

Neuroscience in China

Sino-Danish Center for Education and Research (SDC)

By Kim Ryun Drasbek

Unfortunately, the covid19-pandemic had a large impact on the SDC collaboration in both 2020 and 2021. As all international travels to China was stopped in early 2020, we had to transition to online teaching for all courses while taking the time-zone differences into account as the Danish students and teachers were in Denmark. Great efforts were made by all teachers in transforming the teaching materials and embracing new technologies for creation of video lectures and online teaching rooms.

Even though traveling to China has not been possible, we have continued the collaboration and adopted technologies to facilitate meetings including our Annual Symposium in the Fall. Here we have succeeded in assembling Danish and Chinese students and researchers at 2 locations that were connected with video conference equipment. This gave our 2nd year master student the opportunity to give their Opening Speech for their Chinese degree. Even though collaboration across borders are difficult due to the travel restrictions, these hybrid symposia with participation of Danish and Chinese researchers and students keep the connection open. In addition, as all our master students have supervisors from both countries, they are key to keeping our connection to the Chinese research environments open and alive.

The master's programme runs smoothly with the great help of Programme Coordinator, Vibeke Sauer Panyella. She succeeded in arranging a tour of labs at Aarhus University in connection with our latest Annual Symposium. In addition, she is deeply involved in the recruitment effort to raise awareness about the SDC programme, answer questions from potential students, and arranging and presenting at different information

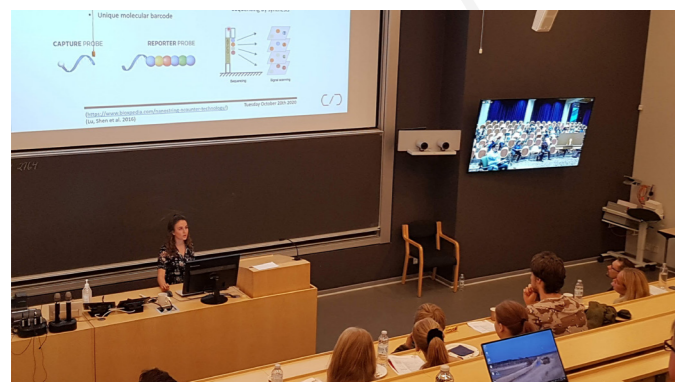


SDC students (class of 2021) at work at CFIN South in Universitetsbyen, August 2021
Photo: Vibeke Sauer Panyella

events across Denmark. Through this effort we have managed to keep the number of students in the programme above 20 despite the uncertainty of physical teaching and stay in China.

Research collaborations

As SDC Principal Coordinator for Life Sciences Kim Ryun Drasbek continues his involvement in both the Neuroscience and Neuroimaging sub-theme as well as the Life Science Engineering and Informatics sub-theme. He has continued as Head of Programme of the Neuroscience and Neuroimaging Master's programme while he is assisting the newly appointed Head of Programme of the Life Science Engineering and Informatics Master's Programme Ling Ding at DTU. Together they are updating and adjusting the content of the Master's programme as well as facilitating new scientific collaborations within that sub-theme.



Left & right: SDC Symposium 2020 at Aarhus University using video conference equipment. September 2020
Photo: Vibeke Sauer Panyella



Every year, the SDC co-finances several PhDs and 5 PhD projects have been initiated during 2020-21 within both sub-themes. These students are working on collaborative projects between Denmark and China and the students will have a research stay of 9 months in their Chinese supervisor's laboratory. In 2021, 3 Danish SDC Neuroscience and Neuroimaging PhD students successfully obtained their PhD degree - one of these from CFIN.

In our effort to deepen collaboration within the SDC initiative, several workshops have been arranged during 2020 and 2021. Some of these have been online, while 2 physical meetings have been possible during 2021. One master programme coordination workshop for the Life Science Engineering and Informatics theme in Odense with the participation of most Danish course organizers and a SDC Neuroscience and Neuroimaging research symposium in Vejle with a focus on collaborations with Chinese researchers and the possible security issues. Here we had expert input from several external Danish speakers with long involvement with China. Both workshops gave the involved researchers from the different Danish universities time to interact and exchange knowledge about research collaborations.



Chris Bailey working on recordings for online classes for the SDC students during the Covid-19 pandemic. During the Covid pandemic all international travels to China stopped, so new teaching methods have been crucial to keep the SDC educations running.
Photo: Vibeke Sauer Panyella



SDC students from classes of 2019, 2020 and 2021 meet in Middelfart, August 2021.
Photo: Vibeke Sauer Panyella