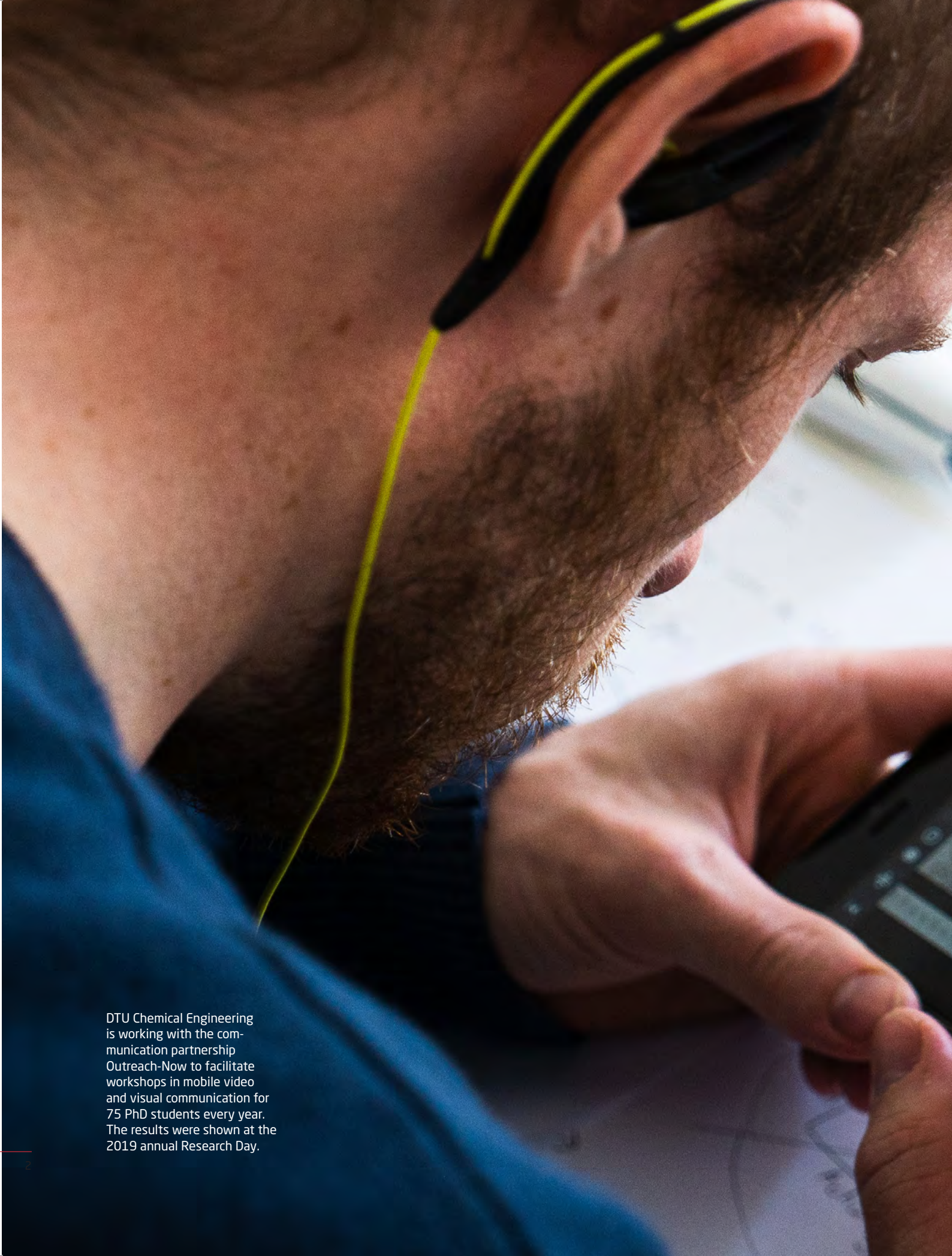




# Annual report 2019



DTU Chemical Engineering is working with the communication partnership Outreach-Now to facilitate workshops in mobile video and visual communication for 75 PhD students every year. The results were shown at the 2019 annual Research Day.



# Contents

- 04** Welcome
- 06** Key numbers
- 08** A greener version of carbon capture
- 11** Sludge—from problem to resource
- 14** Virtual prediction of bio-degradability
- 16** Improved coatings for fire protection
- 18** Highlights
- 22** New surroundings for a new decade
- 24** Building a community on fermentation
- 26** How can we make plastic more sustainable?
- 28** Microbes make tricky biomass useful
- 30** Organization
- 31** Research centres
- 32** The Faculty
- 33** Advisory Board
- 34** Cooperating companies
- 35** KTStudents: Connecting with industry
- 36** Teaching
- 41** Publications
- 50** PhD thesis defences

# Technological solutions for a sustainable future

Sustainability continues to be the main focus of an increasing number of stakeholders in our society. This has been a great focus at the Department of Chemical and Biochemical Engineering for a number of years as well. We strive to build fundamental knowledge to assist the industry in developing cutting-edge technological solutions, to the benefit of companies as well as society at large.

This year's annual report mirrors this striving. Going through its pages, you will see many concrete examples of technological solutions that are vital if we want to reach the political goal of reaching a 70 per cent reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2030 in Denmark, and if we want to support the UN SDGs in general.

We are researching carbon capture, storage, and utilization, as it is not sufficient just to reduce emissions—we also need to actively capture CO<sub>2</sub> and put it to new use. A similar mindset is applied in the Synferon project, where we are converting biomass into 'syngas', turning it into a resource rather than waste. And in another research case, we see how a start-up company can turn normally environmentally problematic sludge from waste water treatment into a resource.

But sustainability is many things, and we need to be smart in the way we approach the solutions. As you can also read in one of our articles, it can be argued that if we are able to recycle a fossil polymer many times, it might in fact be more sustainable than bio-based polymers. And as our work



in the collaboration between academia and industry shows, new software solutions can help companies to improve the sustainability of their products by predicting their biodegradability.

During the year, the relatively recent established Coating Science and Technology Centre, CoaST, has grown significantly, starting projects to facilitate the development of new sustainable coatings solutions under the headline 'Coatings for a better future'.

These are all activities you can read more about in this annual report.

In many ways, 2019 was a year of transformation for our Department. Not only are we transforming sustainable technologies—we have also planned to move into brand-new surroundings in our new state-of-the-art research and education Building 228A. This is an important part of our growth as B228A offers new possibilities for both research and education.

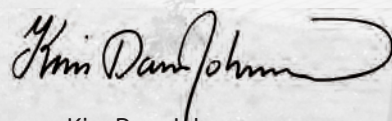
Speaking of education, this year has seen the launching of the FBM initiative, a collaboration between different departments at DTU. It focuses on fermentation-based

biomanufacturing and offers a unique and internationally leading education and research environment. This is important, as chemical engineering students today need a variety of different skills to work across many fields of research and innovation.

Also related to teaching, we have further developed our education in the framework of the Sino-Danish Center for education and research, SDC—and we have developed courses in Coatings Science and Technology to be taught in both China and Denmark.

New sustainable and innovative solutions are not a solo effort- it is a task that must be solved across, teams, centres, departments, universities, and industry. We have created a research and educational environment at DTU where this is more possible than ever before. And the transformation is far from over.

We are looking forward to significant growth in our cooperation with industrial and academic partners to the benefit of finding and implementing the best and most sustainable solutions.



Kim Dam-Johansen  
*Professor, Head of Department*



Kim Dam-Johansen  
Professor,  
Head of Department



# Key numbers 2019



208

SCIENTIFIC ARTICLES IN  
WOS-INDEXED JOURNALS



9

REPORTS AND BOOKS



33

PHD DEFENCES



327

STUDENTS\*

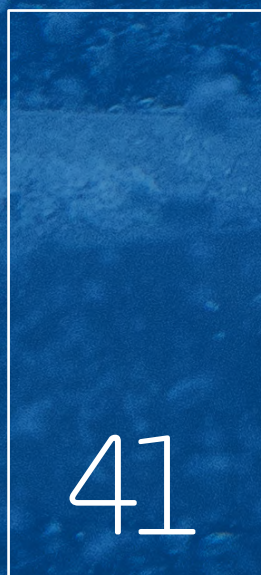


31

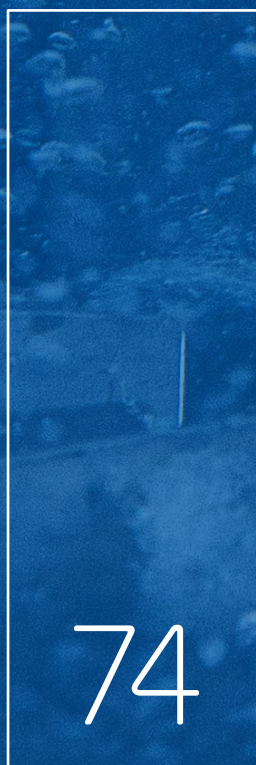
SINO-DANISH STUDENTS



COMPLETED  
BSC PROJECTS



COMPLETED  
BENG PROJECTS



COMPLETED  
MSC PROJECTS



5

SPIN OUTS



8

NOTIFICATIONS OF INVENTION



47

TECHNICAL/ADMINISTRATIVE  
EMPLOYEES\*\*



96

PHD STUDENTS INCLUDING 11  
INDUSTRIAL PHDS\*\*



32

VISITING GUEST RESEARCHERS FROM  
16 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES



87

SCIENTIFIC EMPLOYEES\*\*



230

EMPLOYEES IN TOTAL\*\*



34

FACULTY MEMBERS

\* BASED ON STÅ. ONE STÅ IS THE EQUIVALENT OF ONE STUDENT STUDYING FULL TIME IN A YEAR

\*\* BASED ON FULL TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)

