THE NEW AARHUS UNIVERSITY

VISIT TO LUND UNIVERSITY
FEBRUARY 8, 2013
AGENDA

• A CHANGING UNIVERSITY LANDSCAPE
• AARHUS UNIVERSITY TODAY
• REORGANISING THE UNIVERSITY
• A NEW ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK
• LESSONS LEARNED AND THE NEW STRATEGY 2013-2020
A CHANGING UNIVERSITY LANDSCAPE

1998-99, Intergovernm. agreement:
Governmental push for convergence of HE systems by 2010

2000-02, White Paper & OECD Review

2003 – 2007, Danish sector reforms:
• Reorganising HE&R institutions (2007)
• Modernising the funding compact

2010, AU Academic development process:
• Unified management
• Interdisciplinarity

1999, Bologna Declaration:
Key principles adopted by ministers of education of 29 European countries

2000, European Research Area:
Cohesion in European research, promoting transnational scientific knowledge flow, competition, collaboration and mobility

2008, Aarhus University’s strategy:
• Research
• Talent development
• Knowledge exchange
• Education

2010, European Higher Education Area:
10 years after the Bologna Process. Adopted by 47 countries, facilitating efforts to enhance European HE comparability, compatibility and coherence

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REASONS FOR CHANGE

• What made it possible?
  • Accumulated need for reforms since the 1980s and 1990s
  • Realisation of need for increased interaction between research and society
  • Increased global competition

• Change in influence
  • From a more traditional research policy idea
    (the Humboldt model and the linear models focus on autonomy and internal academic criteria
    and governance mechanisms)
  • Towards a new public management approach with transparency, accountability, efficiency,
    competition, contract, documentation and quantification in focus and new innovation policy ideas
    (closer integration between basic research, strategic research, innovation and knowledge
    exchange)

• Political pressure supplemented by free choice of merger partners – not all merged
• Realised in a period of increasing funding (Globalisation Act of 2006)
UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE – ACT OF 2003

• Autonomy
  • From state institutions to autonomous bodies within the public sector

• Accountability
  • Through the use of university performance contracts

• Governing boards with a majority of external members
  • Safeguard the university’s interests as an educational and research institution
  • Determine guidelines for its organisation, long-term activities and development

• Appointed leaders in university governance structures
  • Rector, pro-rector, university director, deans and head of departments

• Advisory academic councils
  • Instead of collegial bodies
WHY MERGERS?

• Strong international impulses for change
  • Importance of growth and innovation policy in a globalising knowledge economy
  • Danish public research environment deemed too fragmented by OECD

• High government ambitions
  • More interdisciplinary cooperation in education
  • Development of more flexible and relevant degree programs for Danish students
  • Greater success for the universities in their applications for EU research funding
  • Higher quality (in the sense of impact) of Danish university research output
  • Better cooperation between universities and the private sector with respect to innovation
  • More effective knowledge relationship between public research sector and ministries
From 12+13 to 8+3 Universities and Government Research Institutions
POLITICAL PLATFORM OF THORNING-SCHMIDT GOVERNMENT 2011

• 95% of a year group should complete a youth education degree programme, 60% should complete and advanced degree programme
• 25% of a year group should complete a research-based advanced degree by 2020
• 2.5% of a year group should enroll in PhD programmes and 1% should be accepted to post doc programmes
• Strengthen the national innovation strategy: education, research, innovation
• State Education Grant, taximeter for first two cycles
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ACADEMIC PROFILE
GROWING STRONGER

- 44,500 students (52% graduate level students)
- 3,000 PhD students and early career researchers
- 4,500 international students of 103 nationalities
- 11,500 employees, 79 nationalities
- 12,000 publications in 2010
- Facilities: 600,000 m²
- 27% of public research
- Budget: EUR 860m
STRONG INTERNATIONAL POSITION
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CHANGE PROCESS AT AARHUS UNIVERSITY

Merger
- Institute of Business and Technology in Herning
- Danish Institute of Agricultural Sciences
- National Environmental Research Institute
- Aarhus School of Business
- Danish University of Education

Merger
- Aarhus School of Engineering

Common strategy
- 9 faculties with 55 departments located all over Denmark

Academic development process
- 4 faculties with 27 departments primarily located in Aarhus

Implementation

5 faculties located in Aarhus

2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012

VISIT TO LUND UNIVERSITY FEBRUARY 8, 2013
The Background for the AU Academic Development Process

