



eLIFE – news on life at LIFE

Thursday, 29 November 2007

Email to the editors: 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

Gudrun Lau Bjerno, Editor, Communications, glb@life.ku.dk

Life at LIFE

Kim Greiner speaks out: My life as a test subject

People looked at me in shock when I told them, while giving a tour or in other contexts, that I had donated my body to science. But their expressions relaxed a little as I went on to explain that it was my living body and that I definitely expected to survive the scientists' experiments.

I, myself, work at the Faculty of Life Sciences, and one day I read on a flyer that the Department of Human Nutrition needed healthy, non-smoking men aged 40-70. The description fit me perfectly, so I emailed Jesper at Human Nutrition and before I knew it, I was part of their staff of test subjects.

All I had to do for the experiment was eat brook trout, and I thought back to the days of my youth when I had single-handedly caught a brook trout in a freshwater stream in central Jutland. I recalled how delicious the trout tasted about thirty minutes later after a spot in the frying pan, and decided that a brook trout experiment was just right for me. Of course, in the experiment I had to eat brook trout every day for two months, but a good culinary experience can't be repeated too often. The objective of the experiment was to see whether

consumption of fish influences the elasticity of the arteries and thereby the blood flow, but also to determine whether it influences the pulse, cholesterol level, weight, waist measurement and probably other things that I didn't really catch.

The test subjects were divided into three groups: The first group was asked to eat brook trout that had only been fed traditional feed; the second group was asked to eat brook trout that had only been fed vegetable feed; the third group was the control group and had to eat the same amount of chicken instead.

The experiment began with an interview and then tests were conducted to determine whether I was suitable, whether I actually had a pulse, and if so, if it could be found and taken. After the first tests I was deemed suitable, and eventually the entire group of test subjects was called in to an information meeting where each of us was assigned a start date.

Before the experiment began, our normal diets had to be registered, so we had to keep tabs on and weigh down the last gram of all the food we consumed over a period of 4 days, although we didn't have to keep track of the water we drank. We were issued with a scale, a diet registration form and very strict orders to weigh everything down the smallest detail. For instance, if I ate an apple, it had to be weighed first and afterwards the core had to be weighed and subtracted from the total weight of the apple.

In my efforts to maintain a healthy body and soul, I walk every day after work from the Faculty to Copenhagen Central Station eating an apple along the way. On one of the diet registration days, I had finished my apple about half-way to the station and because I couldn't just throw it out, I put it in my pocket. It hadn't occurred to me that an apple core is actually quite wet, so by the time I reached the station I decided to get rid of it. I took out my scale and, among hundreds of people, weighed my apple core. I received quite a few strange looks, but no one called the mental institution.

Another time, I weighed hotdogs, bread and ketchup at a hotdog stand; of course I had to weigh each item separately. The hotdog seller didn't say anything, but he kept glancing in my direction and was probably scared to death that I was a government food inspector and was about to catch him selling underweight hotdogs.

After four days, I was getting pretty fed up with the inconvenience of weighing my food, and I was relieved when the fifth day arrived and I could again eat anything I wanted without having to weigh it first.

On the final night before the start of the experiment, we had to eat a special meal prepared according to a specific recipe they gave us. We also had to eat this same meal on the last night of the experiment at the end of the two-month period before the final tests. So to make things easier on myself, I made a double portion of everything and put half of it in the freezer. After eating the special meal, I had to fast until the next morning when I was to meet up at the Department of Human Nutrition.

Hungry as a wolf, I showed up at the department for an examination and to determine my start statistics before beginning the experiment. Blood samples were taken, my weight and measurements were noted. Then I was asked to rest on an exam table with strict orders not to fall asleep. Then Jesper came in and took my pulse and measured the blood flow from my heart to my groin, throat and wrist with electrodes attached to my chest. After that, I went in to Birgitte, where we sat down together to review the diet registration form and she attached a blood pressure monitor that squeezed my arm and took my blood pressure every fifteen minutes throughout the day. My blood pressure had to be taken regularly over 24 hours, but at night it was a real treat, because it was only activated every 30 minutes.

