

A brief note on the Danish network – DUN – for the ICED board meeting May 2022

A substantial part of the efforts of the board of DUN during the year 2021/22 has revolved around the planning and organisation of the 2022 ICED conference in Aarhus. Besides this, there have been only few initiatives coming from the board in terms of new activities or focus areas.

An initiative that was decided earlier has been realised during this year, namely a podcast series about teaching and learning in higher education. In episodes of between 30 min and 45 min (approximately) present the different SIGs under DUN, addressing what issues and interests the SIG is working with. An additional episode was an interview with the two winners of the national best teacher award for university teachers. When the 14 SIGs have been presented, the board will discuss if the initiative should continue. Inspired by this, we also launched four podcasts to introduce the ICED conference.

The SIGs have continued working during and after the covid lockdown. Some of the SIGs have decided to continue to have some of their meetings online to reduce time spent on traveling, while other meetings continue to be onsite.

Two themes can be expected to be addressed during the next year. One is a change in the special order for staff teaching at university. This special order that is made by the ministry specifies the different types of academic posts (e.g., assistant-professors or professors), what they require and the rights and obligations of those holding the positions. At the end of 2019, a new special order was published stating the right and obligation of all permanent staff at university who are teaching to engaged in pedagogical development throughout their full career. Before then, it was only in the description of assistant professors that pedagogical competence development was mentioned. The universities are now discussion who this change should be implemented and a meaningful way that will ensure a continuous development of the staff to increase the quality of the teaching and learning at university, and at that at the same time will be experienced as meaningful by the staff. Even though DUN is not directly involved in this, I expect it to be an important topic for the network to address.

The second theme is one raised in the board concerning how to reach out the growing number of international staff at the universities. Most of the activities and resources that DUN offers are in Danish, but an increasing number of the teaching staff at the Danish universities do not speak Danish. At the universities, this has to some extent led to considerations concerning language policies, including parallel language use. For DUN, we have to consider how we can reach out to the international staff and make activities in DUN that may be productive for them in their teaching engagement.

The question, we would like to ask the other members concerns the change in the special order
What experiences do you have with sparking and maintaining an interest among more senior staff to engage in continuous pedagogical development? Are there particular formats, themes or incentives that you have found particularly relevant and fruitful?

Lars Ulriksen

Chair of DUN