

Speech at the Education Day, 20. September 2012. By Prorector Thomas Bjørnholm.

Dear students, dear colleagues, dear speakers and guests

I bet you have all tried a Seesaw at a playground. And you might have experienced the very unpleasant feeling, when someone much bigger than you sits heavily on his end of the Seesaw - letting you hang in the air.

Or the even more unpleasant feeling if the other person decides to jump off the Seesaw - letting you falling to the ground! Well, during the latest years this university has been sitting on a very big Seesaw trying to keep a difficult balance.

At one end of the Seesaw we find a very large group of a new kind of students. This university has changed. We once used to educate a very small and privileged group of young people sitting in an ivory tower, speaking only in latin. Today we educate 10 percent of all young people in Denmark. That is a very big challenge. And one that weighs heavily at the one end of the Seesaw.

It goes without saying that all 10 percent of a youth generation cannot be the next Niels Bohr. Most of them do not even wish to be the next Bohr. They prefer to use their talent in other ways. Some by starting up their own businesses. Some by working in companies where innovative candidates are seen as the greatest value.

This means that we have to expand the range of educational products on the university's shelves. The university has to support our students in developing new skills such as innovation and entrepreneurship.

At the other end of the Seesaw we have the traditional core values of the university – basic research, teaching based on research, producing knowledge for its own sake. Also known as the ivory tower.

So what do we do to make sure that the Seesaw stays in balance? That one end does not become too heavy causing the university to lose its balance?

We need to change the classic way of university-teaching. But we should be careful not to throw out the baby with the bathwater! Basic research is - and stays - a core value for the university. How then, do we adapt the university's way of teaching and make room for the new kind of talent among our students? How do we make entrepreneurship and innovation an integrated part of a university education?

We need to construct a "new deal" for universities. One of the ways to do it is to reach out to the outside world. Every time a student collaborates with a company – by solving a problem, by writing their thesis within the company or having a company representative as a mentor – the student learns something more than what he or she could learn in the classic way.

It's a win-win-situation: Our students get new inspiration and their knowledge helps companies.

I would like to stress two main points: One is that we are already reaching out to the outside world in a way that can be combined with a classic university education. An example of this is when students participate in what we call sciencedating. A company gives the students a problem to solve – and they do so by applying basic research, often involving researchers at the university. And two: That innovation, entrepreneurship and collaboration with companies is for everybody. Entrepreneurship is too often portrayed as an activity mainly for students in natural science. But it is also highly relevant for the humanities

and social sciences! We see it every year at the Katalyst Summer School where companies pay to participate in order to get help from students, for instance to invent and implement new service concepts.

We need to promote and encourage these efforts even more than we do today. That is also why collaboration with the outside world as well as improving education are two of the main goals in the new strategy for this university.

And that is why – in an hour or so - we are launching the project: Exchanging Knowledge – a partnership between UCPH, the Technical University of Denmark and the Capital Region.

The project aims at promoting innovation, networking and collaboration between students and companies. I am looking forward to learn much more about that later this afternoon. And I am of course also looking forward to hear from some of our already established activities at UCPH aiming at promoting entrepreneurship and innovation in different ways:

CIEL – Copenhagen Innovation and Entrepreneurship Lab, Suitable for business – a student based network and the Student Council.

But we cannot evolve by only looking at ourselves. I am looking forward to be inspired by one of the most recognized international capacities in the field of innovation and entrepreneurial universities: Professor Henry Etzkowitz from Stanford University.

Henry Etzkowitz invented the Triple Helix Model - the idea that universities, industry and governments should work together in order to generate better transfer and application of knowledge and to create growth.

I am looking forward to hear his take on how to create innovation and maybe also on how to keep the Seesaw of outreach and university core values balancing.

Thank you and enjoy your afternoon.