Twenty four hours later, there was nothing about my body that Human Nutrition didn't know, and I was ready to begin eating brook trout.

The procedure was that every Monday and Thursday, I went to the Experimental Lunch Room and was served a complete meal comprising 150g brook trout – and as an extra benefit, I didn't have to pack a lunch that day. The rest of the week, I received frozen brook trout and could choose my own side dishes, but usually there was a sauce. I always looked forward to lunch in the Experimental Lunch Room because two sweet ladies, Yvonne and Berit, took good care of the test subjects and we had some excellent discussions on everything from trees in Sweden to hiking in New Zealand.

There were seven different dishes, which were repeated throughout the study period, and they always included 150g of brook trout. Among the most notable dishes were fish salad, curried brook trout, brook trout in various sauces, just plain whole brook trout and fish lasagne. As you might have guessed, the brook trout that made up the experiment didn't come from clean spring water, but from a fish pond, and ponds tend to leave something of an aftertaste. But if you really love the taste of marsh soil, it was just fantastic. It is actually a bacterium in the digestive tract of the fish that gives it an earthy flavour – but marsh soil or bacteria, the dishes weren't always easy to get through, especially the lasagne. It was torturous and beats anything else I've ever eaten in my life, including snakes, giant frogs, guinea pigs and palm weevils.

I preferred the fish salad, which I could actually enjoy eating. The other dishes were acceptable, but they had also been heavily doused with spices by the cook. The spices weren't always enough for me, so I developed specialties like brook trout in ketchup and brook trout with salami and a healthy serving of horse radish.

In addition to eating brook trout every day, we weren't allowed to eat any other type of fish or shellfish during the study period. Early in the study period, I attended a party where the most delicious sandwiches with salmon and dill were served, and I am ashamed to admit that I accidentally ate one. Now I am an honest man, so I noted in my study diary that I had eaten a teensy-weensy salmon sandwich, and I also admitted it to Yvonne. Yvonne is an assertive woman, so she gave me a kind-hearted but serious scolding and told me that it was not okay to ignore the rules and eat a salmon sandwich. I had to cross my heart and promise never, ever to do it again.

To my chagrin, I faced the same dilemma again near the end of the study period when I was on a mini-break and the most delectable salmon plate was served on the last night at the hotel. But I was a good boy and resolutely traded my fish for my wife's potatoes. And just for record, it isn't all that fun carrying a variety of fish dishes in your bag on holiday, but everything was eaten as prescribed, because I can do it when it really counts.

The study period wound down and there were, again, four days of diet registration down to the smallest detail. Then the special evening meal was consumed, and I, again, fasted and visited the Department of Human Nutrition for tests.

Before the tests were conducted, I was asked whether a student doing her BA project on the experiment could attend the procedure. And I, course, said yes.

After resting on the exam table for ten minutes, they took a blood sample and then, to avoid being disturbed or just for some unknown reason, the two beautiful women locked the door. But I didn't mind a bit. The girls were very well-behaved, even though blood was shed, and the next item on the agenda was the weighing, where I was thankfully given some privacy as it practically had to be done in my birthday suit.

Then it was Jesper's turn, and because I knew his tests tended to get a bit personal, I thought it best to ask the student whether she had seen a naked man before. She had no problems with it, but she still looked a bit disappointed when he allowed me to keep my boxers on.

Then, Birgitte reviewed my diet registration form, attached the blood pressure monitor to my arm and I could finally have my breakfast and pick up my last brook trout meal. They had come to know my preferences in the kitchen, so they were kind enough not to make my last meal fish lasagne but fish salad. That afternoon, I gave a two-hour lecture at a pensioners association, and because I still had the blood pressure monitor attached, I had to explain that the reason my arm would stuck out and produced a beep every fifteen minutes was because I was a test subject and my blood pressure was being taken.

At night, an active blood pressure monitor is a somewhat turbulent bed buddy, but I did get to sleep a little. And when the monitor was returned the next afternoon, my status suddenly changed back to that of a regular senior gardener after two months of being a test subject.

I will receive a small honorarium of a couple thousand kroner at some point, and later all the test subjects will be called to a meeting to hear the results of our joint efforts.

