

# Aktum.

FOR EVERYONE WORKING AT UMEÅ UNIVERSITY • APRIL 2018 • NO. 1

**A DAY AT BILDMUSEET**

## *Working away behind the scenes*



### **Profile**

Fast Track with Ahmad Hussein

### **Culture**

Culture on Campus continues to inspire

### **THEME Collaboration**

Doctoral school and promising partnerships

### **Outlook**

“Universities are not public service”



UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

## Firstly...

### Good old thoughts

I'm planning on sharing this space with two voices from the classical era that I often think of. The theme for this issue of Aktum is collaboration, which often means collaboration between the University and an external party, but in a wider sense it's when we work together to reach a goal. The Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius expressed it like this:

"When you wake up in the morning, tell yourself: the people I deal with today will be meddling, ungrateful, arrogant, dishonest, jealous and surly. They are like this because they can't tell good from evil. But I've seen the beauty of good, and the ugliness of evil, and have recognised that the wrong-doer has a nature related to my own

– not of the same blood and birth, but the same mind, and possessing a share of the divine. And so none of them can hurt me. No one can implicate me in ugliness. Nor can I feel angry at my relative, or hate him. We were born to work together like feet, hands and eyes, like the two rows of teeth, upper and lower. To obstruct each other is unnatural. To feel anger at someone, to turn your back on him: these are unnatural."

When a deadline is approaching, two quotes from Sun Zi, aka Sun Tzu, often occur to me:

"In the chaos of battle, do not be disturbed. In the formlessness of battle, do not be dissolved."

"Carefulness prevails, carelessness does not. Worse even for those who never cared at all."

(From Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* and Sun Zi's *Art of War*).

I hope that you as a reader will appreciate the work of the editorial board and that you will get in touch with ideas, questions and opinions. Welcome! ●



JESSICA LARSSON SVANLUND  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

"We were born to work together like feet, hands and eyes, like the two rows of teeth, upper and lower."

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# Aktum.

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On the intranet Aurora, you will find the latest news for people working at Umeå University.



# Popular science success in town

**An ever increasing number of residents are attending the popular science lectures the University organises in Umeå. Many who cannot attend in person instead follow the web broadcasted lectures. Even as far north as Kiruna, people gather to attend.**

**TEXT AND PHOTO:** Ola Nilsson

**ONE SATURDAY PER** month during the term, the Faculty of Medicine organises research lectures under the name *Fika efter en forskare* at Väven in Umeå. On each occasion, two or three researchers hold short presentations. To keep up the pace, they follow a form of PechaKucha format in which the slide changes every 20 seconds. So, the trick is to skip the small details so as to not fall behind.

**INTEREST HAS** steadily increased since it started in 2016. The record was broken on 27 January when the audience grew so large that fire regulations kicked in and people had to be asked to come back for the second viewing. That time, an estimated 600 people came to listen to Lars Nyberg talk about the ageing brain, and to Amir Sherif on urinary tract cancer.

The University's other regular popular science events in the city centre are the science lunches, *Vetenskaps-*

*luncher*, at Kafé Station held on nine Thursdays during the term. In this series, all faculties and the Umeå School of Education contribute along with researchers. The format of one speaker per lunch gives a chance of going more in-depth into research. All 2018 lectures tie into this year's theme of democracy. On 15 February, the science lunches also broke an audience record when Yngve Gustafson talked about discrimination against the elderly in healthcare.

**BOTH THE SCIENCE LUNCHES** and *Fika efter en forskare* are being broadcast live on [umu.se](http://umu.se) and the audience can submit questions through Facebook during the event. The science lunches are also being broadcast on big screens in Kiruna, Gällivare, Jokkmokk and Pajala through a collaboration with Lapplands Lärcentra. ●



Christer Larsson is asked how vaccines protect against tuberculosis, at Väven on 24 February.



EISCAT, European Incoherent Scatter Scientific Association, is a scientific organisation that runs a number of radar facilities in the Cap of the North and on Svalbard, with its headquarters in Kiruna. EISCAT\_3D is being built in Skibotn in Norway, Kaaresuvanto in Finland, and Kiruna in Sweden. Owners are Sweden, Norway, Finland, the United Kingdom, Japan and China.

PHOTO: CRAIG HEINSELMAN

# New radar sees space in millimetres

## Prospects for interdisciplinarity and climate research

**EISCAT\_3D provides whole new opportunities to study phenomena in the uppermost atmosphere. The international radar facility, costing SEK 685 million, will be ready in 2021, and will be available not only for space physicists, but also for researchers from several fields.**

**“IT’S EXCITING** that the building phase has now started. The discussions for a new radar system began 20 years ago,” says physics professor Asta Pellinen-Wannberg, the Umeå University mentor for the facility.

It all started with the mobile phone invasion in the 1990s in Sweden and Finland. After a few years, staff at EISCAT were surprised to find that private mobile phone calls, which used familiar mobile technologies, and EISCAT used radio signals at the same frequency.

“You could say that the escalating mobile phone usage stole the frequency. So as not to repeat the same mistakes, the new facility has been given its own, protected frequency and is transmitting at 233 Mhz.”

**THE PREVIOUS EISCAT** radar systems had large parabolic dishes and were used to study the Northern lights. The new EISCAT\_3D has several antenna systems with higher performances and data storage capacities compared to before.

PHOTO: MATTIAS PETERSSON



**The new facility will detect space particles down to the millimetre, according to Asta Pellinen-Wannberg, professor in physics and Umeå University’s mentor for the facility.**

“The spatial resolution is so great that you’ll be able to see everything in space from several hundred kilometres away. Particles only a millimetre large will be detectable.”

New fields of application for EISCAT\_3D will include plasma physics and studies of

extra terrestrial materials such as meteors and space debris. An important feature of the new radar is that it will be able to measure variations in the refractive index and Doppler shift at very low altitudes, at a few kilometres beneath the tropopause, which is particularly interesting for climate researchers who will now be able to study long-term variations in climate effects on the atmosphere over the Arctic.

