

3rd ELLSNA Conference on Transatlantic Cooperation in Education

Copenhagen June 9-10, 2006

at

The Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University (KVL)

Conference Themes: Developing joint curricular for intensive summer schools and stimulating faculty exchange

The 3rd ELLSNA conference on transatlantic Cooperation in Education was held at The Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University (KVL) in June 2006 with 41 participants. 10 participants represented 6 of the North American partners and the rest represented 6 of the Euroleague member institutions.

June 9-10th 2006

Welcome

In the morning the conference participants were welcomed by Rector Per Holten-Andersen, KVL, who gave a presentation on "Globalisation and competition: the new challenges". To make sure Denmark is ready for the challenges, the government established the Globalisation Council in April 2005 with the purpose of guiding the government regarding a strategy for the development of Denmark as a leading knowledge and innovation society. The result was a report "Future, Innovation and Safety" published in April 2006 with 350 concrete recommendations. The main Goals for Higher Education are:

- More Danish students are to **study abroad** in order to give them international insight and greater understanding of other cultures
- Danish Universities shall attract highly qualified **international students and staff**
- Universities shall maintain **international academic environments** – to secure Denmark's position as an attractive country for students, researchers and companies

In order to achieve some of these goals and to ensure Danish Universities a position among the best in the world, the Government has asked the Universities to consider merging with one another. The goal is to strengthen research and as an incentive the government has promised a 50% increase in research founding. At present negotiations are taking place and the final decisions will be made after September 15th 2006.

Per Holten Andersen concluded his presentation by stating that strategic alliances and networks like ELLS and ELLSNA are vital if universities are going to meet the challenges of the globalisation and competition, and wished everyone a successful conference.

ELLS and ELLSNA Update

Chair of the ELLS task force Prof. Dr. Lutz Greve, University of Hohenheim gave an update of ELLS activities. Since the last ELLSNA conference two new members has been invited to join ELLS as observateurs. The new members are:

Warsaw Agricultural University
Czech University of Prague

Two joint/double degrees are being developed among the ELLS universities. The first “Safety in the food chain” will start September 2006 and the next ENVEURO - MSc in Environmental Science is planned to start September 2007. Seven intensive summer courses will take place and in 2006 and the numbers seem to increase every year. The student group ELSA is working on a brochure for students at the ELLS universities and the IRO group is working on a manual that is meant as a help for subject groups, who are developing joint/double degrees.

Assistant Dean Andrea Bohn, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign continued with an update on ELLSNA activities. Since the last ELLSNA conference the ELLSNA partners have signed a ”letter of Intent”, a brochure with university profiles of the member institutions have been published, a joint web-site has been created, bilateral agreements have been signed by many of the member universities and finally a 3rd conference is taking place in Copenhagen. However, there are still barriers to be worked on, and questions to be considered. Andrea Bohn posed the following questions:

- How can we make the collaboration stronger?
- How do we get more students to study at partner institutions?
- How do we encourage involvement from faculty/staff?

It was the conclusion that ELLSNA has the potential for both quantity and quality, if more work was done to eliminate difficulties and support mobility.

Case studies and discussions

The rest of the conference focussed on case studies and discussions on the following topics:

- Developing models for joint intensive courses/summer schools
- Facilitating transatlantic faculty exchange
- Enhancing transatlantic student exchanges
- Update on ELLS/ELLSNA activities

The following case studies were presented (the presentation are available – please contact the ELLS secretariat):

- ELLS summer course in Environmental Science and presentation of ENVEURO (joint MSc in Environmental Science)
Bjarne Strobel, Associate Professor, KVL
- Warsaw Agricultural University - Summer school training programs in Healthy Food and Wetlands management
Prof.Dr. Stefan Ignar, SGGW

