
- 80 Bachelor and 120 Master degree programmes
- 4.700 academic staff (incl. PhD students)
- 3.600 administrative staff



AU ORGANISATION



ORGANIZATION



CHANGING SURROUNDINGS

More strategic approach to eg.:

- External funding
- Entrepreneurship and spin outs
- Talent development and international competition
- Regional development through conferences

=>

- Political skills
- Proaktive skills
- Professional skills

RESEARCH SUPPORT OFFICE

Former approach to work:

The researchers ask for specific assistance very late

The support offices responds as good as possible - given the time constraints

The researchers are satisfied with what they get

New approach to work:

The support office offers a strategic approach to e.g. funding based on dialogue

The support office highlights several options for e.g. funding

The researchers are pleased with more comprehensive solutions

MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Two parallel sessions

- for the staff working with research support
- for the management incl. the vice director

MANDATORY EDUCATION FOR RESEARCH SUPPORT STAFF I

Content of the education

The intent:

Development of personal and social competences by training different methods of providing advice.

The management should be actively involved.

The purpose:

Everybody works *pro-actively* to identify the solutions which make the biggest difference for the university

Everybody must work with researchers or other partners to find the *right* solution to assure the achievement of the goals.

Everybody is equipped to handle situations of competing agendas, which come up occasionally.

MANDATORY EDUCATION FOR RESEARCH SUPPORT STAFF II

The methods:

Combination of theory and practice

Examples are closely related to everyday life

”Transfer of knowledge into practice”.

” *BEFORE* ACTIVITIES ”

Meeting with the management team

Kick-off meeting – preparation of the staff

Workshops – the staff has a say.

Baseline analysis:

- How do you handle
 - Cooperation with the researchers and other partners?
 - Situations of competing agendas?
- Do you have the right competences to handle these situations?
- When do you succeed in being pro-active?
- When do you give up being pro-active?

”*BEFORE* ACTIVITIES”

After-work Meeting – former dean and management researcher:

- Potential Leadership – the expert and intrinsic motivation.

Reflective meetings in the teams – SWOT analysis.

Creation of “interdisciplinary” learning groups.

”EDUCATION ACTIVITIES”

