



## eLIFE – news on life at LIFE

Thursday 27 November 2008

Email to the editors: [elife@life.ku.dk](mailto:elife@life.ku.dk)

Final deadline for editorial changes is Wednesday before publication of eLIFE on Thursday.

Editorial changes may occur in relation to the online newsletter.

As regards links in the newsletter, please refer to the Danish online version at the faculty's website  
[http://www.life.ku.dk/Maalgruppe/medarbejdere/life\\_internt/nyhedsbrev.aspx](http://www.life.ku.dk/Maalgruppe/medarbejdere/life_internt/nyhedsbrev.aspx)

Gudrun Lau Bjerno, Editor, Communications, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk)

## Life at LIFE

### **LIFE nominated to Best Training Place of the Year 2008**

On Friday 28 November at Christiansborg, it will be decided whether the LIFE Greenhouses will be crowned Denmark's Best Training Place of the Year 2008.

As previously reported in eLIFE, the Greenhouses have already won the award for Best Training Place of the Year 2008 at Roskilde Technical College on the basis of a glowing recommendation by trainee greenhouse gardener Tanja Hein Andersen.

The Greenhouses have now moved on to the national competition for Best Training Place of the Year 2008, where LIFE is among three nominated enterprises chosen by the panel of judges from among 30 local winners across the country.

Tanja Hein Andersen considers herself to be the luckiest trainee of the year:

"Glasshouse Supervisor Theo Bølsterli is simply the best boss and throughout my training period, my other colleagues have been really helpful and have contributed to a fantastic atmosphere in the greenhouses, where

we have worked together," she says, continuing: "I have also been very pleased with the trust they have shown in always giving me interesting and varying tasks."

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [gjb@life.ku.dk](mailto:gjb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 26 November 2008*

### **X-factor brains at LIFE**

With stars, supporters, excitement and atmosphere, the Brain for a Night 2008 competition was held on Friday 21 November. A wide variety of LIFE's academic areas were represented by ten students. Each participant had ten minutes to present their his or her BSc or MSc projects to five specialist judges. It was a convincing demonstration of the high academic level and communication skills of these LIFE students and the perfect opportunity for companies to spot talented new researchers.

One even participated via direct transmission from the USA and another was extremely pregnant, so both technology and biology had to be catered to along the way.

It was a difficult task for the judges, who ultimately decided that one of the prizes should be shared by two winners:

The winner of DKK 10,000 – donated by Chr. Hansen – was Rikke Sick Andersen.

The winners of DKK 5,000, each – donated by Novo Nordisk – were Tine Thach and Ragnhild Jørgensen Bager.

The event concluded with a high-spirited party at A-vej.

See more: [www.juniorforskercafe.life.ku.dk](http://www.juniorforskercafe.life.ku.dk) (in Danish)

*Knud Høgsberg, Faculty of Life Sciences Library*

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [gjb@life.ku.dk](mailto:gjb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 26 November 2008*

### **LIFE researcher chosen as Best Commemoration Speaker of the Year**

It is a great honour to be chosen Best Commemoration Speaker of the Year at the University of Copenhagen's traditional Annual Commemoration celebration, which was held on Thursday 20 November. This year, the honour went to Professor Merete Fredholm, Department of Basic Animal and Veterinary Science, Genetics & Bioinformatics.

In addition to being a highly recognised researcher, Merete Fredholm is also a talented lecturer who understands how to communicate her material in a clear and entertaining way without detracting from her professionalism. So the Annual Commemoration Committee's choice was particularly obvious. For her interesting and entertaining lecture, the audience produced energetic applause.

That same day, Merete Fredholm received the Knights Cross of the Order of the Dannebrog by HM The Queen upon the recommendation of Dean Per Holten-Andersen.

Summary of the Annual Commemoration lecture:

Stories From the Magical Universe of Genetics

Through the accomplishments of genetic research, it is now possible to 'read' the mammalian genome almost like a book. And our domestic animals constitute a unique resource for interpreting the content of that book. Therefore, we can use genetic knowledge about, for example, heart diseases and slipped discs in dogs to solve the mysteries of the causes of inherited diseases in humans.

