OVER THE PAST YEAR we have done great things. We have, for instance, awarded a record number of master’s degrees in education and produced a record number of peer-reviewed publications. This report will offer more information on our achievements.

We have many plans for the future. I will list some of them here. In 2018, we will almost double the number of incoming students in early childhood education. For the first time, we are providing primary school teacher education to 20 students in subject teacher education to meet both the needs of the labour market and of the students themselves. We are substantially increasing the amount of training in higher education pedagogy through our engagements in Asia and South America. We are covering new ground by recruiting a professor of game-based learning. We are shaping the curriculum together with our stakeholders with the goal of creating an even better degree programme for education. We are planning the extension of the Tampere University Teacher Training School and developing the learning environment and teaching practices at the school. Through these and many other activities, we are building a better future for our society and expanding the thriving community of higher education in Tampere.

Risto Honkonen
Dean of the Faculty of Education
FOR SEVERAL YEARS, facility issues have been a topic of discussion in the Tampere University Teacher Training School. Fortunately, 2017 brought some solutions to those issues; however, there is still a lot to be done. A decision was made about moving the upper secondary school to the university main campus and school activities in the new environment got under way last autumn. Fifth- and sixth-graders were moved to the Kuokkamaantie facility, which signified a concrete step towards a uniform comprehensive school, and work began on integrating the cultures of the primary and secondary schools.

A completely new element to daily life in the school was introduced by the presence of a group of twenty Saudi teachers who spent almost the whole autumn term immersed in our school community. The aim of their work exchange was to get acquainted with the teaching methods and administrative practices used at the school. The settling of the Saudi teachers in the school was surprisingly smooth, largely thanks to four of our teachers who acted as their mentors. In their feedback the Saudi teachers expressed that they were very happy with what they saw and experienced, and how everything was organised.

What added an extra component to the Saudi teachers’ visit was the fact that they brought their children along, for whom we provided teaching for three months. We managed to find both a teacher who was fluent in Arabic and a teaching assistant who had the main responsibility for the group of 13 students of different ages. Upon leaving, the students made their fondness towards Finnish school very clear. What seemed to be a special source of joy for them were the friendly, non-scary adults in the school. The immediate interaction between students and teachers was something the Saudi teachers also paid attention to. They also appreciated the freedom granted to teachers within the framework of the curriculum. Student centricity – the fact that teachers are in the school for the students – was another thing they highlighted.

The training we provided to the Saudi teachers demonstrated our ability to actively participate in a large-scale education export project. It was essential for the success of the work exchange in the Teacher Training School that our mentor-teachers were able to focus their efforts on training the Saudi teachers. Information exchange and a well-prepared programme – and also interactions, both formal and informal, between the Saudi teachers and our staff – were key to our success, not to mention the contacts the Saudi teachers formed with our students. For the students, the Saudi teachers and their families’ presence presented a new, real-life opportunity to acquire skills in cultural competence, communication and expression, which are outlined in our curriculum.

Kirsi-Liisa Koskinen-Sinisalo
Leading Principal of the Tampere University Teacher Training School
DESPITE the relatively short existence of the Faculty of Education, local thinking and activity around education has been promoted in Tampere since the 19th century. In late November, EDU Professors Anja Heikkinnen, Kirsti Karila and Eero Ropo, along with Docent Eero Pantzar, gave a presentation on the trajectories and future perspectives of educational sciences in Tampere in an EDU partnership event titled ‘Educational Sciences in Tampere, in a 100-year-old Finland’. Over the years, the work has expanded from providing liberal adult education to including cross-disciplinary and international university research activities following the development of educational policies and the evolution of the working life and professions.

MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE San-ni Grahn-Laasonen invited Kirsti Karila to be one of three individuals to look into the development of early childhood education. The other two individuals were kindergarten teacher, Master of Education, EMBA Satu Järvenkallas and VTT Research Director Tuomas Kosonen. A publication titled Roadmap on the development of early childhood education for 2017–2030. Guidelines for increasing the degree of participation in early childhood education, and for the development of the skills of daycare centre staff, personnel structure and training is available on the website of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

IN SEPTEMBER, the Faculty of Education organised a meeting and a learning café for the university’s partners. The event sought to find solutions for better coordinating research in educational sciences with partner practices. The themes discussed in the learning café were practical training, partner communication, continuing education, research and project planning. The discussions were lively and generated many suggestions for developing cooperation between the university and its partners. A new cooperation forum, Opinnäytetori (http://research.uta.fi/opinnaytetori), was also unveiled at the event. The aim of the forum is to bring together researchers with research topics relevant to today’s workplace.

Professor Kirsti Karila explored potential developments in early childhood education

A learning café fostered fruitful discussions with partners

DOCTORAL DEGREES: 10

STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS: 7
Intense brainstorming in upper secondary school

THE ‘HACKING THE 6TH WAVE’ project brought together student teams and coordinating teachers from six different upper secondary schools for one academic term. In a hackathon last autumn, two teams from the Tampere University Teacher Training School competed with eleven other teams. The teaching method, drawing from the startup culture of the business world, instructs both students and teachers on the practice of pitching, among other things. The goal of a hackathon is to generate a business idea within a limited timeframe, usually 48 hours. The participants either actively work on completely new ideas or further develop already existing ideas. At the end of the event, each team offered a three-minute pitch on their ideas and the best pitch received a prize. The winner of the Tampere hackathon was BRAUS from the Tampere University Teacher Training School, winning with their idea of a new social media service. The ideas generated in the autumn event are further developed throughout the academic term with the goal of creating a functioning prototype. You can follow BRAUS’s work on the school’s website at www.norssinlukio.fi. The majority of the winning team’s members are attending the Business Norssi programme. Focusing on business and industry, the programme prepares students for higher education studies and entrepreneurship.

Antti Saari awarded the prize for the scientific article of the year

THE SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL Aikuiskasvatus awarded Research Professor Antti Saari from the University of Tampere Faculty of Education the prize for the scientific article of the year 2016. In his article ‘Lifelong learning and individualizing power’, Saari examines lifelong learning through the perspectives of governance and psychoanalysis. According to the editorial board of the journal, Saari approaches the theme in a way that is original, analytical and perceptive. Saari is currently working in the Faculty of Education as a university researcher.

ARTICLE THESSES INTEGRATE TEACHING AND RESEARCH

The Eskola-MEBS1.0 article thesis group, which was established in the autumn of 2016, tightly integrated teaching and research. Facilitated by Docent Jari Eskola, consulting researcher Anna Wallin and with assistance from other experts, the group of students all applied the same research method and finished their theses in six months.

The research topics the students chose all revolved around an interest in current issues in education, such as the Tampere3 project, general education, immigrant education, school security, workplace well-being and successful recruitment.

The peer-reviewed research articles were published late last year by Tampere University Press under the title Eläytymismenetelmä 2017. Perusteema ja kymmenen muunnelmaa, edited by Jari Eskola, Tiina Mäenpää and Anna Wallin.

THE SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL

Aikuiskasvatus awarded Research Professor Antti Saari from the University of Tampere Faculty of Education the prize for the scientific article of the year 2016. In his article ‘Lifelong learning and individualizing power’, Saari examines lifelong learning through the perspectives of governance and psychoanalysis. According to the editorial board of the journal, Saari approaches the theme in a way that is original, analytical and perceptive. Saari is currently working in the Faculty of Education as a university researcher.
Pedagogical training and research in Palestine

IN THE THREE-YEAR eTraining FinPal project, the HET research group from the University of Tampere Faculty of Education collaborated with the Islamic University of Gaza (IUG) to strengthen the pedagogical skills of Palestinian teachers through training. The project will first implement a pilot group in university pedagogy, which will provide online training to teachers. In the second phase, the teachers who have participated in the pilot group will train their incoming university pedagogy student groups. The project will also examine teachers’ pedagogical approaches, conceptions of learning, the role of community in pedagogical development and how these aspects evolve over time. The broader goal of the project is to extend training in university pedagogy and pedagogical development to other institutions of higher education in the Palestinian territories.

