

Sent by e-mail to rscantor@dartmouth.edu

Professor Robert S. Cantor
Dartmouth College
Department of Chemistry

Re: Open letter in support of MEMPHYS

August 24, 2016

Thank you for your letter dated August 5, 2016 containing a summary of the letters of support for the Memphys Center that you have enclosed. The letters of support are written by members of academia and industry from many parts of the world and we hope that you will forward our reply to them.

Your summary and the enclosed letters of support express concerns regarding the decision to cut back on biophysics at the University of Southern Denmark (SDU). Please be informed that SDU is not closing down Memphys but is cutting back on theoretical biophysics.

The decision to cut back on biophysics was taken jointly by the Dean of the Faculty of Science and the Head of Department of Physics, Chemistry and Pharmacy. Furthermore, the decision was approved by the Executive Board at SDU and by the Board at SDU.

With this letter we briefly provide some background on the decision. We hope that you understand that we cannot comment on issues related to individual academic staff at SDU.

As a consequence of the government decision to cut back on funding for education at the Danish universities, SDU has decided to implement a major cut back of approximately 160 full-time staff in the period 2016-2019. At the Faculty of Science, the cut back corresponds to more than 20 full-time staff.

The overarching principles guiding the decisions are *quality, relevance* and *financial sustainability*. At the Faculty of Science we have decided to close down or cut back a number of research areas – and one of these research areas is biophysics. In this respect, the biophysics group as a whole has not been able to attract enough students (at all levels) – challenging the relevance and the financial sustainability of the research group.

We hope that this background information provides some insight into the decision made, and we regret that we cannot provide more detailed information.

Yours sincerely,



Martin Zachariassen
Dean, Faculty of Science



Frants Roager Lauritsen
Head of Department for Physics, Chemistry and Pharmacy

cc. Henrik Dam, Vice-chancellor, SDU