“Considering everything EISCAT\_3D has to offer, many interdisciplinary collaborative projects are possible if climate researchers are given the chance to team up with chemists, space physicists and computer scientists,” says Asta Pellinen-Wannberg. ●

**INGRID SÖDERBERGH**

# Jubilee at the Faculty of Social Sciences

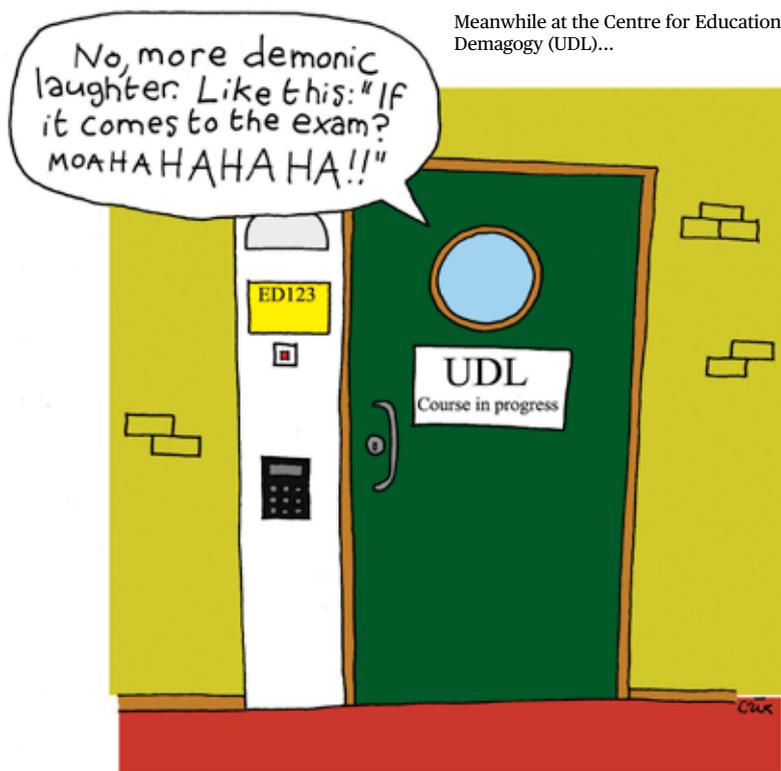
**IN 1968**, the Faculty of Philosophy at Umeå University was split into three separate faculties, namely social sciences, mathematics and natural sciences, and the arts. The 50th anniversary will be celebrated in 2018, especially during the Faculty of Social Science's jubilee week from 16–23 November, which will start with cake for students and employees on Friday. The theme for this week is democracy, and on Saturday, celebrations will include popular science events open to the general public. Monday through Wednesday

will offer feature lunchtime lectures, followed by Thursday's teacher day with the theme of education and democracy. To wind up the jubilee week, Friday will have jubilee lectures with invited guests and an after-work event for employees.

"We are looking forward to highlighting the education and research conducted at the faculty and we're hoping that students, employees and members of the public will enjoy what we have to offer," says Dean Ruth Mannelqvist. ●

JESSICA LARSSON SVANLUND

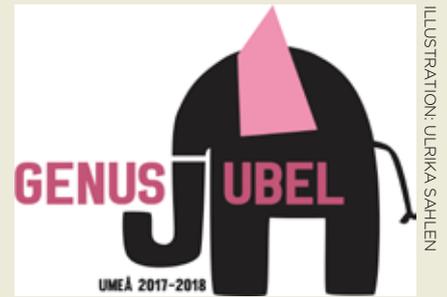
## Figuratively speaking ▶ Erik Domellöf



Meanwhile at the Centre for Educational Demagogy (UDL)...

# 1968

is the year of focus for the web page *Sidan 68* as a part of our year of democracy. Here, everyone's voice can be heard. [www.umu.se/sidan68](http://www.umu.se/sidan68)



## Gender study jubilee gathers researchers

Feminist research and gender studies have a long history at Umeå University, with not one but three jubilees under the name Genusjubel celebrated between June 2017 and June 2018. We are now approaching the grand finale.

- 30 years ago, Kvinnovetenskapligt forum (Forum for Gender Studies) was inaugurated, gathering researchers at Umeå University with the objective of studying and expanding problematic issues such as power and gender.
- 15 years ago, the Graduate School of Gender Studies kicked off its operations with the aim to support competence in gender studies at the University by offering interdisciplinary doctoral education in collaboration with various other departments.
- 10 years ago, Umeå Centre for Gender Studies (UCGS) was formed through a merge of Kvinnovetenskapligt forum and the Graduate School of Gender Studies. UCGS is charged by the Vice-Chancellor to spread gender studies across all faculties at the University.

In 2017 and 2018, gender studies was given extra attention at Umeå University through a series of events.

"I'm particularly looking forward to gathering gender researchers of all eras in a joint celebration of gender studies in June," says Ann-Louise Silfver, senior lecturer in teaching and learning and vice dean at the Faculty of Social Sciences, who is one of the organisers of Genusjubel.

According to Ann-Louise Silfver, Genusjubel has been a success with lectures by doctoral students at the Museum of Women's History, an alumni day for the nearly 60 doctoral students who have completed their doctoral degrees at the Graduate School of Gender Studies, and a series of seminars and a conference at the museum.

"I'd also like to recommend radio P4 Västerbotten's interview series with gender researchers, broadcast on Tuesdays around 11 am with thirty gender researchers for 30 weeks. This is not a part of Genusjubel but coincides well with the 30th anniversary!

### From the Genusjubel programme 2018:

**5 May** Genus i centrum. At 12:00–16:00, the Museum of Women's History, Väven.

**12 June** 'Studying up': reflections on methodological capital and re-contextualization in a white-women's network. At 13:15–15:00 in the large conference room at UCGS.

JESSICA LARSSON SVANLUND



“Accreditation sometimes increases the international interest,” says Rector Sofia Lundberg.

# Business School in good company

At the end of February, Umeå University and the Umeå School of Business, Economics and Statistics earned the internationally prestigious accreditation AACSB International – the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business.

**TEXT:** Mattias Grundström Mitz **PHOTO:** Mattias Pettersson

**U**MEÅ UNIVERSITY and Umeå School of Business, Economics and Statistics is Sweden’s third institution of higher education accredited by AACSB.

## What have you achieved?

“This accreditation is recognition that we as a business school at Umeå University and our study programmes maintain an internationally high standard when it comes to research, collaboration and education,” says Sofia Lundberg, rector at the Umeå School of Business, Economics and Statistics.

“The accreditation is mission-driven and follows 15 standards. This provides a framework for systematic development and follow-up of the entire operation. Having received accreditation means that we maintain high

quality and also that our operations follow our mission, that is, that we, together with other interested parties, take research forward and educate responsible leaders in awareness of sustainable development, who carry on working at local and global levels. We achieve this by offering a high quality learning environment stimulating professional and independent reflection to solve future challenges and by having a dynamic research environment. The accreditation also shows that our research reaches a high international standard in business administration, economics and statistics.”

## How have you achieved accreditation?

“We started this work in 2013. Over the years, we have for instance developed a strategy for the School, a vision and a mission, as well as introduced a system for

follow-up of qualitative targets for student assessment. We have also formulated new local qualitative targets. With the student in focus, we are analysing and following up whether we provide students with sufficient opportunities to achieve the goals, which in turn affects course development. It also means that we have drawn up clear goals and criteria for research and collaboration, that we are regularly following up and continuously developing.”

## What impacts does this have on the School?

“It’s really rewarding and so important for Umeå School of Business, Economics and Statistics, but also for Umeå University, since it’s a fine recognition of all the hard work the School has put into implementing the quality system. It also provides a signal



Umeå School of Business, Economics and Statistics at Umeå University is one of three AACSB accredited business schools in Sweden.

for us and our partners that we have a well-functioning qualitative system for research, education, collaboration and internal support in place. This is important for broadening the international student recruitment and makes us increasingly attractive for international exchange agreements. Presently, the School has 70 student exchange agreements in addition to the institution-wide ones, and we're looking forward to strengthening that portfolio further. We already know that universities from other parts of the world screen their partners based upon accreditation. This accreditation also offers an international network for the exchange of experiences and knowledge with other business schools, which will provide important perspectives on the own operations."

