

## A word from the Dean

**The first few months of the year have been eventful. Astrid Söderbergh-Widding has taken office as Vice-Chancellor, I have a new Deputy Vice-Chancellor colleague, Karin Bergmark, and Hans Adolfsson has been elected and appointed as Pro Vice-Chancellor.**

Thus, the new Senior Leadership Team is formed, and I am looking to the future with confidence. An important task for Hasse will be to have the overall responsibility for the teacher training as the Chair of its coordinating committee. Teacher training is one of the University's most important tasks, and we have now created a good organisation for it. An important task going forward will be to increase collaboration between different educational perspectives and teachers in different departments.

On her first day as Vice-Chancellor, Astrid inaugurated the newly established Baltic Sea Centre. She then presented a grant of SEK 30 million from the Erling-Persson Family Foundation to build a new research vessel. In her inauguration speech a few weeks later, she announced that the Baltic Sea Centre has entered into a strategic partnership with BalticSea2020. This foundation will invest SEK 100 million over five years to develop the Baltic Sea Centre and help realise the ambition to communicate useful knowledge of the Baltic Sea to the right place in society. With this, our newly established Baltic Sea Centre is off to a flying start.

At the end of last year, we processed the applications for 25 new postdoctoral fellowships. It was a somewhat messy process that we unfortunately did not really have the technical support or organisation to handle smoothly, but the end result was good. Happily, most – 10 out of 13 – of the Faculty's top-ranked candidates said yes to the offers they received.

We have now decided which ten young researchers will be nominated by the University as Wallenberg Academy Fellows. At least four of them must be external, i.e. not employed at Stockholm University in the last four years. Six of the nominees are natural scientists, of which three are external. We had alarmingly few external nominees this time. I would like to encourage the departments to work actively this year to find external candidates that they are prepared to take long-term responsibility for if they receive a Fellowship. To stimulate the nomination of external candidates, the Faculty has decided to pay the entire salary for these positions during the initial five years.

The government has now made a decision regarding SciLifeLab, and the new funds are already being paid out. These funds will be used for national operations, i.e. they will benefit all researchers in the country, while the old funds will finance, for example, the recruitment of young researchers to SciLifeLab – researchers who will be employed by the universities in Stockholm, where they are expected to be active eventually. We have now received proposals from the departments regarding the fields of study for these positions. The next step will be for the Faculty leadership, assisted by experts, to discuss these proposals.

The financial statements for 2012 do not look good. The Faculty's accumulated surplus of appropriation funds, i.e. the funds we receive directly from the state to the University, has increased by 50% and now amounts to 15% of the Faculty's total turnover (including both appropriation funds and external grants). We need to reverse this trend somehow. I can understand the desire of the heads of departments to be cautious and save up for a rainy day, but it is wrong. The funds should be used. A better way to create a sense of security in case of worse conditions in the future is to ensure that sufficient funds are being used for short-term commitments such as postdocs and PhD students. Then there will be flexibility to cut back if necessary. One problem with having a large surplus is political: it is difficult to argue for increased funding. At the same time, it has to be said that one could do a lot worse than the financial problems we have.

Anders