# A greener version of carbon capture

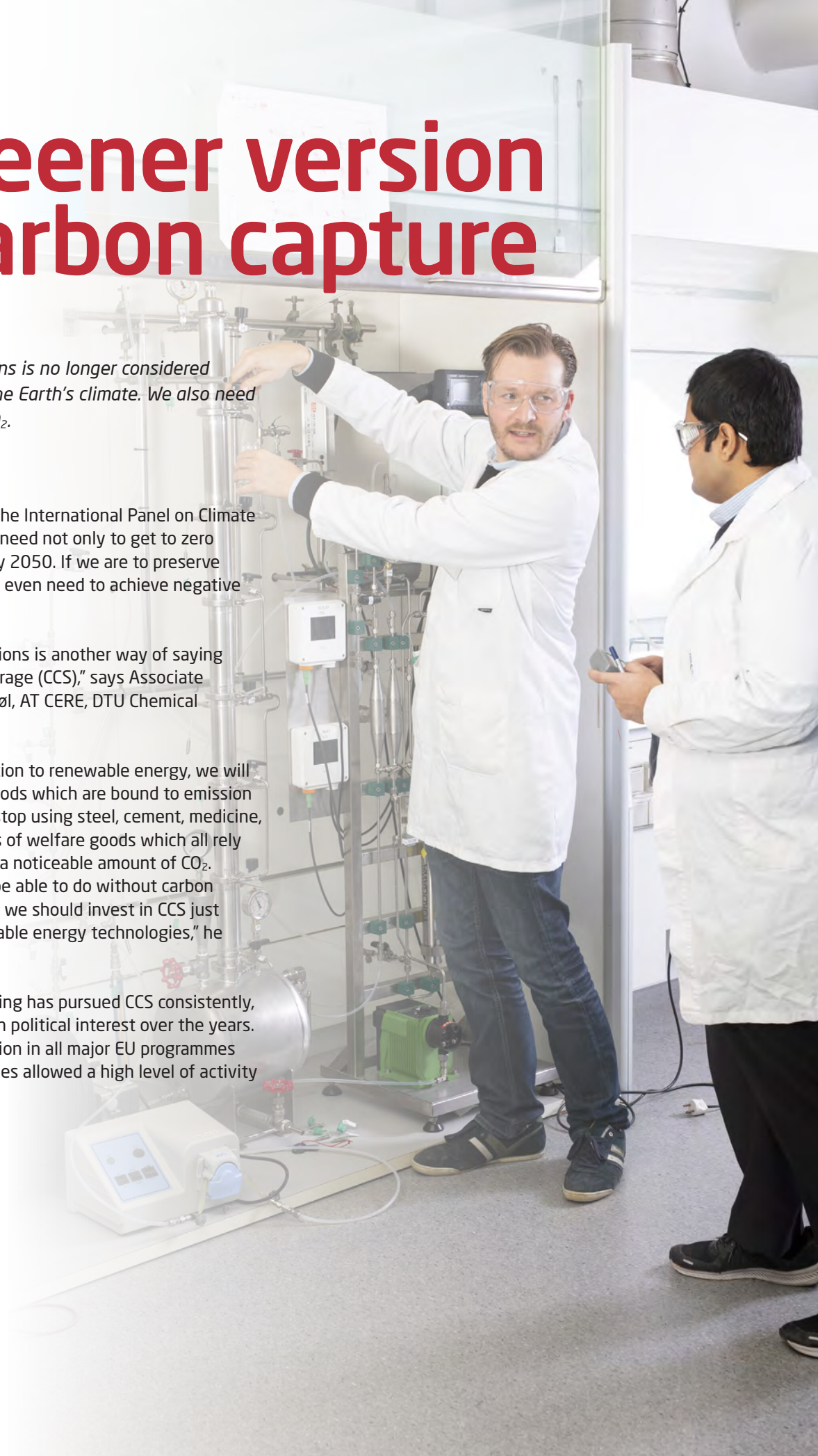
*Lowering CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is no longer considered enough to preserve the Earth's climate. We also need to actively capture CO<sub>2</sub>.*

According to the IPCC (the International Panel on Climate Change), the world will need not only to get to zero carbon net emissions by 2050. If we are to preserve the present climate, we even need to achieve negative emissions.

“Saying negative emissions is another way of saying Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS),” says Associate Professor Philip L. Fosbøl, AT CERÉ, DTU Chemical Engineering.

“Even with a full transition to renewable energy, we will still need to produce goods which are bound to emission of CO<sub>2</sub>. We cannot just stop using steel, cement, medicine, paper, and similar types of welfare goods which all rely on processes that emit a noticeable amount of CO<sub>2</sub>. Therefore, we will not be able to do without carbon capture. In other words, we should invest in CCS just like we invest in renewable energy technologies,” he continues.

DTU Chemical Engineering has pursued CCS consistently, regardless of changes in political interest over the years. Not least has participation in all major EU programmes over the last two decades allowed a high level of activity in the field.





***“Carbonic anhydrase is one of the fastest enzymes known. This is highly attractive in relation to carbon capture, as we typically need to capture CO<sub>2</sub> from huge amounts of flue gas.”***

#### **Enzyme from blood to the rescue**

A major challenge in CCS is reducing the energy consumption required for capturing the CO<sub>2</sub>. A high energy consumption will both be damaging to the sustainability of the method and to the economic feasibility. Therefore, it is good news that the researchers at DTU Chemical Engineering have found a method which improves current state-of-the-art capture methods when it comes to energy efficiency.

The new method is based on addition of the enzyme CA (carbonic anhydrase). CA is found in human blood. In our body, the main function of CA is to enhance the mass transfer of CO<sub>2</sub> in our lungs by catalysing the reversible hydration of CO<sub>2</sub>.

“CA is one of the fastest enzymes known. This is highly attractive in relation to carbon capture, as we typically need to capture CO<sub>2</sub> from huge amounts of flue gas. We have shown that CA is able to speed up CO<sub>2</sub> capture in an industrial context. While the enzyme isn't a CO<sub>2</sub> solvent in itself, it increases the capture capacity of the best commercially available solvents,” explains Associate Professor Nicolas von Solms, also working in AT CERÉ.

The industrial state-of-the-art solvents for CO<sub>2</sub> capture are amines such as MDEA (methyldiethanolamine).

“MDEA is a very efficient and specific solvent for CO<sub>2</sub> capture,

but it is rather slow. You can compensate for this by increasing the size of your capture plant, but that would add to both building costs and energy consumption. The latter is problematic both in terms of operating costs and sustainability. By speeding up the capture process, we can operate a smaller facility.”

#### **A green additive**

In terms of economic feasibility, the new method is currently not superior, because the cost of the CA needs to be factored in. Even though the enzyme is not consumed directly in the process—enzymes function like catalysts in an industrial plant, they facilitate the reactions between other compounds – some new CA needs to be added to keep the process going. The price of the enzyme will go down if and when more capture facilities adapt the method, allowing CA to be produced with economy of scale. Still, for some time the cost of the enzyme will imply that the new, more efficient process will have overall costs that roughly equal those of current CO<sub>2</sub> capture by amines without enzymes added.

“So initially, the advantage will not be economical, but by operating smaller and more energy-efficient plants, carbon capture becomes more sustainable. On top of that we're using a green additive, since enzymes are manufactured at biotechnological plants under mild conditions,” Nicolas von Solms points out.

## **Carbon Capture at DTU Chemical Engineering**

Some 8-9 researchers and a similar number of students are doing projects on carbon capture at DTU Chemical Engineering. The efforts are anchored in AT CERÉ (Applied Thermodynamics, Center for Energy Resources Engineering).

Fundamental research projects on the subject include the use of ionic liquids (ILs) as solvents for carbon capture, and swapping CO<sub>2</sub> for methane in gas hydrates, respectively. Both of these projects are coordinated by Associate Professor Nicolas von Solms.

Further, carbon capture plays a role in three ongoing projects with biogas as the common denominator. In the first project, MeGa-StorRE (Methane Gas Storage for Renewable Energy), methane is produced by removing CO<sub>2</sub> from the biogas. In the second project, Bio Re-fuel, CO<sub>2</sub> is also removed from the biogas, but instead of methane, the end-product will be methanol. The third project, BioCO<sub>2</sub>, focuses on utilizing the captured CO<sub>2</sub> as a valuable industrial feedstock. All three projects are coordinated by Associate Professor Philip L. Fosbøl. The MeGa-StoRE and Bio Re-fuel projects were originally developed at DTU Mechanical Engineering, still a partner in both projects.

Finally, there has been research on carbonate looping in CHEC research centre with collaboration with FLSmidth & Co. A/S coordinated by Associate Professor Weigang Lin. Carbonate looping is a second-generation carbon capture technology, which is especially suitable for the cement industry, where the raw materials can be reacted reversibly between their carbonate form and their oxide form to separate CO<sub>2</sub> from other gases with lower energy penalty.

Experiments and modelling proving the efficiency of the CA-based method have mainly been carried out by Arne Gladis in his PhD project at DTU Chemical Engineering. Arne Gladis was supported by an EU grant through the INTERACT project which also included Professor John Woodley (PROSYS research centre), and after completing his PhD degree, Arne Gladis

is now with Wacker Chemie, Germany. The efforts are continued by Postdoc Humbul Suleman, supported by a Eurotech scholarship. Supervisors in both contexts are Associate Professors Nicolas von Solms and Philip L. Fosbøl. The efforts are carried out in collaboration with Novozymes, world-leading supplier of industrial enzymes.



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Associate Professor Philip L. Fosbøl and Postdoc Humbul Suleman in the lab.



# Sludge—from problem to resource

*Sprung from DTU Chemical Engineering, start-up company AquaGreen sees sludge from waste water treatment as a resource rather than an environmental problem.*

Waste water treatment, aquacultures, and production of biogas all have sludge as a waste fraction. In principle, the sludge can be used directly as fertilizer in agriculture, but complaints from neighbours over smell as well as content of substances which may be problematic for the environment and human health continue to raise concerns. Collaboration between the CHEC research centre at DTU Chemical Engineering and the young engineering company AquaGreen has developed an alternative: Turning the sludge into thermal energy and fertilizer.

The method builds on a combination of superheated steam-drying and pyrolysis. Pyrolysis is the cleaving of organic compounds by heating under anaerobic conditions.

The process is energy efficient, as the energy content of the sludge is utilized for both the drying and the pyrolytic process which converts the solid part of the sludge into a fertilizer. The end product, known as bio-char, has a high content of nutrients necessary for the growth of plants, espe-

Bio-char from sewage sludge -  
sustainable phosphorus fertilizer  
without environmentally harmful  
substances



***“As the bio-char produced in AquaGreen’s process has less than 10 per cent volume and weight in comparison to the sludge, you are no longer limited to finding application close to the source.”***

cially phosphorous. Notably, the content of problematic substances such as pathogenic bacteria and residues from pharmaceutical products—both found in sludge from waste water treatment—has been eliminated in the up to 650° C pyrolytic heating.

Another major advantage is the significantly lower price of transportation.

“Whenever you transport sludge, you are really transporting more than 90 per cent water, which obviously does not contribute to fertilizing. As the bio-char produced in the new process has less than 10 per cent volume and weight in comparison to the sludge, you are no longer limited to finding application close to the source of the sludge,” explains Senior Researcher Jesper Ahrenfeldt, DTU Chemical Engineering.

#### **The next challenge: Upscaling**

AquaGreen was founded in 2014 based on findings in the group at DTU Chemical Engineering. As a first move, the company targeted the aquaculture sector in Norway. Here, environmental problems had forced local producers to move part of production onshore. This improved water quality in the fiords but also resulted in sludge being produced onshore, creating a market for AquaGreen’s technology.

After successful introduction in Norway, the company is now ready to conquer new markets. To this end, the collaboration with the CHEC group—which has been involved all along—will be extended further.

“While the fundamental technology is fully demonstrated and in commercial use, we still need to tackle various chemical engineering issues on the academic side. These are mainly related to upscaling of the processes. In a country like Denmark, waste water treatment is the most interesting

application, but this will require building the plants somewhat larger to become economically feasible. As always, upscaling involves chemical engineering challenges. There are still some first-of-a-kind solutions waiting to be developed,” says Jesper Ahrenfeldt.

#### **Legislation drives the transformation**

Besides waste water treatment, production of biogas is another promising market for the technology. In Denmark, biogas is largely produced from manure and organic household waste. After the gas is produced, sludge remains, still having some 40-50 per cent of the original energy content. This fits in nicely with the AquaGreen technology.