AACSB was formed in 1916 and is the oldest accreditation organisation for business schools in the world, and also offers the largest network for business schools, their students, and collaborative partners in the business and public sectors. Today, less than 5%, or approximately 800 of the world's business schools, are accredited by AACSB. ●

## 5 questions

for **Chatarina Larson**

head of office and senior legal advisor



TEXT: Camilla Bergvall PHOTO: Mattias Pettersson

### 1 On 25 May, the new Data Protection Regulation goes into effect – what implications does this have?

"The University will get a clearer responsibility to collect and process personal data correctly. We also need to take control over and be able to see where and what personal data is being collected at the University, and make sure that sufficient security measures have been taken both technically and in processes across the organisation. The University's data protection officer, who will replace the personal data compliance officer, will be appointed on 25 May."

### 2 A pilot study has been carried out at the University. What was the outcome?

"First and foremost that the University needs a clearer organisation with roles and responsibilities for personal data protection in order to comply with the new regulation. Employees at the University lack knowledge of the importance of registering personal data collection with the central records. There is a huge need for information, education, and support in the field."

### 3 How will this requirement be met?

"There should be a clear internal chain of responsibility and a joint model for dividing personal data collection and processing into categories based on the necessary organisational and technical security measures. Also, a new records system is being introduced to simplify registration of personal data collection and provide a tool to follow up where and how these personal data are being used. We will also inform and train several employees."

### 4 The rights of registered individuals also increase. What could that imply?

"At the University, we need to answer the question 'Where and when does the University collect and process my personal data?'. We also need to enable correcting or in some cases erasing incorrect information or providing data portability."

### 5 How can employees prepare themselves?

"Take a look at the personal data that you are in charge of – those that you have collected or are processing for different purposes than they were originally collected for. Check that you have registered the collection to the Personal Data Records at Umeå University. Ask to delete personal data that are no longer in use. Also, make sure that the data processing agreements you have are up to date."



# *Collaborative research in real time*

Choosing between doctoral education or working life? A tough choice for many university graduates. At Umeå University, an industrial doctoral school is available that keeps both options open. Over the years, around fifty doctoral students have completed their studies through co-funded projects of high scientific quality in a number of subjects connecting companies, organisations and departments.

**TEXT:** Gerhard Karlsson **PHOTO:** Mattias Pettersson



**T**HE INDUSTRIAL Doctoral School for Research and Innovation bridges subjects, researchers, the business and public sectors. The main focus lies on research in collaboration and developing a researcher's ability to communicate research and results within specialist areas.

"We should be proud that Umeå University can offer an education with this approach," says director Anna Linusson Jonsson. "This is research in real time through collaboration with parties outside of the academic community. It's really rewarding to follow the development of the doctoral students during the four years that the doctoral education normally comprises."

**THE INDUSTRIAL DOCTORAL** school is not limited to any particular subject field, and should not be confused with contract education, which is developed and funded purely by the customer.

"No, this is something different," states Benkt Wiklund, who coordinates the doctoral school. "The external party covers half the cost, and the University the other half. The collaborative party should accept that its participation concerns long-term research according to academic methods that should lead to a doctoral thesis. A researcher gets 48 months to dig deep into a specific subject in collaboration with the external party."

Finding collaborative partners with the need, time and funding for this type of long-term research, makes it rather complicated to combine various projects, but despite that, an array of collaborative partners have participated over the years. Some examples are LKAB, Akzo-Nobel, AstraZeneca, the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI), Sámiid Riikkasearvi (the Swedish Sami Association), PwC, Skellefteå Kraft, and the Swedish Performing Arts Agency. In 2018, 14 new doctoral students and research projects will set off.

**THE DOCTORAL SCHOOL** started as a project in 2008 with primarily an industrial focus, hence the name. Benkt ►

## THEME Collaboration



Anna Linusson Jonsson, director of the Industrial Doctoral School and professor in chemistry, and the coordinator Benkt Wiklund are bridging subjects.

Wiklund was there from the start and has seen the project grow to a uniquely broad educational profile. Since the school is cross-disciplinary and not tied to a faculty, it isn't that well-known among supervisors and doctoral students.

"In 2011, the doctoral school became permanent and broadened to include all types of corporations as well as the public sector and organisations. The education also includes three months internship with the collaborative partner, a time that shouldn't specifically concern the research project. The doctoral students are tied to their ordinary departments and supervisors for that. The education with us is both individual and joint, since it contains elements where all doctoral students meet and present their projects, both to each other and to all external parties."

Benkt is enthusiastic in his description of the breadth of research projects, which results in an important exchange of experiences among doctoral students and with the external parties. In total, the course includes eight joint workshops for students plus the mandatory course components.

"There are many exciting examples of fruitful meetings. Once, we spent the morning at the place name archives in Uppsala for a presentation, and the afternoon at Semper's high-tech food factory. That was a nice mix of humanities and chemistry," he says.

**THE CROSS-DISCIPLINARY** concept is fairly unusual even internationally, but there are similar doctoral educations in other countries. A few years ago, Umeå University initiated an exchange collaboration with other European universities. There, doctoral students gain experience in international collaboration and presentation methods. The parties are Bangor University (Wales), Ghent University (Belgium), the University of Aveiro (Portugal) and the University of Pardubice (Czech Republic).

*"The collaboration has had huge impacts, we are already using the tool and work method in both small and large projects where expected impact goals are enormous."*

Kjell-Ove Mickelsson, LKAB

One often hears debate about how exchanges between academics and the community outside of higher education should take place, and whether they are important or not. The industrial doctoral school wants to contribute to public welfare, creating conditions for competition and development of various external operations.

"Basic research and specialisation are both important, but academia's presence and benefit outside of University is of great importance in many ways. In actual fact, there's no antagonism between basic research and applied research, both are necessary," says Anna Linusson Jonsson, who is a professor in chemistry and has four years of experience from the industry at AstraZeneca in Mölndal.

"This doctoral education is focused on the mixture of specialisation in one field of expertise, and the ability to conduct research together with an external party. It provides experience and knowledge that doctoral students, supervisors and participating collaborative partners can make good use of in the future. This education develops the individual doctoral student as well as the interplay between academia and the rest of society." ●

### The Industrial Doctoral School

Doctoral projects in the Industrial Doctoral School are selected from joint applications by a researcher (supervisor) at Umeå University and an external party. The doctoral student is recruited to the project after approval by the doctoral school. Calls for applications take place every two years.

The next call takes place in spring 2019.

