

Universitetspladsen

RUglobal



Information and debate from Roskilde University

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Speak English, please?

“Can you speak English, please?” The English Policies at RU often go unnoticed or ignored. As a result, non-Danish speakers are excluded

- ▶ Promoting AIDS awareness: From Roskilde to Africa
- ▶ The day when RU went GREEN



Editor's Desk

"RUC aims to be an attractive university for prospective international students, as well as Danish students aiming for internationally oriented careers."

– Strategy 2015

When I started last year, one of the issues I wanted to explore was the international aspect of Roskilde University.

As the quote from Strategy 2015 shows, RU has an ambition of being a leading institution in international studies.

In my humble and biased opinion, I believe it already is.

Facts seem to support this as well: RU welcomes more than 800 international students each year and the school has tremendous and often underrated international programs. Economics and Business Administration, Business Studies and Communication immediately come to mind.

We have great international researchers, one of them being Thomas Tufte, who we feature in a candid in-depth interview. As a RU-representative, Thomas does research worldwide, including in Sweden, the US, South America and Africa. He, among many others, is one of the great assets to RU's internationalization.

Still, from being abroad several times myself, I wondered about the people. How do they feel about being here? It's no secret what Christiansborg feels about people from abroad. Some 'discourage' the influx of foreign students. Others flatly refuse to acknowledge the value of diversity. But that's another discussion for another day...

Nevertheless, the point still remains – do students feel welcome here? Amidst the chaos of settling in upon arrival, RU should be the haven where students can feel at ease...but is it really?

I interviewed SIB-students about their experience of coming here, which will be addressed in upcoming issues. For this issue, we addressed "English policy"

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www.ruc.dk/en/self-service/mailling-lists

The screenshot shows the user interface of the Roskilde University self-service portal. At the top, there is a header with the university logo on the left, the user name 'Birthe Randrup | Logout' in the center, and the language 'På dansk' on the right. Below the header, there are navigation links for 'For students', 'For employees', and 'Find Person', along with a search bar and a 'Search' button. The main content area has a breadcrumb trail: 'Frontpage > Self-service > Mailing lists > Subscribe / unsubscribe'. The title of the page is 'Subscribe and unsubscribe to mailing lists'. Below the title, there is a paragraph of instructions: 'Select Subscribe or Unsubscribe, and the list you wish to subscribe to or unsubscribe from. Click OK. You can only subscribe to a list with your RU e-mail address, **randrup@ruc.dk**. If you wish the mail to be sent to another address, please change your Forward under Edit preferences.' There is a 'Tilmelding' dropdown menu, and a list of mailing lists is displayed, with 'Students at Philosophy and Science Studies' selected. An 'OK' button is visible next to the list.

Tips and tricks from Campus-it



that exists at the international programs. Associate professor Mogens Buch-Jensen thinks too many Danish students break this rule and exclude the international students. What do the students themselves think? Find out inside.

On to other matters, as plenty of things have been taking place. On a surprising note, RU is in need of brains according to the government. The Danish University and Property Agency (DUPA) has demanded that RU delivers more PhD students. They're not playing either: 77 PhDs this year, 85 the next.

But for now, RU has at least one since Sine Lehn-Christiansen just defended her PhD dissertation. While research rarely reaches the broader public, Lehn-Christiansen insists otherwise:

"It's part of my research legitimacy that I not just address my work to a narrow group of researchers." How exactly? Find out inside.

Elsewhere in RUGlobal, you can read about Green RU – the student initiative that became an integral part of RU's official strategy. RUGlobal met with initiator Tue Damsø for an interesting chat. We also bring a feature from the Green RU event that brought the celebs out.

This issue is quite the treat, so without further ado: Enjoy!

- Philip Michael Shange

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Publishing information

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Young social misfits are referred to the social and health care training programme



Sine Lehn-Christiansen was born in 1972. In 2000, she graduated as MA in psychology and educational theory and is now employed with the Department of Psychology and Educational Studies (PAES), where she is affiliated with the Research Centre in Health Promotion. She has just completed the defence of her PhD thesis "In the service of Health Care?" The PhD thesis is available at RU's bookshop and at the academic bookshop online.

Taking care of the elderly in society requires human and academic skills. For this reason, it is problematic that the social and health care training programme works as a depository for young social misfits. This is the opinion of a researcher at Roskilde University



Text and photo: Andreas Wraae, RUglobal

The social and health care training programme is extensively used to solve problems in society instead of serving its actual purpose, namely to train people in how to take care of the frail and elderly in society, says Sine Lehn-Christiansen who just completed and defended her PhD thesis called "In the service of Health Care?" at the Research Centre in Health Promotion at Roskilde University. She points to the fact that the programme is used as a depository for young people when social authorities find it difficult to provide solutions.