While the technology is proven, several barriers still need to be overcome, Jesper Ahrenfeldt notes:

“The business case relies on farmers being willing to use bio-char. We see interest going up, but also know that agriculture is generally a conservative sector when it comes to introducing new technology and practises.”

Recent developments give rise to optimism:

“Germany has banned the direct disposal of sludge in agriculture, and we see similar legislation under way in other European countries. Denmark will surely follow at some point. This will obviously support the argument for using bio-char instead of sludge, and thereby prompt a wider use of the new technology.”



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# Virtual prediction of bio-degradability

*Companies striving to improve the sustainability of their products are helped by software developed in the KT Consortium. The project was initiated by industry member Syngenta.*

Some companies manufacture products that will unavoidably end up in the environment and should thus preferably be readily biodegradable. Prompted by a member company, Syngenta, researchers in the KT Consortium have developed a new tool able to predict the biodegradability of most new components that a company might consider to use.

“As long as the molecular structure of the compound under consideration is known and fairly simple, we are able to calculate its biodegradability with high accuracy. The uncertainty in the method increases, the

more irregular the structure of the new substance is, and the less it resembles known structures,” says Associate Professor at DTU Chemical Engineering Xiaodong Liang. He has supervised the development which has been carried out by PhD student Spardha Virendra Jhamb and visiting student Irène Hospital, Université de Lorraine, France.

The tool produces a biodegradability value with two or three decimals, usually in the range from 0 to 1.

Xiaodong Liang further notes that for most practical purposes a company would

normally be happy to just know whether the given substance is readily biodegradable (values above 0.5), non-biodegradable (values below 0.2) or somewhere in-between.

#### **May replace costly lab experiments**

Owned by ChemChina, Syngenta is a leading provider of agricultural chemicals and seeds, supplying farmers worldwide. The company is committed to improving the sustainability of its products in accordance with the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. These efforts involve improving and documenting biodegradability. Here, the idea of building a virtual tool for prediction of the biodegradability properties came up—supplementing or possibly even replacing costly and time-consuming lab experiments.

As Syngenta has been a KT Consortium member for a decade, it was a natural step for the company to approach the group at DTU Chemical Engineering.

"The first communication on the idea took place in January 2018, so development has been fairly rapid," says Xiaodong Liang.

***"The results are promising, with (...) a 96 per cent success of classifying a compound as 'readily biodegradable' or not."***

The first challenge was obviously to establish what is meant by the term biodegradable. It was decided to measure the biodegradability of a chemical using a combination of two oxidation parameters.

The first parameter is BOD (Biochemical Oxygen Demand), which is the amount of oxygen demanded by aerobic bacteria when metabolising a test compound. Common practise of labs in many countries have established measuring BOD after five days of incubation at 20°C as a global standard.

COD (Chemical Oxygen Demand) is the amount of oxygen consumed during oxidation of a test compound with hot, acidic

dichromate, providing a measure of the total amount of oxidizable matter present in the sample.

#### **High rate of success**

The BOD/COD ratio can be seen as a measure for biodegradability. A 1.00 value would indicate that the compound is fully biodegradable.

With this in place, the next step was to develop a model for biodegradability estimation. The chosen model is based on the so-called group-contribution methods, which are simple, easy to use and widely used in chemical process system engineering.

Finally, results from the model were compared with experimental data derived partly from literature, and partly from Syngenta's extensive database.

"The results are promising, with a regression coefficient of 0.92 and an average absolute error of 0.05, and a 96 per cent success of classifying a compound as 'readily biodegradable' or not," says Xiaodong Liang.

He further notes that the methodology can be applied not only by Syngenta:

"The group-contribution methods are quite general. We will be able to use them for different properties and object functions in other DTU Chemical Engineering projects. Also, we are about to integrate them in our ICAS software (Integrated Computer Aided Systems, the main deliverable from the KT Consortium), thereby allowing other consortium member companies to benefit."



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# Improved coatings for fire protection

*Improving the sustainability of coatings able to dampen the destructive consequences of a fire is an example of the highly interdisciplinary coatings research at DTU Chemical Engineering.*

Coatings for passive fire protection are like airbags in a car. They remain idle for years, but when the accident suddenly takes place, they absolutely need to work. Making these so-called intumescent coatings more sustainable is an example of the complex challenges faced by the researchers at CoaST (The Hempel Foundation Coatings Science and Technology Centre) at DTU Chemical Engineering.

“The main driver here is health concerns. All the many benefits of passive fire protection aside, we have to recognize that the current products do contain substances which have been shown to be carcinogenic or otherwise problematic to human health,” says Associate Professor Søren Kiil.

Intumescent coatings are mainly used for steel structures. At elevated temperatures, an intumescent coating will swell by as much as 40 times into a foam which will quickly stiffen and become char. The layer of char

is thermally insulating, meaning that the inevitable heating of the steel takes place at a significantly reduced pace. Without this protection, the steel could quickly lose strength leading to collapse of the structure.

## **Passive fire protection may save lives**

Intumescent coatings exist in two classes, one for normal buildings and one for more critical infrastructure like oil rigs. The presence of hydrocarbons triggers more violent fire development. Therefore, coatings for this purpose need to respond faster.

The first intumescent coatings were invented around 100 years ago. Since then, these coatings have been improved in various ways, but the interest in developing more sustainable formulations is relatively new.

An example of a problematic substance found in intumescent coatings is zinc borate. The researchers in CoaST have ideas for less hazardous alternatives. However, the question is



A hydrocarbon intumescent coating with a thickness of 6 mm applied on the surface of a grit-blasted steel plate. The coating is a two-component (base and curing part) epoxy-based system which is targeted specifically at passive fire protection against hydrocarbon fire scenarios.



whether the technical properties will still live up to specifications. At an oil rig, for instance, lives may well depend on intumescent coatings. The coating will not put out the fire, but it will dampen the effects and give personnel time to evacuate.

“We want to develop more environmentally benign coatings, but we cannot compromise safety. We need to be sure that our sustainable alternatives will still function after say 15 or 20 years,” says Claus E. Weinell. As Senior Executive Officer he is responsible for experimental facilities in CoaST.

A recent initiative is specially developed table-size electro-ovens for the experiments.

“Traditionally, coatings are tested in big industry-type ovens. We realized that smaller electric ovens would be better for our research. They can be heated up and cooled down much faster than larger ovens. Furthermore, we can obtain better control of the conditions and thus more accurate results. And finally, we simply save energy consumption and costs by doing the experiments in smaller ovens,” Claus E. Weinell states.

#### Accelerated testing is imperative

Obviously, the researchers cannot wait for 15 years to see if the properties are still according to specifications. Therefore, accelerated tests are a key part of their setup. An example is cyclic weathering, where the temperature is raised and lowered repeatedly.

#### Real-life fouling and corrosion tests

Recently, a new facility has been added to the experimental portfolio of CoaST. At Hundested, the CoaST researchers are able to operate rafts which can be subjected to real-life fouling and corrosion.

“It is quite unusual for a university to operate a real-life test facility like this,” says Assistant Professor Huichao Bi. As a corrosion expert in CoaST, she will use advanced microscopy to spot early signs of degradation in coating-protected steel surfaces.

“We are among the very few people in the world who have applied this technique—Scanning Acoustic Microscopy (SAM)—for the coatings study. Importantly, based on this, we are developing methods which are non-destructive for the coatings performance evaluation, meaning we will be able to study the same samples repeatedly and follow the propagation of failures over time,” says Huichao Bi.



An intumescent char formed in a fire-resistance experiment of a hydrocarbon intumescent coating according to the temperature-time relationship defined in the standard hydrocarbon fire testing curve UL1709. The thickness of the expanded char (55 mm) is nine times the original thickness of the coating (6 mm).

“In this way, we increase the driving forces which create degradation of the coating under real-life circumstances,” explains Claus E. Weinell, continuing:

“However, we need to constantly be alert to possible differences between what goes on in the accelerated tests relative to the real situation. We need to understand both the physics and the chemistry involved. This can only be achieved through a constant interplay between experiments, mathematical analysis, modelling and simulations.”

Even so, there is still a limit to how much testing can be accelerated:

“If we overdo the accelerated weathering, we will induce phenomena which are different from what is seen in real applications. Therefore, we still need relatively long time spans, typically some months, for the experiments.”



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# Highlights **2019**



**20 JANUARY**  
**STUDY TRIP VISIT FROM  
THE NETHERLANDS**

25 students from our partner university TU Eindhoven visited DTU Chemical Engineering and Hempel to learn about this partnership and about study life at campus.

**24 JANUARY**  
**TOPPING OUT EVENT**

With the topping-out ceremony of Building 228A, DTU Chemical Engineering celebrated a major milestone at the beginning of the year. The new building consists of laboratories, offices, a lounge, as well as an expansion of the existing pilot hall—all carefully placed throughout the 6,000 m<sup>2</sup> of space. Building 228A is expected to be inaugurated in 2021.

**22 MARCH**  
**DPC ANNUAL POLYMER DAY**

The Annual Polymer Day at Danish Polymer Center was held at Coloplast in Humlebæk to mark the completion of the grant received by Ole Hassager in 2014 from Coloplast—Aage-Louis Hansens Legat. The event had more than 120 participants from DTU Chemical Engineering, Coloplast, the industry, and international universities.



**28 MARCH**  
**GEORGIOS M. KONTOGEORGIS  
RECEIVES ERC ADVANCED GRANT**

Professor Georgios M. Kontogeorgis received the ERC Advanced Grant 2018 from the European Research Council for his project “New Paradigm in Electrolyte Thermodynamics”. The project aims to create a new paradigm, which will ultimately pave the way for the development of new engineering models for electrolyte solutions.



**1-2 APRIL**  
**COAST 2ND ANNUAL DAY  
AND 1ST WORKSHOP**

83 participated in the Annual Day, of which 41 were industrial partners. PhD students and postdoc fellows presented their projects and results within the field of coatings. The workshop had 22 participants of which 3 represented international academia.

1 MAY

### **MARINE CENTRE AT HUNDESTED HARBOUR**

On 1 May, the raft used in Roskilde Fjord in a former PhD fouling control research project was transported to Hundested harbour to get a revival. During May, the raft was modified and finally launched in Hundested harbour on 28 May. Based on experience from 2019, a much larger facility will be established next year.

15 MAY

### **EXPERIENCED ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR'S ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATED**

Associate Professor Weigang Lin celebrated his 25-year anniversary at the CHEC research centre at DTU Chemical Engineering's facilities. Weigang Lin has been instrumental in developing the fruitful cooperation between DTU Chemical Engineering and Institute of Process Engineering, CAS, in China.

8-10 JUNE

### **CERE DISCUSSION MEETING**

Modelling the behaviour of electrolytes in energy resources engineering has always been tricky. At the CERE Discussion Meeting 2019, members of the CERE industry Consortium appreciated the academic efforts to address this issue.

12-14 JUNE

### **KT CONSORTIUM ANNUAL MEETING**

KT Consortium Annual Meeting 2019 was attended by 70 participants of whom 17 were representatives of member companies and one from academia. At the meeting, several industry representatives pointed to the value of the ICAS software—one of the main KT-Consortium deliverables, combining computer-aided tools for modelling, simulation, property prediction, synthesis/design, control, and analysis into a single integrated system—in their quest for improved sustainability.

