

Dr. Jorgen Staunstrup, Provost of IT University of Copenhagen (Denmark): **Vietnam is an interesting destination for IT cooperation**

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In an interview with *Thanh Niên*, Dr. Jorgen Staunstrup says that the IT University of Copenhagen sees promising cooperation potentials with Vietnam.

In an official visit paid to the Kingdom of Denmark by the Prime Minister Nguyễn Tấn Dũng in September 2009, Vietnam and Denmark agreed upon the goal of reaching 1 billion USD (vis-à-vis 318 million USD in 2008) in bilateral business turnover and 1 billion USD (compared to approx. 500 million USD at present) in direct investment into Vietnam. The state visit by the Queen of Denmark Margrethe II in Vietnam early November this year further marked an enhanced cooperation tie between the two countries in different fields.

Education plays a crucial role in this cooperation. Denmark is a country with advanced technology and can bring to Vietnam big cooperation opportunities in this field. With an emerging economy, Vietnam is a potential destination for Danish institutions and companies.

Via M.Sc. Nhi Quyen Le's facilitation, *Thanh Niên* had an interview with Dr. Jorgen Staunstrup, provost of the IT University of Copenhagen, about cooperation with Vietnamese partners.

*Dr. Joergen Staunstrup, could you please tell a little bit about the IT University?*

The IT University is a young university (just 10 years old) completely devoted to the digital world. Today, IT plays a key role in innovation and economic growth based on all kinds of mental constructions: arts, software, design, music, business, modeling etc. Therefore, we welcome students, researchers and staff with a variety of backgrounds, for example, business, sociology, mathematics, languages, engineering and of course computer science. The IT University has study lines in Computer Games, Software, Business and Digital Arts and Design. Our research spans from software quality over user interfaces, interaction design and business processes to digital aesthetics. In just 10 years, we have become the major supplier of university level IT graduates in Denmark.

*How are the international ties between the IT University and other universities as well as companies in the world, especially those in Asia?*

All our researchers have a strong international network spanning many countries in Asia. The strategy of the university is to go from such international collaboration which has been common among good researchers for centuries towards global collaboration.

Please note that we distinguish between global and international. We use the term “global” for collaborations where the partners supplement each other, i.e. different partners add different kinds of value to the collaboration, for example, one partner may provide the mathematical theory needed for a model and another the principles for providing a user friendly interaction. This is what many production and service companies are now doing; partners over the entire globe contribute to a product or service, by doing what they are best at. Although many companies are quite successful in producing this way, there are relatively few universities trying to do the same with their education and research.

*What challenges do you face when cooperating with Asian partners?*

Let me start by stressing that we have been very fortunate to find a university in China (Peking University) that share our vision of global collaboration in research and teaching. We share the vision and know patience and hard work are necessary to move in the direction pointed out by the vision. Of course, the long distance both in terms of geography, language and culture is an extra challenge. On the other hand, the whole point of global collaboration is to learn to work effectively with partners that are different from yourself.

*Why is the IT University interested in cooperating with Vietnamese partners? In what specific areas? What types of partners would you like to cooperate with?*

Vietnam is an attractive destination because we understand that there is a strong commitment to the IT area. Furthermore, there are a number of successful examples of global collaboration between Vietnam and Denmark.

As to the partners, we are looking for someone who shares our vision and interest in learning how to establish global collaboration. This could be a public organization such as a hospital, a private company offering IT services or a university.

For us, the most important thing is find partners that supplement us and are prepared to address the challenges of global collaboration.

*Where does the budget (for cooperating projects) come from?*

Ideally, all parties contribute to a collaboration. At least, in the long run. In the short term, it might be possible to raise some money by one partner or in one country, but one should realize

that this is a short-term solution. It is possible to fund research collaboration from the EU or from the Danish research councils.

*Why is it interesting for Vietnamese partners to cooperate with the IT University?*

I believe that the IT University has many things to offer: first and foremost, our broad interdisciplinary approach to IT, our innovative track record and last but not least, the results we have produced in just 10 years (2-300 graduates at M.Sc. level per year, a flourishing PhD program, research collaboration with more than 50 companies and a research network covering all parts of the world).

*To cooperate with the IT University, what criteria do Vietnamese partners have to meet?*

I think the most important is to share our view that IT plays a key role in innovation and economical growth in almost all sectors of society and our visions about global collaboration in education and research.

*Is it possible for Vietnamese students to get a scholarship at the IT University? And how?*

In 2009 and 2010, the IT University will admit 22 new PhD students every year, most of these will come from outside Denmark. Vietnamese students are highly welcome to apply and will be treated exactly as all other nationalities.

If admitted, a PhD student will get a full scholarship covering tuition, housing and living expenses. Vietnamese students are also very welcome to apply to our bachelor and masters programs. However, we have very few scholarships for these, and hence for most students it is necessary that they find funding themselves.

*Does the IT University offer international students, PhD students and researchers any help with practical matters to settle down, study and do research in Denmark?*

As you know, we are a young and relatively small university and. Therefore, we do not have a full-scale international office. However, we are trying to help everybody. A new faculty member coming from Asia will get professional assistance with housing, integration of family, tax etc. In fact we have employed a full-time "feel good" officer to assist with the practical problems that may arise before a new faculty member comes and in their first few months here.

*Thank you very much.*

**By ĐỖ HÙNG**