• The mergers in 2006-2007 where five individual institutions merged
  • Mostly “business as usual” until early 2010...
  • A need to strengthen excellence in research, talent development, knowledge exchange and education
  • A need to unify deep expertise in the core disciplines with interdisciplinary research

• High societal expectations and a new, stronger role for the universities
  • Societal challenges (and policy choices) are complex, crossing the boundaries of individual disciplines
    ... with regard to causes, consequences and solutions
  • Legitimate societal expectation of broad cooperation – that we actively strive to transfer research results into innovative, useful products, services and policy advice, thereby contributing solutions to societal challenges
THE COMPONENTS OF THE AU ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

- **Academic organisation:** A unified university with *fewer internal boundaries*. From nine to four main academic areas, from 55 to 27 departments. Bringing basic and applied research closer. New i-centres, national centres, AIAS and AU Ideas.

- **Governance:** Management with *appointed leaders and joint responsibility* for the entire university. From ten management units to *a senior management team* with pan-university responsibility for strategic management and quality assurance.

- **Administration and finance:** A single university with *an integrated administration*. A common financial model, standardised quality service for the whole university; from three to *one (two) levels of administration* – front office and back office philosophy. Strategic financial pool (3-3.5% of annual turnover).

- **Empowerment:** *Increased staff co-determination*, strengthened academic councils, one per faculty, four AU Fora, one for each core activity: research, talent development, knowledge exchange and education.
THE QUADRUPLE HELIX

EDUCATION
STUDY PROGRAMMES

STUDENTS
LIFELONG LEARNING

TALENT DEVELOPMENT
PHDS

POST DOCS
RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

ELITE RESEARCHERS

RESEARCH PROJECTS
 KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE
CONTRACTS

RESEARCH

VISIT TO LUND UNIVERSITY  FEBRUARY 8, 2013
A MODERN AARHUS UNIVERSITY

VISIT TO LUND UNIVERSITY
FEBRUARY 8, 2013
SIGNIFICANT STUDENT AND STAFF INFLUENCE AND STRONG LEADERSHIP

AU board

External

Advisory boards
Employer panels
Advisory committees

Internal

AU forums
Academic councils
Departmental forums
Board of studies

AU management
AU INTERDISCIPLINARY CENTRES

Contribution to addressing "grand challenges"
› The strategy combines interdisciplinary research with strong core disciplines
› The process is headed by the dean and the vice-deans for research

Centres established after international peer review
› Interacting Minds Centre
› Participatory Information Technology Centre
› Centre for Arctic Research
› Centre for Integrative Sequencing
› Centre for Integrated Register-based Research
› Already existing interdisciplinary centres: iNano and MindLab

Open process for the establishment of additional centres
› Two of the original proposals – Centre for Food, Nutrition and Health and Centre for Global Change and Development – are still under consideration
AARHUS UNIVERSITY

VISIT TO LUND UNIVERSITY FEBRUARY 8, 2013

AARHUS INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES

Approved concept
› The institute will offer optimal conditions for interdisciplinary research across a wide range of fields
› The institute will offer fellowships of 1-3 years, primarily for early career researchers
› The research programmes at Aarhus University and the fellows at the institute will be closely linked
› The physical surroundings will support a dynamic research environment
› A board and a director have been appointed

The next step
› Recruitment of fellows and members of international advisory group
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THE ADMINISTRATION AFTER THE MERGERS

• Six formerly independent institutions:

• + the “old” AU, which was in reality divided into six partially independent administrations:

• A total of almost twelve independent administrations
SOME OF THE CHALLENGES

• 4 different studies administration systems
• 6 different financial management systems
• 8 different mail systems
• 6 different CMS systems
• Fragmented IT structure
• Major differences in HR functions
• 28 library divisions
• Geographical divisions
• Etc.
NEW ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

• Efficiency, standardisation, modernisation, digitalisation (90/10 goal)

• Centralisation

• Transforming the culture

• Dissolving boundaries and silos

• Focus on supporting the core activities
Each administrative division is headed by a deputy director.
AU ADMINISTRATION

DEPUTY DIRECTORS

ADMINISTRATIVE CENTRES

ARTS
Emdrup
Departments

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
Fouluum
Roskiide
Departments

HEALTH
Departments

BUSINESS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
Departments

VISIT TO LUND UNIVERSITY
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CURRENT CHALLENGES

• Implementation of IT systems
• Consolidation of data
• Establishment of close collaboration between front office and departments
• Integration of former Aarhus School of Engineering into AU systems
• Consolidation of financial management system NAVISION
• Establishment of effective strategy for internal communication
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LESSONS LEARNED – THE CONTENT

