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A portrait of Ib Poulsen, a middle-aged man with a grey beard and mustache, wearing a grey suit jacket over a blue and white checkered shirt. He is wearing a white identification badge around his neck. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

Ib Poulsen
New Rector at RU

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Publishing information

RUCnyt/RUGlobal is Roskilde University's official magazine for information and debate about the organization of the university.

RUGlobal is open to all employees and students at Roskilde University to debate the educational and research organizations at the university, including questioning of common interest for research and education.

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RU students awarded COP 15 scholarships

In relation to the annual UN climate summit, also called COP 15 Copenhagen, the Danish government has set up a number of scholarships to focus on the climate. The scholarships have been financed by funds from the pool usually covering costs of gifts and conference kits, which, however, the government has decided to abandon in favour of the scholarships. The scholarships are offered to 10 to 12 highly qualified foreign students. At RU, two students have been awarded the scholarship, and RUGlobal has spoken to one of them, Ankit Joshi from India.

Af Ida Meldgaard Christensen, RUCnyt

Tell us about yourself

Ankit Joshi: My name is Ankit Joshi, and I am from India. I have studied in Delhi where I took my master's degree in social work. In addition, I have travelled a lot and worked in a traineeship.

What motivated you to apply for the scholarship?

Ankit Joshi: The scholarship was set up on the initiative of the Danish government. In India, study programmes are very rigid, whereas in the western world students are provided with better opportunities to combine different scientific fields. In India, it is not possible to take a master's degree by for instance combining social sciences and natural sciences. In the western world students can mix n' match their studies according to their requirements and abilities. I found information about the scholarship on the internet and immediately started working on my application. I prepared my CV and obtained statements. When I first read about the scholarship, the deadline for the application was only a month ahead, so by the time I started preparing the application,

everything became rather hectic.

What do you find attractive about RU?

Ankit Joshi: My first month at RU has left me with the impression that RU is a place where students have a high degree of freedom to study exactly those areas they find interesting. It is my impression that RU offers plenty of opportunities and much innovation. I have been given a unique chance to combine my studies in a way which would not have been possible in India. The basic idea of project-oriented teaching is good since students are given the option to choose both subject and study method.

How do you like studying in Denmark?

Ankit Joshi: The best thing about Denmark is that nearly everybody speaks English. When a student first visits another country, it is important to be able to communicate in a common language. Other international students have told me that in other European countries English language skills are not as good. I also appreciate the structure of the academic programmes in Denmark and here at RU. It provides a high degree of flexibility, and the basic idea of project work is really good. In my

opinion, project work gives students a more open approach to the study programme and provides more practical orientation. I haven't heard of any other educational institutions where students work in this way. I hope to be able to stay in Denmark to specialise in a specific field.

Foreign students like Ankit Joshi who enter Denmark from a country outside the EU/EEA region are given an amount corresponding to the Danish state education funding to cover their living expenses. Applicants from all over the world have applied for the scholarships, with a majority of applicants coming from India and Africa. The students awarded the scholarships are selected on the basis of a mutual collaboration between the universities, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and CIRIUS. In return for the scholarship, students commit to supplying photos and doing blogs throughout their stay in Denmark. This will help promote Denmark as a country with a good education system. Also companies will be approached with an appeal for their support of the initiative instead of gifts for the conference. The costs for a company sponsoring a two-year climate education for a foreign student in Denmark are DKK 360,000.

Meet Ib Poulsen, New Rector at RU

The long awaited rector appointment has finally taken place. On 23 September, Ib Poulsen took up the position as new rector of RU. In connection with his change of job from Head of the Department of Culture and Identity (CUID) to Rector of RU, RUGlobal has spoken with Ib Poulsen about his plans for his rector position and the future of RU.

By Mai Christiansen, RUCnyt. Photo: Poul Erik Nikander Frandsen

"Involvement" seems to be Ib Poulsen's mantra when it comes to his ideological as well as practical views on what a university rector's central approach should be: "It is extremely important to have debate and dialogue at a university. This doesn't mean that one should always expect to be able to agree on everything; something that would probably only happen in your dreams. Neither is agreement a goal in itself, I believe. The most important thing is to make sure that viewpoints are exchanged so that all parties become wiser and understand the background for whatever disagreement there may be. One will have to understand the background to be able to grasp the point".

