



Henrik C. Wegeners tale til de nye studerende på Københavns Universitet

Taler

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Universitet

Dato

26. august 2022

Sted

Københavns Universitet, Vor
Frue Plads

Omstændigheder

Kursiveringer og understregninger er talers egne [red].

Dear new students. Welcome to the University of Copenhagen!

You may wonder: Why is this Rector speaking in English
and not in Danish?

I can give you 2000 good reasons:

That's the number of new international students at the university.

Some of you are here today: Where are you? Let me hear you!

We have students from Cape Town, Canberra, Kyoto, Køge and Kokkedal.

And we have students from Kyiv in Ukraine,

including biology students Margarita and Daria who came to the University

through the #science-for-Ukraine initiative.

I'm pleased and proud that Margarita and Daria are with us today.

Each and every one of you are now citizens of the same university.

This is your new home country.

A republic of science.

A Kingdom of education. Welcome!

In a moment, I will introduce you to the faculties of the university.

Some of them discover the world by reading books.

Others travel to the end of the world

and dig in the soil after long gone species or civilizations.

And some prefer to crunch data and make the world fit into a spreadsheet.

As you can hear, this is a poor attempt to make the great university fit into a few stereotypes.

My point is that we may be different, but we are *all* united in the wonderful

diversity of a comprehensive University.

Out of many – we are one.

”E pluribus unum”

So – according to the old ceremonial order:

Allow me to present the Faculty of Theology

and Dean Carsten Selch Jensen.

Give him and the faculty a big cheer!

From the very beginning in 1479, the Faculty of Theology has educated priests.

Next is the Faculty of Law and Dean Jacob Graff Nielsen.

Did you know that the Faculty of Law has educated the most Prime Ministers in Denmark since 1900 – and that’s 10.

Not only does the next faculty produce many civil servants.

It also has the most students who start their own business.

Here's the Faculty of Social Sciences and Dean Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen.

Now to the faculty with the highest number of Nobel Prizes

– and that's five.

The Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences
and Dean Bente Stallknecht.

Now, give a big cheer to the Faculty of Humanities

and Dean Kirsten Busch Nielsen.

Did you know that the Faculty of Humanities is the faculty where women first became the majority among students.

Finally, the faculty with researchers and staff from the most countries – and that's 83 countries:

The Faculty of Science and Dean Katrine Krogh Andersen.

Last but not least, the people who help govern our university

in keeping with the spirit of academia.

May the force be with you!

Prorector for Education, Kristian Cedervall Lautau

Prorector for Research David Dreyer Lassen

and University Director Jesper Olesen.

Please remember to visit the stalls in the courtyard,
where the deans will be serving cakes for free. Yummy!

This is a day of hope, joy ...and free cakes.

I don't mean to steal your appetite for happiness.

But I guess some of you have arrived not only with a feeling of joy
– but also with a feeling of confusion and maybe even concern.

Some of you have just moved to Copenhagen

– and still rely on Google Maps to find your way to Frue Plads.

Some of you are still looking for a place to stay
with a rent you can actually pay.

Others enjoy the privilege of a parent-paid apartment in Vesterbro

– which costs pretty much the same as a medium-sized castle in other parts of the country.

Regardless of how much money you have in the bank,
everyone has a social deficit today.

It would be strange *not* to feel alone in this crowd of 3000 strangers.

I'm afraid there's more.

You also carry the heavy burden of expectations.

The politicians expect you to get a job and become a taxpayer before you turn 25.

Instagram and Snapchat expect more than any human being can deliver:

Endless pictures from friends always partying and always posing with colorful cocktails and big smiles.

I'm afraid there's more.

You have barely escaped the Corona prison

– and the harsh sentence of two years in isolation.

What awaits you in freedom?

War in Ukraine.

War on European soil.

The fear of nuclear war.

Prices on the two big G's – gas and groceries – are going through the roof.

Sunflower oil and coffee are promoted from ordinary shopping items to luxury goods.

I am afraid there's more.

Yet another progress report from the UN Climate Panel with little or no progress.

This summer even London felt like being inside a pizza oven.

From the Loire to the Donau – the rivers of European civilization have dried out and feel like walking on concrete.

In the Amazonas, the rainforest is destroyed at a rate of three football fields every minute.

Animals and plants vanishing from the face of the earth.

I called customer service at Mother Nature – the species are permanently out of stock.

Dear friends of the earth.

Dear friends of the university:

We need a turning point to prevent a tipping point.

I guess now is the time in my speech to offer hope, comfort and relief

...

And I will.

I know a place that drives the power of new sustainable energy.

I know a place that can empower a sustainable mindset.

I know a place that can plant the seeds of sustainable food.

I know a place that educates citizens, fosters democracy and promotes the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

And I know a place that can bark as a watchdog, when the people in power fail to protect the people and the planet.

It's a place called university.

And dear students – today you have come to the right place!

Some might say that I'm not really in a position to give *you* advice about your future.

After all, it was my generation of kamikaze consumers that made a mess of the planet in the first place.

Still, I dare give you some advice. Here it comes.

First, be patient.

Show up for the lectures or lab exercises.

Expect many hours of lonely deskwork.

It will remind you of your time in the Corona prison.

Do *not* expect books in academic English to have won an Oscar for reader-friendliness.

Don't worry – the person standing next to you won't have a clue either – even if she looks cool and confident.

Be patient – you will crack the code of academic learning.

Eventually, studying will give you a Netflix sensation of suspense and an urge to binge the next episode.

Secondly, don't pretend to be perfect.

This year, the university celebrates that Niels Bohr received the Nobel prize 100 years ago in 1922.

Bohr did not wake up one morning to present his revolutionary model of the atom out of the blue - and before his first cup of coffee.

In Bohr's view, a scientist is a person who has made the maximum number of mistakes in the smallest possible space.

It's the method of not being afraid of mistakes but to learn from them.

I very much encourage you follow Bohr's example.

Make mistakes and learn from them.

But more than anything, I encourage you to help each other.

The secret of getting through your degree

is not only to hang in and work hard alone

- but also to hang out and work, together.

Have coffee on campus, together.

Play ball in the park, together.

Arrange a movie night or a yoga morning, together.

Climb the mountains of knowledge, together.

Discuss the climate and how to reach a turning point

to prevent a tipping point, together.

Finally, I will bring you back to the outset.

The medieval university from 1479.

The ceremony of matriculation means that you become citizens of the independent academic republic of the university.

It's the custom that students shake hands with the Rector.

By performing this ritual, you say that you will obey the ancient laws of the university.

Some of the old rules are about respecting the old professors and doing as you are told as polite and well-behaved students.

But perhaps it's more suitable if the handshake today will mean something else.

That you will acquire the knowledge to help solve current and future problems of our planet:

Armed conflicts, the climate, poverty, pandemics and other unexpected catastrophes.

Prorector for education, Kristian Cedervall Lauta, will lend me a hand as we shake hands with all of you after we have enjoyed some more music.

As it happens, Kristian is also a professor of disaster law.

I'm afraid Kristian's research field will never be out-of-date.

But I'm confident that you – the new students of 2022 –
will make the world a better place.

And please remember to take good care of each other
as you climb the stairs of the university, together.

Welcome to the University of Copenhagen!

Kilde

Manuskript modtaget fra taler

Kildetype

Digitalt manuskript

Tags

Immatrikulationstale, Krigen i Ukraine 2014/2022-

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<https://www.dansketaler.dk/tale/henrik-c-wegeners-tale-til-de-nye-studerende-paa-koebenhavns-universitet-2022>