

Network report from the Danish network – DUN

The two main activities in DUN are the annual conference and the special interest groups. The 2017 conference in May presented a number of high-quality papers and presentations that reflect that the field of research and development in higher education teaching and learning continues to improve and grow. The number of SIGs is growing and the SIGs display a wide array of topics. Also, the board of DUN has sought to facilitate the exchange of experience between the managers of the teaching and learning units at the member institutions.

The network's journal, DUT (Journal of Higher Education Teaching and Learning) is published twice a year. One of the issues this year presented papers from teachers attending the basic pedagogical training reporting on their developing their own teaching and reflecting on the experiences. The editorial board of the journal has succeeded in developing and maintaining a high standard of the papers published while still balancing scholarly papers with papers of a more experiential nature.

The board has had meetings with the Ministry of Higher Education and Science in order to raise the ministry's awareness of the pedagogical issues related to the policies in the field. This reflects the board's ambition to represent the voice of teaching and learning in the field of higher education emphasizing that DUN speaks from a position based on knowledge and research. Also, the board has made a contribution to the process of formulating topics for the future strategic research funding launched by the Ministry of Higher Education and Science. Furthermore, there has been contact with the organization of university rectors/vice-chancellors.

The political landscape of higher education in Denmark is characterised by budget cuts and a strong focus on value for money where the Ministry points at drop-out rates, unemployment rates within the first months after graduation and how fast the students complete their studies as key indicators for quality. There is a risk that the focus on speed is in fact detrimental to the employment possibilities and to the quality of the learning outcomes. Questioning this quantitative understanding of quality and its possible implication for student learning is an important issue in the present situation.

The network believes that so far it has succeeded in achieving a balance between nurturing the sharing of experiences and knowledge among teachers, education developers and researchers and the ambition to voice the position of teaching and learning in the higher-education policy.

Lars Ulriksen

Chairman of DUN (Danish Network for Educational Development in Higher Education)