4 x 3,5 hours of education

4 meetings in the learning groups

“Learning group” – for the VD and Head of Units

Seminar 1: Professional Interview Technique

Introduction to theories of interview techniques

Exercises in interviewing

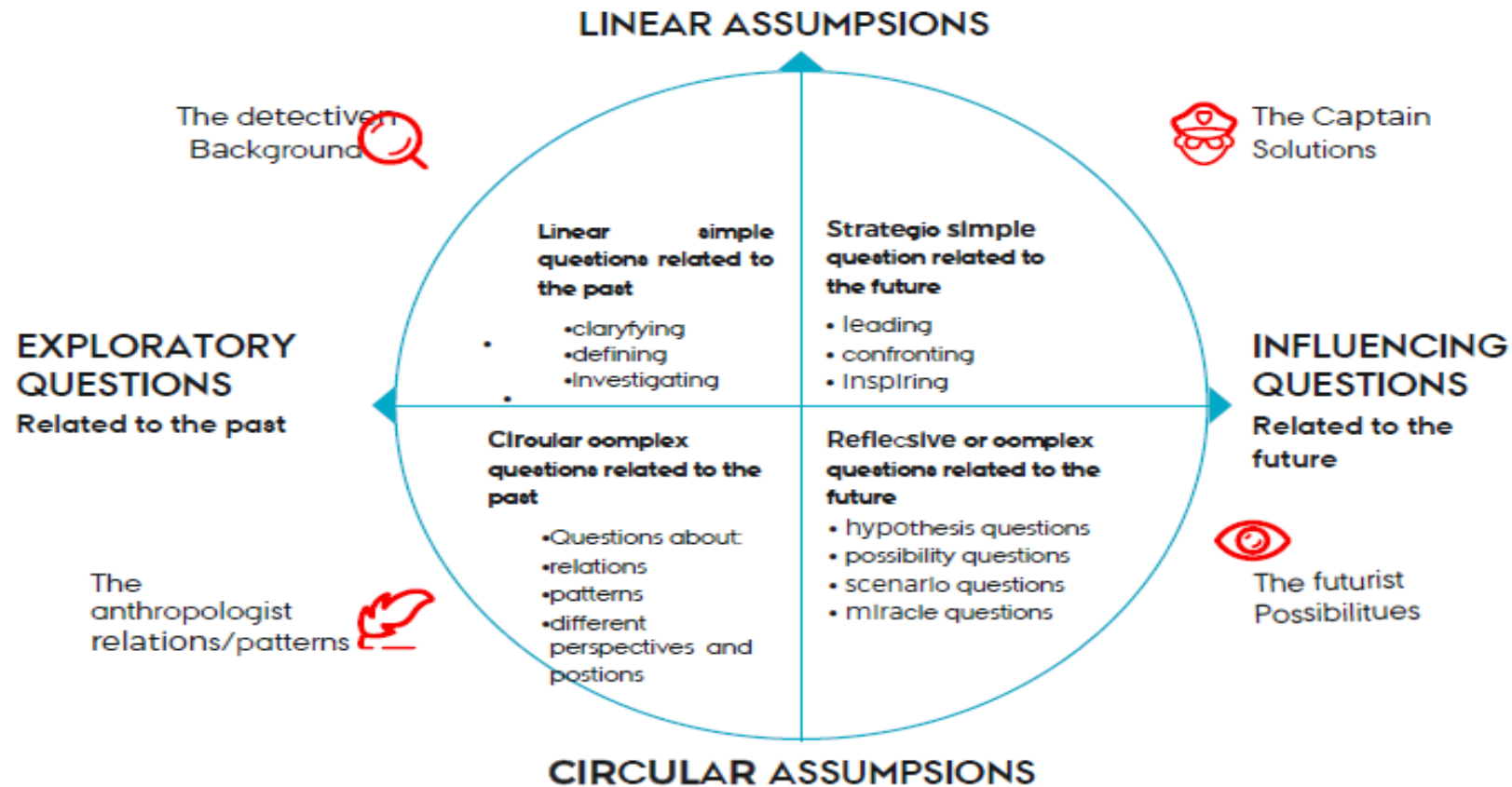
Individual homework:

- Self observation:
 - How do you use interview technique in your work - when you have face-to-face meetings, on Skype, on the telephone etc.

FIGUR – KARL TOMM

INTERVIEW TECHNIQUE

Based on Karl Tomm and Go' Proces



”EDUCATION ACTIVITIES”