Depository

According to Sine Lehn-Christiansen, the social and health care training programme is used to solve a number of social problems, including problems with young people, ethnic Danes as well as young people with a foreign ethnic background who have not acquired upper secondary education or who are unemployed. This is problematic since, according to her, work as a social and health service helper

Work within social and health care requires human as well as academic skills. Students acquire these skills during the training programme. In the real world, however, this is not how it works because the work has been organised in meticulous detail and leaves no space for the individual's personal approach.

is very demanding. “The municipalities provide traineeships or jobs as helpers to those who are unemployed, i.e. they help them be admitted to the programme. Therefore, you cannot also expect these people to invest their life blood in this work,” Sine Lehn-Christiansen says.

According to Sine Lehn-Christiansen, providing places for young social misfits on the social and health care training programme means that some of the training programme students are unable to rise to the challenge as helpers. “Why is it that they are referred to a programme that is very demanding in respect of human as well as academic skills,” Sine Lehn-Christiansen asks.

She stresses, however, that also very dedicated and skilled students attend the social and health care training programme, as well as dedicated and skilled teachers. Consequently, she does not consider it reasonable to them that one single programme is burdened with underprivileged people in society.

Incapacitated authority representatives

Learning how to provide advice, guidance and assistance to citizens on how to live a more healthy life, so-called health promotion, forms part of the social and health care training programme. According to Sine Lehn-Christiansen, it is a governmentally and politically defined task that health care graduates are set to solve.

Consequently, she describes them as authority representatives. According to her, this is only in theory, however, because when they serve as helpers in residents’ homes, everything is timetabled, which means that they go from being authority representatives to suddenly being incapacitated authority representatives. “They are deprived of all freedom to act. On their time schedule, five minutes have been allocated for putting on support stockings, twenty minutes for personal care and ten minutes for hovering,” says Sine Lehn-Christiansen. She finds it problematic that graduates trained in considering how to best solve the different health care duties have no say at all, but are forced to just do their job.

UNiverse

Newly graduated researcher at RU: I want to draw conclusions

Post-structuralist or not, in her defence of her PhD thesis “In the service of Health Care?”, Sine Lehn-Christiansen insisted that she wanted to draw conclusions that are understandable and can be put to use

Text and photo: Andreas Wraae, RUGlobal

The room is buzzing with people who are finding their seat behind tables placed in what most of all resembles an innovative horseshoe of the kind you see in primary and lower secondary schools. The chit-chat slowly stops, and the attention is directed at the blackboard. Today, Sine Lehn-Christiansen will defend her PhD thesis “In the service of Health Care?” at the Research Centre for Health Promotion at RU, and apart from a few minor technical problems – Power Point was a little slow to start up – everything went very well. Sine’s PhD was accepted, she received flowers and the audience gave her several rounds of applause.

What is science?

“But what is your approach to scientific theory?”, asked one of the members of the review committee. Sine Lehn-Christiansen’s answer was just as complicated as the question would

indicate, because theory of science is complicated. That is becoming absolutely clear to this RUGlobal reporter, who for that same reason, decided to contact Sine Lehn-Christiansen – by telephone of course – in order to maybe reveal what they really talked about that last day of February, because in between the general conclusions and the long and hairy explanations, especially about the theory of the scientific standpoints, there was one thing that was repeated several times. In fact, it is – albeit paraphrased to academic language – written in Sine Lehn-Christiansen’s PhD thesis: “I want to draw conclusions that can be put to use;” she wants to make a statement with her research. This we can understand, so this is where this RUGlobal reporter starts out.

Part of my research raison d’être

Not only researchers should benefit from Sine Lehn-Christiansen’s research: “It is part of my research raison d’être that I don’t just target

a narrow group of researchers,” she said and continued: “You can also use research to open a dialogue with the people you are researching.” In her own research, these people are many different players: local, central and regional authorities, and especially the people who specifically have been the focus of her PhD thesis: All those who, in one way or another, are a part of the social and health care training programme, i.e. students, teachers or just anyone making a living within the profession. She believes that her research can be used for many purposes. “Managers and teachers at the social and health care training programme can benefit from reading my thesis, and its conclusions could also be communicated to the students. I also believe that it will be relevant to the people at Christiansborg (the Danish parliament, ed.) and to local authorities, because they are the ones responsible

Continues

Continued

for our healthcare policy,” said Sine Lehn-Christiansen.