30 JUNE

### **MICETECH PROJECT SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDED**

The advanced technology platform 'Minerals and Cement Process Technology—MiCeTech' funded by the Innovation Fund Denmark, FLSmidth A/S, Hempel and DTU was concluded successfully. The platform, which started in 2013, has resulted in important scientific and business results within the three main research areas: Cement processes, minerals processes, and coatings. Further, the platform has facilitated tight cooperation among the partners and recruitment of new employees from the project in both partner companies. A strong basis for future cooperation has been created.

2-3 JULY

### **THIRD KT-IPE SEMINAR**

For years, the Danish-Chinese cooperation has resulted in joint education in the framework of SDC and research that benefit the sustainable development for Denmark and China. In early July, the leadership of DTU Chemical Engineering and the Institute of Process Engineering, Chinese Academy of Sciences came together in Marienlyst for the third joint seminar to further consolidate the collaboration and facilitate cooperative projects within sustainable energy, green processes, and advanced materials and formulated products.

12 JULY

### **GÜRKAN SIN WINS HUTCHISON MEDAL**

The IChemE Hutchison Medal 2018/2019—awarded for both practical and wide-ranging, philosophical or thought-provoking published papers—has been awarded to a scientific paper involving Associate Professor Gürkan Sin as a co-author.

# Highlights **2019**

23-30 AUGUST

## **7TH BIOPRO WORLD TALENT CAMPUS**

The advanced one-week course at PhD level organized by the BIOPRO consortium was held for 25 PhD students from all over the world. The focus was on biomanufacturing, including topics such as on-line measurement techniques, mathematical modelling and control of bio-based processes.

29 AUGUST

## **BIG GRANT PAVES THE WAY FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

The Novo Nordisk Foundation granted DKK 182.7 million to an international partnership between DTU and North Carolina State University (NCSU) aimed at the establishment of new biopharmaceutical processes and study programmes for students and employees in the industry. The collaboration will involve both DTU Chemical Engineering and DTU Bioengineering.



30 AUGUST

## **RESEARCH DAY 2019**

Focus this year was on the key developments within the Department and the industry, and Head of DTU Entrepreneurship, Professor Jes Broeng gave an inspiring talk entitled Research-based Entrepreneurship. The winners of this year's highly successful PhD video workshop—PhD students Valeria Chiaula and Frederik Zafiryadis—were found on this occasion. The workshops have become an increasingly popular initiative to help the PhDs communicate their research in the digital age.

9-13 SEPTEMBER

## **2<sup>ND</sup> INTERNATIONAL EUROMBR TRAINING COURSE - INNOVATIVE MICROBIOREACTOR APPLICATIONS IN BIOPROCESS DEVELOPMENT**

The International EUROMBR Training Course originates from the Marie Curie Initial Training Network EUROMBR coordinated by DTU Chemical Engineering and financed by the FP7 of the European Union. Within this network, application-oriented professionals from nine countries have been working together for the education, development and application of the explorative MBR technology to sustain the future progress of biobased processes. With the EUROMBR Training Course, the EUROMBR consortium makes its expertise accessible to all prospective scientists who want to gain a deeper understanding of microbioreactor technology. In 2019, 35 young researchers have been participating at this course, held at the Center of Pharmaceutical Engineering (PVZ), Technische Universität Braunschweig, Germany, including also lectures by Associate Professor Ulrich Krühne.



2 OCTOBER

## **GIRLS DAY IN SCIENCE**

In AT CERE, girls from local high schools were invited to workshops in the DTU Chemical

Engineering laboratories to get a close-up experience of scientific work for the annual Danish Girls Day in Science. This year, the high schoolers were investigating some of the climate solutions needed to meet the global challenges of the future.

25 OCTOBER

### PROSYS ANNUAL RESEARCH SEMINAR

The seminar, with guest speakers from Freesense ApS, Novo Nordisk, and Pall Corporation, gave its 110 participants the opportunity to learn about the ongoing projects within PROSYS, and also to meet and discuss in an informal way with the PhD students, postdocs, senior researchers, and faculty members of the centre during the poster sessions. Furthermore, the seminar was, as always, an opportunity for our industrial stakeholders to connect with colleagues across different industries.

29 NOVEMBER

### INNOEXPLORER GRANT

Professor Anne Ladegaard Skov and her DPC team received an InnoExplorer grant from Innovation Fund Denmark for the project Glysius. This is a spinout in the making from DTU Chemical Engineering that created a silicone adhesive with glycerol domains embedded that release active substances while ensuring the right humidity level in the wound bed.



12 AND 15 NOVEMBER

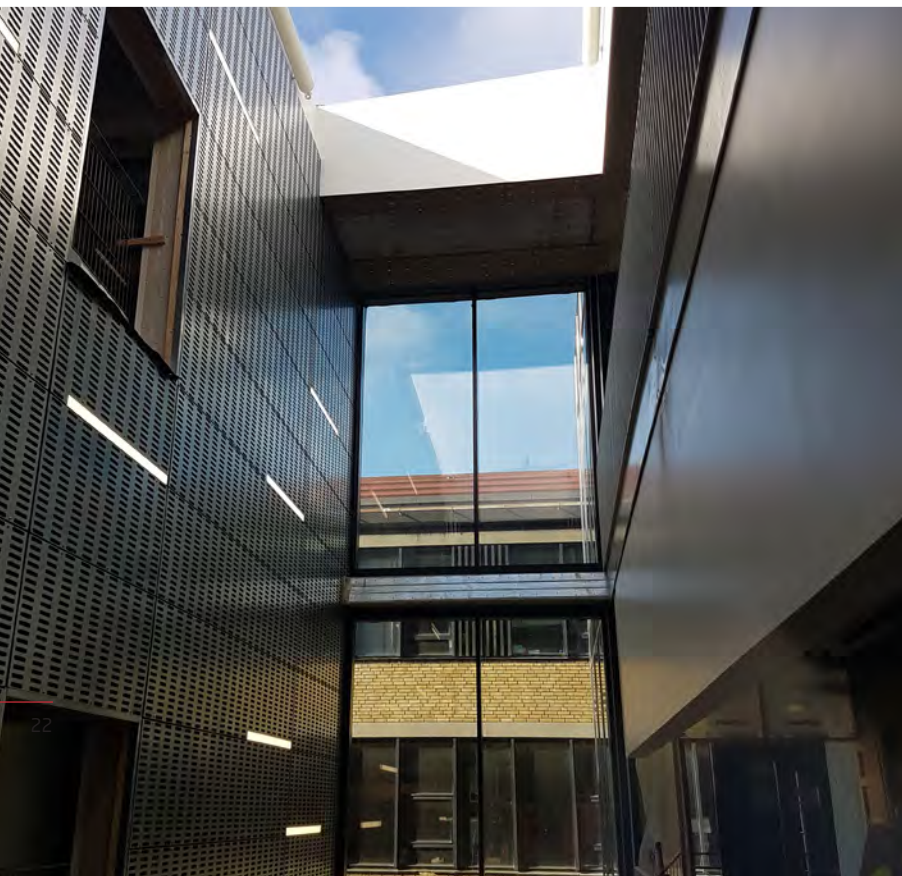
### VISIT FROM HIGH SCHOOLS

The science students from Odense Technical High School visited the department for the second time. Already in 2015, they won the Hempel-DTU Award for science high schools, which included a trip to DTU Chemical Engineering. But they wanted another visit this year, as their Production Technology classes were working with the themes chemical production and food products. Also, this year's winners visited DTU to get an introduction to the life of an engineering student. The Award is a way for the Hempel Foundation and DTU to strengthen the science work at high schools.

6 DECEMBER

### SHARING INNOVATIVE IDEAS

As the year was waning, the entire Department gathered to celebrate the annual Christmas seminar. On the agenda was innovation. Former Associate Professor at DTU Chemical Engineering Tue Johannessen was invited to give a talk on innovation in chemical engineering. As co-founder of Amminex Emissions Technology A/S and now Senior Innovation Portfolio Manager at A.P. Møller-Mærsk A/S Tue gave inspiring examples on how to approach innovation from different perspectives. In addition, each centre gave a presentation on their respective takes on innovation and examples on how they implement them in their work.





# NEW SURROUNDINGS FOR A NEW DECADE

2019 was truly a year of transformation for DTU Chemical Engineering. Our new 6,000-m<sup>2</sup> Building 228A was completed and put to use in 2020. The new building symbolizes a modern university anno 2020 with cross-function cooperation between research, teaching, and administration.

The new facilities include laboratories for both research and teaching as well as an expansion of our existing pilot plant with large-scale experiments. With the large and modernized expansion, the Department is able to meet current and future demands for teaching and research and to continue innovating and teaching in even better conditions.

We look forward to the formal inauguration—an event where we will also celebrate the last 150 years of technical chemistry at DTU and the many benefits this has had and still has on society.

# Building a community on fermentation



*The interest in Fermentation Based Biomanufacturing is on the rise in chemical, pharmaceutical and biotech industries. A new cross-departmental effort at DTU will deliver candidates and PhDs with the exact profile required.*

In an industrial context, fermentation is the manufacture by any of a variety of organisms—bacteria, yeasts, fungi, cell cultures—of desired products, which could be chemicals, enzymes, proteins, etc. Spanning across three departments at DTU, a research-based programme takes education and training in Fermentation Based Biomanufacturing (FBM) to a new level. The programme is designed to create candidates with both a deep knowledge of biology, deep knowledge on scaling up, pilot operations and strong mathematical and programming skills.

“We are fulfilling a long-standing wish from industry. Traditionally, a university graduate would either be keen on biotechnology or on chemical engineering. In FBM you need to have an understanding of both worlds. This is what we offer,” explains Professor John Woodley, DTU Chemical Engineering.

The FBM education is based on cutting-edge research covering all aspects of fermentation, e.g. fundamental physiology of production organisms, metabolic engineering, scale-up processes, and downstream processing.

Overall coordination lies with DTU Bioengineering, while DTU Chemical Engineering and the Novo Nordisk Foundation Center for Biosustainability are the two other partners.

## **Industry standard level of containment**

Each year at DTU Chemical Engineering, two PhD students will be hired at FBM. The first three are already onboard, while the hiring process for the next ones is ongoing. Further, some 15-20 students from the Departments will do their master projects under the FBM umbrella every year.

The research facilities at DTU Chemical Engineering play a key role in the programme.



***“The rapid development in fermentation-based biomanufacturing means that we can rarely use all the content from past years’ courses. Still, this is also what is so thrilling about working in this field.”***

“We already have excellent pilot plant facilities, and with the upcoming inauguration of the new Building 228A, these facilities will be upgraded further. Not least a new fermentation plant with 300 L fermenter (around 200 L working volume) production capacity will allow us to do experiments at a useful scale en route to industry,” says John Woodley, noting that the pilot facility will be classified as ‘GMO 1’—the standard containment level in Danish industry.

“Importantly, we will not just have the equipment itself, but mirror all components digitally. These ‘Digital Twins’ will have a dual function. They will be important in our teaching, and also contribute to research projects, improving our understanding of what is going on during the fermentation and downstream operations.”