*Merete Fredholm*

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [gib@life.ku.dk](mailto:gib@life.ku.dk) – latest update 21 November 2008*

## **Veterinary studies in the good old days of 1868**

Today's veterinary science has probably changed a great deal since Hans Jensen Madsen first arrived at the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University on 21 August in the year 1868. The main characters in this story were probably very good at what they did, but they did not all possess a talent for teaching, which is why it was something near a miracle that the school actually produced veterinarians at all.

The young Hans Jensen Madsen bravely showed up at the office, where he was received by the old Administrator Jokumsen, who handed him a teaching plan. After asking politely where he should begin as a veterinarian student, he was told to read the plan. It was a bulky work with a lot of foreign names, and it was nearly impossible for the budding veterinarian to figure out where to begin. Madsen went to the main building, looked around and met an elderly man who did not give the school the best evaluation as he had, himself, attended the school for many years without ever earning a degree. Luckily Madsen also met some other young people and, together, they figured out that they were to begin with physics, chemistry, zoology and botany.

The course in physics started at 9 am on the following day, and at 9.15 am, a thin gentleman walked in. This man turned out to be Professor N. J. Fjord – the physics professor. Madsen had no previous knowledge of physics and Fjord immediately opened with a "Gentlemen" and then launched into a lecture on physics in an accent that Madsen had difficulty understanding. When the bell rang, Fjord left the room with a slight bow and Madsen was very disappointed, because he had hoped to be recommended a book that he could study on his own, but it now became clear that he would have to acquire all his knowledge via the lectures.

The next lecture on chemistry with Professor Barfod went no better. Barfod was a meticulous gentleman with a silk cravat and at the slightest indication of wind or rain, he would be dressed in galoshes, 2 umbrellas and a cane. When the students politely greeted him, he always kindly acknowledged them, but at his lectures he spoke very quietly while throwing around symbols and abbreviations for the elements. He did not refer to any books, either, where more information on these odd things that the students were hearing about for the first time could be looked up. All these numbers and strange chemical compounds made Madsen desperate, but the students did not dare ask the advice and guidance of the professors, who considered themselves far superior to the students.

Professor Schiødte gave lectures on zoology, and even though they were nice poetic lectures, they were more entertaining than educational and not much use at the exam. However, the course did include recommended reading in the form of Lytken's and Krøyer's textbooks, which Schiødte loved to mock. Instead, Schiødte's exam required knowledge of material that none of the students could recall ever hearing about at his lectures, so they felt very lost in that discipline as well.

By comparison, they had no problem comprehending Professor Johannes Lange's lectures on plants. His excursions were a real pleasure and he was happy to answer questions from the students.

After the summer holidays in 1869, Hans Madsen began the second part of his veterinary studies, which in those days required that veterinarians could even forge their own horseshoes. This had the added advantage of providing an extra income if the income as a veterinarian was not enough.

The art of blacksmithing was taught by Professor Westring, a strange, taciturn man who taught almost without saying a single word. They started by learning how to make iron bars for nails out of old horseshoes and not until that discipline was mastered were the students permitted to forge horseshoes. They donned leather aprons and then 20 men hammered away at the red-hot iron. There were two men to a forge and an anvil and they took turns hitting the horseshoes with sledge hammers in what must have been a deafening noise. Sometimes, a wrong hit would send a red-hot horseshoe flying into the air, so it was a dangerous business indeed. Professor Westring walked around quietly and observed the students, and if there was something he did not approve of, he would simply grab the tongs with the glowing iron and show them with the hammer how to do things properly. But in order to hear him if he spoke at the same time, they had to be careful, because there was a real risk of getting hit in the head with the hammer. After the students learned to make nails, they could take the smithy exam, and Madsen, who had a knack for blacksmithing, earned one of the highest marks which was very rare in that discipline.

The most important and most difficult discipline was anatomy, which was taught by Titular Councillor of State Professor Bendz, who was a very noble gentleman whose bearing alone inspired the deepest respect. He always wore a black frock coat and well-polished shoes when he lectured, and he performed the task as though it were an extremely sacred act. He had a unique talent for drawing illustrations on the blackboard with very few lines. He was always in a hurry to get through the very comprehensive syllabus, but it helped a great deal that he had written an excellent textbook on the subject, which was something the students missed in their other disciplines. No one would ever dare approach the Titular Councillor of State with a question, and he never spoke directly to students except at exams.