More than post-structuralist complexity

“I don’t want to end up just showing complexity that has nothing general to say,” said Sine Lehn-Christiansen.

This is why she has also had to consider how she, with her post-structuralist background, would have the right to reach a conclusion at all. “I have endeavoured to describe the process, i.e. explain where I’m coming from. In part from which theoretical position, but also relative to my research subjectivity, enabling the reader to see the prerequisites for the results I produce.” As Sine Lehn-Christiansen points out, post-structuralism might have eradicated positivism’s objective researcher who concluded undebatable truths, but it should

also be possible to conclude more than just complexity. Sine Lehn-Christiansen believes that it is, as long as you let the reader look over your shoulder. “The approach I’ve taken enables me to reach a more general conclusion. For example, in practice, I have written myself into the thesis, i.e. writing in the first person in order to make it clear to the reader which role I’m playing, for example, when I’m out observing,” said Sine Lehn-Christiansen and points out that she is far from the fly-on-the-wall-principle where the observer tries to be completely objective. In her mind, that would not be possible.

Less prestigious research

Sine Lehn-Christiansen believes it is a shame if research is only targeting other researchers. Especially, if, as in this case, the ambition is to conduct critical research. She believes that there can be a tendency to rank research into fine, finer, finest depending on whether it is published in known scientific journals, or intended to be put to practical use. “I think that’s sad. I believe it’s important not to forget the people you do research on.” However, she points out that, obviously, research should not only address practice.

Conclusion

“The review panel has voted, and we unanimously accept your PhD thesis. Congratulations;” something along that line were the conclusive words at Sine Lehn-Christiansen’s defence and her PhD thesis has now been published – a culmination of several years’ intensive work. As if instructed, the audience began to stream out. Some gathered around the new researcher who had received a bouquet of flowers. They shook hands, smiled and laughed. There was an atmosphere of relief, and the troublesome Power Point application was long forgotten; it was just an intermezzo of something much bigger.



Sine Lehn-Christiansen recently defended her PhD thesis “In the service of Health Care?”

Avoid the Trap

Unfortunately it happens that every semester some students attempt to improve their essays and project reports through plagiarism. But this is a practice which can result in the expulsion of the students in question

By: Niels Teglbjærg, Department of Education and Research

Dear student,

At Roskilde University we have many honest, bright and hard working students, and hopefully you are one of them.

Studying at RU implies writing a number of essays and project reports etc. As you probably know by now in academic texts it is vital to include references to other academic works within the field and sometimes even quotations. That also applies if you use your own earlier written works. I assume that you also know that a reference or a quotation must be clearly marked – and how to do it. If not, you are always welcome to contact one of your teachers.

However, sometimes it happens that one of our students – or even a group of students – get tempted to try to “improve” an essay, a project report or other written work by adding smaller or larger pieces of text that they did not write themselves without proper quotation. Just to make it look smarter, or because they ran short of time, and the “help” was so easily found on the web, or maybe due to some other reasons.

But the reason doesn't really matter - quotations without quotation marks – and other improper techniques are violations of good academic practice, and since it is vital for a university to ensure the confidence of the society in its exams, the university regards any such malpractice with great severity.

Unfortunately a number of students ignore this every semester - maybe without considering how easy it is for the internal or external

examiners to discover the malpractice no matter whether they use web based electronically tools (as many do) or other means.

The sanctions vary depending on the case – but the most common sanctions used are that the exam is annulled and at the same time the student is expelled for 1 – 1½ year. These sanctions of course may have negative side effects such as loss of personal honour, loss of right to rent a student flat, and for some students that their residence permit may be withdrawn.

Although the university strives to handle these cases in a fair and correct manner, there are no doubts that such a case is quite burdensome for the student.

I hope that this little note will help these – after all few – of your fellow students who might be tempted to avoid plagiarism and the like. And I just thought you should know how much we care that the society can trust the value of your exams and the grade you are working for.

If you want to read a little more, you can find some examples of misconduct at: http://www.ruc.dk/ruc_en/studying/regulations/examination_fraud/

You can find a link to the rules used in these cases at: http://www.ruc.dk/ruc_en/studying/regulations/ Just look for “Regulations on disciplinary measures against students at Roskilde University”.

You can find more information about the handling of cases concerning plagiarism on the homepage. A link can be found under the headline: “Disciplinary measures against students” at this page http://www.ruc.dk/ruc_en/studying/regulations/ There you will also find a link to the rules in english.