#### **Lifelong learning in digital formats**

The new initiative can already claim great interest—no less than 120 students signed up for the first of the new master’s courses during the fall semester of 2019.

“To see this level of interest is really great. It is also quite demanding in terms of the amount of teaching we have to deliver—not least since the rapid development in fermentation-based biomanufacturing means that we can rarely use all the content from past years’ courses. Still, this is also what is so thrilling about working in this field,” John Woodley comments.

The FBM initiative involves several training programmes.

“The concept of lifelong learning is highly relevant to FBM, as technology and fundamental understanding progress so rapidly. Therefore, it is a natural part of our activity to provide courses for industry staff and other candidates. Some of these courses will be offered in digital formats, and we plan to extend these options further,” says John Woodley.

#### **Expansion in digitalization and downstream processing**

The high level of activity has already prompted the involved DTU departments to hire additional scientific staff. At DTU Chemical Engineering, Assistant Professor Helena Junicke has become faculty member, while a faculty member at professorial level is due to be recruited in 2020.

“Also, we plan to hire new post-docs to assist us in research, not least with a focus on digitalization and downstream processing,” John Woodley informs.

With the FBM initiative, industry is well on track to get its wish granted for a new type of candidates and PhDs with both biological and chemical engineering skills.

“Maybe even more important is the fact that the field has become stronger and more visible here at DTU,” John Woodley notes. “The three departments involved each have their strongholds, and by getting closely aligned in this way, we are able to grow a healthy community on fermentation based biomanufacturing—something also highly appreciated by our industry partners.”

## The FBM Initiative

Backed by a donation from the Novo Nordisk Foundation, the FBM (Fermentation Based Biomanufacturing) initiative is scheduled to run for the coming five years. It will continue for another two years after that, as the initiative includes a PhD programme—and the PhD students starting towards the end of the five-year period will of course be able to complete their projects, normally running for three years.

The FBM industry partners are Bioneer, Chr. Hansen, AGC Biologics, Dupont, Glycom, Novo Nordisk, Novozymes, and Xelia. The companies take part in teaching and offer internships to master students.



John Woodley  
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# How can we make plastic more sustainable?

*All stages of plastics use, from processing to initial product and after-life will need to be taken into account for design of tomorrow's plastic materials and to increase their value for society.*

The optimal sustainable polymer would be made from biological feedstock and be fully recyclable. However, we cannot get to this ideal scenario in one go, as Anders E. Daugaard, Associate Professor with the Danish Polymer Centre (DPC) at DTU Chemical Engineering, explains:

"We still see more bio-based polymers with satisfactory technical properties being developed. This is good news for climate change mitigation. We need alternative sources of raw materials, and production of bio-based polymers does emit less CO<sub>2</sub> than production of polymers from fossil raw materials. However, these bio-polymers do not recycle well so far. I would argue that a fossil polymer, such as our current commodity plastics, which can be recycled many times, is in fact more sustainable than a bio-based polymer that can only be used once."

Further, Anders E. Daugaard wants us to think polymer sustainability in a broader context:

"We should not only be concerned about the source of raw material or the fate of the polymer itself, but also include its function. Without polymer wrapping, food like fish, meat, and fruit would quickly go bad. We would have to return to the situation 50 years ago, where people had to do most of their shopping at a daily basis. And we would waste a lot more food than we currently do. This would hardly be sustainable."

## **Multi-layer foils challenge recycling**

Most consumers don't know that as they pick up a random tray with fresh meat at the supermarket, the product is protected not by one, but typically 5-7 different layers of foil. The middle layer will have excellent barrier properties—stopping meat juice from getting out, and oxygen from getting in—while the other layers add other technical properties.

"The result is unique protection, and we can thus see food products last for several weeks rather than maybe a couple of days. However, from a recycling perspective this

***“A fossil polymer, such as our current commodity plastics, which can be recycled many times, is in fact more sustainable than a bio-based polymer that can only be used once.”***

is really problematic. It is just not possible to separate these 5-7 different layers after collection. At the very best, you may be able to tolerate these polymers in a blended form in granulated re-used polymer, which could be utilized for making, say, an outdoor bench. Nevertheless, you will never be able to restore the excellent barrier properties and re-use these high-value polymers for the original purpose,” says Anders E. Daugaard.

Solving this problem will require a combination of technical research and a change of attitude, Anders E. Daugaard argues:

“Efforts in many research groups, including ours, aim at developing novel polymers which as one-layer foils have satisfactory barrier and other properties. This will enable recycling for the original purpose. We have shown that a significant improvement can be achieved using various composite systems. Such solutions are able to meet requirements in some areas of packaging. However, even though a lot of progress is made, it is still very difficult to meet the excellent barrier properties of the best multi-layer foils.”

Through a recently granted Innovation Fund Denmark Grand solutions project, DPC will collaborate with industrial partners covering all the elements of processing and preparation of industrial solutions to reduce the need for multi-layer foils for packaging applications.

#### **Getting value out of plastic waste at all stages of the process**

Reducing plastic consumption during processing by direct recirculation, when possible, or through industrial recycling is currently being done. However, for some materials, such as multi-layer foils or thermosets, this is particularly difficult,

since these cannot just be re-grinded and recirculated into the production. In these cases, companies will not even be able to recycle waste created in-house.

“We’re talking about significant quantities here, and it should be possible to utilize this resource. Multi-layer foils are one such example, but also thermoset materials or heavily degraded materials that have been in circulation, are fractions that will need to be handled, says Anders E. Daugaard”

If a quantum of newly produced polymer has some kind of flaw, it will often have to be incinerated. In addition to waste from production, also thermoset materials as well as heavily degraded or mixed plastics need to be recycled to a much greater extent to generate higher value from these types of materials.

Through an internal collaboration at the Department, we combine gasification technology from the CHEC research group with our expertise on plastics, together with industrial and academic partners in an Innovation Fund Denmark Grand Solutions project, to extract higher value products from such complicated waste fractions. Particularly, the possibility to be able to produce new pristine polymers from these raw materials holds a great potential for increasing the value of these waste fractions.

“By considering all the stages of plastics use, from processing to initial product and after-life, we believe it will be possible to both reduce the amount of waste as well as to increase the value of the waste products that we as a society will inevitably create. All of these aspects are critical in the development of a more sustainable use of plastics, Anders E. Daugaard concludes”.



Anders E. Daugaard  
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# Microbes make tricky biomass useful

*Turning residual biomass into a resource rather than waste has previously been difficult. A novel process produces methane with very high yield.*



Lignocellulosic biomasses, organic household waste, waste from food industries, and pig manure are the main raw materials in the growing Danish biogas industry. However, some 40-50 per cent of the energy content is still present in the residual sludge after the biogas has been produced. A new process developed in an interdisciplinary project involving several groups at DTU Chemical Engineering is able to convert biomass into methane with very high carbon efficiency: Close to 100 per cent of the carbon present in the raw materials ends up in the methane. Methane is a valuable fuel and has the further advantage of being storable in the already established Danish infrastructure for natural gas.

As a first step, the biomass is converted into 'syngas'—which is a mixture of  $H_2$ ,  $CO_2$ , and  $CO$ —through gasification. This is a commercially available process. However, syngas in itself is not an ideal product.

"While syngas is used for instance as a resource for combined heat and power production, this involves a number of practical challenges, since the syngas cannot be stored and has to be used when it is produced," Associate Professor Ioannis V. Skiadas explains.

"By pairing the combined heat and power production with the fermentation of syngas, the processing of residual biomasses can always follow the optimum path. That is, the production will be easily diverted to either combined heat or power, or to storable biofuels, thus satisfying the supply and demand of the biomass and energy markets at the given time."

## **A microbial process is the key**

When the demand for heating and electricity is high, the syngas may be exploited mainly through combined heat and power, but when the heating and electricity demand is low, the syngas will be fermented to storable biofuels like methane. The fermentation takes place at atmospheric pressure and very mild temperatures (30 - 60 °C), and therefore it is very simple and comes with very low operational costs. This makes the technology particularly suitable for relatively small gasification plants, which is the usual case for Denmark.

Therefore, the real novelty in the project is the proven ability to process the syngas further into methane using fermentation, which is a microbial process.

A number of industrial fermentation processes rely on pure microbial cultures where a single microbial species is used—often in a genetically

engineered version—to perform a very specific task. For instance, this is a common strategy in the pharmaceutical industry. In contrast, the fermentation in this project at DTU Chemical Engineering is based on mixed microbial consortia.

“Pure cultures require costly procedures, for instance sterilizing equipment and feedstock, to avoid contamination from other species. This can be justified if you manufacture a high value product like an active pharmaceutical ingredient, but for a product like methane you need something cheaper,” Associate Professor Hariklia N. Gavala explains.

However, using mixed microbial consortia is not just hoping for the best. The team has developed enriched microbial cultures for this specific purpose.

### Pilot reactor is in operation

Another factor which strongly contributes to the close to 100 per cent methane yield, is the development of thermodynamically driven enrichment processes and reactor operations, not least a trickle bed reactor. This has helped to further develop the process to include hydrogen (which can be produced with renewable electricity from wind turbines) and biologically convert the remaining CO<sub>2</sub> content of the gases into methane as well.

Proof-of-concept for the reactor has been achieved in a lab-scale version, and a 30 times up-scaled pilot version is now in operation—both with close to 100 per cent methane yield.

In practice, any type of biomass will be relevant, Ioannis V. Skiadas explains:

“This could be straw, wood pellets, residual sludge from biogas production, etc. Whenever you have a bio-resource that is rich in carbon

and poor in water, gasification into syngas will be possible.”

### Next step: Higher value chemicals

Further, production of methane could be just the first step in utilization of tricky biomass resources, Hariklia N. Gavala notes:

“We have also shown the possibility to produce ethanol and other chemicals from mixed microbial consortia. This could be an even more promising utilization of the difficult biomass fractions, as these chemicals have higher value than methane.”

A new enabling technology has been the development of combined biomimetic membranes and diabatic distillation for the purification of the produced ethanol.

“The next step will be implementation in industry, possibly at a biogas, combustion, or gasification facility. We hope to attract interest from one or more companies as soon as we have the final report ready,” says Associate Professor Jens Abildskov.

The project has created a general overview of existing and new technologies.

“We have managed to create an innovative benchmarking study, for recovery of ethanol as an example of a higher value chemical. The project clearly shows how energy use can be reduced by applying the right know-how. We have also improved the understanding of reactor design which will reduce the size of future full-scale plants,” concludes Associate Professor Philip Fosbøl.

## The SYNFERON project

The gasification/bio-conversion technology platform for production of methane and possibly other chemicals has been developed at DTU Chemical Engineering in the SYNFERON project (Optimised SYNGas FERmentation for biofuels production).

Partners in the SYNFERON project are DTU Chemical Engineering, Danish Gas Technology Centre, Aquaporin A/S, Biosystemer ApS, Highterm Research GmbH (Germany), and Bioeconomy Institute at Iowa State University (USA). Of the initial total budget of EUR 2.8 million, EUR 2.3 million was financed by Innovation Fund Denmark, while the partners have contributed with the remaining EUR 0.5 million. Professor Georgios M. Kontogeorgis, DTU Chemical Engineering, was overall coordinator.