Instruction in dissection was poor and scarce, for the Titular Councillor of State did not perform manual tasks – instead he assigned them to his assistant, Dr Krabbe, who was a dry man who never said a word. So the students learned the most by observing Assistant Knudsen produce preparations for the lessons.

In the evenings, the students were left to themselves when they practiced dissection, and the atmosphere was often very lively, with backhand throws of various pieces of flesh and organs. One evening, the Titular Councillor of State suddenly walked in. This had never happened before, but in his noble and elegant way, he reproached the students for daring to profane and make such a mess in what was one of the most unique rooms in the entire world. For a period, it was always calm and quiet in the dissection room.

Physiology was taught along with anatomy, and the Titular Councillor of State loved to take an elegant and theatrical step back after showing specific preparations and drawings and say: There you have it, Gentlemen, Nature has arranged itself very wisely .” The students were almost given the impression that it was the Titular Councillor of State himself who had decided how the physiology of animals worked. It was unheard of for the students to think for themselves and they were made to feel like primitive bodies that had been given the permission to look on such greatness and wisdom.

Important disciplines like pathology, internal medicine and pharmacology were taught by Professor Bagge, who gave long philosophical observations of the essence and causes of diseases with a variety of unknown foreign words and Latin terms. The students were given the impression of something strangely spectral from an unknown world that was difficult to grasp.

Microscopy was not part of the study programme at that time, and there were only a few microscopes set up with historical preparations which the students could view with care. Handling a microscope themselves was out of the question as it was a much too delicate and costly instrument.

The thermometer was not used for measuring body temperature – that was determined by checking breathing, the pulse and the outer body temperature. If they suspected fever, the proper treatment was bloodletting. The beneficial effect of bloodletting was that when the blood flowed, everyone could see that something was being done, and when the veterinarian was talented enough to stop the flow of blood again, their respect for him increased significantly.

Professor Bagge was also head of the stationary clinic where the students practiced the treatment of sick animals. Professor Bagge always arrived at the clinic wearing a frock coat and top hat, and his dress shirt was not always buttoned up in front so the students could see his hairy chest when his shirt opened as he moved. In this dress, it was, of course, rare that Bagge did anything which would cause him to touch the animals, the lessons were more along the lines of vague theoretical conversations on the suspected diseases in question.

At the time, not much was known about bacteria and their influence on diseases, nor about antiseptics, but Professor Bagge did, however, use carbolic oil to treat wounds. Professor Stockfleth, on the other hand, did not see the point of using carbolic oil. Instead he believed in blue vitriol, which was very confusing for the students, because the two gentlemen were examiners for each other in the clinical disciplines, so there was not always a balance between the two points of view.

In the next episode, we continue to follow Hans Madsen's path though his veterinary studies among often choleric professors, but luckily he also met a few talented and humane people.

*Kim Greiner, Senior Gardener*

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [gjb@life.ku.dk](mailto:gjb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 21 November 2008*

## Announcements

### **Conference on Modernising European Company Law – the Case of Denmark**

Alexandersalen, Bispetorvet 3, 2 December 2008 at 1-6 pm.

Company law of the European jurisdictions is changing rapidly. Several drivers for change can be identified, notably globalisation and international competition among corporations and legal systems. The results are visible in EU law with increased focus on corporate governance and a different emphasis on capital protection as evidenced by the SLIM project and the changes made to the 2nd Company Law Directive. This development is spurred on by the case law of the EC Court of Justice in Centros, Sevic, etc.

The law of the Member States has changed accordingly and, within the last few years, there have been major reforms in the United Kingdom, Germany and France as well as within the Nordic countries of Finland and Sweden. Now the turn has come to Denmark, where on 26 November 2008 the Committee to reform Danish company law will publish its report and recommendations for a new Danish Companies Act.

Two law professors at the University of Copenhagen Faculty of Law were assigned to the committee as independent experts and the Forum for Company Law and Financial Market Law (FOCOFIMA) at the Faculty of Law is now hosting a conference in Copenhagen on 2 December 2008 from 1 to 6 PM to review the proposed

reform.

The conference will outline the reform, explain the Committee's reasoning and try to put the Danish reform into a European context. The Conference will be conducted in English.