The project is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ HEI-ICI programme and led by Research Director Vesa Korhonen. Other project members are Postdoctoral Researcher Pauliina Alenius, Researcher Vesna Holubek, University Lecturer Jyri Lindén and Doctoral Student Tahani Al Dahdouh.

THE MULTICULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES REQUIRES LEARNING SKILLS FOR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

The Faculty of Education, under the leadership of professor Pirkko Pitkänen and in collaboration with the University of Eastern Finland, carried out a research project titled ‘Increasing intercultural understanding in work communities: Contextual action research in social and healthcare work’ (MUL-TI-TRAIN, Academy of Finland 2013–2017). Tays Hatanpää Hospital, Koukkuniemi Home for the Elderly, Karhula Hospital, Kuopio University Hospital and Mainio Vire (now Hoiva Mehiläinen) participated in the study, which aimed at providing research data to help health and social services organisations to develop practices that support intercultural cooperation. The study showed that conditions favourable to daily interactions are vital in multicultural work communities in the health and social services field. Smooth intercultural communications create a foundation for the well-being of both staff and clients, as well as a foundation for the financial success of the organisation.

The project produced a research report edited by Pirkko Pitkänen, Katja Keisala and Vuokko Niiranen entitled Tavoitteena sujuva arki: Kulttuurien välienen työ sosiaali- ja terveydenhuollon työyhteisöissä (Tampere University Press).
EDUMAP is a three-year Horizon 2020 project examining the role of adult education in promoting active citizenship among young adults under risk of marginalisation. The University of Tampere’s Faculty of Education is coordinating the study, which is being carried out in EU countries and Turkey. EDUMAP is looking for an answer to the following question: What are the educational policies, practices and teaching methods that would best reach young adults under risk of marginalisation?

The project studies the systems of adult education in EU countries and young adults between 16 and 30 years old who, for different reasons, have become susceptible to marginalisation. Reasons for marginalisation in education or wider society include illiteracy, immigration and disability. Young people without vocational education are easily marginalised, not only in the labour market but in society at large. Apart from producing new research data, the project will develop an IT application, the Intelligent Decision Support System (IDSS), to support data-driven decision-making.
JURE 2017 – a conference for junior researchers

IN AUGUST, the Faculty of Education hosted the Conference of Junior Researchers of EARLI, or JURE 2017. The theme of the international conference was ‘Education in the light of multiple perspectives: Towards intertwining personalised and collaborative learning’. The conference received a record number of abstracts and had over 400 participants.

The conference was organised by the JURE 2017 international and local scientific committees. Doctoral researchers Maiju Kinossalo, Laura Pylväs and Janniina Vlasov were the chairpersons of the local scientific committee, which was comprised of the EDU’s doctoral researchers. Apart from the scientific programme, the local committee arranged various activities for the conference guests, including a walking tour in the Pispala neighbourhood, a beer tasting and a gala dinner at Finlayson, which was thoroughly enjoyed by the guests.

DOCTORAL RESEARCHER Jenni Pätäri spent the months of March, April and May in a researcher exchange in the University of Wuppertal School of Education and the Centre for Lifelong Learning. A town of approximately 340,000 residents, Wuppertal, is located in the state of North Rhein-Westfalia. Its university has about 20,000 students. During her exchange, Pätäri also worked in the German Institute for Adult Education in Bonn.

