

# A word from the Dean

We are now half way through the semester and, after a hectic period, the new faculty management is finding its feet.

We are also beginning to see how the new organisation works in practice, with the new boards and the inclusion of the Deputy Vice-Chancellors in the university management team. Within our faculty our work is largely the same as before – but we are augmented by the new Vice-Dean, Ylva Engström, who is not also a Dean of Section. As I expected, the new working committee is also functioning exceptionally well. The biggest changes are that operational activities have a more direct university management influence due to the inclusion of the Deputy Vice-Chancellors in the management team. My collaboration with Astrid Söderbergh Widding, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Humanities and Social Sciences, works very well and we have had a decisive influence in the operational issues discussed by the university management team.

Together with Ylva, Åsa Borin, the head of the Office of Science, and the respective section deans, I have now visited around ten of the faculty's departments and units. This has been very instructive and the discussions, which have been mainly about strategic issues, have been very rewarding. It is surprising how different the departments are. This is natural given the decentralised organisation that we have, where the departments have a large degree of autonomy. I don't see anything wrong with variation – things can be done in different ways and still be good (or bad as the case may be), but I would like there to be a dialogue between the departments and department heads. I think that we can learn a lot from each other. The problems that the departments have to cope with are fundamentally the same after all. I would like to encourage this type of dialogue initially within the sections, but more widespread discussion would also be good. Informal heads of department lunches and directors of studies lunch meetings within the sections could be one idea.

The previous Board of the Faculty conducted an in depth policy discussion about whether or not to advertise adjunct teaching positions. The discussion was initiated by an application submitted by INK to request that the Vice-Chancellor should announce such a position. The new adjunct position is not the same as previous university adjunct teaching positions. It is not part of the academic career ladder, it does not require a doctoral degree, there is no research time included and the holder of the position cannot be promoted to lecturer. According to a ruling in 2008, it is mandatory for teaching staff to have a doctoral degree to be employed at the university. In individual cases, however, the Vice-Chancellor can grant an exception to the rule and allow a Board to advertise a permanent adjunct teaching position. Opinions were much divided within the Board, which to a certain extent reflects the differences between the departments, and the discussions were protracted and interesting. There was no general policy decision taken on the matter but the Board decided to support the INK request in this instance. I am very dubious about the appointment of adjuncts in anything other than very special circumstances – such as within the teacher training programme where adjuncts have been employed to provide a professional perspective in the teaching courses. The Faculty of Science is very research intensive and protective of the links between research and teaching. I believe that to now appoint new, permanent teachers who have no doctoral degree, who have no research associated with their positions and who have no opportunity for promotion, is the wrong path to take. Even if this can be seen as a good solution for a particular department in a particular situation, there is the risk of creating problems in the

longer term and sending out signals that the connections between research and teaching are not so important. We have many problems within our courses and study programmes, but the strong research connections, with research-active lecturers and professors who teach at all levels, is one of our greatest advantages and one that we should protect.

The decision to close down research activities at AstraZeneca's facilities in Södertälje was bad news. This closure means the disappearance of one of the largest workplaces for chemists in the Stockholm area and the already difficult chemistry student recruitment problem will become even more acute. Chemists at the university in particular, but also biologists, have had comprehensive and multifaceted collaborations with AstraZeneca that will now essentially cease to exist. This is a structural change that we can do nothing to prevent but must adapt to.

Half of the semester remains. The birds are singing and the flowers are starting to bloom. Spring is just around the corner.

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