The conference is hosted by FOCOFIMA and the Danish Company Law Association, and is made possible by a contribution from the FOCOFIMA Business Group.

#### [Registration and fees](#)

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 27 November 2008*

### **Want to be part of the most important scientific climate congress of the year?**

In December 2009, Copenhagen is hosting the COP15 summit where the successor to the Kyoto protocol is to be adopted.

In anticipation of the UN climate summit, the University of Copenhagen, along with nine other leading international universities, is hosting the largest ever research congress on climate change in 2009. There will be several hundred participants, including such major names as Lord Nicholas Stern, professor at the London School of Economics, and Dr. Rajendra K. Pachauri, chair of the UN climate panel.

You now have the opportunity to become part of this unique event. The University of Copenhagen needs volunteers to help with the practical aspects of the congress. There is plenty to do, from handing out material to participants and assisting in group conference rooms to manning information desks. The congress will be held on 10-12 March 2009 in Bella Center on Amager.

The only qualifications you need to be a volunteer is that you are friendly, service-minded and fluent in English.

If you would like to volunteer, we offer an outstanding opportunity to experience first-hand what might be the most important climate policy event ever, not including the Climate Summit itself, of course. When you are not on duty during the congress, there will be plenty of opportunity to hear leading scientists as well as politicians, decision makers, NGO representatives and journalists from around the world discuss climate change.

If you are interested in volunteering, please send an email to [frivilligklima@adm.ku.dk](mailto:frivilligklima@adm.ku.dk), and you will be contacted as soon as possible.

Read more about the congress at [www.climatecongress.ku.dk](http://www.climatecongress.ku.dk).

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 26 November 2008*

### **Winter programme for the Havebrugshistorisk Selskab**

See the [winter programme 2008-2009 for the Havebrugshistorisk Selskab](#) (Danish history of gardening association).

All lectures will take place at Villa Rolighed, Rolighedsvej 23. Free admission for members and spouses; DKK 25 for guests.

**Finn T. Sørensen, Faculty of Life Sciences Library, [fts@life.ku.dk](mailto:fts@life.ku.dk)**

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 27 November 2008*

## **The Forestry Students' Christmas tree market at LIFE**

True to tradition, the forestry students will be selling Christmas trees every Friday, Saturday and Sunday until the Christmas, as well as Monday-Wednesday 22-24 December.

The address is Thorvaldsensvej 57. Opening hours: Fridays, 3-7 pm, Saturdays, Sundays and Monday-Tuesday 22-23 December, 10 am-4 pm, and Wednesday 24 December, 9 am-12 noon.

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 27 November 2008*

## **Election at University of Copenhagen**

In the period October-December 2008, ordinary elections will be held at the University of Copenhagen for student representatives for the University Board, the Academic Council, Study Boards and PhD study committees. See the website [www.ku.dk/valg](http://www.ku.dk/valg)

There are twelve voting stations, but none at LIFE. Ours is an uncontested election because there is either a prioritised list of nominees nor does the number of nominees exceed the number of representatives to be elected.

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 27 November 2008*

## **Channel 5 seeks participants in comedy programme**

Channel 5 is currently seeking five participants for a new season of Uffe Holm's comedy programme "Stå Op" (Stand Up) – if you are interested, you can find more information at [www.kanal5.dk](http://www.kanal5.dk) (in Danish) or send an email to [standup@blu.dk](mailto:standup@blu.dk)

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 21 November 2008*

## **Climate Lecture: Minister for Climate and Energy Connie Hedegaard: Moving towards a global climate agreement**

At the 10th Climate Lecture on Thursday 18 December, the Danish Minister for Climate and Energy, Connie Hedegaard, will take stock of the international climate negotiations to date. At that time, she will have recently returned from COP14 negotiations in Poland. She will talk about the progress of the international negotiations with one year to go before the COP15 Climate Summit in Copenhagen.

Ceremonial Hall, Frue Plads, 4.00-5.30 pm

[Register here](#)

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 20 November 2008*

# Education

## **LIFE students to be bioethanol experts at climate summit at Nørre G**

Four natural resource students will take part on Thursday 27 November when Nørre G hosts a climate day for its upper secondary students – one year before the major COP15 Climate Summit in Copenhagen.