Pätäri says her exchange was a very rewarding experience. In addition to working on her research, she studied German, attended lectures discussing the significance and the role of universities and the production of knowledge, and participated in various doctoral seminars. ‘I found our German colleagues to be very determined and theoretically ambitious, but also warm and hospitable’, says Pätäri. ‘We had discussions, for instance, on issues related to the nature of educational knowledge and the role of adult education in Germany and Finland. In Germany, adult education has a strong and well-established role and is seen as a benefit to society, also in universities. Furthermore, there has been a long-term effort to invest in collecting and archiving information on adult education in a more organised way compared to Finland, which is likely to have contributed to the visibility of the field. That is something we can learn from.’
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

The EARLI 2017 conference in Tampere

THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION and the European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction (EARLI) organised the EARLI 2017 conference in the University of Tampere and Tampere Hall between August 27 and September 2, 2017. The conference takes place every two years, and last year was its 17th instalment. The conference had altogether 2,206 participants from 51 different countries, the highest number of participants in the history of the event. On the days of the conference, the university provided a venue for 508 sessions and 1,500 presentations. There were nine keynote speeches, 187 invited and proposed symposiums, 23 ICT demonstrations, 382 poster presentations, 11 workshops and 59 discussion groups.

The main theme of the conference was ‘Education in the crossroads of economy and politics – Role of research in the advancement of public good’. The theme was discussed in the opening panel, which included representatives from the OECD, national education administration, and Finnish and European universities. The panel members clearly agreed that high-quality research must play a more central role in the political decision-making of the future.

IN MARCH and April, staff and students in the Faculty of Education and the Teacher Training School had a chance to meet 30 Indonesian teachers who were doing their exchange course in Finland as part of a master’s programme established in 2015. Their course in Finland consisted of theoretical studies which included visits to Finnish schools. The end gala was attended by esteemed guests from Media Group and the Sukma Foundation, who funded the programme. Twenty-nine students graduated from the programme in 2017.

In late spring, the faculty and the Teacher Training School were visited by a group of 20 Saudi teachers and their families. The training they attended was part of a six-month training programme organised in cooperation with universities in Tampere, Helsinki, Eastern Finland and Turku. In total, 117 Saudi teachers took part in the training. The training was planned and implemented in close cooperation between the four universities. For the Saudi teachers, the goal was to receive additional training in English and pedagogy.

The experience of working with the Saudi teachers reinforced the idea of increasing dialogue through international training programmes.

In 2017, the faculty also organised training in university pedagogy in Thailand and Brazil. In Thailand, 90 teachers from the multi-disciplinary Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi (RMUTT) took part in a 10-credit training course in the spring and another 90 started training in the autumn. In addition, 16 teachers participated in instructor training in university pedagogy. In Brazil, 40 university teachers in universities owned by the Anima educational organisation started on a training programme on university pedagogy. The popularity of the programme necessitated the extension of the team responsible for training in the Faculty of Education.

The international master’s programmes in the faculty welcomed new students and work continued with existing students. Courses offered by the faculty were attended by some 50 international exchange students in 2017.

CREDITS AWARDED IN THE SUBJECT OF SPEECH TECHNIQUE AND VOCOLOGY: 243

DOCTORAL STUDENTS OF SPEECH TECHNIQUE AND VOCOLOGY: 6
A linguistically responsive school understands the significance of language

As linguistic and cultural diversity increases, teacher training needs to develop its practices. In the spring of 2017, the Ministry of Education and Culture awarded key project funding to DivEd project, focusing on linguistically and culturally responsive teaching and teacher training. The project is coordinated by the University of Turku. The project aims at enhancing linguistic and cultural responsiveness in teacher training, as well as in basic education and upper secondary education across Finland. In addition to the University of Turku, universities in Tampere, Lapland and Oulu and Åbo Akademi University, Diak and Häme University of Applied Sciences are participating in the project.

In recent years, more importance has been placed on linguistic and cultural responsiveness in the national core curriculums of early childhood education, basic education and upper secondary education.

A linguistically responsive school understands the central role language plays for each learner and their personal growth, learning, cooperation skills, identity construction and socialisation (National Core Curriculum 2014).

Cultural diversity comprises various aspects, such as ethnicity, religions, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, marginalisation and socioeconomic backgrounds. Culturally responsive teaching aims at strengthening respect for cultural diversity and facilitating human interaction both within and across cultures.

The EDU’s role in the key project is to develop educational practices from early childhood education to university pedagogy, both within the faculty and in workplaces.