• A clear vision is key
  - Have a clear strategic forward-looking vision – aim to achieve more than could be delivered by the individual parties separately
  - Keep academic issues at the heart of the merger – research, talent development, knowledge exchange and education

• The merger is an opportunity for necessary changes
  - Mergers are often an opportunity to implement a whole range of changes that would be more difficult to achieve piecemeal in the course of business as usual
  - Management, financial and administrative reforms work alongside the academic change process

• Co-location is often necessary to deliver significant synergy and efficiency
  - New physical development plans often needed (building, infrastructure etc.)
  - Relocation of staff and students motivated by the academic strategy

Collaborations, alliances and mergers in higher education, Hefce (2012)
LESSONS LEARNED – THE CONTENT

• Strengthen the corporate brand and consider abolishing sub-brands
  • Growing significance of name recognition – linked to identity, differentiation, prospective students, staff, partners and funders
  • Strengthening corporate brand – abolition of several earlier strong brands
  • Establishing a new set of (controversial) branding principles

• Efficiency and rationalisation are rarely good arguments
  • Size in itself is rarely a good argument
  • Merger costs are high and underestimated (e.g. harmonising pay structures, ICT systems, administrative processes, securing relocation etc.) – savings and quality follow later
  • Where it is essential to reduce costs, change administrative procedures etc. it is imperative to consult staff, students and interested parties, as they are affected

• Risk-sharing should be sought where possible
  • Seek risk-sharing in achieving objectives – sharing costs, acquiring expertise or capacity, achieving critical mass, accelerating development etc.

Collaborations, alliances and mergers in higher education, Hefce (2012)
THE AU ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT PROCESS 2010-2011

- **September 2009**: Initial Board discussions
- **February 2010**: Meetings in four “academic families”
- **March-September 2010**: Meetings and discussions of processes and objectives with staff, students, labor unions representatives, “academic families”, working groups etc.
- **June 2010**: Board decisions on general structure (no. of faculties = four)
- **8 Marts 2010**: Rector’s Office principles on paper
- **July, 2010**: Establishment of four academic steering groups
- **December 2010-February 2011**: Consultation on recommendations for academic reorganisation
- **January 2011**: New deans in place – and pro-deans in the months thereafter
THE AU ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT PROCESS
2011-2012

9 March 2011
Board approval of senior management team report and recommendations

Since April 2011
Implementation of new organisation, academic and administrative discussions and decisions and 27 academic departments and nine administrative areas

March 2011
Meetings with committees and academic and administrative staff

Since August 2011
Establishment of AIAS, AU Ideas, interdisciplinary centres etc. and improvement of study environment

Since August 2011
Planning and implementing relocations, reorganising and implementing administration and strengthening co-determination, councils etc.
LESSONS LEARNED – THE PROCESS

• Leadership is vital
  • ... for formulating the vision
  • ... for driving the process
  • ... for overcoming the obstacles
  • ... for negotiating with the stakeholders

• Shared vision with key stakeholders is key before acting
  • ... close dialogue with ministers, ministries, city councils, industry, labour unions...

• Senior management structure and governance principles are in place early in the process
  • ... need to be agreed
  • ... need to include a transparent financial model and the right incentive structures

Collaborations, alliances and mergers in higher education, Hefce (2012)
LESSONS LEARNED – THE PROCESS

• Experienced and flexible change management organisation
  • ... with clear implementation plan flexible enough to accommodate necessary adjustments
  • ... with adequate comprehension and management of the change process
  • ... with sufficient supportive manpower and resources

• Communication and dialogue are vital
  • ... and not at all easy – in content, dose, sequencing, targeting etc. – so...
  • ... do not lose sight of those most affected by the changes
  • ... communicate on a regular and consistently basis
  • ... focus on managing expectations and keeping them realistic
  • ... Communicate proactively - “before the event”
  • ... prefer two-way (preferably face-to-face) dialogue
  • ... be prepared to handle the media...

