



A word from the Dean

Oct 2017

When I wrote last time in the beginning of the year, Åsa had just taken office as Head of the Strategic Planning and Vice-Chancellor's Office, Jocke was on his way out as Director of Administration, and we did not have a Head of the Office of Science. In practice, Åsa ended up filling all three of these heavy positions for much of the spring. How she managed this is a mystery, but she did. Now, however, Åsa's and Jocke's replacements are in place. On 10 April, Katariina Kiviniemi Birgersson took office as Head of the Office of Science, and rarely have I seen anyone get into a new job so quickly – surely with good support from Åsa, but still. Katariina immediately became a strong and effective support for me and the Board of Science. In Katariina, Åsa has a worthy successor who will ensure that the Office of Science will continue to provide the effective support and access to administration that the departments need. On 11 September, Eino Örnfeldt took office as Director of Administration, but before that he had participated in the management conference in August and held individual meetings with all his unit managers, as well as with me. Although it has only been a short while, I am convinced that Eino is just the Director of Administration the University needs. We have had major problems within the administration, and while much has been done to address them, there is much left for us to do in order to establish the close, effective and trustful collaboration that is our goal. With Eino as Director of Administration and Åsa as Head of the Strategic Planning and Vice-Chancellor's Office, we have an administrative leadership that is hard to beat. The Vice-Chancellor is already the best we can have, and I just hope that we get to keep her.

Stockholm University, and Sweden in general, has long received too few ERC grants. With the help of the Research Support Office, we have strengthened the application processes by providing interview training and encouragement to candidates. Moreover, the working committee of the faculty has read the applicants' B1 sections – an important part of their application – as these must be written in such a way that they remain accessible to a panel from a wide range of subjects as well as describe innovative projects in an exciting manner. In the latest round of ERC Starting Grants (StG), the Faculty of Science received as many as five grants, three of which were awarded to people we have previously recruited as assistant professors. These are small numbers, so it is difficult to draw any conclusions about whether this is the beginning of a trend or a coincidence, and it is even more difficult to know the cause. However, in addition to the strengthened application processes, the fact that the assistant professorships have generally attracted very strong applicants could be a contributing factor. Sweden received a total of 16 StGs this time, and the national distribution is remarkable: SU 7, UU 4, KI 2, GU 1, CTH 1 and LU 1. As many as 13 out of 16 went to Stockholm-Uppsala, which can be gratifying, but it is also worrying if the result does not improve at the other research universities. The whole country should live, as the politicians often say.

The autumn has started more intensely than ever. This is to a certain extent of course due to the fact that it is the board's final term and there is much to finish, such as the integration of NADA into the Department of Mathematics and Neurochemistry into the DBB. However, there is also an unusual number of issues that just happened to coincide right now, such as new rules for assistant lectureships, relocations to Albano, a new organisation of management at SciLifeLab, the distribution of the library's costs (that old headache), decisions regarding

the funding of the the faculty's Core Facilities, negotiations with the Research Council concerning infrastructure grants, the distribution of the cost of SNIC and user support management, to name a few.

At the same time, the working committee laid a good foundation for dealing with all matters at an extended conference in Tovetorp in August. Strengthened by the nice environment and the good food, I am sure that we will be able to deal with most of it in the autumn. What is left will be in the hands of the next board.

/Anders