Read more at

[www.umu.se/english/about-umu/collaboration/industrial-doctoral-school](http://www.umu.se/english/about-umu/collaboration/industrial-doctoral-school)

# Strengthened collaboration with the municipality

The new agreement for strategic partnership signed between Umeå University and Umeå municipality will strengthen existing collaborations and enable new progress.

**“THE UNIVERSITY AND** the municipality have collaborated in many ways since the University began, but through this new agreement, we are now aiming to formalise the collaboration, create an overview, support ongoing projects and enable new ones. An important aspect is to find even more synergies and collaborative formats for both parties to really benefit from each other,” says Anna Sandström Emmelin at the External Relations Office, and coordinator of the strategic partnership.

The agreement between Umeå University and Umeå municipality has a breadth that may include research, education, innovation and skill support in all of Umeå University’s disciplinary domains. The endeavours should strive to contribute to sustainable community development in social, environmental, cultural and financial aspects. Within skills development and knowledge transfer, several forms of activities for collaboration are possible. Such as degree projects, placements, personal exchanges, joint research projects and applications, seminars and workshops.

**AT THE ONSET OF** the collaboration, the parties will pay special attention to sustainable city development, for instance through Ruggedised and the Low Carbon Dioxide City (Den koldioxid snåla platsen). Another important project is the fusion and move of Umevatoriet to Sliperiet where plans for the new dome theatre are now being realised with support from the Knut and Alice Wallenberg Foundation.

According to Anna Sandström Emmelin, the agreement enables collaboration on several levels.

“We are faced with great societal challenges, not least regarding the climate, migration and health, in which we can collaborate to contribute to solutions. One important task is to involve our respective organisations in dialogue to see how we can enable collaboration in the best possible way. For that reason, we’d like to reach out to everyone at the University who’s interested in getting in touch with the municipality to initiate a collaboration and also contact those who in various ways are already collaborating with the municipality,” says Anna Sandström Emmelin. ●

**MATTIAS GRUNDSTRÖM MITZ**

## FACTS:

Anna Sandström Emmelin together with Charlotte Lundkvist, head of strategic development at Umeå municipality, will coordinate the strategic partnership between Umeå municipality and Umeå University. The Sustainable City Development part of the partnership is led by Katrin Holmqvist-Sten, senior lecturer and head of the Umeå Academy of Fine Arts. Mats Falck, coordinator at the External Relations Office is project manager for Sliperiet/Umevatoriet.

# Your contact for questions on collaboration

**If you wish to develop your collaboration methods, or find new ones, or if you are looking for collaborative partners or good advice, you can reach out to your faculty contact at the External Relations Office.**

“The contacts should focus particularly on your faculty, and we are in constant dialogue with the faculty managements about what options are out there,” says Mats Reinhold at the External Relations Office.

The faculties have worked in various ways with their contacts. Bodil Formark has, for instance, developed a series of workshops about research funding for the faculty of humanities, and Mats Falck, former faculty contact for the Faculty of Science and Technology, has helped organise industry days together with the business sector in the region.

“If you have any queries regarding collaboration or research funding, please get in touch,” says Mats Reinhold. “And please remember to involve us in the process early so we can incorporate a collaborative perspective early on.” ●

**JESSICA LARSSON SVANLUND**



**Mats Reinhold,**  
faculty contact for  
Social Sciences



**Katarina Henriksson,**  
faculty contact for  
Science and Technology



**Annett Wolf,**  
faculty contact for  
Medicine



**Bodil Formark,**  
faculty contact for Arts

# Collaboration for green hydrocarbons

Bio4Energy researchers at Umeå University and partnering company Eco-Oil are launching a new technology for making “green” hydrocarbons.

**THE PRODUCTION PROCESS** can be operated by non-experts within the space of a standard shipping container. The technology, and the pilot unit that it has been tested in, have already attracted the attention of investors in Sweden and Germany.

“The containers can be shipped anywhere in the world,” says lead research Jyri-Pekka Mikkola, Professor at Umeå University and Åbo Akademi University.

Hydrocarbons are the basic components of fossil fuels such as petrol, diesel and jet fuel. Making hydrocarbons from biomass, for instance forestry residues, is a hot topic in research and development. The fuel industry is in demand for cost-effective solutions for biofuels that can be mixed in with fossil fuels, with the objective of reducing the climate impact of the latter.

“This is a disruptive technology. It does not have to be constructed on the scale of a biorefinery,” says Jyri-Pekka Mikkola.

“This application could be operated on behalf of a petrol station or village. Because the process also renders liquefied petroleum

gas, which can be used in gas-to-power engines, it may be used to produce electricity.”

**THE PILOT UNIT** that the technology has been tested in can make up to 250 litres of biofuel per day from biomass that is turned into an alcohol before becoming hydrocarbons.

The researchers together with business partner Kent van Klint have started a company, Eco-Oil, to market the technology. The next step for the business partners is to demonstrate the technology on a pre-commercial scale.

“Two full-scale plants will be built. One for petrol and one for diesel, according to the principle that the resulting fuels will be entirely void of petrochemicals. Both fuels will be exact chemical copies of their synthetic counterparts,” says Kent van Klint.

“Our business model is to produce and sell plants,” he adds.

“We leave it in the hands of those who have capital to construct full-scale production units,” says Jyri-Pekka Mikkola. “We

Bio4Energy is a research environment developing methods and tools to run a sustainable and efficient bio-refinery. Umeå University, Luleå University of Technology, SLU Umeå and Innventia are the founding members.

are going to concentrate on selling licences and making the catalysts. The secret is in the catalysts.”

**THE INVENTION AND** the pilot unit have been developed by Jyri-Pekka Mikkola and colleagues Ajaikumar Samikannu, William Siljebo and Lakhya Konwar in the research environment Bio4Energy. The colleagues are partners in the company Eco-Oil. ●

**ANNA STROM**

# Waiting for the big revolution

*Digital disruption* means that a business is changed beyond recognition by new technology. A typical example is the media industry, which Anette Novak has mapped out in her role as investigator for the State. When looking at the future for the universities, she sees several parallels.

TEXT: Jonas Lidström PHOTO: RISE Interactive

**MEDIA INVESTIGATOR** Anette Novak is most at home at a newspaper office, but since 2013 she works as head of the governmental research institute RISE Interactive. What's happened to mass media will also shake the universities, she says:

"The Universities have an established model to base their work on, a model that still works. But it's urgent for the academic community to realise that a change is necessary."

**MUCH OF WHAT** Anette Novak sees approaching in digital development is about automation and artificial intelligence.

To a certain degree, automation and algorithms will play an important part in connecting research data with related information and sending it to the right recipient. But human interaction will also be necessary, at least for the foreseeable future.

"Researchers, those who dig deepest, aren't always the best suited to communicate their achievements."

"I'd like to see universities experimenting wildly with new ways of filling the gap between academia and the general public," says Anette Novak.

**SINCE UMEÅ UNIVERSITY'S** website is getting an update in 2018, I take this opportunity to ask her the most important aspects of digital communication for universities.

