

APPENDIX E

Tertiary Education Reform in Denmark: The University Act of 2003

Through reforms in four key areas—institutional autonomy, institutional leadership, quality assurance, and internationalization—Denmark is in the process of transforming its university system into an independent sector contributing to broad national success by answering more effectively to the evolving labor market that it serves.

Institutional Autonomy: Increased Independence for Denmark's Universities

- As of 2003, all universities in Denmark are considered independent subsidiaries of the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation.
- Funds are distributed based on established rates for research and on per student enrollments and completion, to establish more objective criteria for funding. Institutions are allowed to use their complete subsidies as they deem necessary, may also seek outside sources of funding to complement the state contributions, and may establish profit-making activities.
- Performance contracts, first introduced in 1999, serve as a type of contract between the government and an individual institution regarding how that institution will seek to maximize its individual strengths.

Institutions work to their strengths, as defined by themselves, and seek successes at points where they are most competitive.

Institutional Leadership

- Leadership at every level is balanced within and outside.
- Governance of the institution is primarily in the purview of an external majority university board whose members are elected, not appointed, and include representatives from both within and outside the university, including academic and administrative staff and students.
- Each university's rector serves at the will of the board.
- Deans are hired and supervised by the rector and in turn hire and supervise department heads.

Source: University Act of 2003, retrieved on December 14, 2005, from <http://en.vtu.dk/acts/act-on-universities/act-on-universities.pdf>.