Actual involvement

Ib Poulsen is well aware that "influence" is a buzz-word and that it is easy to be liberal with buzz-words. "I am very much aware that creating influence requires much effort. When as a leader you state that you would like to increase people's influence, you will have to be sincere; it is important that the statement you make is not vague. It needs to be backed by action. It doesn't suffice to say that I wish

for the students, the Academic Council and the Works Council (HSU) to have more influence. They need to experience that they actually have more influence since the actual idea is for them to be able to feel it."

As his first step to secure a higher degree of influence for employees and students, Ib Poulsen will tour the departments, the University Administration and the students' governing bodies in the near future. On that occasion, he will take a discussion directly with anyone who may wish to do so about how RU's employees and students envisage RU's future as a university, educational institution as well as an organisation.

The work on the educational reform

It may not come as a surprise, but at the moment Ib Poulsen's attention is focused on, among other things, the work on the educational reform. "It is important for me to acknowledge the great efforts and good work made by the previous rectorship and groups of employees. The current key essence of the reform is very exciting and contains some obvious qualities. On the basis of this work, we strive to establish a new educational structure while maintaining some of the core elements of the present RU structure such as the broad approach, broad bachelor programmes and the gradual specialisation. I think that

is really, really good. In addition, the reform enables us to maintain the strong dimension of the combined programmes and paves the way for the establishment of new master's programmes that, of course, will not erode our existing programmes. I have to say that I look very much forward to contributing to the completion of the Educational reform work so that we can see it implemented", he says.

Tell us about RU

Large research projects funded by external parties are undertaken at all RU departments. RU needs to be better at providing information to the surrounding world about these projects, and in general to increasingly highlight the research profile of RU, says Ib Poulsen. "The level of research undertaken at all departments in relation to the large projects funded by external parties is very high, and I do believe that this is something that the world cannot know enough about. That being said, I also find that it is equally important to let the world know about the research communities that we have at RU. After many years' work and the very high academic level held by the researchers, many of the projects have gained a strong position in their field and enjoy much respect and recognition from the outside world. This is definitely also something which ought to be highlighted more intensively, I think".



The importance of natural sciences

In general, providing positive information about RU is something Ib Poulsen feels strongly about. "With respect to research, I find it important that we remember to promote RU as an institution where high quality research is thriving. In my opinion, when promoting RU as an educational institution with a view to attracting and retaining more students, this is an important angle to have. Also, it is important that we stand out as an attractive alternative. As some of our students have said, RU is an active choice, and it should stay that way during the entire study programme. Not just in the initial phase. When talk is on attracting students, it seems essential for Ib Poulsen to highlight the following: "Attracting more students is, obviously, an objective that applies not least to the natural sciences field. In this context, I would like to say that I agree with the board when it says that the natural sciences field must be maintained at RU. It is natural for any university to represent all major disciplines – and besides, extraordinarily exciting research is carried out within the natural sciences disciplines here at RU".

Sad farewell to CUID

In his last years as head of Department of Culture and Identity (CUID), Ib Poulsen experienced at first hand what it means when cost cutting is a recurring challenge in one's everyday life. For this reason, he is pleased that RU's economic reality these years seems to be gradually improving. "It is important that we have a robust economy – that we do not become too vulnerable. Therefore, we need to continue to build up our equity

so we can withstand potential fluctuations. Nevertheless, it is a fact that there are parts of our economic conditions that are beyond our control. Among other things, this applies to the taximeter rates. It is obvious that it would benefit RU considerably if the HUM and SAM rates were increased as promised by Danish Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation, Helge Sander. I was happy to note that the Minister repeated his promise to increase the rates when recently he visited RU".