"My job is to spread research-based insights, but in a way relevant to a greater group of people than the primary target audience," says Anette Novak.

One promising example she names is the website *The Conversation*. There, researchers are working together with editorial teams to create content that is both informative and inviting.

"They're actually approaching the Swedish market. Those of you who work with communications at Umeå University should get in touch with them," says Anette Novak with enthusiasm.

**FROM A UNIVERSITY PERSPECTIVE,** it's easy to see the opportunities in the digital communications channels, even if they are not always easy to master. From a media perspective, the development is more ambiguous.

This becomes evident when I ask Anette Novak to comment on a seminar that was broadcast live online from the Swedish Higher Education Authority conference Högskoleforum, where she and Professor Jesper Falkheimer participated. Universities should see themselves as a form of public service institute, suggested Jesper Falkheimer.

"I don't agree with that," replies Anette Novak.

To her, the trend is that public bodies such as municipalities and county councils prefer to communicate directly with citizens using their own channels.

"The universities and the media have completely different roles and targets. In the academic process, there is definitely independence. But university communications offices aren't independent. They are actually to a great extent PR agencies for their own organisations," says Anette Novak.

"What Jesper maybe wanted to say is that universities possess an array of publicly funded knowledge that could benefit the media landscape. It's an incredibly interesting opportunity for universities, the media and citizens alike." ●



Anette Novak suggests that universities have a future as a place of knowledge, but they need to change processes and methods. "New issues will become important in the future. How is the process of learning set up? How do we get people to want to learn and to educate themselves?"

# *Far from home, but with his eyes set on success*

At the front of the classroom stands a man in a handsome suit. He's trying to make himself heard through the murmur of voices. After a while, he gets everyone's attention. The speaker is Ahmad Hussein, and the listeners have just completed the fast track teacher education, Snabbspåret, for newcomers to Sweden.

TEXT AND PHOTO: Per Melander

**S**INCE HE SPEAKS ARABIC, it's difficult for a Swede like me to follow. Every now and again people burst out laughing. He's got the audience the palm of his hand – just like any stand-up comedian.

“I like to use beautiful words and sentences and old proverbs, and it becomes somewhat exaggerated and amusing in the contexts they're in. Although, it makes it easier for students to remember what I've said,” says Ahmad Hussein.

“I started at Umeå University in 1993 by taking a French course. Our teacher asked us to mention a personal fact to help her remember our names. When it was my turn, I said with a straight face, “Promise not to tell anyone, but Saddam Hussein is my cousin.”

The classroom fell silent. It wasn't until a Moroccan fellow student finally said. “That's not right. Ahmad comes from Lebanon and hasn't got anything to do with Saddam Hussein”, before everyone understood that Ahmad had been joking. Ahmad gives a big smile:

“The teacher is still around and she remembers me and my presentation of myself.”

**CURRENTLY, LEADING THE** fast track for newcomer teachers occupies Ahmad's time. He tells the story of how his own journey into Swedish society has given him enough experience to make him understand what many newcomers go through and what they need.

“For me, it took two and a half years to reach the level that those who take the fast track course manage in six months. And in the last course, we had 40 participants who all passed. Eighteen of them have jobs now, several others have internships. And those who haven't been offered a job yet can continue studying Swedish. Most of them can even go straight to the highest level of Swedish for immigrants.”

“I often say to my fast track students that they're lucky to end up with someone as experienced as me, with a Swedish academic background that means I know the system. Other universities with fast track courses have even been in touch asking what form of ‘medicine’ we're offering here in Umeå for it to be so successful.

**BUT WHAT AHMAD** does today was unthinkable when, in 1988, he found himself at the airport in the war-torn Beirut to bid his family goodbye. Ahmad Hussein was 21 ►

## Ahmad Hussein

**Does:** Project manager and teacher at Snabbspåret.

**Family:** Married with four children.

**Hobbies:** Gardening, following news coverage, writing poetry, football and volleyball.

**Watches:** No time for TV.

**Favourite food:** Lebanese.

**Latest book-read:** *The First Industrial Revolutions* by Peter Mathias and John A. Davis.

**Dreams of:** To write a book about oil extraction in Lebanon that becomes a bestseller.

**Bok:** Ahmad Hussein's book *Den välkända konflikten och den eftertraktade freden* was awarded a Prize by the Swedish Arts Council in 2003 for its nuanced description of the Middle East and Palestine.



The artwork *The wind will carry us* between the Social Sciences and the Humanities Buildings was created by Mandana Moghaddam in 2015. It alludes to her time as a quota refugee in Kristineberg, and her thoughts of family and friends back in Tehran.



and promised his mum and dad to seize all opportunities to succeed in life.

“When my father hugged me goodbye he took out his most precious pen and said: ‘Take a look at this pen and you’ll know what I mean,’ and when I accepted the pen it was like promising to fulfil my dreams about studying, and making my parents proud.”

That pen later became what paved the way for Ahmad Hussein’s studies. Twenty-four years later, at the party celebrating his doctoral graduation in economic history, his wife called for everyone’s attention and brought out a present.

“She opened it herself. It was a new pen that she said I had earned. I carry these two pens with me everywhere I go. As soon as I think about knowledge and education, these two pens come to mind – they give me strength to carry on.”

**A FEW DAYS AFTER** Ahmad Hussein left Beirut in 1988 he stayed a month at a refugee camp outside of Stockholm before being shipped on to Kiruna. It was February and still dark for many hours of the day.

“When I looked out across the camp everything was dark. All I could see were the lights on the skii slopes. I cried my eyes out. Missing my parents. Missing Lebanon. The orange groves. The sea and the sunshine. To me, it looked like everything ended with that last row of lights at the top of the slope. I thought that was the end of the world. Because what could possible be behind there?”

After that, everything happened quickly and Ahmad Hussein thanks God for having been sent to Kiruna. He describes his personality as someone who can take care of himself, standing on his own two feet. He started taking Swedish courses for immigrants (SFI) and describes how even his first week was decisive.

His SFI teacher Yvonne Niemi told him:

“Ahmad, you’re 21 years old, but they way you speak and behave, you might as well be 40. You’re mature and

you will do well in Sweden. I hope I live to that day so I may see what you’ve become.”

**AFTER EIGHT MONTHS** of learning Swedish, Ahmad became an interpreter for newcomers at the refugee camp. Despite the Migration Board seeing him as a role model for assimilation, it was only after two rejections and 22 months that he got a Swedish residency permit.

“Two days after I was informed, the coordinator called me to his office. He picked up a map of Sweden and laid it out. ‘Here’s Kiruna and here’s Malmö. Please take your pick. Where do you want to live?’ he said.”

“Most of those who were given permits wanted to move to Malmö or Gothenburg. But I pointed to Umeå. He looked at me and said: ‘Are you crazy, Ahmad? It’s snowy and cold there, everyone wants to move south.’ So I told him that my SFI teacher Yvonne Niemi, who had done her teacher training in Umeå, had told me to move there. She’d said that Umeå was young and not as xenophobic as southern cities.”