Teacher Training Entrance Exams Will Undergo National Changes

In its negotiations with universities, the Ministry of Education and Culture has agreed that future selection criteria for higher education will put a greater emphasis on matriculation examination results. With this measure, the ministry aims to decrease the number of entrance exams requiring a significant amount of preparation and accelerate the transition from secondary education to higher education. Entrance exams may still be utilised in student selection, as long as they are based on research data.

The intended change would play a significant role in teacher training, where student selection has been based on aptitude tests for years. Since entrance exams have been seen as a reliable way to measure the aptitude of applicants, instead of abandoning them, teacher training entrance exams are undergoing a national change. The University of Tampere’s Faculty of Education is participating in OVET, or Student selection in teacher training – perspectives for the future, a project launched in 2017. The project is coordinated by the University of Turku and funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The aim of the project is to create student selection practices that will be shared across different teacher training units and to generate a common understanding of the fundamentals of teaching which inform the selection process.
Professor Tuomas Takala gives his farewell lecture

TUOMAS TAKALA’S farewell lecture on ‘Education: A globally alluring idea or a world changer?’, discussed the problematic role of schools, specifically in the context of developing countries. The issues Takala raised regarding the effect of formal education on individuals and societies are also relevant to Western societies. In fact, research focusing on developing countries helps untangle political and professional beliefs that are considered self-evident and it acts as a reminder that these ideas need to be reviewed consistently.

Takala’s scientific orientation is towards the field of educational sociology, which has traditionally seen education as upholding existing structures of social stratification, institutions and culture, rather than seeing it as a force for change. This approach has maintained scepticism towards viewing the spread of education as a panacea.

Takala defines the allure of education as lying in an uncritical belief that providing and participating in education have a positive effect on the development of societies, as well as on the economic success and well-being of families and individuals. The allure of education has become a global phenomenon which permeates societal, geographical and cultural borders. By contrast, Takala evoked the colonial roots of education and stated that the world-changing potential of education is dependent on various factors.

Moreover, it is important to be critical when assessing how participation in education affects key skills, such as reading and writing. Despite offering opportunities for empowerment for many, school can be a source of painful experiences involving abuse and violence, with the perpetrator going unpunished.

New findings in the field of speech and voice research

THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS that came out from the Speech and Voice Research Laboratory in 2017 examined the basic principles and effects of voice training methods and the effects of speaking in a foreign language on voice quality and vocal straining. The latter has practical implications, for instance for the work of language teachers and interpreters. Research carried out in the laboratory has also shown that both children with hearing problems and children with immigrant backgrounds have great difficulties in identifying emotional prosody, a finding which will lead to further international studies.

Apart from these findings, studies on the mechanisms of vocal straining, singing voice across different musical genres and intercultural differences in interpretations of emotions and personalities that are based on speaking voice were presented in international conferences in Ghent and Hong Kong. In addition, a multivariate analysis on voice health was carried out on new students during the autumn term of 2017. Along with the analysis, a phoniatric examination was performed in collaboration with Helsinki University Hospital. The image shows phoniatrician Annika Laaksonen from HUH examining the larynx of laboratory technician Tero Ikävalko.
KAKS10 56 – pair teaching in a new innovative learning environment

KAKS10 56 is the new learning environment implemented in the Tampere University Teacher Training School. The aim of KAKS10 is to develop pair-teaching methods in new flexible learning spaces equipped with cutting-edge technology. Despite its innovative experimentation and development, KAKS10 is not a project but rather a permanent strategy to change the learning environment and culture at the school.

KAKS10 is the brainchild of Mikko Horila and Tuo-mo Tammi, who teach the fifth and sixth grades at the Teacher Training School. Together with their groups, they share the common spaces and collaborate daily across grade levels. The endeavour is also a pilot for the pair-teaching method, different from a traditional combination class or regular co-teaching. Collaboration around various themes that cross subject lines, diverse approaches to project work and the efficient usage of information and communication technology in teaching are at the core of KAKS10.

