

Universitetspladsen

RUglobal



Information and debate from Roskilde University

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“You have to keep up with the students”

RU hires Hanne Leth Andersen, Managing Director of CBS Learning Lab, as new Pro-rector



“RU feels like home”

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International students help RU being RU!

By: *Sandra Viby Langtofte & Mette Reebirk,
International Office*

Once again Roskilde University has received a bunch of new students from all over the world. This year students from 55 countries have arrived and are starting their new temporary existence as international students at RU. For a little while they are a part of our life and we at RU get to be a part of their experiences, frustrations and personal growth.

In the fall 2010, approximately 780 international students have chosen RU to be a part of their education. But what are the possibilities in the partnership RU and the international students make every semester, and what does each partner contribute with?

Roskilde University is known for the emphasis on teamwork, and the problem oriented approach to almost all scientific subjects. An approach which several of the other Danish universities are embracing, but which is still new to most of the universities and other institutions of higher education in the rest of the world.

At RU the educators does not tell you what the right or wrong answer is. They encourage you to figure it out for yourself, applying you with the necessary knowledge and tools to do it. Trial and error is not just a saying, it is a mentality.

This can be frustrating at times but the ability to take knowledge and theories from different places and combining it to new answers and approaches is a valuable skill in almost

every aspect of life – and it is almost definite the basis for all innovative ideas. Furthermore it enables you to take on new challenges and it makes you capable of managing larger projects with unforeseen events and problems along the way, without being discouraged.

The choice to study at RU also presents the international students with the possibility of making an international network within ones specific profession. This will without a doubt prove valuable in a professional career. Not only in situations where you need a second opinion or just inspiration on how to do things different, but also to develop your professional profile.

At RU it is a goal to enable the international students to encounter challenges not only with expertise, but also with an open mind – and hopefully that is also what the students bring back in their suitcases when they return to their home-universities.

At the same time RU is dependent on the international students and the new perspectives they bring to the faculties and courses. To withhold and develop the ability to look at challenges and problems in new ways it is essential to constantly get new input. And in the diversity of the international students also lies a diversity of opinions, questions, and ways to address these challenges, possibilities and problems.

This contributes not only to an environment of innovation but it also makes it possible for the Danish students to learn more about the ways of doing things elsewhere. A

possibility they probably would not get before leaving the university if it has not been for the international students contribution to RUs campus.

Therefore RU perceives the international students as essential to the continuous development and improvement of the university because they too contribute to experimental, innovative forms of learning and knowledge creation. You could say that the international students are essential for sustaining the principle idea of RU.

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“You have to keep up with the

RU hires Hanne Leth Andersen, Managing Director of CBS Learning Lab, as new Pro-rector

By: Camilla Buchardt, the Information Office

The rectorship and RU as a whole will be strengthened considerably when Professor of University Pedagogy, Hanne Leth Andersen, takes up the position as new Pro-rector on 1 October.

“We have to be completely aware of why we do what we do: What are the objectives of the different programmes? What can they be used for? Why have we chosen the methods we have? This way, we ensure that students choose the programme that suits them best, and it could also help reduce the drop-out rate.”

Hanne Leth Andersens comes from a position as Managing Director of CBS Learning Lab, where RUGlobal met her the same day as Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen held a debate meeting, which could be watched from the corridor in front of her office.

“He just said something about poverty not existing in Denmark”, she said before closing the door to her office.

A woman with many views, ideas, and a broad professional profile within university pedagogy and educational research.

“Teaching and education is my passion – I take a certain interest in primary and lower secondary schools, a big interest in upper secondary school and of course a main interest in the higher education institutions”, she said.

More media, more campus

What does the future university look like?

“Inevitably, there will be a lot more focus on the use of social media; a form of ‘blended learning’ as it’s called. Students will be able to access the more information-intensive part of the programme in other ways than by attending lectures. Not necessarily by podcast or vodcast, but by different mediated forms.”

“The project method is extremely authentic compared with the labour market. This is a field where RU stands really strong and which we must hold on to. In society, no one keeps their results to themselves.”

