

As the three-year term of the Board of Science is coming to an end, it feels natural to reflect on this time period. When the Board took office, and I with it, the University had a new organisation with two disciplinary domains – science and the humanities and social sciences – each represented by a Deputy Vice-Chancellor who, together with the Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellor, and Director of Administration, constitute the Senior Management Team. The major change for the Board of Science, which is also the faculty board, is that contacts have been strengthened between departments, faculties, and the Senior Management Team. This has been very positive and will be a great strength in the future. Issues and problems within the core activities are now easily and quickly discussed in the Senior Management Team, and initiatives within the administration can be reconciled with the core activities' needs at an early stage. One year into my term of office, my fellow Deputy Vice-Chancellor took office as Vice-Chancellor and launched a much-needed reform process which, to name a couple of examples, has resulted in a new Director of Administration and an estates unit capable of handling the major forthcoming construction projects. We are still in a transitional period, but I am convinced that we are on the right path.

Important organisational changes within our disciplinary domain include the merging of biology departments that led to the creation of the Department of Molecular Biosciences, The Wenner-Gren Institute (MBW) and the Department of Ecology, Environment, and Plant Sciences (EMB). Other important changes were the creation of the Baltic Sea Centre, and the incorporation of the research institute Stockholm Resilience Centre (SRC) as a centre within our faculty – but where the humanities and social sciences also have a clear responsibility. At the end of this year, another department will be created as the Department of Applied Environmental Science (ITM), the Department of Analytical Chemistry, and the environmental chemistry section of the Department of Materials and Environmental Chemistry (MMK) merge into the Department of Environmental Science and Analytical Chemistry. These structural changes are important in order to create large, strong units within important disciplines. During this term of office, SciLifeLab has grown rapidly and become a national infrastructure, and an active research environment is emerging through the strategic recruitment of SciLifeLab fellows – young researchers in attractive tenure-track positions.

The Faculty's newly adopted operational plan, as well as the University's strategies and action plan, describe the priorities of the next few years. Here I would like to highlight the planning of Albano and the need for larger facilities in general, as well as the management of infrastructure needs, for which the Board has now adopted new guidelines. In both cases we depend on external parties, such as Akademiska Hus and KTH in Albano, and the Swedish Research Council when it comes to infrastructure. When it comes to education, the discussions about priorities and dimensions that were started by the Faculty's commission for undergraduate programmes will continue, and we also intend to address the issue of student completion.

Three of the section deans – Kerstin, Ove, and Peter – are now stepping down, and I would like to thank them, as well as the other retiring members of the Board, for their solid work and commitment. I will miss them; working in the Faculty management is constructive and fun, and Kerstin, Ove, and Peter have all contributed to the positive culture that prevails there. However, we should all eventually be replaced, and as I welcome Lars, Sören, and Lennart as their replacements, I am convinced that this culture will live on. It serves us well.

The year is almost over and I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Anders