The undertaking was inspired not only by the most recent curriculum update, but also by the fact that the Teacher Training School was pressed to move the 5th and 6th grades into the secondary school building. The limitations of traditional classrooms prompted the idea of utilising the old library as a teaching space, thus the search began for teachers willing to develop a vision of a future classroom combined with pair teaching. KAKS10 was provided a space of 210 square metres in total, which consisted of an open space, a more traditional classroom space and a workroom with glass walls. At the beginning of the autumn term, the space was already equipped with transforming, modern furniture and versatile presentation tools.

Adjusting to a new and in many ways unpredictable model was a jump into the unknown, and the pair-teaching experiment did not draw wide interest. After several months of planning and preparation by Tammi and Horila, KAKS10 has been in full effect for the past academic year and has proved to be very successful. Several students in teacher education have visited the learning environment as part of guided training and training sessions and numerous different groups of visitors have been introduced to the facilities, equipment and approaches utilised by KAKS10.
New courses to complement existing ones in continuing education

CONTINUING EDUCATION is built on the EDU’s research base, combining theory with the practice of teaching. The new core curriculum for basic education has also shaped the content of continuing education. Continuing education has been funded by both the Finnish National Agency for Education and the Ministry of Education and Culture.

In teacher training, the EDU has pursued a multi-modal approach to multiliteracy and languaging by integrating mathematics and the Finnish language. Multiliteracy has been awarded more attention in the new national core curriculum of basic education. Due to this development, a new continuing education course, ‘Languaging in mathematics and Finnish’ (5 ECTS) was offered to teachers. Special education and S2 perspectives were also included in the course.

A specialist training module focusing on linguistically and culturally responsive teaching, ‘Multiculturalism in teaching’ (30 ECTS), established in 2016, continued to be offered and was granted funding by the Ministry of Education and Culture for the following years as well. In addition, the Ministry of Education and Culture will fund two new specialist training modules to be implemented in collaboration with different universities which will be launched in 2018: ‘Linguistic and cultural responsiveness in early childhood education’ (30 ECTS) and ‘Specialist training in career counselling’ (30 ECTS). Work continued in the ‘Kuulumisia’ projects, which are targeted to teachers with immigrant backgrounds. The participants of Kuulumisia IV became qualified classroom teachers after completing the Multidisciplinary Studies module.

The faculty is participating in seven national key projects.

IN ADDITION TO new courses and modules in continuing education, the EDU was granted funding by the Ministry of Education and Culture for several of their key projects aimed at developing teacher training. The projects are some of Prime Minister Sipilä’s key projects.

The Teacher Education Development Programme, formulated by the ministry-appointed Teacher Education Forum, outlines goals and measures to ensure that Finnish teacher education remains strong, attractive and internationally respected. In 2017, the EDU received funding for a key project titled ‘Mentorointia ja oppimiskumppanuutta varhaiskasvatuksessa’ (‘Mentoring and learning partnerships in early childhood education’). The faculty is also a co-contributor in the following six national projects:

- Key project OVET (Student selection in teacher training – perspectives for the future), a development project coordinated by the University of Helsinki
- Key project DivEd (Promoting linguistically and culturally responsive teaching and teacher training), coordinated by the University of Turku
- Verme 2, (Peer-group mentoring to support competencies and community), coordinated by the University of Jyväskylä
- Community and research-based learning environments in teacher training in the LUMA ecosystem, coordinated by the University of Helsinki
- ULA (Creative expertise – building bridges in teachers’ basic education and continuing education), coordinated by the University of Jyväskylä
- Building the future of art education – a development project for teacher competency, coordinated by the University of the Arts Helsinki
UPON ARRIVING to the café on the third floor of the Virta building on a Wednesday, one will almost certainly run into the same students that were there a week ago, sitting on those same sofas in relaxed positions, drinking coffee. At a first glance it seems the students, taking a break from studying, are engaging in several non-related conversations simultaneously. One is loudly criticising the arrangements of mass lectures while another muses about the latest news on Tampere3 to a coursemate unfamiliar with the topic who just happened to walk by. Some are talking about the sit sit party next week, others are going through their lecture notes together.

