

CONFERENCE

WHY DON'T THEY STAY?

Every fifth student drops out within their first year. Most enrol in a new degree programme, while others drop out completely. We need a better understanding of why, the contributing factors, and what preventive measures work.

Thursday 1 November

9:00-15:00

the Main Hall

Register here: auws.au.dk/Hvorfor_bliver_de_ikke

WITH KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

PROFESSOR VINCENT TINTO, SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY, USA

▶ Vincent Tinto is a noted theorist in the field of higher education, particularly concerning student *retention* and *attrition*. His work seeks to explain why university students drop out before graduation and what conditions must be in place in order for students to complete their studies successfully.

Professor Tinto's talk will centre on an explanatory model which will provide inspiration for our concrete efforts to combat student attrition. An important aspect of the model has to do with the students' study habits: persistence, time management skills, planning and how students perceive their learning community, as well as various aspects of relationships among students and their cooperation skills.





9:00-9:20

OPENING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTION, PRO-RECTOR BERIT EIKA

Who are we looking to retain, and at what price? What is the goal of retention? Success criteria for retention? Who should we design our degree programme for? Who are our future graduates? Who is responsible for retention?

9:20-11:00

KEYNOTE SPEAKER DR. VINCENT TINTO

A Theory of Student Persistence: Its origins, changes, and future development

Social theory is not static. It is in constant flux as it seeks to respond to changing contexts and the important feedback and critique that leads to a deeper understanding of social behavior. Professor Tinto will review the history of the development of his theory of student persistence, the changes that have taken place since its initial conception, and the need for further development that would enable it to better understand the complex events leading students to persist or drop out from university. In looking to the future, the audience, working in groups, will be asked to suggest ways in which his theory can be improved and/or modified especially as it applies to the issue of student persistence in Denmark.

11:00-12:00

PRESENTATION OF POSTER SESSIONS AND WORKSHOPS

Presentation of a selection of AU's many student retention projects (see the overview of workshops on the next page)

12:00-12:45

LUNCH

12:45 - 13:45 1ST ROUND WORKSHOPS

(Select your desired workshop when registering)

13:45-14:00

COFFEE AND CAKE

14:00-15:00

2ND ROUND WORKSHOPS

(Select your desired workshop when registering)



A

'Academic integration in the degree programmes' (in English):

Professor Vincent Tinto, Syracuse University, USA

Participants in this workshops will work together in groups to develop a programme for the first year of university study based on the model introduced in Professor Tinto's talk.

B

'Retention strategy' (in Danish)

Grethe Berthelsen, Vice-dean for Education, Science, UCPH and
Finn Borchsenius, Vice-dean for Education, Science and Technology, AU

Improving student retention requires efforts from many sides. But what is the role of management in relation to reducing student attrition? At both UCPH Science and the Faculty of Science and Technology at AU, management has approved the framework for a coherent, faculty-wide approach to improving retention of first-year students in particular. On the background of these plans, we explore what management can do to ensure a cohesive strategy in relation to retention and to ensure the involvement and investment of the research and teaching programmes.

C

'Through the eyes of students' (in Danish)

Aarhus University Student Council

A positive academic environment gives the university life, creates collaborative relationships and facilitates contacts across disciplinary boundaries, as well as giving students a desire to spend time at and around the university. The work of many voluntary organisations is aimed at improving the physical and social academic environment, for example the AU Helpline, which provides counselling to students who are experiencing social or academic problems. But what does it take to create a good academic environment? What is the role of the universities, the politicians and the students in establishing a good academic environment?

D

'The brains of young people' (in Danish)

Rune Kappel, psychologist, the Counselling and Support Centre, AU

Your brain is still developing physiologically when you are 20-25 years old. This affects our abilities and mental strength in relation to a number of competencies that can be relevant for us as students. Our executive functions are an example of the cognitive abilities which have not reached their full potential in our early 20s. These functions are extremely important in relation to our ability to organise, understand and exercise self-regulation in relation to completing a degree programme. The talk will explore these functions and present examples of good advice you can give students and others who find that they have trouble concentrating on and organising their studies.