Even though Ib Poulsen is looking forward to attending to the rector job and the tasks awaiting him, leaving the department is not without sadness. "My time with the CUID has been really exciting. The very committed employee groups there have been a great and important inspiration to me, and not the least the incredibly exciting task of trying to combine the different professional environments, which I think – a long way down the road – was quite successful. Thanks to the employees' ability and commitment to making it work, it was a success, even if the work had to be carried out under economic conditions that were far more difficult than I could have wanted", he says.

RU's role in society

There is a lot of talk about how RU's unique character should be defined, what it is and what it should be in the future. In Ib Poulsen's opinion, RU should first and foremost, now and in the future, be a university featuring innovation and experimentation, both in terms of education and research. "We must continue to reinvent ourselves and our role

in society by looking at our surroundings and identifying the developments and needs that we, in particular, are able to meet and challenge. In addition, I think that RU could benefit from its role as an exploratorium in a number of areas to the extent that it makes sense, of course. It would make sense with respect to group examinations. In this context, we would evidently be the right institution to document why group examinations should again have a place in the overall examination system. I think it would be very exciting, if RU could head various experiments. It is, however, obvious that under no circumstances should this take place on conditions that would threaten our independence".

Earlier on this year, we launched a portrait of Ib Poulsen in this newsletter in connection with his 60th birthday. The article can be found in RUGlobal no. 9 2008/09 at www.ruc.dk/ruc/RUCnyt/

At the end of October, Ib Poulsen will give an accession "lecture", in which he will provide more detailed information on his ideas and thoughts about the future of RU. More information on this will follow.

The first Economics and Business Administration graduate

On Monday, 14 September the first Economics and Business Administration graduate visited RU to share his experiences with the new programme students. RUGlobal was “eavesdropping” and got a chance to talk to the graduate, Troels Dalgård, and Poul Bitsch Olsen, coordinator with Economics and Business Administration.

By Anne Frida Christiansen, RUCnyt

Troels Dalgård, who recently completed his study programme and became the first graduate in Economics and Business Administration at RU, has not followed the direct programme route to reach his goal. He does not consider his educational course a strict career plan, but having finalised his dissertation, he can now see the unifying principle that has followed him through his study programme over the years.

Before Troels Dalgård enrolled at RU, he worked as a music producer for a number of years. His ambitions to obtain an academic degree brought him to RU where he started his studies at the Basic Studies in the Humanities. His reason for choosing Business Studies and subsequently Economics and Business Administration as an advanced-level course was among other things based on the fact that unemployment in the humanities field was massive. Troels Dalgård, of course, did not want to join the unemployment queue, and therefore he chose to abandon his humanities studies in favour of the more business-oriented programme. He has never regretted that decision. “I have learned to define issues in organisations on the basis of a conceptual framework”, he says about his gains from the study.

Primarily, the teaching provided to Troels Dalgård and his fellow students focused on what mechanisms trigger these problems in businesses, and secondly on concrete management and management tools useful in this context. Since there is a widespread interest amongst

students at the Economics and Business Administration programme in getting more practical management tools, this is an element of the programme which has now been strengthened for subsequent classes, adds Poul Bitsch Olsen, coordinator with Economics and Business Administration. Through tools courses and theme seminars, focus on practical tools will be increased. “It is about being able to identify what is going on in the individual business and understanding the issues better than the employees, for instance to be able to communicate organisational changes so that other members of the organisation can accept them. If employees do not accept these changes, it is of no use that they understand the background to the changes”, explains Poul Bitsch Olsen.

In connection with the theme seminars, focus is on the importance of students – simultaneously with the theoretically based teaching – acquiring competences in “the real world”. For this reason, Poul Bitsch Olsen encourages students to contact managers of businesses themselves to gain an insight in practical management through monitoring work processes at the workplace. That way, students will strengthen their ability to actively participate in management, which, according to Poul Bitsch Olsen, is an important competence.