The SYNFERON project was formally completed by summer 2019, but efforts and collaborations continue with the aim of implementing the developed technology platform.

At DTU Chemical Engineering, the SYNFERON project has been highly interdisciplinary involving staff from the AT CERe centre, the PROSYS centre, and the Pilot Plant.



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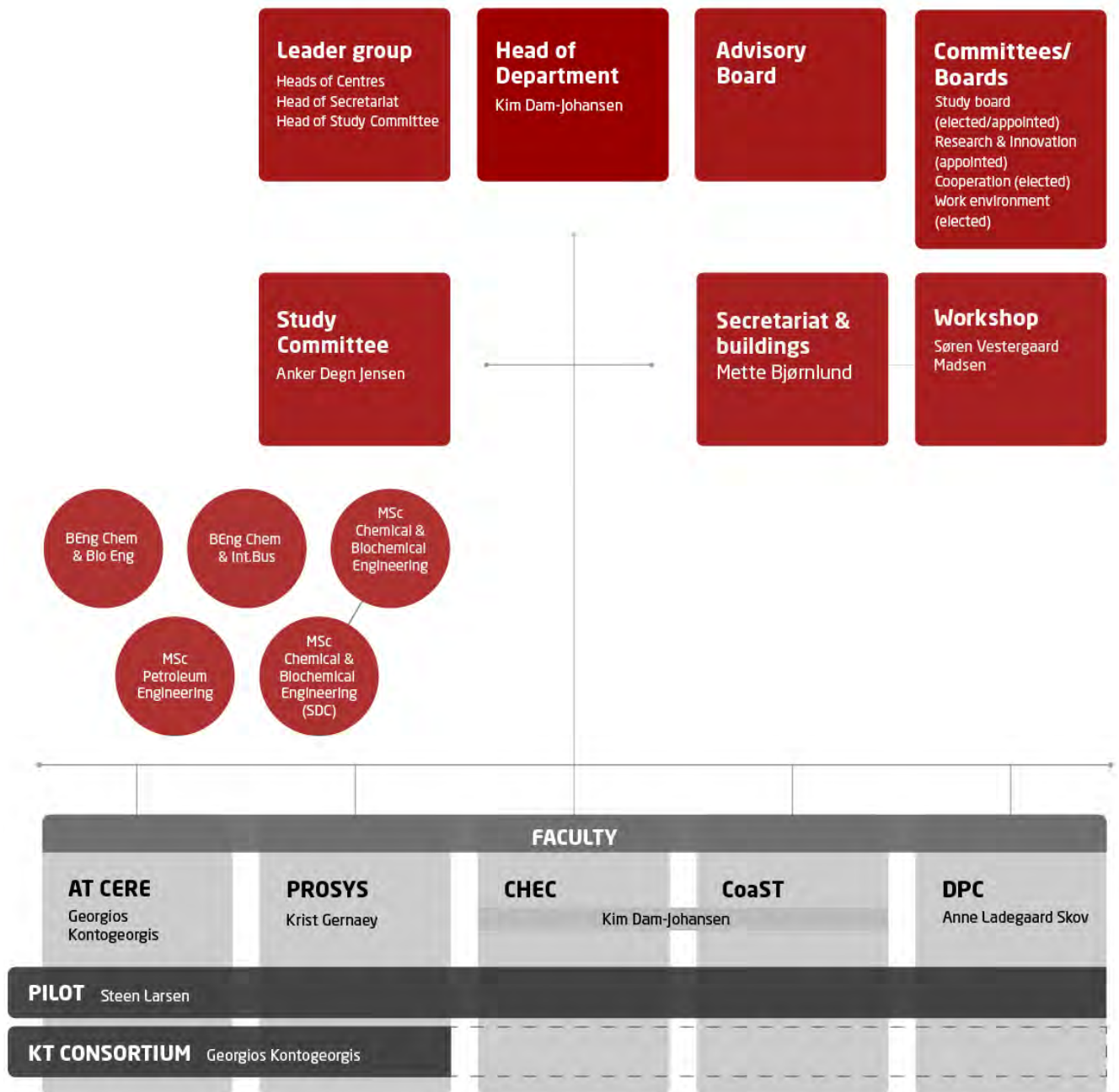


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# Organization



# Research centres

DTU Chemical Engineering is home to five research centres, one cross departmental Pilot Plant facility and one industry-academia collaboration—each focusing on their area of expertise. Below you can get a quick overview of the centres and facilities and their respective research areas.

## AT CERE

In Applied Thermodynamics—Center for Energy Resources Engineering (AT CERE), we focus on applied thermodynamics, transport processes and properties, mathematical modelling, materials science, petroleum technology, enhanced oil recovery, CO<sub>2</sub> capture, and gas hydrates and energy resources.

## CHEC

In Combustion and Harmful Emission Control (CHEC), we focus on catalysis, inorganic chemistry, combustion and flue gas cleaning, diagnostics, gasification, pretreatment of biomass, and pharmaceutical production.

## DPC

At Danish Polymer Center (DPC), we focus on polymer technology based on deep knowledge on polymer chemistry, rheology, filament stretching rheology, surface modification, silicone polymers, and elastomers.

## COAST

The focal points in The Hempel Foundation Coatings Science and Technology Centre (CoaST) are sustainable coatings technologies including raw material engineering, smart formulation and production principles, application, testing and tailor-made functionalities.

## PILOT PLANT

The cross-departmental Pilot Plant facility focuses on designing and building large-scale plants to perform, teach and develop unit operations, industrial chemical processes, operational experience, design of components, plant safety, and good manufacturing practice.

## PROSYS

Process and Systems Engineering Centre (PROSYS) is focused on developing state-of-the-art Process Systems Engineering (PSE) methods and tools, as well as to develop and demonstrate novel technologies for future more sustainable production processes, including industrial fermentation technology, biocatalysis and downstream processing.

## KT CONSORTIUM

KT Consortium is an industry-academia collaboration where members are provided networking opportunities and state-of-the-art methods and tools for chemical and biochemical engineering. Faculty and researchers from two of the Department's centres, AT CERE and PROSYS, participate in KT Consortium.

To learn more about our research, recent results, or current projects, please visit [www.kt.dtu.dk/research](http://www.kt.dtu.dk/research).

# The Faculty 2019

## SCIENTIFIC



Alexander Shapiro  
Associate Professor



Anders E. Daugaard  
Associate Professor



Anne Ladegaard Skov  
Professor



Anker D. Jensen  
Professor



Georgios Kontogeorgis  
Professor



Gürkan Sin  
Associate Professor



Hao Wu  
Associate Professor



Hariklia N. Gavala  
Associate Professor



Helena Junicke  
Assistant Professor



Huichao (Teresa) Bi  
Assistant Professor



Ioannis V. Skiadas  
Associate Professor



Jakob K. Huusom  
Associate Professor



Jakob M. Christensen  
Associate Professor



Jens Abildskov  
Associate Professor



Jesper Ahrenfeldt  
Senior Scientist



John Woodley  
Professor



Kaj Thomsen  
Associate Professor



Kim Dam-Johansen  
Professor,  
Head of Department



Krist V. Gernaey  
Professor



Manuel Pinelo  
Associate Professor



Martin Andersson  
Associate Professor



Martin Høj  
Assistant Professor



Nicolas von Solms  
Associate Professor



Peter Szabo  
Associate Professor



Peter Glarborg  
Professor



Philip L. Fosbøl  
Associate Professor



Seyed S. Mansouri  
Assistant Professor



Stig Wedel  
Associate Professor



Søren Kill  
Associate Professor



Ulrich Krühne  
Associate Professor



Xiaodong Liang  
Associate Professor

## ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIVE



Mette Bjørnlund  
Head of Secretariat



Ivan Hundebøl  
Special Consultant,  
PILOT PLANT



Khosrow Bagherpour  
Senior Consultant  
PILOT PLANT



Steen Larsen  
Head of PILOT PLANT

## EMERITUS



Gunnar E. Jonsson  
Associate Professor  
Emeritus



Hanne Østergård  
Emeritus



John Villadsen  
Professor Emeritus



Lars G. Kiørboe  
Emeritus



Ole Hassager  
Professor Emeritus



Sten B. Jørgensen  
Professor Emeritus



# Advisory Board



**LARS BANG**  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,  
H. LUNDBECK A/S

"Implementing manufacturing of new medicines and continuously exploiting innovative new technologies to optimize manufacturing is key to the competitiveness of Lundbeck. Through a long-term partnership with DTU Chemical Engineering, we are working together with a world-class research group. It has significantly increased our technological competences and capabilities. At the same time it has improved our network and thereby the basis for attracting the right new engineers to drive further progress."

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**THOMAS VIDEBÆK**  
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER,  
NOVOZYMES A/S

"At Novozymes, we aim at finding biological answers, for better lives, in a growing world. Fermentation technology holds enormous potential and every day we work together with partners around the world to improve chemical processes. Thereby reducing the need for scarce resources for the benefit of consumers, our partners, as well as the planet."

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**BJERNE CLAUSEN**  
PRESIDENT & CHIEF  
EXECUTIVE OFFICER,  
HALDOR TOPSØE A/S

"Topsøe's solutions within catalysis help solve some of the world's most serious challenges. In order to develop our products and meet future needs, our close partnership with DTU Chemical Engineering is indispensable. We aim for the same high scientific and quality standards, and in Topsøe we are greatly inspired by the remarkable knowledge, drive, and curiosity of the students and candidates from DTU Chemical Engineering."



**LARS PETERSSON**  
PRESIDENT & CHIEF  
EXECUTIVE OFFICER,  
HEMPEL A/S

"At Hempel, we strive every day to solve the challenges of our customers by providing coating solutions which protect their assets, lower their impact on the environment, and enhance their performance. In that quest for solutions, DTU Chemical Engineering is an invaluable partner for us to tap into the latest research within the fields of formulations, processes, and sustainability. Cooperating with DTU Chemical Engineering also creates an excellent opportunity for attracting talent and developing future and existing Hempel employees."

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**HANNE EVERLAND**  
VICE PRESIDENT TECHNOLOGY,  
GLOBAL R&D, COLOPLAST A/S

"The best results are never achieved alone. For Coloplast, performance and collaboration go hand in hand. Working together with colleagues, customers, and partners, we share knowledge and explore new possibilities. That's what moves things from what they are, to what they could be. It is our mission to always be at the forefront of new technology and innovation within medical devices for people with intimate healthcare needs and therefore we have this partnership with DTU Chemical Engineering. The polymer research and education as an integrated part of Chemical Engineering is important not only for Coloplast, but for the medical device industry in Denmark in general."