Collaborations, alliances and mergers in higher education, Hefce (2012)
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• NEW STRATEGY 2013-2020
THE FOUNDATION FOR THE NEW STRATEGY

- Strategy 2008-2012
- The report of 9 March 2011
- 2012-14 development contract
- Wide-reaching strategy process
- Refining our strategic course
A GLOBAL FRAMEWORK

• A leading global university

• Participating in the competition for
  • The brightest talents
  • Research funding

• Therefore, we must
  • Have a distinct, respected brand
  • Improve the framework for our activities at national level
  • Know our point of departure
  • Exploit our potential
  • Prioritise in accordance with the strategy
# The Process – The New Strategy

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<tr>
<th>September 2011:</th>
<th>November 2011-September 2012:</th>
<th>April-June 2012:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Preliminary discussion of a new strategy by the Board</td>
<td>• Departments and faculties work with goals and action plans; the committees for the four core activities work with pan-university strategies</td>
<td>• Discussions and consultations on strategic initiatives at the faculties in the liaison committees, boards of study, academic councils, departmental fora, core activity committees, advisory boards, etc.</td>
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<th>November 2011:</th>
<th>February 2012:</th>
<th>March 2012:</th>
<th>September and December 2012:</th>
<th>March 2013:</th>
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<td>• Seminar with department heads and deputy directors on the new strategy</td>
<td>• Discussion of the strategy process by the Board</td>
<td>• Seminar with department heads and deputy directors on the new strategy</td>
<td>• Discussion of draft strategy by the Board</td>
<td>• Approval of new strategy by the Board</td>
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VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

• Mission:
  • Aarhus University is an academically diverse, strongly research-oriented institution that creates and shares knowledge.

• Vision:
  • Aarhus University strives to be a leading globally-oriented university that is strongly engaged with society and that supports economic, cultural and social development.

• Guiding principles:
  • Interdisciplinary education and research based on strong core disciplines
  • Talent development aimed at exceptionally motivated/qualified students at all stages of their academic careers
  • Strengthening the university’s international capacity.
RESEARCH

• Challenges
  • Universities are increasingly being called on to help address the grand challenges society faces.
  • Competition for research funding is increasing.
  • Elite researchers are increasingly mobile.

• Goals
  • Increase the number of research areas that rank among the best in the world.
  • Attract more external funding
  • Achieve research breakthroughs and focus on challenges to society

• Initiatives
  • Establish interdisciplinary research centres to address society’s challenges
  • Enter into strategic partnerships with major international universities
  • Assume a leadership role in connection with more larger and new EU-financed project consortiums
  • Make focussed efforts to recruit potential elite researchers and good research managers
EDUCATION

• Challenges
  • Admissions must be increased - the target is for 60% of school-leavers in any one year to complete a higher education course.
  • We must develop the innovation capacity of our degree programmes
  • Our degree programmes must be quality assured

• Goals
  • Enhance the profiles of the degree programmes offered at the university and of the university’s graduates
  • Accommodate diversity among students
  • Develop the quality of degree programmes in accordance with the highest international standards

• Initiatives
  • Revise the quality policy and increase the coherence of the quality assurance system
  • Systematise teaching and degree programme evaluations and cooperation with employers
  • Develop a strategy for and organise teaching development
  • Develop a model for upgrading the qualifications of teaching staff in connection with Educational IT
  • Develop a clear education profile with principles for which degree programmes are offered - the beech tree model
  • Formulate approaches to and goals for the inner market - cross-disciplinarity
  • Develop a plan for following up on study environment surveys effectively
  • Develop a strategic brand management and recruitment policy
TALENT DEVELOPMENT

• Challenges
  • To maintain and increase Denmark’s competitiveness, a large number of trained researchers are required
  • International competition to attract the best research talents is intense

• Goals
  • Offer researcher talent development at the highest international level
  • Recruit, develop and retain researchers with outstanding talents

• Initiatives
  • Develop a focused recruitment campaign aimed at potential PhD students
  • Develop tenure track models to attract the best academic staff members from all over the world
  • Develop a quality assurance policy for doctoral education
  • Increase the international mobility of our PhD students
  • Improve career counselling for PhD students, including guidance on opportunities outside academia
KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

• Challenges
  • Universities must share their knowledge with the society they belong to
  • The value of knowledge exchange must be strengthened, developed and made visible, both internally and externally
  • The amount and quality of existing public-sector consultancy services must be retained at current levels

• Goals
  • Intensify collaboration with the business community and the public sector
  • Consolidate and develop the university’s role of independent scientific consultant to the public sector
  • Develop continuing and further education activities
  • Strengthen contributions to the development of civil society

• Initiatives
  • Develop a comprehensive plan for future knowledge exchange activities, including a knowledge exchange conference
  • Strengthen the national centres and transform them into gateways to research-based public-sector consultancy services
  • Increase the number of Industrial PhD students, contracts and researcher and student projects in collaboration with businesses
  • Establish a central alumni organisation, set up career centres at strategic locations and create a clear web gateway