However, compared with for example upper secondary schools alone, universities

are not in the same league when it comes to electronic media. It would also be natural to include electronic media in the examination forms and have the students contribute. We are not ‘digital natives’, but the students attending university in five years time will be. The young ones use Skype with great ease while watching a movie or playing a video game with another person in a completely different place. We have to adapt to this situation. We have to keep up with the students. It doesn’t mean that you can sit in your home in Copenhagen and study at RU. My point is: more media, but not less presence”.

“I really believe that we must use campus and that it strengthens RU to have its campus in one place. I have seen campus be very lively – and sometimes less lively. I would like to see it become even more lively; it’s amazing to be able to build a real study environment. Having a drop-in centre, sports, culture and various other facilities and options making this the action point. Being able to meet each other and knowing where you belong, is also something that fosters commitment”.



Hanne Leth Andersen

About Hanne Leth Andersen

Hanne Leth Andersen is 48 years old and holds an MA (1990) as well as a Ph.D. degree in French (1997) from the University of Copenhagen. For 13 years, she served as Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor (2007) at Aarhus University and held management functions such as Head of Studies, Associate Dean and Head of Centre before she was appointed Managing Director of CBS Learning Lab at Copenhagen Business School in 2009.

During her career, she has written numerous articles printed in Danish and international publications within didactics of languages, university pedagogy and educational research. Most recently, she published surveys of the views of pupils, students and teachers on the role of grammar in foreign language teaching in *Dansk Universitetspædagogisk Tidsskrift* (the Danish university-pedagogical journal).

Moreover, Hanne Leth Andersen's career comprises membership of several committees under the Danish Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation and the Danish Ministry of Education, the ACE Denmark and Rådet for de Gymnasiale Uddannelser (the council for upper secondary education programmes). Thus, Hanne Leth Andersen has promoted a research network for didactics of languages under the Danish Network for Educational Development in Higher Education (DUN), and she is also heading a cross-university project about internationalisation of programmes focusing on learning culture challenges in the encounter with multi-cultural student groups. Recently, she was chairman of a project group dealing with languages at upper secondary education level within the framework of the Danish Ministry of Education.

She has a strong interest in the French language and culture and a passion for horseback riding and horses. However, she does not have the time to engage in this anymore. When she is not reading or at work, she likes to jog, go to the cinema and spend time with her two children.

students”

The special and creative

How do you find RU's new strategy that combines the experimental and innovative with the socially relevant?

“Of course you have to be innovative, and it's a good idea to combine the entrepreneurial elements with the project-oriented elements. When I think of experimental elements, I also think of creative elements – something I sometimes miss in the modern world of education. Now we have the new grading scale which can easily be used in other countries. That is a good thing because we have to become international. However, at the same time, by removing the grade 13, we state that we basically don't want to reward the very special or original performance. However, as a teacher you need to dare aim for the top – to aim for those who can do something special. I think it's in the cards for RU; at the moment we get a lot of students through the education system, and they will not all be original, creative and innovative, which is fine. But for this reason it is also important to develop the education system by, for example, differentiating the

education programmes and making some specific majors with specific challenges.”

“In the education system we have come to a point where we are introducing a lot of new changes and where at the same time we have to be able to accommodate the less academic people. Today, there are a lot less academic students than when I was a student. This doesn't mean that they are not strong, but that we have to make the education system more diversified and offer a broad range of learning approaches and ways of studying.”

Linguistic challenges

What challenges is RU facing as a university?

“All universities are currently facing the challenges of becoming an international university in a new way. This means that there is a linguistic challenge, which I pay special attention to because I know what it's like to teach in French. I know from experience that there are plenty of surveys showing that there is a loss of content, level and interaction when you teach in a foreign language. English alone is a challenge, which, if we don't pay attention

to it, risks reducing our education programmes significantly. We have to be able to explain why we offer a specific education in English. When it makes sense and when it does not”.

“And what about Danish? At CBS, there are a lot of foreign teachers, and when large meetings are held, speaking Danish is not very polite. If you have many foreign students and that is the area of priority, it is not particularly appropriate to speak Danish anyway. We have always said that it was natural for all administrative communication to be in Danish. I just want to say: I believe we will have a debate about this – and we really need to know what we want and be able to argue for it.”