# Cooperating companies

## A

Addifab  
Akzo Nobel  
Alfa Laval  
Aquagreen  
Aquaporin  
ARKEMA FRANCE  
AstraZeneca  
AVEVA Software

## B

Babcock & Wilcox Vølund  
Basewater  
BP  
Burkert  
BW Scandinavian Contractor

## C

Calsep  
Centro Tecnológico  
Componentes  
Chempilots  
Chevron  
Coloplast  
Contura  
Covestro Deutschland AG

## D

DSM  
DuPont Nutrition and  
Biosciences Denmark

## E

EnCoat  
Equinor  
ExxonMobil

## F

Firmenich SA  
FLSmidth  
Fluidan

## G

GEA Process Engineering  
Gelest  
GlaxoSmithKline  
Grundfos

## H

Haldor Topsøe  
Hempel  
Hess  
HOFOR  
Hundested Havn  
Hwam

## I

I/S Vestforbrænding  
IFP

## J

Janssen pharmaceutical  
company of Johnson &  
Johnson

## K

Kalundborg forsyning A/S  
KBC

## L

LEAP Technology  
LEGO  
LeoPharma  
Linde  
LiqTech International  
Logstor  
Lundbeck  
Lundsby Biogas

## M

Madsen Bioenergi  
MAN Energy Solutions  
Microsoft  
Mitsubishi  
MOL Group

Multiflex-folien  
Mölnlycke

## N

National Oilwell Varco  
NEO GROUP  
Neptune Energy  
Neste Jacobs Oy  
Nordic Sugar  
Nouryon  
Nova Pangeae  
Novo Nordisk  
Novozymes

## P

ParticleTech  
Petrobras  
Pharmacosmos  
Process Design  
Processi Innovativi SRL  
Processium  
ProSim SA

## Q

Q-Interline

## R

Radiometer  
Rambøll Danmark  
Rockwool

## S

Schlumberger  
Shell  
Sinopec  
SYNESIS  
Syngenta

## T

TOTAL

## U

Umicore Denmark  
Unibio Group  
Unilever  
Union Engineering

## W

Welltec  
Wintershall

## X

Xellia Pharmaceuticals

## Y

Ystral

## Ø

Ørsted

On 4 February 2019, KTStudents visited Ørsted's Avedøre Power Station (Avedøreværket) in Hvidovre.



# KTStudents: Connecting with industry

*As a multicultural student organization that holds both professional and social events for the students at the Department, KTStudents not only creates bonds between students, but also connects students and the industry.*

2019 was a busy year for KTStudents. The student organization visited companies such as Ørsted, SPX Flow and Dutch Nystar as well as Eindhoven Technical University.

“Through these activities, we would like to create a better learning environment for our fellow students, where the students can discover more about their future career options while having a good time with their friends at the Department,” says chairman of KTStudents Hsi Tsao.

The students visited Ørsted's Avedøre Power Station. They interacted with a chemical

engineer working there and had a tour around the power station where they could ask questions and get to know more about the energy company.

For the spring semester, KTStudents has already planned to visit CP Kelco, Chr. Hansen and Fujifilm.

“We are constantly trying to grow our connections with the industry and provide our fellow students more opportunities to interact with the industry,” says Hsi Tsao.

**Contact KTStudents on [KTSO@kt.dtu.dk](mailto:KTSO@kt.dtu.dk)**

# Teaching

The Department participates in two 3½-year Bachelor of Engineering (BEng) programmes, one in Chemical and Biochemical Engineering, and one in Chemical Engineering & International Business, a three-year Bachelor of Science (BSc) programme in Chemistry and Technology, three two-year Master of Science (MSc) programmes in Applied Chemistry, Chemical and Biochemical Engineering, which includes an Honours programme, and Petroleum Engineering, and finally a Sino-Danish Master of Science programme in Chemical and Biochemical Engineering.

Our students work both theoretically and experimentally with the core disciplines in chemical engineering such as unit operations, transport phenomena, reaction engineering, mathematical modelling, and thermodynamics. They are taught by faculty specializing in these areas with applications in energy conversion, enzyme technology, and biotechnology, polymers, coating technology, catalysis, computer modelling, process and product design.

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## Courses

1 SEPTEMBER 2018-31 AUGUST 2019

### PHD COURSES

- 28904 Polymer physics
- 28905 Advanced topics in process systems engineering
- 28908 Rheology of complex fluids (heavy)
- 28909 Thermodynamic models, fundamentals and computational aspects
- 28917 Statistical thermodynamics in chemical engineering
- 28923 Uncertainty and sensitivity analysis of numerical models
- 28927 Advanced topics in process technology
- 28928 Electrolyte solutions thermodynamics
- 28930 Advances in chemical and biochemical engineering
- 28932 Process engineering laboratory

### SINO-DANISH CENTER (SDC) COURSES

- 88700 Industrial reaction engineering
- 88701 Transport processes
- 88703 Laboratory experiments
- 88704 Progress in research
- 88705 Process design—principles & methods
- 88708 Green chemical engineering
- 88709 Fluidization and multiphase flow
- 88710 Combustion and high temperature processes
- 88711 Industrial bioreaction engineering
- 88713 SDC Green Challenge
- 88714 SDC summer school in unit operations
- 88715 Biorefinery
- 88716 Coatings science and technology

# Courses

## MSC, BSC, AND BENG COURSES

Below, course numbers and names are shown for 2018-2019, with the number of students attending shown in brackets. Bachelor of Engineering courses are marked with a **(B)**. The other courses are Bachelor of Science courses, Master of Science courses, or common courses.

### FALL-SEMESTER

- 28001 Introduction to chemistry and chemical engineering (68)
- 28012 Chemical and biochemical process engineering (91) **(B)**
- 28016 Mathematical models for chemical and biochemical systems (94) **(B)**
- 28020 Introduction to chemical and biochemical engineering (61)
- 28022 Unit operations of chemical engineering and biotechnology (94) **(B)**
- 28121 Chemical unit operations laboratory (26)
- 28125 Chemical unit operations laboratory (22)
- 28140 Introduction to chemical reaction engineering (38)
- 28150 Introduction to process control (70)
- 28157 Process and product design (46) **(B)**
- 28213 Polymer technology (45)
- 28233 Recovery and purification of biological products (71)
- 28242 Chemical kinetics and catalysis (65)
- 28244 Combustion and high temperature process (55)
- 28310 Chemical and biochemical product design (54)
- 28315 Colloid and surface chemistry (60)
- 28316 Laboratory course in colloid and surface chemistry (19)
- 28322 Chemical engineering thermodynamics (82) **(B)**
- 28342 Chemical reaction engineering (54) **(B)**
- 28344 Biotechnology and process design (28) **(B)**
- 28352 Chemical process control (37) **(B)**
- 28420 Separation processes (71)
- 28515 Enhanced oil recovery (13)
- 28530 Transport processes (66)
- 28831 Computational fluid dynamics in chemical engineering (20)
- 28845 Chemical reaction engineering laboratory (19)
- 28852 Risk assessment in chemical industry (56)
- 28864 Introduction to Matlab programming (45)
- 28870 Energy and sustainability (102)
- 28872 Biorefinery (56)

#### Courses given in cooperation with other departments:

- 23522 Rheology of food and biological materials (19)
- 26010 Introductory project in chemistry (68)
- 36004 Health, diseases and technology (61)
- 41683 Materials science (26) **(B)**

### SPRING-SEMESTER

- 28012 Chemical and biochemical process engineering (33) **(B)**
- 28016 Mathematical models for chemical and biochemical systems (30) **(B)**
- 28020 Introduction to chemical and biochemical engineering (59)
- 28022 Unit operations of chemical engineering and biotechnology (42) **(B)**
- 28025 Bio process technology (82)
- 28121 Chemical unit operations laboratory (9)
- 28157 Process design (40) **(B)**
- 28160 Mathematical models for chemical systems (44)
- 28212 Polymer chemistry (45)
- 28214 Polymer synthesis and characterization (12)
- 28221 Chemical engineering thermodynamics (43)
- 28231 Laboratory in chemical and biochemical engineering (13)
- 28322 Chemical engineering thermodynamics (24) **(B)**
- 28342 Chemical reaction engineering (50) **(B)**
- 28344 Biotechnology and process design (57) **(B)**
- 28345 Chemical reaction engineering (41)
- 28346 Advanced fermentation technology practicum (15)
- 28350 Process design: Principles and methods (56)
- 28352 Chemical process control (44) **(B)**
- 28361 Chemical engineering model analysis (72)
- 28415 Oil and gas production (23)
- 28423 Phase equilibria for separation processes (12)
- 28434 Membrane technology (54)
- 28443 Industrial reaction engineering (31)
- 28451 Optimizing plantwide control (34)
- 28535 Rheology of complex fluids (light) (0)
- 28811 Polymers in processes and products (10)
- 28850 Quality by design (QbD): Integration of product and process development (85)
- 28855 Good manufacturing practice (103)
- 28864 Introduction to Matlab programming (48)
- 28871 Production of biofuels (27)
- 28885 Technology and economy of oil and gas production (13) **(B)**

#### Courses given in cooperation with other departments:

- 12701 Introduction to living systems (73)
- 26317 Instrumental chemical analysis (48)
- 41683 Materials science (68) **(B)**

## BACHELOR OF ENGINEERING DEGREES

41 students finished their research programme for the BEng degree. The project titles are listed below:

Biomethanation of syngas in mesophilic and thermophilic trickle-bed bioreactors  
Characterization of Norwegian farmhouse microbial cultures for beer production  
Characterisation of the degradation of heterogeneous catalysts in upflow reactors  
Chromatographic separation  
Continuous oxidation of phosphorous rich biochar  
Cost estimation API manufacture by solid phase peptide synthesis  
Crystallization in continuous flow  
Design and analysis of small scale photobioreactors for cultivation of microalgae  
Design of a pilot scale setup for bubble size examination **(2 students)**  
Development and validation of a mini parallel fed-batch reactor setup for rapid bioprocess design  
Development of a method for production of Dextran T20  
Development of high flux forward osmosis hollow fiber membranes **(2 students)**  
Development of high retention forward osmosis hollow fiber membranes  
Development of methods for immobilized lipase pressure-drop measurements  
Development of procedure for wood particle pyrolysis experiments  
Drop tube study of urea decomposition  
Dynamic analysis of an industrially validated simulation model  
Feasibility study on non-destructive strength measurement on 7 hole tablets  
Flexible rubber coating  
Frost on bulk bags and breached bags: A potential source of cross and hygiene contaminations at Chr. Hansen  
Image analysis software module development for determination of size distributions of small objects  
In-situ monitoring of fast evolving particles in emulsions by using continuous image analysis  
Modeling and simulation of processes with salt solutions  
Modeling methylamine oxidation  
Multi-reactor laboratory scale-down system for bioprocess characterization and optimization  
Optimisation of insulin APX processes  
Optimising the recovery of ammonia from aqueous ammonia soaked biomass in a pilot scale test unit  
Periodic separation  
Pilot study of the potential of Aquaporin inside TM forward osmosis membrane to concentrate xenobiotics in municipal wastewater effluent  
Porcine trypsin: Process mapping and yield optimization  
Process optimization based on mapping and risk analysis of production processes at Nohrlund Organic Cocktails **(2 students)**  
Qualification and process validation of ultrafiltration setup for immunoglobulin purification  
Recovery process economics and inventory optimization  
Separation of chiral lactic acids **(2 students)**  
Simulation of chemical and biochemical production processes  
Systematic downstream process synthesis, design and analysis for butanol production  
Thermodynamic modeling of industrial salt system

## BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREES

24 students finished their research programme for the BSc degree. The project titles are listed below:

Advanced regulatory control of the Tennessee Eastman process  
Application of spectroscopy techniques for real-time monitoring of fermentation processes  
Automatization of iterative heat exchanger design  
Developing an interactive mathematical model to predict gradients and required mass transfer in a U-loop fermentor  
Drug delivery from silicone-glycerol elastomers  
Dynamic and non-linear polymer rheology  
Enzymatic synthesis of DFF from HMF using galactose oxidase  
Establishing robust temperature and pH regulation on a pilot scale U-loop reactor  
Flue gas cleaning by membrane separation **(2 students)**

Investigation of alternative molybdates for selective catalytic oxidation of methanol to formaldehyde  
Investigation of catalytic decomposition of glycolaldehyde (**2 students**)  
Investigation of close-coupled SCR for automotive exhaust gas cleaning for NO<sub>x</sub>  
Investigation of the catalytic oxidation of methane in the presence of SO<sub>2</sub>  
Measurement and model of reaction kinetics for new solvents in CO<sub>2</sub> capture  
Measurement of properties of CO<sub>2</sub> capture solvent  
Nano structuring of silicone elastomers for optical applications  
Preparation and modelling of chain extended silicone networks  
Syngas conversion to ethanol over rhodium-based catalysts  
Synthesis and analysis of ionic liquid as additive for Li-ion battery electrolyte  
Systematic tuning of PID controllers in non-steady-state wastewater treatment systems  
Thermodynamic modeling of aqueous salt system  
Thermodynamic modelling of associating compounds for gas processing

## MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREES

74 students finished their research projects for the MSc degree. The project titles are listed below:

Analysis of rinsing solvents and optimization of purification processes for 3D printed objects  
Analyzing process operation constraints in industrial spray drying  
Anti-corrosive coating degradation evaluation under marine environment conditions  
Aqueous Ammonia Soaking, AAS for pre-treatment of lignocellulosic biomasses: Potential for methane enhancement and ammonia recovery  
Benchmarking cathode materials of commercial and industrial relevance for sodium-ion batteries  
Biomass-degrading enzyme discovery from marine microorganisms for macroalgae decomposition  
CO<sub>2</sub> storage by hydrate swapping - flooding and CT scanning  
Computational fluid dynamic investigation of a static mixer in a pilot scale U-loop reactor  
Computer based industrial enzyme design  
Control of divided wall distillation columns  
Corrosion and coating breakdown—comparison between real life and accelerated laboratory testing  
Cyclic separations  
Data driven compartment modelling of bioreactors using free-floating sensors  
Decomposition of urea  
Design and simulation of rate-based CO<sub>2</sub> absorption processes  
Design, construction, and measurement of CO<sub>2</sub> capture in a mini pilot  
Designing biotech facilities of the future  
Development and optimisation of an industrial process for hydrolysis of sucrose  
Development of a coking model for catalyst deactivation during the methanol to gasoline reaction  
Enzymatic esterification of free fatty acids in crude biodiesel using continuous bubble reactor system  
Enzymatic esterification of free fatty acids in crude biodiesel using stepwise flash for water removal  
Experimental analysis of CO<sub>2</sub> vapour liquid equilibrium on solvent for biogas upgrading  
Experimental determination and modelling of reaction kinetics for condensation curing silicone coatings  
Experimental investigation of a water jet CIP cleaning device  
Experimental investigation of CH<sub>4</sub>-CO<sub>2</sub> swapping in gas hydrates (**2 students**)  
Extensional rheology of polymer melts  
Feasibility study on energy recovery from brewers spent grains  
FCA-controlled nutrient addition during microbial fermentations  
Fermentation of syngas to methane in trickle bed bioreactors: Lab and pilot scale  
Gas phase conversion of glycolaldehyde to new chemicals  
Hardening process of protective coating systems  
Hardness build-up in polyurethane top coats  
Immobilization of MAO for continuous operation  
Immobilized enzymes on thin-film composite reverse osmosis membranes for fouling mitigation  
Impact of ultrasonic sound on CO<sub>2</sub> reboiler desorption performance  
In situ measurement of absorbed dose in irradiated polymer material and medical devices made therefrom

Integration of various polymeric nanostructures incorporating Aquaporin Z protein into the active layer of biomimetic membranes  
 Integrated process/product design  
 Influence of TiO<sub>2</sub> crystal defects on automotive V-SCR  
 Investigation of cross-linking effect on proteopolymerosome reconstituting Aquaporin Z proteins  
 Modelling and design studies of the crystallization step in the biotechnological production process of xylitol  
 Modeling of salt precipitation from industrial brines  
 Model based capacity analysis, production planning-scheduling of an API production utility blending process  
 Model based capacity analysis for an insulin product  
 Model-based control analysis and simulation of a pharmaceutical recovery process  
 Model-based development of control strategies for mitigating greenhouse gas emissions from wastewater treatment plants  
 Model-based dynamic simulation and control of a solvent recovery process  
 Model for urea decomposition  
 Nanomechanical properties of microgels and polymer layers  
 New screening assay for coating process optimization and testing  
 Optimization of growth and expression conditions for the production of selected aquaporins in *S. cerevisiae*  
 Periodic separation control  
 Pneumatic transport of bulk solids  
 Polyhydroxyalkanoates production from concentrated fermented effluents: Effect of VFA and 1.3 PDO concentration  
 Predictive modelling for production of catalyst with a view to plantwide control **(2 students)**  
 Preparation of polymer solutions for 3D printing  
 Process intensification for in-situ removal of inhibitors  
 Pyrolysis and oxidation kinetics of binders used in stone wool products  
 Pyrolysis of bio-dust  
 Reactor development for GOX biocatalysis  
 Read length optimization of nanopore MinION sequencing data  
 Renewable biofuel process design using hydrotreatment of vegetable oil  
 Rheology of highly filled polymer matrices  
 Screening of optimum process conditions for butanol production in mixed microbial cultures  
 Simultaneous material and process optimization of adsorption processes for H<sub>2</sub> purification and CO<sub>2</sub> capture  
 Simulation based methods for engineering optimization  
 Synergetic effect of fillers on the performance of hydrocarbon intumescent coatings  
 Synthesis and characterization of thermoplastic elastomers used for pressure sensitive adhesive formulations for skin applications  
 Solvent design for chromatographic separation  
 Tailoring and optimization of matrix properties and interactions between enzymes and support materials  
 The influence of additives on deposit formation from biomass combustion **(2 students)**

## SDC MASTER'S DEGREES

12 students finished their research projects for the MSc Degree/Double degree. The project titles are listed below:

An EMMS-based flow regime study. Focusing on high-density circulating fluidized beds  
 Application research of enzymatic membrane reactor to produce fructose dextrose syrup  
 Butene dimerization catalyzed by acidic ionic liquids  
 Controllable synthesis of VPO catalysts: Optimization of synthesis conditions  
 Design and preparation of bimetallic nanocomposites supported on porous carbon derived from biomass and its application in catalysis  
 Ionic liquid-based composite membranes for CO<sub>2</sub> separation  
 Step-wise condensation in coal pyrolysis process for fractional of coal tar  
 Study on gasification technology of municipal sludge  
 Study on structure control and electrochemical performance of Li<sub>4</sub>Ti<sub>5</sub>O<sub>12</sub> anode material  
 The study on the catalytic hydrogenation of CO<sub>2</sub> to synthesize C<sub>2</sub> oxygenated chemicals  
 Theoretical study on the structure-interaction relationship of long chain ionic liquid-amino acid system  
 Using bio-electrochemical systems (BESs) to produce methane



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- Barrett, Kristian; Lange, Lene / **Peptide-based functional annotation of carbohydrate-active enzymes by conserved unique peptide patterns (CUPP)**. *Biotechnology for Biofuels*, Vol. 12, No. 102, 2019, pp. 1-21.
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# PhD thesis defences 2019

**Adam Karcz**

*Surface characterization of activated chalcopyrite particles*

**Anders Schlaikjer**

*Development of the electrolyte CPA Equation of State*

**Anna Leth-Espensen**

*Modeling bio-dust combustion in suspension firing*

**Antonio Grimalt Alemany**

*Syngas fermentation to biofuels: Evaluation of the interplay of kinetics and thermodynamics for directing bioconversions based on mixed microbial communities*

**Burak Ulusoy**

*NO<sub>x</sub> formation and reduction in fluidized bed combustion of biomass*

**Carlos Eduardo Ramírez Castelán**

*Mathematical modelling and simulation of a trickle-bed reactor for petroleum feedstocks hydrotreatin*

**Chitta Ranjan Behera**

*A decision support tool for screening novel WWT processes*

**Francois Kruger**

*Towards the realization of subsea factories: Thermodynamics of petroleum fluids relevant to subsea processing*

**Frederico C.C. Montes**

*In-silico process design and evaluation tool for pharmaceutical manufacturing*

**Giulia Ravenni**

*Application of biomass char to tar conversion and producer gas upgrading to syngas*

**Hao Luo**

*Modelling of biomass combustion and gasification: From particle-scale to reactor-scale*

**Héctor Alexánder Forero-Hernández**

*Validation and improvement of property and process modeling for oleochemicals*

**Jifeng Yang**

*Novel strategies for cleaning-in-place operations*

**Kasper Hartvig Lejre**

*Mechanisms of sulfur dioxide and sulfuric acid neutralization in lube oil for marine diesel engines*

**Katrin Pontius**

*Monitoring of bioprocesses. Opportunities and challenges*

**Konstantinos Asimakopoulos**

*Biomethanation of synthesis gas in trickle bed reactors*

**Kristian Meyer**

*Advanced simulation of preparative chromatography processes*

**Lars Schwarzer**

*Biomass particle ignition in mill equipment*

**Li Sun**

*Analysis and applications of the e-CPA Equation of State*

**Lukasz Ruszczynski**

*Thermodynamic modelling and data evaluation for life sciences applications*

**Magnus Zingler Stummann**

*Catalytic hydropyrolysis for green fuels*

**Mark Nicholas Jones**

*Design and optimisation of oleochemical processes*

**Marvin Masche**

*Milling and physical properties of wood pellets for suspension-fired power plan*

**Nipun Garg**

*Phenomena-based process synthesis-intensification*

**Peter S. Hammershøi**

*Durable zeolite based catalyst systems for diesel emission control*

**Ricardo André Fernandes Carço**

*Model-based monitoring and optimization of a bio-based process*

**Robert Timo Hagemann**

*Causes and consequences of Aspergillus niger pelleting behaviour in industrial cultivation*

**Spardha Virendra Jhamb**

*Computer-aided design of sustainable product formulations*

**Ying Zeng**

*Performance studies and char characterizations of hydrocarbon intumescent coatings*

**Ting Song**

*Membrane modification, preparation and application*

**Yu Zhang**

*Catalytic oxidation of methane*

**Xianglei Meng**

*Conversion of CO<sub>2</sub> to carbonates catalyzed by ionic liquids under mild conditions*

**Zhibo Zhang**

*Use of ionic liquids and support materials for high performance - enzymatic conversion of CO<sub>2</sub> into formic acid and formaldehyde*

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### **Annual Report 2019**

June 2020  
ISBN: 978-87-3054-89-9

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