Promoting AIDS awareness: From Roskilde to Africa

Communication professor. Director of international research program. A list of books behind him. No doubt, RU's Thomas Tufte is a distinguished international scholar. But what drives him is global social change



Thomas Tufte

By: Philip Michael Shange

Linking RU and Malmö. Teaching through entertainment. Working across continents. Communication professor Thomas Tufte's work spans different areas. The one thing the various things have in common, however, is the global focus.

For more than a decade, he has traveled the world performing field studies and promoting AIDS awareness.

As the door to his office opens, several thoughts arise. With five books in the last five years, along with several transnational research ventures, Tufte is an accomplished scholar.

Still, for a dedicated scientist, Tufte's youthful appearance stands in stark contrast to his plethora of published works that splatter across his desk, coffee table and shelf.

"I'm not the only featured in the books, though," Tufte says with a light smile. "I just have chapters here and there."

His key component in his work, he says, is education – teaching through entertainment

and strategic communication. Or, as he says, "integrating education and information in an entertaining format."

A global approach

He has extensive experience with HIV/AIDS communication work from Southern, East and West Africa, Central America and Eastern Europe.

As much as anyone, Tufte epitomizes the internationalization at RU. Looking at his resume, Tufte seemingly has an interesting list of interests that suggests an uncommon diversity.

His Master's degree came in cultural sociology – something he says gave him a foundation of cultural insight. Then Tufte taught audience research, media sociology, communication for development and later became an associate professor in health communication at the University of Copenhagen.

"But then I ended up drifting too far from my core discipline," the professor says. "So I applied for a professorship at RU to get back to my academic roots – communication."

Still, his academic *raison d'être* is social change. (His preferred approach is *edutainment* – tea-

ching through media such as strategic television shows, Tufte says.)

"Since then, I've worked more and more in strategic communication, particularly in developing countries," Tufte says. "My primary concern is now how communication can create or articulate change processes, primarily in developing countries."

Working hands-on in Africa

From 2001 to 2006, Tufte led a five-year research project in South Africa, Burkino Faso and Vietnam, where he did audience research on HIV/AIDS awareness.

"What in the world do you do when you're 15 and six to seven campaigns are running at the same time, all targeted toward the youth," Tufte asks. "Don't you get just a little confused?"

His work in Africa isn't restricted to research only. As he explains, he's done work in African countries for Danida.

He's currently directing two international projects from Roskilde – one, a Danida-funded called "*People Speaking Back? Media, Empowerment and Democracy in East Africa*" (MEDIEA).



Thomas Tufte interviewing AIDS-stricken farmers in Malawi.

The other's "Ørecomm – A Research Consortium on Communication and Global Change".

Current change issues

Tufte quickly falls on his current international project, MEDieA. The project consists of three universities and six researchers – two Danes and four Africans. As a group, the assembled team focuses on central issue.

"We are studying how media – social media and 'old' media – can be used by civil society to empower marginalized groups of young people," Tufte says.

Tufte has been on board at RU since 2004 as a professor. Prior to his arrival at RU, the professor obtained his MA and PhD. from Copenhagen University.

Brazilian soap operas

But why the international interest?

"I was a Latin America researcher at first," he explains. "My PhD dissertation was about how poor Brazilian women used soap operas in their daily lives."

It was here, he explains, his path extended to a working relationship with Africa, spanning 12 years.

"I met two South African researchers at a conference and one thing led to another," Tufte says. He's now worked in more than 10 African countries – "mostly southern and eastern Africa."

There, the research group promotes AIDS awareness in a part of Africa, which has been ravaged with AIDS.

But he's not finished with South America. Just last year, he was invited to a conference to speak about youth, communication and social change.

"I talked about hip hop and rap," he says. "And how you can actually use this bring forth social issues to the forefront and into the public debate."

Better international programs at RU

With all the work abroad, there still are domestic issues to handle here at RU, he says – especially as it pertains to internationalization.

"RU in many ways is still a Danish university," Tufte explains. "International issues call for international solutions – something I honestly think we've been lacking here."

He adds, "Internationalization is more than teaching the Danish courses in English. It's about dealing with international subject areas and it's also about creating transnational research collaborations. We do it to some extent, but other universities are better at this than we are."

Is virtual learning the answer?

While he says internationalization is an ongoing – and time-consuming – process, he still believes there's plenty to be done if RU wants to be an attractive university on a global scale.

With the rise of technology and virtual classrooms, collaborations could easily create better international programs. "If we want to recruit international students, we have to have better and more international courses to offer," he says.

"I just taught at Ohio University last week through Skype. Those are things we could definitely explore a little better here."