Donating my body to science was an extremely interesting experience, and the staff was very nice and thoughtful throughout the entire period. So I wouldn't mind being a test subject again, but not with brook trout and certainly not with fish lasagne.



Kim Greiner, Senior Gardener

Gudrun Lau Bjerno, gub@life.ku.dk – latest update 28 November 2007

The University of Copenhagen – now at Yale

Today, the University of Copenhagen is opening an office at Yale University. The objective of the office is to strengthen collaboration between Yale and the University of Copenhagen on, among other things, research, summer school programmes and fund-raising. The office will also act as a bridgehead for the University's activities on the American east coast.

A delegation headed by Pro-rector Lykke Friis has travelled to Yale to study how sustainability is implemented at Yale. Lykke Friis will also be hosting the official opening ceremony for the University's new office.

Both Yale and the University of Copenhagen are members of IARU, which is an alliance of ten of the most

research-intensive universities in the world.

“This is a fantastic opportunity for the University of Copenhagen and for our IARU collaboration. The office will be our gateway to collaboration on everything from climate policy to HR policy. It will be very inspiring for everyone,” says Pro-rector Lykke Friis.

The opening of the office will make the University more visible at Yale and collaboration on research and study programmes is expected to intensify.

Read more about the IARU universities: www.ku.dk/iaru/

Jasper Steen Winkel, Head of Communications

Gudrun Lau Bjerno, glb@life.ku.dk – latest update 27 November 2007

The students are yelling yet again: Send more money – Quit your meddling!

The speech by David Salomonsen, Student Council chair and law student, given at the University of Copenhagen's Annual Commemoration on 15 November 2007:

Your Royal Highness, Your Excellencies – ladies and gentlemen

It has been a memorable year for the University of Copenhagen. The old University has gained a number of new colleagues through the merger with the new LIFE and FARMA faculties. We are an enormous institution – not only in size, but also in content.

In many ways, the merger has been a successful project, with many benefits for us as students. However, this does not change the fact that we would have gone about it differently.

Wouldn't it have been a great if the desire for a merger came from the universities and not from the ministry? If it had been the academic environments that had sought out new friends on the basis of academic potential rather than the decision being made from above? The ministry's – you could say, drive – in terms of the individual universities can generally be felt in a number of areas.

“We deliver the goods” as they say at the ministry. And *“Do you mind stopping that please”* – would be an appropriate answer. Because if the University of Copenhagen is to become a university of international class, it is crucial that we, as an institution, decide how the goods should be formed.

What we should research; how long it takes to become a good graduate; the form our examinations should take – these are all questions that the students and teach staff together are the most qualified to answer – as long as it is academic level, learning and new understanding that are the highest priorities.

And this should not be taken to mean that we are not interested in adjusting to the needs that society might have at any time in terms of, say, the supply of labour. However, it must also be our duty to explain what is actually possible – and especially what is not possible – or, at least, explain the academic and social costs that can result from forcing change.

But let us come back to this in a moment.

Because the first prerequisite – for which ambitions we can achieve here at the University – is the financial resources.

I think everyone is aware of the extensive debate that has taken place, especially between the students and the politicians. On the one side, you have thousands of students who are finding the quality of their study programmes reduced every year. There are fewer courses on offer, there is less feedback available, classes are getting larger etc. On the other side, you have the politicians who claim to be investing heavily in education.

And if the two sides ever manage to agree that year-for-year there have been fewer resources with which to operate the universities – then the blame has always been placed on another government. In the eyes of the students, or even in the eyes of society as a whole, this is not a comfort.

For the first few years, it had apparently been possible to balance out the annual budget squeezes of a percent or two with administrative streamlining. However, the reality is that the administration and management costs are not actually shrinking at the moment.

As far as we can see, there is a general and long-term trend of granting fewer and fewer resources to the educational system in Denmark.

But there is also another trend worth noting – actually a very positive one – namely the demands that the universities perform better and better. From society's point of view, there is often an understandable expectation that we get better and better on a variety of fronts – and we are also expected to constantly expand our capacity to accept new students.