In 1989, Ahmad came to Umeå and the first thing he asked his coordinator was how to get into the University. In response, he was told to take it easy. He was going to find out, but first he was asked to start working as an interpreter; rumour of his achievements at the job in Kiruna had reached the Umeå immigrant coordinators. While interpreting and translating, Ahmad started studying and continued until 2007.

But working as a full-time interpreter was no longer possible from the year he was admitted as a doctoral student. The choice of economic history was yet again dependent on a personal meeting, this time with study counsellor Lennart Olofsson at the University, who himself had been to Lebanon and Cyprus as a UN soldier back in 1967.

“When he heard my life story, and about the war and my interest in politics and history, he told me to forget my thoughts of becoming an economist or an engineer. When he heard my life story, about the war and my interest in politics and history, he told me to forget my thoughts of becoming an economist or an engineer. Instead, he saw fit for me to study economic history.”

**IN 2012**, Ahmad Hussein completed his doctoral education after having been the single admitted student among 14 applicants to the doctoral education in economic history – in part because he had already written a book about the complicated Palestine conflict.

Born and raised in Lebanon. Adult life in Sweden. “A rich life of two cultures – the best of two worlds.” That’s how Ahmad Hussein summarises things. His way of seeing it is the life he’s led so far has affected him in a purely positive way.

Before we wrap up, I need to ask him about the SFI teacher Yvonne Niemi. Did she get to see what he’d become?

“I tried to find her for my defence of my doctoral thesis – but without success.”

It would have been great to have had her there to show her how right she’d been in 1988 when she really saw a 21-year-old man, alone and far from home, but with a strong desire to succeed. ●



**A place to meet  
for many  
expressions**

## A day at Bildmuseet



▲ Visitors are strolling through a colourful installation by Korean artist Do Ho Suh at the top floor of Bildmuseet.



▲ Museum technician Olle Ebgen Ljungblad is grouping Sara Lundberg's paintings together.



▲ Curator Sofia Johansson and art assistant Polonca Lovšin from Slovenia are discussing the placement of one of this summer's works of art.

**TEXT:** Helena Vejbrink

**PHOTO:** Mattias Pettersson, Mikael Lundgren and Polly Yassin

Among workplaces at the University, Bildmuseet contemporary art museum stands out somewhat. As a visitor, you have probably met some of the museum hosts, but behind the scenes there are another ten people: curators, technicians, art educators, an administrator and a communications officer. In this article, you'll get to meet some of them during a day at Bildmuseet.



▲ Curator intern Sorcha Stott-Stralza from London came well-prepared for both cold weather and exhibition production.



◀ Bildmuseet aims to reach an audience of all ages.



▶ Upper-secondary school pupils create collages at Bildmuseet.

**IT'S MID-MORNING** at Bildmuseet and Sorcha Stott-Stralza is peeling off layer after layer of warm clothing in the cloak room. She comes from Manchester and is studying curating at Goldsmiths, University of London, and has started her placement training at Bildmuseet during the coldest week of the year. This morning registered  $-23$  degrees Celsius.

“Luckily, I got to borrow a hat and ski pants from my teacher before I left,” says Sorcha with a laugh.

“That’s no problem, though,” she says unconcerned, “Not as long as I get some power into the radiators of the apartment at Lars Färgares Gård. Do you have any cross-country skis to spare?”

**SORCHA'S PLACEMENT** at Bildmuseet will last the whole spring term. Despite the extreme climate, she doesn't seem to have any issues with making herself at home in Umeå. Ice skating at Lake Tavelsjö – check. Raving at Verket – check. At Bildmuseet, her task is to assist in various exhibition projects and plan the autumn per-

formance weekend, a collaboration between Bildmuseet and Vita Kuben at the Norrlandsoperan Opera in Umeå.

“I’m looking forward to it. In London, I spend a lot of my time with dance, theatre and queer performance art, so this is a suitable task. I’ll also be working with a really interesting exhibition on arts and physics together with Museum Director Katarina Pierre.”

In the brightly lit work room nearby, curator Sofia Johansson is planning a summer exhibition with a highly topical theme. *Eco-visionaries* is opening in June, and today, an assistant to one of the participating artists will pay a visit.

“This exhibition is something of a personal favourite,” says Sofia while waiting. “To me, there’s something inspiring in the visionary art projects we have chosen. No paralysing climate anxiety, but instead creative ideas and visions of our relation to nature.”

**NOW IN THE LAST** few months before the exhibition, Sofia Johansson is in close contact with the artists. Since they are spread across the world, Skype is the natural

## A day at Bildmuseet



▲ Lunch viewing: Museum host Emma Mårtensson is presenting the exhibition *Dada is Dada* to today's visitors.

way to meet. But certain issues need to be discussed on site. Art assistant Polonca Lovšin has travelled here from Ljubljana, Slovenia, to discuss the installation of one of the works of art. Sofia is guiding her guest around the exhibition room, measuring surfaces and the ceiling height, all the while describing how visitors will move through the room. Museum technician Olle Ebgén-Ljungblad has prepared some colour samples that they look at together.

Olle is an artist himself, and sees his understanding of art as an important asset to his work as a museum technician. He can imagine what artists want to portray, and based on that, contribute his technical expertise to achieve creative and aesthetical solutions.

"For *Eco-visionaries*, we will for instance be building a small school building according to the artist's instructions," he says. "This afternoon, I'm taking Polonca to a timber yard to look at materials for roofs and walls."

But first, another meeting with another of today's visitors. In the office downstairs awaits curator Brita Täljedal together with Sara Lundberg, the author of *Fågeln i mig flyger vart den vill*, which took home the Swedish literary August Prize and the Swedish Picture Book of the Year Award. The latter was awarded at Littfest 2018 – Umeå international literary festival – and in conjunction with that, Bildmuseet is presenting the win-

ning book in an exhibition. Olle has brought drawings of how it could be designed.

Sara Lundberg presents sketches and original pictures from the book on the big table in the conference room. Together, they pick out and sort the fine-tuned and colourful watercolour paintings and gouaches, discussing how the images should be grouped and displayed. Brita Täljedal is on the jury of the picture book award and says that they had some intense and fun discussions before deciding on this year's winner.

"Some fantastic books were among the nominees, but this one stood out. For its magnificent pictures of course, but to me, it was also the entirety – how it lies in your hand and how the pages turn," says Brita.

**DEEP CONCENTRATION CAN** also be found in the art workshop. Students from the upper-secondary school aesthetic programme are making collages under supervision of art educator Karin Jonsson. Bildmuseet annually welcomes a hundred school classes, from preschool to adults. This particular class is a part of an educational collaboration between Bildmuseet and Midgårdsskolan upper-secondary school. Once per week, they visit Bildmuseet to explore art and test various art techniques.