The day when RU went GREEN

You could “cycle a smoothie”, drink environmentally-friendly beer and see RU’s new wind turbine. The event Green RU was held on 4 March. Speakers included Danish actress Jytte Abildstrøm

Text and photo: Jakob Bang Schmidt, RUGlobal

The cool lights from the canteen’s many fluorescent tubes had been replaced by a green glow. Stands offering green alternatives to everything from energy consumption to construction had been set up along one of the walls. Although the green glow from the canteen was a result of green silk paper covering the ceiling lights, the day was characterised by a special green glow.

Green beer was served at the bar, and the management representatives wore green hooded sweatshirts for the occasion.

At first glance, you would think that RU had stolen a march on Tuborg’s Green Concerts, which are held during the summer season. However, the Green RU event was held to mark that RU is now becoming an environmentally-friendly university.

Energy consumption to be reduced by 20%

RU aims to reduce its energy consumption by 20% by 2015. According to Peter Lauritzen, University Director and Green RU ambassador, this is an ambitious but still achievable goal, if only everyone contributes.

“Green technology alone will not help us achieve the goal; our behaviour is equally important. We must remember to turn off the lights and our computers before going home,” he explained.

After a speech given by Rector Ib Poulsen, in which he welcomed the many audience members, it was time to visit the many stands. One of the stands served smoothies that were blended using an exercise bike. Another stand presented hybrid lamps that combined daylight and light emitting diodes. The common denominator was the ambition to turn

RU into a greener university. The centre of attention, however, was the large table with green snacks and free wine.

Wind turbine and free beer

After a speech given by Connie Barfod, Deputy Director General of the Danish University and Property Agency, the time had come for the high point of the day: the launch of RU’s new green investment.

While most students chose to stay inside the canteen, about 30 of the most devoted audience members defied the biting cold and went outside where Roskilde’s mayor, Poul Lindor, spoke before the new wind turbine was put into operation. “Although the more than six metre high wind turbine may not compare to Vestas’s large offshore wind turbines, it does play an important role,” Poul Lindor assured the crowd.

“It symbolises environmentally-friendly green energy. Having a wind turbine sends a clear signal to the rest of the world,” he said.

There was a strong wind, and it was clear from the expressions on the audience’s faces that the mayor should keep his speech short.

“It would of course be foolish to erect the wind turbine in a place where it would be sheltered from the wind,” an audience member whispered to the person standing next to him.

“Yes, after all, we can take a bit of cold,” the other person replied, crossing his arms and shrugging his shoulders in an attempt to keep warm.

Following a few difficulties loosening the wire that held the blades in place, Poul Lindor managed to start the wind turbine. Everyone watched in excitement as the wind turned the blades.

“The older I get, the more new things I try,” Poul Lindor said with his eyes fixed on the wind turbine, which generates enough power



The most colourful contribution of the day came from actress Jytte Abildstrøm, well-known as the flying grandmother in the Danish movie “Flyvende Farmor”. In her speech, she offered RU free lessons in sustainability.

to run the five recently purchased refrigerators in the canteen.

The turbine was barely in operation before everyone hurried back inside.

Insight rather than great views

Shortly after 3 pm, environmentalist and actress Jytte Abildstrøm took the floor, giving the most colourful speech of the day.

“People love their views, but there will be nothing to look at if we don’t develop insight and make the change towards renewable energy.

Jytte Abildstrøm is a devout environmentalist and has for many years advocated the use of more environmentally compatible solutions in our daily lives.

“I have brought along a miracle,” she said, holding up a black toilet seat to show to the audience. If you installed composting toilets all over RU, you could deliver fertiliser to all of Zealand,” she explained to the audience’s big applause.

Often, she had to step away from the microphone before exploding with a contagious laughter.

I would be happy to give the 3,000 kroner I am paid to come here today back to RU if you would use it to buy spades. During the past few years, Jytte Abildstrøm has lived in the eco-village Munksøgård and is therefore a neighbour to RU.

“There’s a lot of tidying up to do at RU. I just visited your canteen shop. They don’t carry a lot of organic products,” she said, and offered to come back and teach RU students lessons in sustainability. “It wouldn’t cost you a thing; I only have to cross the field.”

The idea came from students

The Green RU initiative was launched in September 2008 by a small group of Tek-Sam students, who stressed the point that being a progressive university, RU ought to be more sustainable. These green ambitions filtered through to the university management and now form part of Strategy 2015.

Tue Damsø, Tek-Sam student and promoter and chair of Green RU, was greeted by cheers and applause when he stepped onto the podium. Wearing a green tie and suit, he described the hard work that was invested in moving from thought to action.