But what is cause for concern is the combination of these two trends. If the demand for performance increases on the one hand – and the resources are slowly shrinking on the other hand – then it is easy to conclude that a time will come when the departments themselves will have to begin looking for alternative sources of financing.

And if you look at the rest of the world – and we do, of course – then the most logical source of financing is to require tuition from the students – also in the countries we normally compare ourselves with.

Here in Denmark, the trend is crystal clear. The market for private players selling “extra classes” to students is growing steadily with more and more new subjects and more and more students.

Also the Erasmus Mundus programmes, where the students pay fees of up to 50,000 Danish kroner to participate, have come on the agenda.

Unfortunately, this has come with a discussion of whether this practice is technically legal or not – and if it is illegal, will the ministry intercede.

But that isn't really the interesting part – what is actually interesting is whether it is a politically desirable practice.

Whether fee-based study programmes are something we want to promote or restrict?

For the student who has to pay 50,000 kroner to get an education, the result is the same – regardless of the legality of the practice.

The consequences for social mobility are still the same. The ability to exploit the talent potential of all young people is still weakened. The incentive to get an education is reduced – regardless of the legality issue. In this connection, I find it alarming that it has even been proposed that we actually establish private universities in Denmark.

Besides the fact that it was my impression that the reason for the series of mergers we just underwent was – according to the ministry – that there were too many universities in Denmark. There is the added concern that private institutions have an even greater incentive to implement fee-based study programmes in Denmark.

Finish faster

It has been a political goal for many years to get the students to finish their studies faster and to commence their studies earlier. Danish students are too slow, and, unfortunately, a political consensus has developed among the decision-makers that ideals like learning and immersion must yield to this new demand.

Either that, or there is the impression that it really is possible to significantly reduce study times without having a negative effect on the academic qualifications of the graduates when they enter the labour market.

And certainly there are also several areas where it is possible to make changes and give students improved conditions so that they can better concentrate on their studies – and this would, of course, also result in shorter completion times.

And this is happening. The University of Copenhagen now invests regularly in making the study environment more attractive and in improving student guidance and making it more accessible. Making sure examinations are scheduled more logically and so forth.

And we can see that it is working – completion times are on their way down – although obviously it will take some time for such initiatives to really have an impact. Changing an institution's culture and work process, and achieving the full effect of the initiatives is, unfortunately, something we don't seem to have time for, however. Things just can't seem to go fast enough.

And here I think it is important to remember that it is their independence and professional expertise that make Danish graduates an attractive labour force. In contrast to other countries, we can move directly into an actual job function, without having to work for several years in trainee-like positions on the way. That does not happen in very many other places.

And it is with this in mind that I find it worrying that, in addition to the positive incentives, there is an effort to introduce a financial penalty for universities with longer completion times.

This gives rise to the implementation of measures at the institutions – regardless of the academic costs – that result either in students being “carried” through their exams – a so-called lowering of the academic bar – or in slower students simply being pushed out of the university.

Two very unfortunate situations. Also if the goal is for more young people to acquire an education at a so-called world-class university.

But maybe the winds are changing. It has been suggested, at least during the election, that students be allowed to work more alongside their studies. I don't hope they expect us to work harder on our studies and work more outside school at the same time.

It is interesting that this idea was voiced at almost the same time as a new PhD dissertation from Aarhus was quoted in the press as showing that more than 15 hours of work a week outside school has a negative impact on a student's studies. The fewer exams a student passes, the more he or she works outside school.

Regardless of how many hours a student is permitted to work alongside her studies, there is a strange disparity between the finish-as-fast-as-you-can demand and the academic ambitions. World-class universities, more Nobel Prize winners and pioneering research are the goals set by the politicians.

But all of the initiatives they produce focus less and less on professionalism. It seems extremely optimistic to think that our budgets, which represent a fraction of what the other "world-class universities" have at their disposal, can produce the same quality.

All in all, of course, you can sit there as a politician and think – here the students are, yelling yet again: – *Send more money – Quit your meddling – Beware of fee-based study programmes – Quit rushing us...* And all in all, that's probably not far from the truth. These *are* actually some of our biggest concerns at the moment. And I see no reason to soften the message.