"Working with the group for some time opens up for more opportunities," says Karin. "When it comes to creation, of course, but also in the dialogues about art. We often

collaborate across subject fields, between art education and social sciences, for instance. Based upon the themes of art, we can chat about topics such as social issues, identity, or language."

*In ten minutes, at 12:00, today's lunch tour of the exhibitions takes place, starting at the reception desk on level 1. Welcome!*

The loudspeaker voice can be heard throughout the building. Emma Mårtensson is the guide for today's tour. She is one of the museum hosts who welcomes the 80,000 visitors to Bildmuseet every year.

"Everyone should feel welcome, regardless your prior knowledge about art, and regardless of if you want to browse around on your own or take a guided tour. The exhibitions we display are interesting both to those who want to dig deep into a few things and those who seek an experience to wow them," says Emma.

**SOON, SOME VISITORS** turn up at the reception desk. Emma chats to them while waiting for more to show up. When the clock strikes twelve, she takes the little group to the sixth floor and the large colourful installation by the Korean artist Do Ho Suh.

"I know. You just want to touch it, don't you?" Emma is prepared and takes out a piece of transparent fabric of the same sort and turquoise colour as in the delicate installation. She passes it among the visitors while vividly talking about the work of art and the artist behind it.

Since it's Friday and the museum has its regular evening event, a lot needs to be taken care of in the afternoon. Tonight, they are hosting a theatre performance about the female Dadaists in the exhibition *Dada is Dada*. While visitors come and go, the sound system is being rigged by the bar, signs are placed in the great hall, and candles are being lit. Tickets are nearly sold out for the this evening's performance. Carefully, the display cases and walls inside the exhibition are moved to make room for a stage and a seated audience of a hundred people.

**BILDMUSEET'S INITIATIVE** to organise Art Fridays has been popular with Umeå residents, although there is still some nervousness among the staff about the outcome. But also this evening was a success, and curator Lisa Lundström lets out a sigh of relief. She organised this evening's event from planning to execution, and has also hosted the actors during the day. By nine o'clock, when the last visitor has left, she feels both tired and satisfied.

"The atmosphere during the theatre performance really was spiritual. It was as if the artists came alive," says Lisa. ●

PHOTO: MATTIAS PETTERSSON



# Integrating collaboration

**“It’s no wonder that we are now phasing out the collaboration strategy.”**

**COLLABORATION IS AN** important part of the university’s operations. Even the latest government bill on research highlights collaboration as an important activity. In light of this, it may seem odd that the University Management is now choosing to phase out the collaboration strategy.

However, I don’t think that this comes as a surprise to those who have followed our work over the last 18 months. Since the new University Management took office, there is no vice-chancellor with particular responsibility for collaboration. Instead, collaboration is something that is included in all vice-chancellor assignments. The change was also manifested through the liquidation of the strategic council for collaboration and an overhaul of the University’s overall vision and objectives, Umeå University 2020. In the latter, collaboration was identified as a means of developing and strengthening quality.

Have we lost faith in collaboration? No, I’d say rather that in order to reach the potential that collaborative work has to cause positive change in terms of quality, it needs to take place in connection with education and research rather than as a separate entity with its own committees and processes.

In that way, collaboration needs to happen hand in hand with research and education. Interacting with potential research stakeholders before, during and after a project should be self-evident to most researchers, if you ask me. The same naturally goes

for teaching, which shouldn’t happen without interaction with research and collaborative aspects.

**THE BEST EXAMPLE** of collaboration at present takes place between the University and the county council. It covers a varied range of activities concerning education, research and infrastructure and it’s actually rather difficult to even imagine our medical operations without this collaboration. But there are naturally also other good examples and ideas to develop in other areas.

We were also provided proof that our approach on collaboration as an integrated part of research and education is in line with international perspectives when the Umeå School of Business, Economics and Statistics received its AACSB accreditation based on international quality standards. To be approved, teachers need to produce high quality research or have documented collaboration activities.

**PHASING OUT** the collaboration strategy is in that way not the end of collaboration but rather a signal to strengthen collaboration where it really matters, in research and education. ●

**DIETER MÜLLER**  
DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR

1968 was a year of contrasts. Student union occupations and demonstrations created a sense of participation while faith in traditional democratic processes abated. Left-wing students recruited members from the most privileged parts of the community. Solidarity between people in different parts of the world was easier to achieve than equality between men and women. Both the power of democracy and challenges to it became evident. Research reveals nuances, and in 2018, we want to examine the romance of 1968 era at Umeå University somewhat closer. Join us by telling your stories from that time!

**Heidi Hansson** about Sidan 68.  
[www.umu.se/sidan68](http://www.umu.se/sidan68)



PHOTO: MATTIAS PETTERSSON



Al Pitcher, one of the funniest men in Sweden, creates a KPC moment.

# Culture on Campus continues to inspire



Jonas Ericson, project manager of Culture on Campus.

PHOTO: MATTIAS PETERSSON

**How and when did Culture on Campus start? Who was involved?**

“I got talking to a stranger during an event in Aula Nordica one day. On stage was the author Mikael Niemi talking about his new book *Popular Music* from Vittula. The stranger, who later turned out to be Per Rylander, shared my opinion that it had been a great event, and we started juggling an idea to organise similar events. It soon resulted in the organisation of some rather straggly concerts in various places on campus at lunch time. This was in 2003 and Culture on Campus, often shortened KPC, saw the light of day.”

**What was the idea behind the investment?**

“Early on we had set a rather ambitious goal, to create a special type of meeting place for everyone active at our campus. Students and employees are all in need of inspiration and creativity in their daily activities and we wanted to create conditions for that to happen. And culture was the perfect catalyst.”

**Can you share some highlights over the years?**

“Wow. There are so many. I usually call them ‘KPC moments’, and that denotes the euphoric sensation of being a part of the interplay between artist and audience. Sometimes it’s so noticeable. The events take place around noon, often with daylight pouring in, which

makes it even more cool. Some examples are Al Pitcher, Veronica Maggio, Svante Henrysson, Anna Järvinen and Johan Wellton.”

**You have travelled across the globe to talk about KPC – is it really that unique?**

“It’s not really unique to organise cultural events at a university, but to do so at this frequency, breadth and quality, and get funded by the University Management, is actually unique. Or rather, it *was* unique. In Sweden, Jönköping University has copied the Culture on Campus concept, and three other Swedish universities have shown an interest. Three foreign universities have also been in touch to find out more. It’s encouraging and shows that culture as a source of inspiration has a place in academia.”

**What is the future of KPC?**

“This year, KPC turns 15 and we have produced 400 events that have been seen by over 100,000 people. We will continue to produce good events as long as we get the resources for it. How many inspiring encounters all our events have resulted in is unknown, but the stranger above and I are living proof of how effective it is. No book presentation by Mikael Niemi back then – no Culture on Campus.” ●

JESSICA LARSSON SVANLUND

# The bitter feud over the collars

In the Research Archives, many examples can be found where seemingly small issues have caused great upheaval.