“In the beginning, it was difficult; not so much getting people to back the idea, but it was difficult getting them to act. It wasn’t enough that everyone just agreed that it was a good idea. We needed momentum.

And we gained momentum when in 2009, in his inaugural speech, Rector Ib Poulsen supported the idea,” said Tue Damsø. The Danish University and Property Agency, which owns RU’s buildings, later joined in, and the process began to take off.

Tue Damsø believes that the target of 20% by 2015 is ambitious. However, he hopes that it won’t end there. “We need to achieve more in future,” he said.

After 4 pm, the formal part of the event was over, and the band Treefight for Sunlight took the scene, followed by Green Lives. As the sound level rose, the average age of people present in the canteen fell.

All the while, as darkness fell on campus, the symbol of RU’s new green profile was spinning vigorously outside.

UNiverse

From idea to action

Green RU is the story about how an initiative launched by three students ended up forming a significant part of RU’s official strategy. RUGlobal has spoken to Tue Damsø, promoter and chairman of Green RU

Text and photo: Jakob Bang Schmidt, RUGlobal

What is the philosophy behind the Green RU association?

- Green RU is a platform for green student initiatives. For example, you can draft projects on how RU can become more sustainable, and Green RU will then try to make the achieved results accessible.

I wrote my own bachelor project on how RU could reduce its emissions of greenhouse gases. The project was then rewritten and expanded in some areas, and now forms part of Green RU’s climate plan ‘RUC Zero’.

How did you get the idea of launching Green RU?

- We launched Green RU back in September 2008 based on a series of articles in RU’s independent magazine Hippo Campus, which were about how the University of Copenhagen

implemented sustainable reforms based on a student initiative.

How did you sell the idea to RU’s management?

- In the beginning, it was difficult; not so much getting people to back the idea, but rather getting them to act. It wasn’t enough that everyone just agreed that it was a good idea.

Continues

From the Green RU initiative to the green RU strategy

Green RU is a student initiative that was launched in 2008 by three Tek-Sam students. The initiative has now become part of RU's green strategy under the name Green RU.

Continued

After having held meetings with the Danish University and Property Agency, it was as if the project needed momentum. However, we gained momentum when Ib Poulsen gave his inaugural speech back in 2009. When he supported the idea, and announced it in his speech, everyone else also supported the idea.

What advice do you have to others who would like to have an influence on RU?

- In our experience you have to keep believing that it's possible. At the same time, you must choose your projects carefully.

- The good thing about the environment is that everyone gain. RU saves money and is able to profile itself, and at the same time it's good for the environment.

- If you can find projects with obvious advantages for the people whose help you depend on, it's much easier than if they have to go against their own interests.

Read more on grøntruc.dk



Tue Damsø, promoter and chairman of Green RU had put on a suit and a green tie for the occasion.

RU gets a massive PhD backlog

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The Danish University and Property Agency requires that RU increases its number of PhD positions significantly. Too few PhD projects have been started up in recent years, and now the agency requires RU to seriously speed up the pace. It can be a costly affair, but so far management is optimistic

By: Tyson William Lyall, RUGlobal

77 new PhDs this year and 85 next year. This is what RU must produce after the Danish University and Property Agency has issued a "PhD upgrade demand" to management.

The requirement comes after a couple of years where RU has not taken in the number of PhDs

as required according to the development contract it holds with the Danish University and Property Agency. This has now resulted in an extra big back log, which in a worst case scenario might mean cutbacks and savings in other areas.

Pro-rector: “Unpredictable”

In a supplementary contract on PhD admission from 2007, RU agreed to admit 211 PhDs from 2008 to the end of 2010. However, with only 197 PhDs admitted during the period, RU must now compensate for the shortfall by admitting 14 additional PhDs over the next two years. Failing to do this, will cost RU DKK 600,000 per PhD student short of the target per year.

The rectorship regrets the unfortunate situation, which RU is the only Danish university to face. Pro-rector Hanne Leth Andersen is willing to take part of the responsibility for the unfortunate situation, but she still believes the error was extremely difficult to detect in time.

“It is always the rectorship that bears the final responsibility, but, there has been a policy based on a specific financial framework for PhD positions. The ministry did not communicate that the terms and conditions governing the finances were so hard-and-fast, and now we are in a situation, which I believe we were not in a position to predict,” she said, emphasising that this is not an excuse for the current situation.

“That does not mean it is all right not to live up to our promises,” she said and added that management could not have expected that the supplementary contract and the development contract were so financially binding as they turned out to be.