Especially when we know that our educational system is the key to – well, if not everything– at least to a large share of the challenges that our society will face in the future.

David Salomonsen, Student Council Chair and law student
Gudrun Lau Bjerno, glb@life.ku.dk – latest update 27 November 2007

Warning: Christmas is dangerous for your stomach

Take care at the Christmas buffet: Your stomach might burst. Interview with Professor Arne Astrup and Glutton of the Year Peter Kongstad in the Danish daily *metroXpress*. [Read the entire article here.](#)

Good advice for Christmas parties:

Good advice from Glutton of the Year Peter Kongstad:

Get up from the table, move about and jump up and down to allow your stomach to fall into place and get your digestion going. Drink Coke – it counteracts bloating and nausea.

Good advice from nutritional expert Arne Astrup:

Drink alcohol and coffee, but in moderation – they help thin the blood, thereby reducing the risk of a heart attack. Drink beer instead of wine as it contains fewer calories. Eat dark chocolate instead of cookies – chocolate is more satisfying. The day after: Exercise and lots of water gets your digestive system going.

Hans Gottlieb, *metroXpress*

Gudrun Lau Bjerno, glb@life.ku.dk – latest update 22 November 2007

Announcements

BioCampus: State-of-the-art in imaging - in vitro and in vivo - Monday 10 December - at 11 to 16.45 The Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences

A BioCampus Symposium, to be held at the Benzon Auditorium, Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Universitetsparken 2.

[Programme](#)

Gudrun Lau Bjerno, gib@life.ku.dk – latest update 28 November 2007

LIFE's accounting staff is moving to the Central Accounting Section in the University of Copenhagen's Central Administration – reception on Friday, 30 November at 2.00 pm in lecture hall 1.16

On 10 December 2007, LIFE's accounting staff will move to the Central Accounting Section in the University of Copenhagen's Central Administration at Nørregade 10.

LIFE would like to thank everyone for their good work and wish them all continued success in the future. On the occasion of the move, there will be a reception on Friday, 30 November at 2.00 pm in lecture hall 1.16 in Nordre Sidebygning.

Kind regards,

Søren Hartz

Gudrun Lau Bjerno, gib@life.ku.dk – latest update 27 November 2007

Education

New Directors of Studies as of 1 November 2007

Mette Olaf Nielsen (IBHV) has been appointed director of studies of the new MA programme in Domestic Animal Science, which will be established as of 1 September 2008 provided that approval can be achieved from the Accreditation Council.

Henrik Meilby (S&L) has been appointed new director of studies for the MA programme in Forestry. Henrik Meilby will be taking over the position after Jens Emborg.

Ingelise Lundgaard, Study and Students' Affairs, il@life.ku.dk

Gudrun Lau Bjerno, gib@life.ku.dk – latest update 27 November 2007

Staff news

Winner of Det Gyldne Snit 2007: Rikke Langebæk and Henrik Kaas, LIFE

Veterinary surgeon Rikke Langebæk, IHMS, and Systems Administrator Henrik Kaas, ITLC, won Det Gyldne Snit 2007 (The Golden Ratio) in Category A: Use of learning objects developed with a view to helping users acquire specific competences and, in some cases, specific types of organisation, with contribution 13: **Basic surgical skills**.

Basic surgical skills is a programme designed for training veterinary students in surgical techniques.

The jury wrote:

- Good example of how to integrate video in a learning platform

- User video well-chosen for instruction
- Instruction is strengthened by the fact that it is recorded on location (at a clinic)
- Video is an excellent combination of PowerPoint, text and more
- The productions are organised such that in addition to seeing professors conducting the work, the students are also involved
- Good technical video quality



Gudrun Lau Bjerno, gjb@life.ku.dk – latest update 29 November 2007

Inaugural lecture: Gertrud Jørgensen, Forest & Landscape – Wednesday 19 December, 1.30 pm in the main lecture hall

Professor Gertrud Jørgensen: "The living city – Challenges for future urban designers". Wednesday, 19 December, 1.30 pm in the main lecture hall 1-01.

Forest & Landscape will host a reception afterwards in the Senate's conference room.

