Inddrag forskerne! / Involve the researchers!

Election for the board of the University of Copenhagen Nov 25-29, 2019

1. Eske Willerslev	
2. Jesper Grodal	9. Morten Rievers Heiberg
3. Pia Quist	10. Dorte Sindbjerg Martinsen
4. Randi Starrfelt	11. Janus Mortensen
5. Mikael Rask Madsen	12. Thomas Mears Werge
6. Nanna MacAulay	13. Stine Helene Falsig Pedersen
7. Michael Broberg Palmgren	14. Timo Minssen
8. Claus Thustrup Kreiner	15. Hans Heugh Wandall

Hi, we'd like to ask for your support, by voting for us in the upcoming election for the *board of the University of Copenhagen,* carried out Nov 25-29, 2019.

We will fight for strong representation of researchers, i.e., "tenured" faculty, junior faculty/postdocs, and PhD students on the Univ. Copenhagen board, through engagement with the rest of the board, including students, and external members. We come from different faculties across University of Copenhagen, and have all witnessed the difficulty in getting meaningful involvement of researchers in leadership decisions under the "new" 2003 university law. We will fight for our voice to be heard in all important decisions, and for more "research-and-teaching" driven decisions in general.

Here is our stand on 12 particularly pressing issues:

1. **Focus on the long run**: We'll keep the leadership's focus on the university's core mission of making long-term research breakthroughs, across-the-board, and providing high quality education.

   Background: The university is subject to demands from many sides: The government wants it to fix society's problems, businesses would like the university to carry out its research, etc. While all these things are laudable, and certainly represent opportunities for UCPH, it is important that new initiatives do not cannibalise core activities, or destroy the academic diversity that is vital to long-term success. The only way UCPH can become an internationally leading university (with all sorts of spin-offs for business and society to follow) is by being given sufficient resources for its core activities — we need to communicate that to the world.

2. **Tenure**: We'll work for better job security for academic personelle, and better hiring procedures.

Background: How can one have tenure track without tenure? UCPH has a bad track record of firing "permanent" faculty, lecturers and professors, due to perceived needs of restructuring or changes in funding situation. The UCPH needs to understand that this hiring-and-firing seriously undermines our credentials as a leading scientific institution, and impairs our ability to hire internationally. "Need" for these kinds of measures reflects lack of foresight by professional leaders or inadequate hiring procedures (cf. 5-7).

3. **Organization**: We'll work to ensure that academic staff is properly involved in any organisational change — these should be bottom-up and not top-down processes.

    Background: The last 15 years show plenty of missteps in handling of mergers of faculties and departments. Such changes in the organisation cannot be done without meaningful consultation with the permanent scientific staff. Mergers driven not by a bottom-up demand, but rather a need for "budget realignment" or desire to transfer resources from A to B will eventually cause the best faculty members to leave, and impair our recruitment.

4. **Administration**: We'll work to make sure that the administration is built around servicing the academic staff, and not vice versa.

    Background: Centralisation in the UCPH administration, in particular in terms of IT, HR, and accounting, is often done with a poor understanding of the functioning of the university in terms of teaching and research, or international routines, often blindly copying questionable programs and methods used in non-congruent governmental agencies. A poor job-environment for administrative staff also impairs our ability to hire and retain qualified administrative staff.

5. **Leadership by researchers**: We'll fight for better representation of people with a strong research and teaching profile throughout the UCPH leadership.

    Background: The introduction of professional leaders throughout the line management, from head of department up, with no research time and heavy administrative burden has made it hard to recruit people with sufficient research and teaching insight for these positions. Positions such as head of department or vice dean should be part-time jobs held by strong active researchers, similar to current custom at top US universities.

6. **Career management and hiring procedures:** We'll fight for better career paths at UCPH.

    Background: It has for ages been a cause for all sorts of troubles that promotion from lektor to professor could not be done without advertisement of a new position, a point where light is hopefully at the end of the tunnel. Likewise has the concept of "tenure track" only recently became part of UCPH vocabulary, and, even there, largely only in name. There is still much confusion about what these things mean and should mean. Good hiring procedures is one of the cornerstones of a university, and UCPH has a lot to learn just by properly understanding how it's done elsewhere in the world, such as the top US universities.

7. **Internationalisation**: We'll work for a better incorporation of international best-practices throughout UCPH.