Lack of communication

RU usually manages the finances on the basis of a specific budget for PhD funds of DKK 25 million annually. When a new PhD student is appointed, this person receives payment distributed over approximately four years. If many new PhD students are appointed each year, the resulting financial commitment will have to be added to the budget four years ahead. According to Hanne Leth Andersen, this model seems to have been difficult to apply. In any case, she points at difficult budget planning as one of the reasons for the tricky situation.

“Due to this financial management approach, we had to inform the institutions and the

PhD schools that the allocated funds and the four-year budget had now been used up, and obviously that caused a bit of frustration,” said Hanne Leth Andersen.

However, the communication between the administration and each institution and PhD school is not the only explanation for the current situation. According to the pro-rector, the institutions have not taken the necessary precautions.

“We had hoped for more PhD students than we actually got. You might say that we hadn’t overbooked enough. We focused on co-funding, but you don’t always get everything you apply for. This means that we didn’t want to overbook too much because that would put us above the DKK 20 – 25 million allocated (before and after the globalisation funds),” she said.

“A positive shock”

At RU, they are not exactly proud of the fact that the university has now received its completely own version of a tax shock. However, Hanne Leth Andersen still tries to take a positive view on the challenging situation. She believes that the university can use the big challenge to think along new lines.

“I am also a classic university person who wonders why we have to collect that much money externally and why it has to be done at arm’s length and all that. However, I don’t believe we can avoid it, and it will do us good to take a more creative approach. Right now, we have to think out of the box. We have to talk to people we are not used to talking to, and we have to do it together,” she said, emphasising that there is a limit to how far you can go.

“Cost-cuttings can make us better and more creative, but at a certain point, there is nothing left, and then we can no longer solve the problem by being creative. However, I don’t see it as if we are standing at the edge of the abyss right now,” she said explaining that so far she has only received positive feedback from the heads of department.

“The heads of department have indicated to me that actually they think the goal is achievable. It is my impression that people have had to let it sink in, but that there is general support for it. In terms of management, you have to accept the fact that there are other authorities that apparently have a very strong control of what you can do.”

According to Hanne Leth Andersen, the new ways of thinking could also mean admitting self-financing foreign PhD students or more private students.

Potentially a hard blow

Even though there appears to be a good team spirit in tackling the challenges, there is still a huge mountain to be climbed, and even if that goes well, RU will have to balance on the edge of a deep abyss.

The PhD-budgets for 2011 and 2012 have been merged and the budget for 2011 has now grown to DKK 31 million. Part of the financing will be coming from the university’s own funds. RU’s office of finance CFTM’s own calculations show that the PhD bill could result in RU having a deficit of DKK 32.5 million in 2014. The budgets indicate that at best, RU will only incur a deficit of DKK 8.8 million.

Hanne Leth Andersen also admits that the bill might “constitute a threat to us all,” and that some might end up losing their jobs, “if we do not find adequate external funding”.

There is one thing, however, that the pro-rector is willing to promise on: the students will not suffer from any economic downturn.

“We will not take anything from the students,” Hanne Leth Andersen asserts.

”Speak English,

“Can you speak English, please?” The English Policies at RU often go unnoticed or ignored. As a result, non-Danish speakers are excluded

Text and photo: Philip Michael Shange, RUglobal

When you pass the international basic studies, you may very well hear the familiar phrase:

“English, please!”

RU’s international programs have an English only rule – the English Policy. According to the rule, English is to be spoken at all times during school hours.

But during casual conversations, Danish-speaking students often switch to Danish – leaving international students feeling left out.

“Foreigners definitely feel discriminated against by it. There’s no doubt about that in my mind,” associate professor Mogens Buch-Jensen says.

He’s been at SIB for four years and is instrumental in keeping the English policy intact. “There is nothing more socially excluding than language. That’s why I insist that everyone speaks English – even during small talk.”

Students don’t want to nag

Ziyad Zaman Ahmed is a first-year SIB student from India. While Danish can often be heard, he says students often have mixed feelings about what to do.



please?”

“I realize we’re in Denmark,” says Zaman Ahmed, 19. “And constantly urging people to speak English can be uncomfortable. You don’t want to be a ‘party pooper’ or come across as nagging.”

Associate professor Buch-Jensen agrees: “I get tired of it as well,” he says. “But I guess the

“There is nothing more socially excluding than language,” associate professor says.

nagging works, because they automatically switch to English when I come around.”

A common phenomenon

Switching between languages – a phenomenon known as ‘code-switching’ – isn’t RU-exclusive, however. A University of Copenhagen thesis reveals that students often code-switch in the presence of non-Danish speakers – and often unknowingly.

