

TELEMARK UNIVERSITY COLLEGE WINS NATIONAL PRIZE FOR QUALITY IN EDUCATION 2008

The Ministry of Education's Prize for excellent work with quality in education – The Quality in Education Prize 2008 – has been awarded to Telemark University College for its pioneer work to adjust the curriculum of regular three year engineering programmes to applicants with a vocational certificate rather than a regular college preparatory high school diploma. The prize includes NOK 500 000.

The adjusted curriculum is called Y-Vei in Norwegian, an abbreviation for “the Vocational Route to an Engineering Diploma”.

The prize was handed out during at the annual Norwegian conference on quality in education, organized by NOKUT (the Norwegian Agency for Quality and Quality Assurance in Education) in Hamar Tuesday.

The Prize committee emphasizes that Telemark University College can verify through documented results that the students recruited among those with a vocational certificate perform significantly better than ordinary students in the same theoretical courses. In addition, a considerably larger group of these students completes their studies in three years (regular duration of bachelor in engineering programmes).

Exchange of courses

At the time of commencement, the Y-Vei students already have acquired a solid background in some of the professionally specialized courses. In their first year of study they therefore exchange these courses for more intensive studies in mathematics and physics in order for them to reach the same theoretical level as the students with a regular (college preparatory) high school diploma.

Innovative

The Prize Committee declares that the way the Y-Vei engineering programmes are organized represent a major innovation in engineering education. The Y-vei students are brought to the same academic level as the other engineering students in the same amount of time, and the Y-Vei curriculum is tailor made without jeopardizing the general quality of engineering education.

Norwegian Champions

Telemark University College has been in close collaboration with business and industrial associations during the process of establishing the Y-Vei programmes, and the labour market seems to have welcomed these candidates.

Telemark University College has several years in a row won the Norwegian Championships for student enterprises, with Y-Vei students dominating these enterprises.

Adjustments have been necessary.Justeringer

- We have continually collected feedback from the different student cohorts, and through efficient quality improvement processes we have made adjustments during the course of studies. Therefore, we are very pleased to receive the Quality in Education prize for this project, says Telemark University College's professor Svein Thore Hagen, who has been responsible for this unique education development project.

Modifications of admission's regulations

The Y-Vei project started as a pilot project in 2002, by special consent from the Ministry. The

Committee points to the fact that the successful project at Telemark University College has led to modifications in the central regulations of admission to higher education in Norway.

Associate professor Trond Clausen has a special reason to be happy today. He was the one who already in 1995 took an initiative to start working towards an Y-Vei model, who unwearingly worked for acceptance of these new ideas and who worked out the documents leading to the final approval of the pilot project. Today's national award for quality in education comes only few days before he retires from Telemark University College.

The pilot project of 2002 and the first years thereafter, was limited to applicants with a vocational certificate as electricians. By now the Y-Vei model has been applied also to civil engineering/construction, mechanical engineering and gas- and energy technology.

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