- Making short term programs work - Current strategy and results accomplished at Purdue University for study abroad. How can European partners participate? Promoting study abroad to US students
Linda Vallade, Program Leader for Agricultural Study Abroad, Purdue University.
- Internationalization of Agricultural and Environmental Programs in the US. Attempts to make international involvement an integral part of the mission of Michigan State University: international development project work, research through the Agricultural Experiment Station, Study Abroad Programs
Paul Roberts, Director of Study Abroad and International Training, Michigan State University, Steve Pueppke, Director Agri. Experiment Station, Frank Fear, Acting Associate Dean, College of Ag. And Natural Resources
- New tools in international collaboration: E-learning, simple and easy - Presentation of best-practice experience from pilot projects at KVL
Anita Monty, E-learning Consultant, KVL
- Building the *virtual* into *real* exchanges – Pilot experiences from an EU-Australia Exchange Project
Nadarajah Sriskandarajah, Associate Professor, Unit of Learning, KVL
- Finding a model for joint ELLSNA collaboration? Presentation of EU/US (FIPSE) cooperation program
Karin Klitgaard Møller, International Relations Officer, KVL
- Joint US/Swedish summer school in sustainable natural resources management and intercultural communication.
Professor Mats Olsson, SLU
- Food Safety - Presentation of ELLS joint program in Food Safety and short term course collaboration
Prof.Dr. Lutz Greve, University of Hohenheim and Professor Susanne Knøchel, KVL
- Czech University of Prague - Presentation of Czech/US summer school program in Economics, Forestry and Hydrology
Prof. Pavel Kovar, CAU

In between these presentations group discussions were held in order to find ways of improving the already existing cooperation. Barriers were defined and discussed, solutions were suggested and ways of expanding cooperation were recommended.

Conclusions

Prorector Flemming Frandsen wrapped up the conference by summing up topics that had been considered during the conference and put forward questions to be considered in the future. One of the main topics was, how the universities could benefit more from the ELLSNA network and which opportunities the network offered. The following areas were presented and suggested as further forms of collaborations:

Research collaboration – more site visits should be arranged between the partners, areas of mutual specialisation should be defined and cooperation encouraged. When relevant, collaboration between research schools should be established.

Post-doc exchanges – to increase the mobility at the post-doc level faculty-to-faculty contacts should be set up and joint post doc courses/seminars should be organized.

Fairs/conferences/workshops - ELLS subject area groups should be encouraged to arrange Fairs/conferences/workshops with participants from the North American partner universities.

It was also pointed out that initiatives to collaborate with the ELLSNA partners on Quality Assurance topics should be promoted and that it was essential to strengthen the general communication channels through the ELLS Secretariat, the ELLS website and the IRO group.

The main issue that was discussed at the conference was how to increase the mobility in general, and especially how to increase the number of American/Canadian students who want to study in Europe. The main problem appeared to be how to include American/Canadian bachelor students in European programs? At present the American/Canadian universities mainly have bachelors students interested in studying abroad, but most of the programmes offered in English at the European universities are at the masters level. The following questions were raised:

- Is there a need for shorter programmes for both American/Canadian and European students?
- Can we find a model where American/Canadian students can participate in already existing summer courses?
- How do we make American/Canadian students and faculty aware of the existing ELLS short term/summer courses?
- Can we develop new courses/programs – jointly?

The possibility of encouraging mobility of PhD-students was also discussed and it was suggested to invite PhD-students from partner universities to shorter courses and in this way encourage mobility and collaboration. Finally the possibilities or rather the barriers of faculty exchange were considered. The big question was – how do we make faculty “moveable”? There were no explicit solutions to the above-mentioned questions, but possible measures and proposals were put forward:

- Update of ELLSNA brochure and web page (responsible: IRO group + ELLS secretariat).
- Easy and accessible web information (responsible: IRO group + ELLS secretariat).
- Clear IRO-entry in each ELLSNA partner institution (responsible: IRO group + ELLS secretariat).
- Improve marketing of existing ELLS summer courses (responsible: Subject groups + IRO group + ELLS secretariat).
- Form a “Search Committee” for funding of ELLSNA activities (responsible: IRO group + ELLS secretariat).

The final questions of the conference were – what do ELLS expect from the North American partners and what do North American partners expect from ELLS? And were there basis for e 4th ELLSNA conference in 2008?

The conference participants agreed that the conference had been productive and that the ELLSNA network had much potential for the future. Michigan State University concluded the conference by offering to host the next ELLSNA conference in 2008.