At Nørre G's Climate Day, all the upper secondary school's students will discuss climate strategies. And in addition to the students from LIFE, Eyvind Vesselbo (MP Liberal Party) and Anne Grete Holmsgaard (MP Socialist People's Party) will also attend. The final speaker will be Jytte Abildstrøm.

[Read the press release](#)

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [gib@life.ku.dk](mailto:gib@life.ku.dk) – latest update 26 November 2008*

### **Line of study projects to be carried out at LIFE**

This week, upper secondary schools from all over Denmark have had the opportunity to genetically engineer plants, melt chocolate and examine microorganisms in the stomachs of cows. They have chosen to focus on life science in their line of study projects and, in this connection, have visited LIFE.

Rasmus Tarp and Daniel Jacobsen from Tornbjerg Upper Secondary School in Odense travelled all the way to Copenhagen to do their line of study project – a compulsory multidisciplinary project for all graduating classes at Danish upper secondary schools. They wanted to try their hand at life science with the project on the degradability of alcohol.

"We are working with yeast experiments where we get to study pig livers to see how enzymes break down alcohol in the body," explains Rasmus Tarp.

"It is really exciting to be able to work in a real, professional lab," adds Danile Jacobsen.

This week, they are working on the biochemistry of alcohol, one of the exercises created for upper secondary line of study projects that LIFE organises every year to encourage young people's interest in natural and life sciences.

Every year, 10,000 students from all over the country visit LIFE via the programme that seeks to give upper secondary students an opportunity to carry out scientific experiments at the university over a period of two days in connection with their line of study projects in their final year of upper secondary school studies. Last year, 48 students took part in the programme. This year, 200 students registered for the programme, which will take place in calendar weeks 48, 49 and 50.

The line of study project exercises have been developed as a collaboration between LIFE, the business community and the upper secondary schools in Denmark. They are all multidisciplinary and tailored for line of study projects:

"A visit to LIFE is attractive, because it gives the students the opportunity to experience how their knowledge can be put to use in real life. The young people also get a chance to utilise the latest research in our laboratories," says Dorthe Christensen, as one of the project managers behind the project.

Read about all seven exercises on LIFE's [website](#)

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [gib@life.ku.dk](mailto:gib@life.ku.dk) – latest update 26 November 2008*

### **Campaign for LIFE on busses and trains**

In calendar weeks 49-51, LIFE is inviting technical school and upper secondary school students to be university students for a day.

The invitation will be advertised on buses and trains, mainly in Jutland and on Funen. [See the advertisement here](#)

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 26 November 2008*

## **Student influence has been eroded and given lower priority**

Speech at the Annual Commemoration, University of Copenhagen 2008

You Majesty, Your Royal Highness, Your Excellencies – ladies and gentlemen

You will not find the word student in the great Danish encyclopaedia. The University of Copenhagen is there, yes, but not student. Not a word. In the Danish dictionary, it is simply defined as: “A person who studies at a school of higher education.” Nothing more – and, in my opinion, that definition is incomplete.

Maybe it is just an expression of how difficult it currently seems to be to figure out what category we belong to? Are we just passing through on our way to the labour market? Are we customers in the university’s education shop? Or are we part of the institution that is charged with driving society forward by achieving new realisations? One thing is certain, however: We are the subject of much discussion – but included in fewer and fewer of them.

Yes, we have been asked to speak here today – and yes, we are represented on a variety of bodies here at the university. But our influence has also been consistently eroded and given lower priority in every statute and university act that has been adopted since 1970. Back then, we were given, what was called, at the time, the most liberal administration legislation in the world. Today, we find ourselves again with a university act that has effectively taken our freedom of research, has removed any overriding influence the students have had on the university and has been criticised for being one of the most conservative and micro-managing university laws in the world.

Most of the bodies have been transformed into advisory, rather than decision-making, bodies and a so-called professional managing body has been introduced. With this type of management, decisions should preferably have been made yesterday and not through dialogue with those who are affected by them. This type of management is inspired by an old-fashioned business culture and loyalty is not with the subordinates but rather with their superiors.