Seminar 2: Professional management of the dialogue

Introduction to theories of how to manage the dialogue

Exercises in how to manage the dialogue

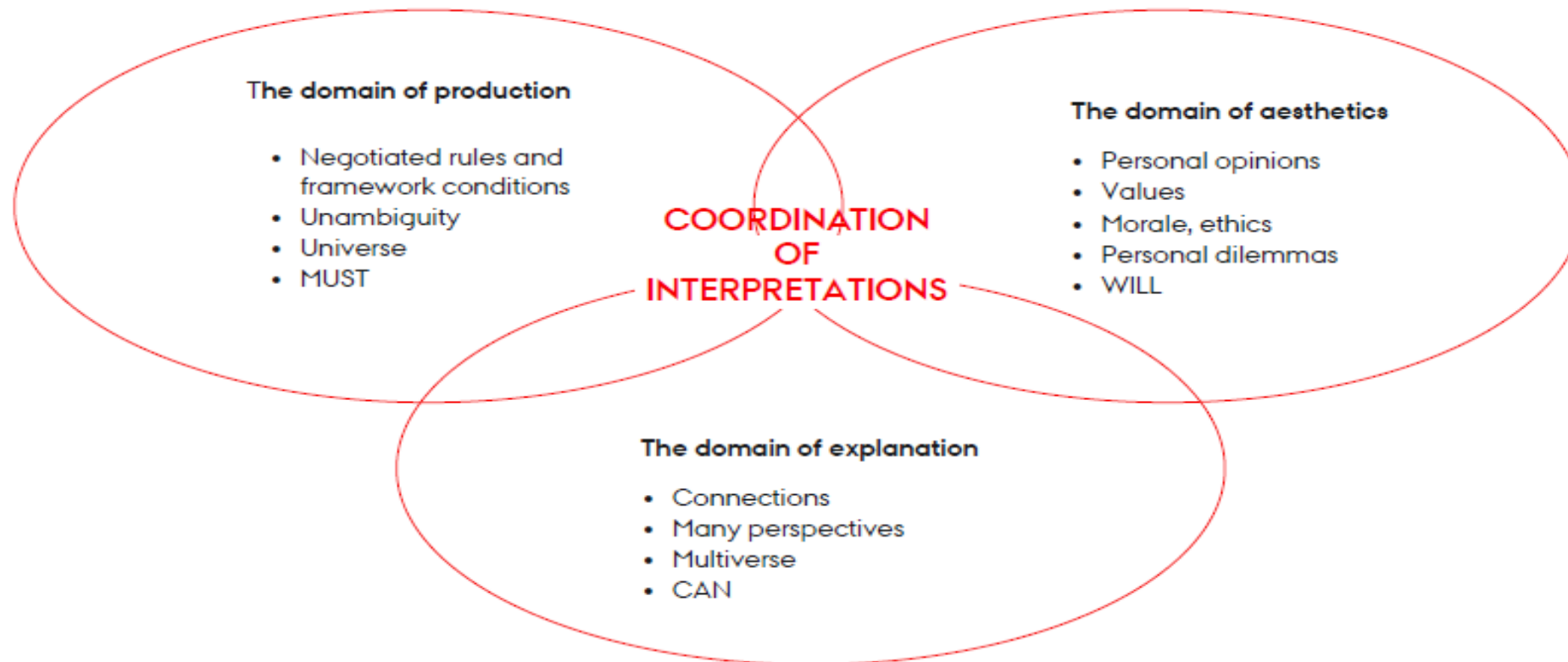
Learning group homework:

- Practice management of the dialogue through games.

FIGUR – HUMBERTO MATURANA

DOMAIN THEORY AND HOW TO USE IT TO MANAGE THE CONTENT OF A DIALOGUE

Based on Humberto Maturana and Go' Proces.



”EDUCATION ACTIVITIES”

Seminar 3: Challenge yourself – choose a theme:

Feedback

Relations

Uncomfortable answers

Formalities/Enforcing Rules and Regulations

Team work

Theory and practice

”EDUCATION ACTIVITIES”

Seminar 4: How to handle competing agendas

Introduction to theories on competing agendas

Exercises in how to handle competing agendas

Learning group homework:

- Practice the handling of situations of competing agendas

”*AFTER* ACTIVITIES”

After-work meeting: Professor Emeritus in Political Science:
Counselling between politics and professional competences.

After-work meeting: Research Support in a global world.

Post analysis of the employees.

Evaluation meeting – all employees.

CHALLENGES 1

Early in the process:

- To work in a strategic way is not common knowledge to all academics (or perhaps changes are always difficult)
- The staff regarded the education sessions too superficial
- The staff did not meet in the learning groups or they did not make the exercises in the intended way.
- Mandatory – but one size does not fits all.

CHALLENGES 2

Later:

- The speakers of the “after-work meeting” did not deliver
- It has all lasted for too long – no momentum
- The staff “forgot” their own responsibility
- Management support – all the way
- The post evaluation showed it was difficult for the staff to implement the theories

HOW TO MAKE IT A SUCCESS

What did we reach after summer:

A common language for pro-active behavior

Good reflections on working methods and approaches

Good to meet colleagues from other units

In the Autumn a kick-start was needed:

No learning groups – we work in our own teams

No artificial cases – we work with real daily problems

The burning platform has become more evident

WHAT HAVE WE DONE IN THE RESEARCH SUPPORT OFFICE?

Focus on proactivity:

Two team sessions before Christmas:

- How would we work in an ideal world?
- What kind of actions are needed?

All research supporters are supposed to make working plans for each department of the university:

- What are we supposed to do during the first half year of 2019?
- What are the challenges?
- How to handle the challenges?

NEXT STEP

Discussions with the vice deans and the management of the departments on priorities
Revising the plans twice a year



AARHUS
UNIVERSITY