**ONE EXAMPLE WAS** the issue of whether the University should have an embroidered emblem signifying Umeå on tail coat collars.

The Swedish state herald Gunnar Schefter was contacted and gave some proposals including stylized reindeer horns. The issue was brought up in the former Faculty of Philosophy, where, according to Professor Gunnar Kulldorff's notes, the matter caused heated discussions.

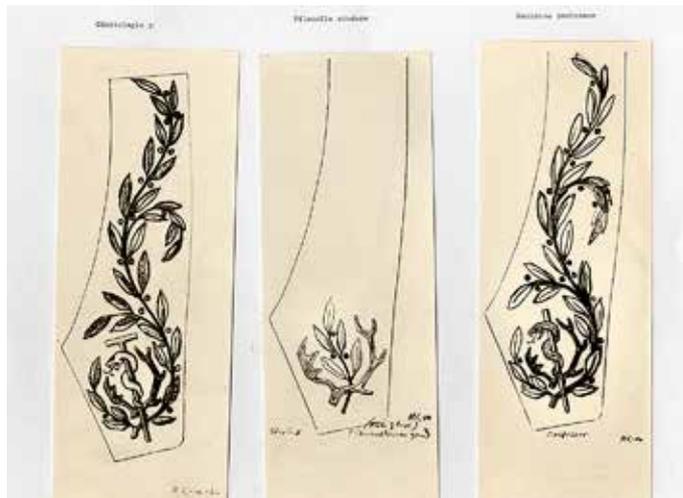
Prof. Hegeland: "Remove the horns",  
Doc. Lindberg: "Equal for all with horns",  
Deputy Prof. Brunte: "An abstract symbol",  
Prof. Hegeland again: "Equal for all without horns".

**AFTER THAT, PROFESSOR** Hegeland didn't utter another word, instead handing in a sharp petition, see photo, where he compared the reindeer horns with the University of Gothenburg having an emblem with fish bones. Hugo Hegeland, professor in economics, later left Umeå University in 1969 to become editor-in-chief of the business magazine *Veckans affärer*, and later became a member of parliament for the Moderate Party in Gothenburg.

As such he was known for always wearing a bow tie in chambers (without, however, an embroidered collar).

Umeå University didn't get any embroidered collars either, as the topic seemed to have been buried with the 1966 friction.

**CUNO BERNHARDSSON**



Proposed embroidered tail coat collars.



Professor Hugo Hegeland.

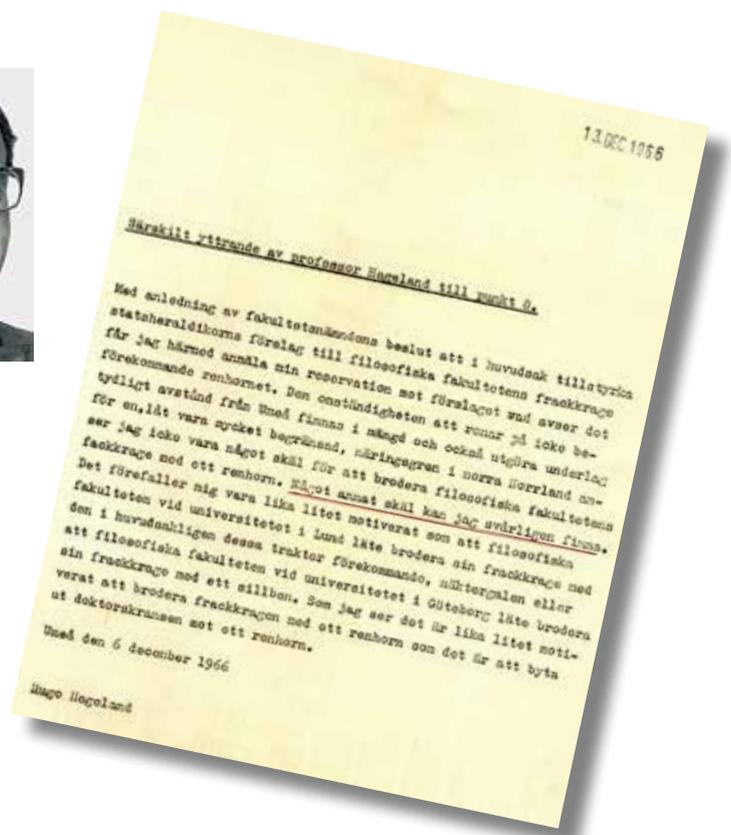




PHOTO: PER MELANDER

**Sara Edenheim** is a docent in history and senior lecturer at the Umeå Centre for Gender Studies.

(The text is a translation of an excerpt from Sara Edenheim's blog post on Forskarbloggen at umu.se.)

## The seminar that ebbed away

**H**OW WE LOOK UPON our jobs as researchers and teachers varies depending on what task we have ahead of us, in my mind. Some tasks are seen as a part of a contract, something we simply have to tick off to earn our salary. Some tasks, however, are seen as more of a gift, a mercy to be given and that we're sometimes dangerously close to completing free of charge despite our knowledge that it results in a sort of wage dumping.

**WHAT CAN BE REGARDED** as contractual versus a gift can change; sometimes for personal reasons, sometimes due to changes in the organisations, and sometimes as a consequence of an intricate combination of both. The seminar is one such task that seems to have moved from gift to contract. With a risk of nostalgia getting the better of me, the seminars during my time as a doctoral student weren't just popular among both doctoral students and senior researchers, they were also regarded as mandatory. At present, we only attend if we happen to have time on that particular day – regardless of how early the seminar was advertised – and we tend to go only if the seminar deals with issues very close to our own subjects of interest.

**OUR OWN PROFESSIONAL** development sometimes seems limited to what it takes to write a credible account for previous research in our grant applications. This doesn't necessarily mean that we have all more egocentric; the organisation we belong to has been slimmed over time and the demand to prioritise our own research doesn't come solely from ourselves, but also from above. The peculiar thing is that there are other parts of our operations that are still regarded as gifts and if we in the same breath say that we can't make time for seminars, how can we then spend hours in conversations over coffee, attend a week-long conference, or feel that we have time for research at home? None of these hours count toward our time sheets, and yet we do it.

**I BELIEVE THAT** it is we researchers have stopped seeing the value of a functioning seminar culture. We don't really see the point of having it: seminars no longer fit the image of our University. Within the scope of evaluations and measurable results, seminars are almost incomprehensible: a continuously recurrent meeting with colleagues where focus lies on someone else's research and texts, not on a department level, the next grant application or the Master's programme syllabus – what on earth is the point in that? Like a secret club that meets without being measurable, without relating to any of the University's goals and objectives, and without scraping up points for the citation index. It almost sounds subversive.

The University has gone a long way from its origins when things that used to be its starting point – collegiality and seminars – aren't even mentioned in steering documents or seen as meaningful parts of our work, neither as a gift nor contract. No wonder that the notion of seminars is ebbing away. ●

SARA EDENHEIM

Would you like  
to write an Aktum  
column?

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