What we need, instead, is a modern knowledge institution structure. A structure that is as free as possible from ministerial involvement – because that would mean that the ministry had faith in the university and its population, rather than the lack of faith to which we are subject today. It is a misunderstanding to believe that efficiency and quality can be increased through top-down management. We need a structure in which co-determination is the method of choice. Because it quite simply produces better graduates and better research results; because it motivates in a world in which motivation of the individual is crucial; and because having an influence on our own daily lives strengthens our sense of belonging and responsibility.

In general, it seems as though speed has become a trump card that is to be played regardless of the context. This is true for the decision-making processes themselves – but especially for all the issues that concern the students and our studies. Quality has become a hollow concept because speed, in itself, has become the most important quality parameter. We may not be able to see the consequences at the moment, but they will become visible. And society will be the big loser. Because how do we use graduates who have not had the

opportunity to exploit their potential? Is there really no correlation between quality and time? Is two years, say, enough time for a Master's degree?

It would be a relief if everyone were honest and said: Sorry, but producing graduates of a decent quality simply takes too long! – and then pick up the discussion from there!

But this would represent a problem in relation to another mantra, which may not have much effect on us right now, but which we hear a lot about – world-class. I have no idea what it means. And that may be because it has been reduced, today, to a cliché used by politicians when talking about the universities. Because world-class is, apparently, a redistribution of finances between the universities – the so-called 'completion bonus' – that results in a witch hunt for students who study abroad for a period, have study-relevant jobs and who happen to have children while studying at the university.

It also turns out that world-class means only attending classes for two to four hours a week – doesn't sound like much to me. And world-class has proven to be able to contain everything that makes up our universities. But most importantly, world-class is a university that is undemocratic, inefficient and highly micro-managed. Apparently, world-class is when employer interests and the ministry are allowed to take over the Study Boards' job of designing our study programmes.

And world-class has also turned out to be competition. Competition is the new mantra. Competition is the solution to all problems. We have seen competition influence all levels – from student intake to competing for how quickly they can complete their studies. Take, for instance, student intake. Today, every university produces its own glossy brochures that explains all about the content of its study programmes – and they paint a pretty picture of what it is like to be a student at their university. Competition is ruthless and with the way the so-called 'taxi-meter model' is put together today, the university simply cannot afford not to take part. If intake goes down, it means a loss of funding. This is why we cannot afford to turn up the heat in the lecture halls – or to pay for the latest research. World-class.

The thing is, marketing universities as fantastic places with students that shine as if they had just jumped out of a TV series has some pretty serious consequences. First, students become disappointed – seriously disappointed – because the world-class they have been told so much about simply does not exist. The lecturer doesn't know their names, there are not always enough chairs in the classrooms and they are taught by loosely affiliated lecturers because the researchers who might have given them a research-based education have to work hard to bring in funding for their department.

Second, it is a disaster because the glossy world seeks to trick the students into thinking commitment isn't necessary. If they are not satisfied, they can simply take another product down off the shelf. The education market has well-stocked shelves. So when the negative impact on the study programmes becomes clear, it will become even more obvious to the students that they have been conned into believing that they were studying at the next best thing to Harvard. Imagine a university that didn't have to worry about falling taxi-meter income and that was brave enough to be honest and say – we hope that you will study here with us. We are far from perfect, but we hope that you will help make us better. Instead, we are given a dose of customer mentality – where our complaint options are more relevant than influence and co-responsibility.

We are a significantly stronger resource as students than we ever will be as customers. As students, we can contribute to research and to the development of society – while as customers we are on a kind of passive support. Without visions and without contributing to society. As customers, we can only contribute to ourselves – and I certainly hope no one is interested in that.

The concept of world-class is as misplaced as the concept of elite. Elite is something you are – not something you call yourself. World-class is something the rest of the world recognises that we have in Denmark – not a worn out cliché that can be used to legitimise anything and everything.

My point in all of this is that we need a new university act. We need to throw out all the ministerial involvement – and put in real self-government for the universities. Drop the advisory bodies – and establish decision-making bodies that consist of an equal representation of the various parts of the university's population. In short, we need innovation in the university area.

Drop the competition and control and give us faith. Faith that we actual have – not only the ability – but also the desire to make a difference in the daily life we share. And we could begin by agreeing that we all have a deciding influence on the upcoming evaluation of the university act. We need to ensure that a future university act benefits not only the OECD, but also meets the real and long-term interests of Danish society and, especially, works for those of us who make up the university.

