**A word from the Dean Nr 3 2015**

Next year will be a financially meagre one for the faculty, in terms of both education and research. The government will allocate most of the planned SEK 300 million increase in the country's higher education institution research funding to the four new universities and to the university colleges. Only SEK 100 million will be allocated to the research universities, which account for nearly all research conducted at Sweden's higher education institutions. The Minister of Education, together with local politicians, writes in the provincial press that "it is important to the government that research and higher education are conducted across the country" and that "to the government, all higher education institutions are of national interest – whether they are universities or university colleges, new or old". The texts demonstrate a lack of understanding concerning the conditions of research. One can also sense a lack of understanding regarding the absolutely crucial importance of quality – not all research is equally good, and research is not equally important in all areas. High-quality research is conducted in an extremely tough, globally competitive environment, and in Sweden, only the research universities have what is necessary to develop the strong research environments and recruit the researchers required to compete globally. We currently have 105 applicants for a professorship in materials chemistry, many of whom are highly qualified professors. They are attracted to Stockholm University because of the strong research environment and the resources we have to offer. How do the university colleges recruit, and in what research areas? The minister's statement is worrying in view of the research bill that is currently being planned. Funding for research in Sweden has been good over the years, but this has involved major commitments. The government speaks of a long-term perspective; let us hope that this will be reflected in the upcoming research bill. The commitments made, for example in MAX IV, ESS and SciLifeLab, must be secured so that these and other important research areas in the country can continue to develop.

Research universities and university colleges play different roles. The former have the main responsibility for Swedish research, while the latter are focused on education. Both of these roles are important to Sweden's development. It is important that higher education is available across the country, but this does not apply to research. Due to limited resources, research must be concentrated; anything else is a waste of taxpayers' money. Unfortunately, the different roles are clarified all too rarely. The research universities have a social responsibility to promote the needs and demands of research more clearly as a group. Does this mean that the university colleges should not relate their education to research? No, of course they should. The teachers should, of course, be trained researchers, and the university colleges can develop certain niche research environments, often with regional ties, and they can also conduct research in collaboration with major research universities. The university colleges generally lack the necessary conditions to develop broad, internationally competitive research environments and should primarily provide education at the bachelor's level; master's and doctoral programmes should mainly be provided at the major universities. This would allow for the most effective use of the country's research resources, and the university colleges would avoid ending up in a situation where they have to live up to impossible demands for a high level of research. Unfortunately, research has become viewed as particularly prestigious; we must get rid of this attitude. Education at all levels is perhaps the most important instrument of social development. In the United States, there are liberal arts colleges that are held in very high regard due to their good education, without heavily focusing on research. This is what university colleges in Sweden should aim for.