



## **A Word from the Dean**

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And so my time as dean has come to an end. A new scientific area board has been elected and will take office at the end of the year. I am confident that it will do an excellent job. Perhaps this should be an opportunity to summarise what has been done, but I have always been more interested in what is happening now and what can be done in the future. The election for the scientific area board, where there was an alternative list for the first time in a long time, has caused me to reflect on how we appoint managers, such as deans and heads of departments, within the Faculty.

One of our scientific area's main success factors are the heads of departments. We have an organisation in which the departments have considerable autonomy and in which much of the strategic work takes place. We often point out that the organisation is decentralised, and this is true, but it is also influenced by and works in close collaboration with the Faculty's management on major issues of strategic importance. This collaboration, which often involves co-funding, is efficient and facilitates development. It combines very well the fundamental collegial work within the departments with an overall perspective that helps overcome the deadlocks that are the downside of collegial decision-making. Compared to other universities in our vicinity that have more of a top-down approach, I think that we are actually better at making informed decisions. We have a simple organisation, which also facilitates the dissemination of information. I think that we are often more familiar with the issues than our colleagues are. Keeping track of what is happening has become increasingly difficult, however. The downside of our simple organisation is that too much of the burden may rest on too few individuals.

Overall, we have very good heads of departments within the Faculty. Many of them are very active as researchers and teachers, while others have been so in the past. The fact that the heads of departments have this strong connection with the core activities, and that they enjoy a high level of trust from their colleagues, makes them a tremendous asset. Many heads of departments are probably not primarily interested in being head – they would rather focus on their research – but they are still committed to doing a very good job. They assume this responsibility because they feel the support of their colleagues, but also, of course, because they see opportunities to influence matters they think are important. There is nothing wrong with having heads of departments who are not too interested in the job. In this regard, our way of appointing heads of departments and other managers is important. In connection with the election for the scientific area board, it was proposed that the election be a more political process, where candidates for the top positions would campaign for their cause. This may sound appealingly democratic, but in such a system, many of the very best heads of departments we have and have had, as well as some of the deans, would never have been considered, simply because they were not sufficiently interested in the job. When it comes to the election of the scientific area board, I believe there has to be an election committee that prepares a carefully considered proposal. However, it is important that the election committee has close contacts with the organisation throughout its work, and there are surely lessons to be learnt from the recent process. It is important to remember that information requires not only a sender, but also active recipients.

Metoo is currently dominating the news flow and will, I hope and believe, fundamentally improve society. The reported problems exist everywhere, but to highly varying degrees. When I look back

at where problems with people who behave in an unacceptable manner have been discovered, they are not random. Rather, they correlate strongly with the units that we know function poorly in general; they may be too small or have an old-fashioned structure or weak management. Well-functioning departments with skilled management promote a positive culture, and any problems that arise can be dealt with.

Thanks for everything!

/Anders