    Background: UCPH often says it wants to be an internationally leading university, yet, there is little international experience in the university leadership, and insufficient understanding of how a leading international university works. Many of the models are copied from governmental agencies or nordic universities below the level we are striving for.

8. **PhD and postdocs**: We'll work for a better integration of PhD students and postdocs in the university.

    Background: There has been a tremendous growth in the number of PhD students and postdocs, yet these are often not properly integrated in the department, as they may be paid on external money, or attached to a narrow project. The university needs to do a better job in integrating postdocs and PhD students, as the subsequent careers of PhD students and postdocs are key to determining the overall status of the university.

9. **Integrity**: We'll work for better possibilities for PhD students, postdocs, and permanent faculty for reporting transgressions by line management.

    Background: CPH is still suffering from the repercussions of the Penkova scandal. While the scandal has put

focus on research integrity of the individual researchers, there has been too little focus on ensuring integrity in university leadership — a key part of that scandal was that complaints by people working under Penkova about abusive and criminal activity were ignored.

10. **Teaching**: We'll work on rewarding and encouraging good teaching, focusing on local needs and sufficient resources, including a better integration of research and teaching, and meaningful teachers training.
Background: Teaching is part of our core mission, and there is a constant, and fully warranted, demand to raise the quality of teaching at UCPH. Unfortunately, instead of entering a real dialog with departments and researchers on how this is done, the top-down approach has been through bureaucratic control mechanisms together with forcing everybody on lengthy teachers-training courses designed by theoreticians without enough knowledge of the subjects taught. (Designing a TA session is different in mathematics than in law!)

11. **Funding**: We will work with the rest of the board to ensure that politicians allocate the necessary resources for basic research and high level education, and also engage in the mission of convincing private foundations to pay proper overhead.
Background: It is of paramount importance that politicians truly understand the need for basic research and high level education, and allocate the necessary resources. Also, while the influx of external funding is overall a huge success story, and something we should pursue vigorously, it is also not without pitfalls, due to the concentrated and transient nature of these funds. It is therefore important that grants come with the necessary overhead to cover the actual costs, to not cannibalise other core activities.

12. **An inclusive UCPH**: We'll work on making UCPH an inclusive workplace, with good possibilities for combining work-family obligations.
Background: UCPH has a mixed record of trying to make it a more inclusive workplace, and debates on how to improve unfortunately often degenerate into the voices of the extreme. It's important that we keep focus on this important issue through bottom-up solutions, instead of either denial or fix-it-all quotas.

Jesper Grodal biography: I got my PhD in mathematics from MIT in 2000, and spend 2000-2006 at Univ. Chicago, IAS-Princeton, and Paris, before starting a professorship in mathematics at UCPH in 2006. I've also subsequently had visiting positions in France, Germany, UK, and US, so I'm quite familiar with different university systems. My main passion is of course my job —I was proud to be named fellow of the American Mathematical Society in 2018 "for contributions to algebraic topology, representation theory and their interactions, and for service to the profession". During the last 13 years, I've also been involved in building up a strong activity in my research area at University of Copenhagen, aided by a number of external grants, e.g, from EU and DNRF, and been involved in department administration in various ways. I live on Østerbro, with my wife and our 3 daughters aged 10, 8, and 4. My wife is also a professor in the math department, and I've grown up "on UCPH", as my parents were also both professors here (my mom in economics, and my dad in film studies). When I don't work or tend to the kids, I try to do some sports. Ideally kitesurfing, but if wind, swell, or time does not allow, I'll settle for a swim or a run.

Eske Willerslev biography: I hold a Lundbeck Foundation Professorship at University of Copenhagen and I am the director of Centre for GeoGenetics, at the newly established GLOBE Institute, at Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences. I also hold the Prince Philip Chair in Ecology and Evolution at the University of Cambridge, UK. I did my education at University of Copenhagen and have since been employed at University of Oxford as a post doc and later as visiting professor and at UC Berkeley as a visiting Miller Professor. I have been employed as full professor at several institutions at University of Copenhagen; first at the Niels Bohr Institute, later at Department of Biology and then at the Danish Natural History Museum before moving to the Faculty of Health and Medical Science. I have been part of the University of Copenhagen board during the last period. I live in Lyngby with my wife and have 2 sons.

VOTE

for

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on the board of Univ Copenhagen

Electronic voting opens Nov 25, 2019,
ends Friday Nov 29 at 15:00

https://kunet.ku.dk/about-ucph/election/