The whole dimension involving internationalisation is something Hanne Leth Andersen would very much like to focus on as Pro-rector at RU. But as she says:

“First, I have to start working at RU, and first and foremost I would like to help where people find my held is needed.”

“RU feels like home”



RU has a new head of department and thereby also a new member of the Executive University Management. Martin Bayer joined RU as Head of Department of Culture and Identity (CUID) on 1 September after five years as Head of Department at the Danish School of Education, Aarhus University (DPU). At the end of August, RUGlobal met him for a chat about his expectations for the new job, his management experience acquired from DPU and the Greek island named Idra that he is “sharing” with Leonard Cohen

By: Thomas Humle, RUGlobal

Wearing tight-fitting jeans, a casual jumper, a gold watch and stripy socks in all sorts of colours, Martin Bayer greeted us in the lobby at DPU. The little curls on his head had been brushed away from his forehead, and most of all he looked like a mature Thomas Helmig – cool and relaxed. He flashed a smile and showed the way to the office that he was about to leave.

A few removal boxes had already been placed in a stack. In a couple of weeks his employer will be RU. The big poster on the wall opposite Martin Bayer’s desk had still not been taken down. The motif of the poster was from the gangster film *Pulp Fiction*: Jules and Vincent, the two hitmen, are displaying stern looks, tight-fitting suits and big “guns”. Lifting their guns with firm looks they are aiming ruthlessly at a point beyond the picture.

“This poster I will take with me to RU”, said Martin Bayer. “*Pulp Fiction* is a fantastic film, and when my sons were attending school, I often watched it when I returned home from parents’ meetings; it served as an outlet for all my frustrations, because teachers and parents can sometimes be such idiots”, he said and laughed.

55-year-old Martin Bayer is a trained teacher himself, but after a couple of years using blackboard chalk and eating lukewarm packed lunches, he was fed up.

“Whenever I met pupils in the hallway during their classes, I started asking them: “What are you doing here?” And then I thought: This is it! I don’t want to be a teacher anymore, because now I have become as much of a control freak as all those people that I would like to distinguish myself from.”

Martin Bayer felt that he slowly became paralysed in his job as a teacher and decided that if he were to change the system, he had to study for a higher degree. For this reason, he enrolled at the University of Copenhagen to study Educational Theory and earned his MA in 1988. He also got a Ph.D. degree from the same university and worked as a teacher trainer in Gentofte, in the greater Copenhagen area, for a number of years before returning to the University of Copenhagen as an external lecturer and later as an assistant research professor. Years later, he came to DPU where he has worked as Head of Department for the past five years. Now, he is standing on the threshold to a new chapter of his career, and despite the title “Head of Department” remaining the same, he is looking forward to new challenges and surroundings:

“I have often felt at home when having visited RU, and I have always felt good about that,” said Martin Bayer, who has visited RU regularly over the past 10-15 years, among others as an external examiner.

Small is good

In 2001, Martin Bayer was actually considered a qualified candidate for a job as an assistant professor at RU, but when being offered a job at DPU, he turned it down. At the time, Martin Bayer found the distance from his home at Østerbro in central Copenhagen to RU too long; that is not the case anymore. Improved methods of transportation have made it easier to commute, and it takes precisely one hour commuting from his home to CUID. He also emphasises that in general RU is a more attractive place than before:

“RU is a compact university, and I find that appealing. The big universities suffer greatly from piles of administrative work, and I imagine that from an administrative perspective RU is a lot more flexible. I like RU’s critical approach and its special educational theories and didactics that have developed since 1972, but which have been exported to broadly all other universities in Denmark since then.”

What are the advantages of being a compact university?

“The collaboration between staff, students and management is closer than at the big universities where some management boards are very remote and make some decisions that no one really understands and that are not communicated adequately in the organisations,” he said.

“In this context, I see opportunities at RU, among other things because as Head of Department you are also a member of the Executive University Management. This also makes it possible to improve information channels”.

What do you expect RU to offer specifically?

“I am convinced that RU can provide a very interesting disciplinary and interdisciplinary community that I look very much forward to benefitting from – at management as well as research level – whenever possible. RU boasts an exciting environment experimenting with democracy – in relation to its students as well as in relation to its staff. If people are without influence, they do not fulfil their potentials. This is something I experienced throughout my five years as Head of Department at DPU”.