However, there is something more profound behind these singular, random comments, made in passing. The students ranting about their studies in the hallways are there for a common goal: to verbalise our visions and dreams for the faculty, the scientific community and our participation in it. In this way, hallway discussions, along with discussions had in the lecture halls, contribute to a common understanding and perception of studying in the faculty.

Indeed, often the first step of official student activism in working groups, boards and meetings is to gather in the hallway with peers, just like docents on duty. Otherwise known as student activists, these hallway docents listen carefully and then share their ideas in official meetings, reflecting on the dozens of discussions they have had with their peers over a cup of coffee. They act as representatives for their fellow students and can be easily called upon if needed, ready to provide close-to-satisfactory answers to questions regarding the opinions of students.

In all its simplicity, activism through hallway docents is successful because hallway discussions do not need to be scheduled on Doodle beforehand. There is no need for preparation; one only needs to be brave enough to speak out loud when the right person is around and be able to make the most of daily encounters with both students and staff members. Hallway activism is a commitment to be present and engage in discussions, to criticise and to dream. It is also vital to the community, because if the hallways and cafés are silent, the diversity of viewpoints in the scientific community as a whole is lower.

Apart from information exchange between active members of subject associations, lively hallway discussions prompt action. In the autumn of 2017, many students who applied for the curriculum working groups wrote in their applications about the shared views of students and their willingness to promote those ideas. Without the support and input of the student community, those views would remain isolated. With validation and new perspectives from other students, the ideas circulated from informal hallway discussions into official forums, contributing to a better university community that more closely reflects the wishes of the students.

Sara Komulainen, student
Miikka Mäkirinta, student
MENTORING and learning partnerships in early childhood education is a key project of the Ministry of Education and Culture that focuses on developing teacher education. The project aims to develop mentoring as an approach to support the school-to-work transition of kindergarten teachers and directors of early childhood education. Furthermore, the project will promote mentoring in workplace learning for students in kindergarten teacher education and work towards creating a continuum from kindergarten teacher education into professional life. The model, created in collaboration with educational institutions and workplaces, supports professional development and builds a continuum from basic education to workplace induction and workplace learning.

The need for developing competencies and practices that promote them is driven by the new requirements of early childhood education work. Administrative structures in early childhood education have undergone changes which have prompted discussion about providing training to directors. Apart from mastering good administrative practices, the new mentoring model emphasises the changing requirements of early childhood education work, shared leadership and the guidelines listed in the curriculum for early childhood education and care.

The project is carried out by a partnership network involving six municipalities in the Tampere region and their organisations of early childhood education, encompassing over 60 kindergartens with their staff. The project steering group provides opportunities for mentoring. The project will last from 2017 to 2020. Two 10-credit modules will be implemented during the course of the project, the first of which will focus on guiding workplace learning and mentoring kindergarten teachers and the second will focus on mentoring directors of early childhood education at the beginning of their careers.

EXCHANGE STUDENTS ARE INTERESTED IN LEARNING ABOUT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Several international exchange students have learned about Finnish early childhood education as part of their studies. In the KASMULTI2C course – Practical Observation and Reflection of ECEC – some 20 students from different parts of the world have been observing daily life in kindergartens, non-standard-hour childcare and preschool education.

The module includes six observation visits, which each last for five hours. The kindergartens were found through the Pirkanmaa region partnership network on early childhood education. The kindergartens have welcomed the students with excitement.

Exchanging ideas and experiences has been an enriching experience for both the exchange students and the Finnish early childhood education workers. Discussions have been lively. Staff members in the kindergartens have been eager to hear the observations of the students, who, coming from other cultures, have been able to offer fresh perspectives. Established practices are sometimes seen as self-evident, so an outsider’s perspective can identify things that would normally be overlooked. At the end of the course, the students shared their experiences and insights with other exchange students. Some staff members from the kindergartens also wished to participate in these reflection sessions.