Dalgård’s meeting with the new students

Troels Dalgård also focused on the practical element during his time studying Economics and Business Administration, which, he emphasises to the new students, has been a great advantage. Parallel with the teaching provided at RU, he had the opportunity to work on different

In the centre we see Troels Dalgård surrounded by the new students at Business Administration and Poul Bitsch Olsen (on the left)



consultancy tasks, which he appreciates a lot, he says. "The programme offers a lot of knowledge, but one needs to take that knowledge and apply it out there in the real world", is one of the messages he conveys to the new students. At the same time Troels Dalgård emphasises that he would never have been able to provide qualified consultancy assistance, had he not had the theoretical background that he has acquired from the Economics and Business Administration programme.

Troels Dalgård makes it no secret that – to a large extent – his driving force has been his interests. The wide range of theoretical angles and dimensions that are presented to the Economics and Business Administration students are, in his opinion, an opportunity for students to choose precisely what they find most interesting. "Management is an abstract and ambiguously complex matter. It is important to start by including as many angles as possible, and then obtain as much in-depth knowledge of one's own interests as possible", says Troels Dalgård.

The qualifications of the graduates

At this time, all in all, about 80 students have enrolled in the Economics and Business Administration programme, including a number of international students. Poul Bitsch Olsen explains how Economics and Business Administration is an alternative to the combined programmes at RU such as Business Studies where students – by virtue of to the combined programme – will often acquire expert knowledge of a different subject. "In the Economics and Business Administration programme, focus is more on the management perspective than on the subject-specific field. The analytical profile is still an overall fea-

ture, but is primarily focused on management and the ability to relate to the management perspective", says Poul Bitsch Olsen. Thus, students acquire the ability to understand the management perspective and the common perspective for the entire organisation as well as the ability to participate in management. Rather than focusing on a specific idea as the basis for a company's development, Economics and Business Administration graduates will, according to Poul Bitsch Olsen, focus on what is required for a business to be able to develop something innovative and valuable. At the same time, students from the Economics and Business Administration programme will be engaged in learning and organisation.

Another competence that Economics and Business Administration students acquire is the ability to establish a co-operation between different disciplines, says Poul Bitsch Olsen. According to Poul Bitsch Olsen a crucial element is also the academic part; "our graduates are capable of acquiring knowledge at a general level. They can formulate and query what they know and need to know to be able to provide a solution in a given situation." Knowledge is, according to Poul Bitsch Olsen, a prerequisite for students to be able to improve the quality of the organisation that they work for. Before students can provide solutions to problems, they have to acquire the relevant knowledge", Poul Bitsch Olsen says, while the new students gather to meet the challenges of the Economics and Business Administration programme.

Energy efficient housing in Stenløse Syd looks like standard homes



Experiencing the green route with the Climate Express

It is 9:30 a.m. Saturday, 19 September. The average Dane is probably about to wake up at this time of the day; he/she may still be in bed or is maybe having a cup of morning coffee. Together with 20 other people I, on the other hand, have chosen to jump out of bed and on my bike to go to the bus park in front of DGI-byen in central Copenhagen. Here I get on the green Arriva bus that has come all the way from Malmö to take climate interested passengers to see different environmental initiative projects in Zealand. In other words, we are on the Climate Express bus.

By Runa Lund Sørensen, RUCnyt. Photo: Rune Dalborg Wessely Mariboe

The Climate Express is an initiative set up by employees involved in the Environmental Tourism – a Learning Experience Project at the Department of Environment, Social and Spatial Change at RU in collaboration with the Danish Agriculture and Food Council's Ecology Section. The bus runs on Swedish natural gas and biogas produced from agricultural waste products and domestic waste. It goes to environmental attractions in Zealand with a guide describing the environment-friendly initiatives, sustainable solutions and the environmental enthusiasts that the passengers having boarded the Climate Express will be introduced to on this trip. Today, the theme "Sustainable living – in a large and small scale" has filled the bus with people of different ages, educations and nationalities.