What is it about RU's interdisciplinarity that has appealed to you?

“It is my background. When working with educational science and theory, in principle you work with interdisciplinarity. Now, I find it hard to imagine how it is possible not to base one's work on interdisciplinarity. RU makes it an integral part of its education and research. The old universities also try to move in that direction, but at a very slow pace and with major qualms as a result. Again, we see RU exporting some of its good ideas to the old ones,” he said with a smile.

The future at CUID

There are lots of small courses at CUID. Considering the small number of students, they must be expensive?

“Yes, that is obvious. Naturally, it is a political priority of a university and department whether it wants to offer those courses. However, announcing closures is a very unpopular thing to do – also among the takers in the labour market. Meddling with German for example would be a very bad idea, wouldn't it? Germany is the largest country in Europe, and letting the survival of a course depend on financial criteria alone would therefore be a short-term, narrow-minded decision. But of

course a course must justify itself and prove its worthiness.”

What can RU and CUID expect from you – what will you contribute?

“I know a lot about running a department in terms of finance, administration, strategy, research and education. I have lots of experience in collaborating with all kinds of academic professions, and I believe that is one of the reasons why I got the job.”

Do you have any idea of what you would like to help change? What will be different in the department in five years time?

“Well.... that will be the sort of thing I will look into during my first year with the department. Changes will take place in collaboration with the people that are there. The department offers lots of strengths that I would like to help maintain. We will have to look into publication, which might need a pull upwards. The department's earnings from external research projects are not very big compared to those of the other RU departments. We will have to look into that, and I acquired a lot of experience in this field from DPU. ““Chasing” projects I have always found to be great fun”.

Working as a member of the Executive University Management

What do you expect from your work as a member of the Executive University Management?

“Lots of meetings”, he said with a laugh.

Even though Martin Bayer still does not know what the Executive University Management work will specifically involve over the coming months, he believes there will be a lot to embark on in general:

“Educational reforms, strategies, internationalisation are subjects that all other universities in Denmark will also have to look into. I am experienced in this area since I have been a member of DPU's management board.”

As you will be Head of Department as well as a member of the Executive University Management, there will be a lot of administrative work to do. How do you expect that to interact with your research?

“First and foremost, the department has a very well-functioning secretariat, which means a whole lot. Nevertheless, I think I will have to fight for the time I need to conduct research. People often say that “research is something you do at night.”

As Head of Department you must know about the researchers' conditions, and if you

do not conduct research yourself, it is difficult to be a proper Head of Department.”

What management experience will you bring to RU?

“I have learned how difficult it is to be Head of Department. A Head of Department is a traditional middle manager whose job it is to ensure that the department staff is provided for and that, at the same time, the university strategies are implemented. So sometimes you are on one side, and others on the other. At times, you are even on both sides at the same time. I feel that I have learned to handle this difficulty.”

Which type of leader are you?

“I think I am a very communicative leader. I do hope that people at CUID can see that I want what is best for them and that they have my support.

It has meant a lot for me to walk about at the university and chat to people. I will also practice this at my new workplace. My office door is seldom shut, which is the style I want to promote.

I also want us to have fun, throw parties and that sort of thing. I want us to feel that this is our second or third home,” he said smiling.

What do you do when you are not at work?

“Then I spend time with my family. I have two sons; one has just started at first grade of Det Frie Gymnasium (The Free Upper Secondary School), and the other has just graduated from the upper secondary school. They take up a lot of your time such boys.”

“I do enjoy travelling whenever I can get away with it. I happily claim to have a small Greek island. Its name is Idra, and I have gone to visit regularly during the past 30 years. I was also there this past summer. The reason is that Leonard Cohen has a house there. Now his two ex-wives are living there, so he is not there as frequently anymore. I find it a blessing that there are no cars or mopeds. It is just one small island with one small town. I love visiting that place.”

Is the island yours or Leonard Cohen's?

“It is ours,” he said laughing.

Martin Bayer took up the position as Head of Department at CUID on 1 September.