“It’s rarely because of lingual challenges,” says Lotte Eggert Kiil, who observed 34 hours of lectures, student presentations and group work at the English program in Copenhagen. “In all groups I observed, people switched back to Danish as soon as the non-Danish speaker left the room.”

Only oftentimes conversations would continue in Danish – despite the presence a non-Danish speaker.

“It’s difficult to say why they did. But it was very possibly because they weren’t aware. And

international students don’t want keep reminding people to speak English,” Eggert Kiil says.

Comfortable with Danish

Bent Preisler, professor of English Language and Sociolinguistics and author of *The Danes and the English language*, acknowledges the difficulty of the issue.

“The most blatant way of creating barriers is by speaking a different language,” he says. Still, the reality is that Danes prefer speaking Danish.

“You always feel more comfortable speaking in your mother tongue,” the professor says.

Associate professor: No excuse

Perhaps in fairness to the students, there is a reasonable explanation for the frequent code-switching. Many enrolled SIB students are native Danish speakers.

“Of course, we live in Denmark and that’s one thing we miss sometimes,” Ziyad Zaman Ahmed says. “But at the same time, it is an international line, so everyone should know they’re coming to a line that is English.”

English policy advocate Mogens Buch-Jensen agrees.

“It’s not right to enroll in an English-speaking program and not speak English.”

Exclusion hard to fathom

When the students first arrive at RU, the English Policy is upheld quite firmly, SIB-student Anne Holm says.

“During the intro period, people speak English because if they don’t, the tutors point their finger at you,” says Anne Holm, a native of

Norway. Holm speaks Danish fluently but insists on speaking English at school.

With no nagging tutors around, people start speaking Danish shortly after the intro period, Anne Holm says. However minor sanctions could prevent that.

“It’s kind of kindergarten, but if we have a board with everybody’s name and someone’s caught speaking Danish, that person gets a mark. It’s very childish, but if it’s out in the open, it becomes more like, ‘aha’ – you need to do it.”

Either way, as it is now, the English Policy needs to be followed better, she says.

“I don’t think the Danes realize how it feels to be excluded that way.”

The Master's thesis – what's it good for?

What can you do with your master's thesis? RUGlobal asks this question in a series of interviews with recent RU graduates. This time, we'll talk to a RUC'er who created her own niche and became a quoted expert

Tekst: Philip Michael Shange, RUGlobal

The numbers speak for themselves. Less than two out of 10 RU's graduates find jobs in the area of their master's thesis.

While being the final stamp on a five-year education, RUGlobal asked former students what their thesis did for them. Did it serve as a stepping stone to the dream job? Or was it just something to get out the way before venturing into labor market?

In our first edition of the series, RUGlobal spoke with Charlotte Lumbye, who wrote a practical management project in a company. Supporting the statistics, the thesis at press time had not given her a job yet.

In this edition, RUGlobal asked former RUC'er Ane Lützhøft, "what can you do with your thesis?" Along with a partner, the new Master of Arts ventured in the emerging field of social media and food blogs.

Found a niche

"So far I haven't been able to use it professionally," says Ane Lützhøft, who got a 10 on the project.

But it led to something else.

"There's been a lot of interest about it in the world we examined," says Ane Lützhøft, who's since been quoted in articles as an expert.

"In that sense, it's gotten some publicity. I've also been interviewed for an article about food blogs. So you could say job-wise, you can use it to find my name more places than before, if you Google me," she says.

Controversial thesis

Aside from the newfound status, Ane Lützhøft reveals that the thesis stirred the waters in the food blogging-universe.

"People were divided in two camps," she says. "Those who thought we had done something

wrong by not making bloggers anonymous enough, and those who thought our thesis was great."

Still, the controversy only spurred more interest.

"It resulted in many discussions about many things at different food sites and blogs" she says.

Coveted skill

While it hasn't led to job just yet, the project could pay major dividends down the road, Ane Lützhøft says.

"It's probably a good thing to have if I want to apply for a communication job where you communicate through social media," she explains.

Many companies are still exploring how to utilize social media, making her skill a coveted asset to employers. But that wasn't the motivation for the project.

Personal interest important

"It was more important for me, personally, to write about something I found interesting rather than writing about something less interesting that probably would've been more strategically smart in relation to a future job," she says.

Even if it has not led to a job yet, there is no doubt that she has enjoyed it.

It was fun and exciting to write and it was cool that it got so much attention afterwards," she says."



Ane Lützhøft handing her thesis to her supervisor.