A versatile introduction to climate After a couple of last-minute passengers have jumped on board, we leave Copenhagen for Stenløse South. En route, Kjeld Dahl, our enthusiastic guide, describes some of the climate challenges facing Denmark and the World as well as the importance of current and new innovative efforts in the work to minimise the environmental impact. The guide points to, among other things, Copenhagen's world famous Five-Finger Plan where each of the five fingers constitutes the transport links into Copenhagen. The benefits of this plan, stresses Kjeld Dahl, is that all residential areas are located close to public transportation. Also, in between the fingers so-called green wedges constituting green forest and park areas bring nature closer to the city area. Railway lines, ringways and forest areas of this five finger plan are pointed out as we go past them. As we pass the Avedøre Power Station, the talk

is on the power station's use of bio mass in one of the boilers, Denmark's current dependence on fossil fuels for power generation and the resulting climate impact. The newly launched offshore wind farm in the North Sea is emphasised in this context since it is the world's largest of its kind and since it symbolises one of the steps taken by Denmark to minimise the dependence on the fossil fuels harmful to the environment.

Sustainable construction

The Climate Express' first stop is in Stenløse South. 750 new residential units are being constructed here, and some of them have already been completed. These residential units on plots in Stenløse South are, however, not examples of conventional housing construction. They constitute the largest low energy and environmentally friendly building project in Denmark to date, and we are here to see it



Participants at the Climate Express on their way towards Svanholm's main building, where the commune's residents live.

on this sunny day in September.

When selling the plots, the municipality of Egedal decided to make it a requirement that all houses should be low energy houses, should not contain materials such as PVC and that pressure-treated wood should not be used" says Jan Poulsen, energy and climate consultant of the municipality of Egedal. Thus, the municipality of Egedal forces the builder to consider every detail of the building process extra carefully before commencing construction.

When touring the area in and around the flats and houses, the area does not come across as something particularly special. It simply looks like a conventional housing project. "Therefore, it is not people with a particular interest in the environment who choose to move to Stenløse South", says Jan Poulsen, as two residents drive past on their motorcycles. As we peek through the door into a bathroom, Jan Poulsen tells us that in Stenløse South it is a rainwater tank that supplies the water for toilet flushing and washing clothes. Thus, the construction and its concept enable the residents to lead an environmentally-friendly life without constantly having to focus on it. One of the participants asks what has been debated the most in connection with the municipality of Egedal's construction criteria

at Stenløse South. "Generally, there have been no major debates, but we have had vigorous discussions with the construction firms of the housing estates concerning our prohibition against glazed tiles. That is, however, the only thing I remember having been a problem", says Jan Poulsen.

Environmentally friendly community

We board the bus again, and after an introduction to ecology in Denmark by tourist guide Eva Diekman, we drive to our next stop which is the large community, Svanholm. We start by sitting outdoors eating so-called climate-friendly sandwiches. Having eaten our sandwiches, we are invited into Svanholm's communal kitchen and dining hall. All in all, 85 adults and 46 children live in Svanholm, so a lot of food is prepared in the communal kitchen. The community has chosen to lead a green life style, which means that nearly all their food is either grown organically or is home-made. Each year, the community spends a total of DKK 1.7 million on food.

However, the organic lifestyle is not only expressed in the communal kitchen at Svanholm. Svanholm is an estate with 14,000 square meters of farm buildings and 430 hectares of land that has been farmed organically since 1992. We are taken to the cowshed where

we are told how the breeding takes place. Not everybody pays attention, as a very pregnant cow in one of the first stalls is distracting them. These city dwellers staring with fascination at the volume of the cow's stomach have never seen a pregnant cow before.

Before boarding the bus to return to Copenhagen, we are told that the Svanholm residents are doing everything they can to lead a sustainable life style, which – unfortunately – the organisers were unable to show us. "Svanholm owns two wind turbines producing almost all the electricity we consume. We have our own water works and waste water purifying plant, and we compost all our domestic waste", says Jette Frantzen, a resident of the large organic community, Svanholm. People on the bus seem happy and content with the trip and its experiences when the bus again heads back towards Copenhagen.

Should you also wish to go on a trip with the Climate Express, go to www.klimaekspresen.dk, or call, tel.: +45 26230994.

Klimaekspresen, så tjek www.klimaekspresen.dk eller ring til 26230994.