

## **THEA QUISTGAARD - TECH PHD COMMITTEE**

### **What made you stand for election to the PhD committee?**

I'm a student at the Department of Environmental Science, which is located in Risø north of Roskilde, far away from the rest of AU.

This distance means it can be difficult to keep up with changes at faculty and university level - and generally feel like an integrated part of the university. That's why it's important that we as a department are represented on TECH's PhD committee, so that my fellow students and I are also heard further up the system - both at the faculty, but also right up to the top of the university.

At the same time, I'm glad that there is a democratic space where it's possible to share your opinions and ideas.



### **What have you been particularly interested in during your time on the PhD committee?**

Personally, I've focused my energy on two things in particular: (1) a sense of community and solidarity between students across the departments at the faculty and (2) the PhD students' mental well-being and rights.

A third issue I work on is making the university more sustainable. This is mostly something I do at department level: for example, I set up a sustainability committee, hired a student assistant to work on emissions inventories of our employees' travel, and performed the first analysis of a completely local (AU Risø Campus) emission inventory.

I hope that my time serving on the faculty's PhD committee can help bring some of these initiatives to a greater part of the university.

### **What will you take with you from your time on the PhD committee?**

Serving on the PhD committee has given me confidence in relation to the democratic process within the university. We students have valuable input on our programmes and our workplace – and I'm very grateful for how much the university has listened to us and our wishes, frustrations and ideas.

At the same time, it's given me a priceless network across the faculty that I would never have had the opportunity to develop otherwise, given that my department is so far away from the rest of AU. It's been amazing to experience how committed we all are to each other, the faculty, the students and our future.

### **In your opinion, what are the main arguments for standing for election to the PhD committee?**

A lot of people are dissatisfied with one thing or another. But if you're serious about it, you have to do something about it yourself. On the PhD committee, you're taken seriously and listened to, as the students' representative. This is a space where you can express your frustrations – and find a solution together. At the same time, it also gives you an overall and in-depth insight into the inner workings of the university – and with that insight and understanding, you can help make the programme, the job and life a little easier for yourself and your fellow students/colleagues.

### **Why is it important to get involved and vote in the university elections?**

In practical terms, of course, this is the most important way we as students and employees can be heard. Though you might think that universities are deeply rooted organisms where things must be done a particular way because...that's how they've always been done. That's far from the case! The only way things can be changed is if we say out loud what we're dissatisfied with, pleased and about and what visions we have for the future.

And the university elections are one of the best places to make your voice heard!