On a day like today, I can't help but think back to the Annual Commemoration 40 years ago. The year was 1968 and the students wanted to be involved in the decision-making process. They would no longer tolerate the old-fashioned, obdurate university of the day, and the Annual Commemoration was used as a chance to call attention to their dissatisfaction. There were several motives for capturing the rostrum, and I do not agree with them all, but they used a phrase back then that still rings true today. "We demand co-determination." And they were ultimately given a certain amount of co-determination, but now we are facing the same problem all over again. As students, we have been taken out of the game – but we will continue to demand to be put back into play.

Therefore, I hope that, after revising the act this spring, we can achieve a common understanding of what we, as students, are and can. A complete dictionary definition that should read:

A student; a socially conscious citizen who is part of the institution of higher education in which she is enrolled. A student is characterised by an uncommonly strong pride and interest in her discipline, in her field of study and in her ability to acquire and develop new knowledge through interaction with researchers and society in general. Students are a huge resource for any modern society, but only as long as that society is willing to have faith that the students often know more about the science and its potential that they do themselves. Involving the students in the university's development and operation produces the most qualified candidates that can become part of society and contribute to its continued development and progress.

*Pia Mejdahl Daugbjerg*

*Student of political science*

*Student Council, Chair*

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [gib@life.ku.dk](mailto:gib@life.ku.dk) – latest update 27 November 2008*

## Staff news

### **Winners of Brain for a Night 2008**

The winner of DKK 10,000 – donated by Chr. Hansen – was Rikke Sick Andersen, biology-biotechnology. The winners of DKK 5,000, each – donated by Novo Nordisk – were Tine Thach, agronomy student, and Ragnhild Jørgensen Bager, biology-biotechnology.

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 26 November 2008*

### **Dan Holmberg appointed professor with special duties**

As of 1 November 2008, LIFE has appointed Professor Dan Holmberg in a globalisation professorship with special duties within biotechnology in relation to health in animals and humans. The appointment is part of an increased focus at LIFE seeking, through biological research, to expand knowledge about the development, spread, management and treatment of diseases across animals and humans.

[Read the press release](#) (in Danish)

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 25 November 2008*

### **Defence of doctoral thesis: Professor Niels Strange, Forest & Landscape**

On Tuesday 9 December 2008, 1.30 pm, Professor Niels Strange will defend his doctoral thesis: Uncertainty, Spatiality and Environmental Values in Integrated Forest and Nature Management Planning.

The defence will take place in Auditorium 2-02, Dyrølægevej 100.

The following official opponents have been appointed:

Professor Finn Helles (chair)  
Danish Centre for Forest, Landscape and Planning  
Faculty of Life Sciences, University of Copenhagen

Professor Claire Montgomery  
Department of Forest Resources  
Oregon State University  
Corvallis OR 97331  
USA

Professor Hans Frederik Hoen  
Department of Ecology and Natural Resource Economics  
Agricultural University of Norway  
P.O.Box 5044  
N-1432 Ås  
Norway

**Lilian Zeuthen Bjørnseth, Study and Students' Affairs, [lzb@life.ku.dk](mailto:lzb@life.ku.dk)**

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 21 November 2008*

## **Research**

### **DBL reappointed as WHO Collaborating Centre**

On 25 November 2008, Deputy Director for the World Health Organization – Regional Office for Europe – has officially reappointed DBL as WHO Collaborating Centre for Integrated Control of Helminth Infections.

On the basis of the Centre's successful work and excellent results in the previous period from 2004-2007, and its future plans, the WHO Regional Screening Committee has recommended that DBL be reappointed as an official WHO collaboration centre for the period 2008-2012. Pascal Magnussen will continue as head of the collaboration centre.

The collaboration will comprise, among other things, research capacity building, training and investigative assignments within helminth infections as well as capacity building in connection with such infections.

In the future work, DBL and ISB will continue to maintain and further develop positive relations with WHO, its regional offices and member countries, with a view to continuing to contribute to sustainable health and the achievement of the 2015 targets for combating poverty.

**Pascal Magnussen, Department of Disease Biology, [pma@life.ku.dk](mailto:pma@life.ku.dk)**

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 25 November 2008*

## Research funds etc.

See the updated information on the Research & Information website.