Mariann Erichsen, Forest & Landscape, erich@life.ku.dk

Gudrun Lau Bjerno, gjb@life.ku.dk – latest update 28 November 2007

Research

The travelling "innovation circus" C.I.R.C.U.S.

After three successful events in Riga, Berlin and Milan, it is now Denmark's turn to experience the travelling "innovation circus". Innovation C.I.R.C.U.S. will be visiting the Technical University of Denmark on 3-7 December.

Innovation C.I.R.C.U.S. is the name of a joint European project aimed at teaching us about what makes people

innovative.

A whole week of innovation

"For five days, we will be focused on various aspects of innovation. We believe that everyone – regardless of age or profession – can learn about what makes us innovative. So we encourage anyone who is interested in innovation to drop by," says Annette Borchsenius, head of office, Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation.

Learning and entertainment go hand-in-hand. Throughout the week, it will be possible to take part in various workshops and hear a number of major companies talk about how they work specifically with innovation.

Programme and registration: www.innovationcircus.nu. Admission is free all days except Wednesday.

Innovationcup 2007

The week of innovation will begin with the presentation of this year's innovation awards. The young school students compete within the categories of Innovation in society, User innovation and Product innovation. And the creativity of the nominated projects in Innovationcup 2007 is tremendous.

"The many projects include an armrest for wheelchair users, a new type of clothes-pin, a childproof seatbelt for children and a light bulb that emits a special light. This shows the diversity of the innovative abilities of young people," explains Annette Borchsenius.

After the awards ceremony, representatives from, among others, upper secondary schools, Danske Gymnasieelevers Sammenslutning (Association of Danish Upper Secondary School Students) and the Danish publication *Mandag Morgen* will discuss how schools can be better "incubators" for future innovators.

On the following day, Tuesday, 4 December, exhibitors from Denmark, Sweden and the rest of Europe will show how they work with innovation.

On Wednesday, 5 December, Grundfos A/S, Danfoss Universe Impact and Siemens AG, among others, will talk about how innovation can lead to new products.

On Thursday, antropologerne.com, among others, will lead workshops and present video interviews with a variety of people giving their answers to the following questions: What is innovation? What does it look like? Who talks about it? Why is innovation so popular right now? And what does it have to do with the Øresund region?

The week will conclude by taking the temperature of innovation efforts in the public sector. On the basis of the Danish government's visions for Denmark as a leading nation within innovation, the Danish Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation has launched a number of innovation projects. Hear how the ministry and other

public authorities and companies work with innovation initiatives that can improve our lives.

The Danish partners in the joint European project, Innovation C.I.R.C.U.S., are: the Danish Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, the Technical University of Denmark and Antropologerne.com. C.I.R.C.U.S. stands for Challenge and Illuminate Regional Creators and Unfold Societal Strength.

Further information

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Birgitte Ehrhardt, Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation, ehr@fi.dk

Gudrun Lau Bjerno, gib@life.ku.dk – latest update 28 November 2007

Grants

Landlegatet 2008 – grant recipients will receive a letter in calendar week 48

Recommendations to the Danish Directorate for Food, Fisheries and Agri Business concerning travel grants from Landlegatet 2008 were submitted to the ministry on 28 November 2007 – grant recipients will receive a letter in calendar week 48. Letters of rejection will not be sent.

Annette Guildal, Study and Students' Affairs, ag@life.ku.dk

Gudrun Lau Bjerno, gib@life.ku.dk – latest update 28 November 2007

Foreningen Plan-Danmark – grant recipients will receive a letter in calendar week 48

Recommendations to Foreningen Plan-Danmark concerning travel grants for 2007/2008 were submitted to the foundation on 28 November 2007 – grant recipients will receive a letter in calendar week 48. Letters of rejection will not be sent.

Annette Guildal, Study and Students' Affairs, ag@life.ku.dk

Gudrun Lau Bjerno, gib@life.ku.dk – latest update 28 November 2007

Research funds etc.

See the online version at

http://www.life.ku.dk/Maalgruppe/medarbejdere/life_internt/nyhedsbrev/forskningsmidler.aspx

Here you will find all calls with active links.