

Aktum.

FOR EVERYONE WORKING AT UMEÅ UNIVERSITY • DECEMBER 2017 • NO 4

Meet Kristina Lejon

In tune with spreading knowledge

A day at IRT

Keeping our digital systems away from attacks

THEME Procurement

What you need to know about public procurement

Annual Celebration

New professors, honorary doctors and award recipients



UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

Firstly...

Don't shoot the pianist

Procurement?! More than one eyebrow has been raised when I mentioned that procurement was going to be the theme for this issue of Aktum. Sure, it may sound dry and somewhat boring, yet there are few things that awake such feelings. It simply takes bringing up fitness cards, the telephone network system or mobile phone subscriptions to make the blood pressure rise in some people. But what's it about? How much do you really know about public procurement – actually? What it means? How it works?

As an institution of higher learning, Umeå University is a public authority. Public authorities are subject to laws and regulations – not least in regards to procurement. There's something beautiful about it; an ultimate sign that a well-structured society works. A guarantee that, for example, our taxes are used in a proper manner.

There are obvious examples of inaccuracies, wrongdoings and even corruption. But those instances are usually uncovered, and in those cases where everything functions, it's certain: the law on public procurement governs in the Kingdom of Sweden.

I've had the pleasure of meeting Magdalena Ribbing – peace in her memory – who has left an empty space behind as a public authority on etiquette. I'm certain that she would've had something to say about the proportion of the outbreaks and insults spread through emails and comments in connection with the procurement of the fitness card, for instance. That's where the boundaries of common manners and civility were crossed many times. In addition, it became evident how the messengers had to deflect bullets for something that the originators were responsible for; namely the decision about the winning procurement bid.

So a minor in-depth review may be in order, and not only about procurement, but also how we communicate with each other – within Umeå University as a *public authority*. Something that can also be useful when the institution-wide discussions on our core values have started this autumn. ●



PER MELANDER
ACTING EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

“A guarantee that, for example, our taxes are used in a proper manner.”

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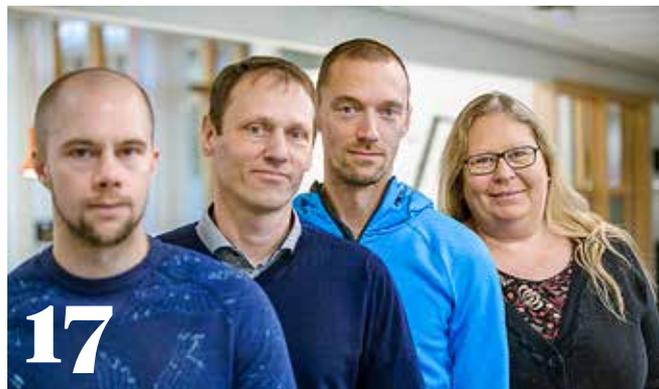
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On the intranet Aurora, you will find the latest news for people working at Umeå University.



Hi there! *Pontus Bergh*, director of studies and deputy director of the Police Education Unit

Police education finally on campus

In spring 2016, the first sods were cut for the new Police Education Building on campus, just north of the Northern Behavioural Sciences Building. The new premises will be ready to welcome students and staff in early 2018. And as of 1 March 2018, instruction is scheduled to take place in the new building.

TEXT: Kristina Forsman Lindmark **PHOTO:** Ulrika Bergfors

“IT FEELS VERY EXCITING to carry out police education in brand new premises that we designed specifically for the training of police officers, but also to finally teach on campus where we belong. We are incredibly anxious!” explains Pontus Bergh.

The teaching has previously taken place at three different locations in Umeå – Umestan, Iksu and campus. To gather all parts under one roof is something the Police Education has long strived towards and anticipated. They now hope that the new premises will help to further improve the education, partly as the education will be better integrated into the campus environment.

Pontus Bergh explains that currently, the size of the building is adequate for the num-

ber of admitted students, but nearly half of the seats are empty in Umeå. Even if there are many applicants to police educations in Sweden, few of them meet the requirements set by the Swedish Police Authority.

SIMULTANEOUSLY, the ambition is that Sweden should train more police officers, although the new Police Education Building is not large enough to meet the expansion of the police force desired by the government.

“But if we can’t accommodate all students here, we could continue to use the police training premises at Umestan,” he adds.

The new building has everything that is required to train police officers. A large part of the premises are specially adapted for

the distinct training situations needed by the police education. For example, training flats, forensic laboratories, shooting ranges and modern classrooms for lectures and group work.

The education also includes a number of exercises in which police students prepare themselves through by training in simulated situations.

If you’re interested in helping out as figurant, for example by acting as witness to a burglary or playing someone who is fighting in a flat during the exercises, you can register your interest to the Police Education.

“It’s a great and fun way to learn more about police training,” says Pontus Bergh. ●





Don't forget your five a day for Christmas

Jellied veal, pig's trotters and boiled ling. Traditional dishes that are becoming increasingly rare at Swedish Christmas buffets. Björn Norén at the School of Restaurant and Culinary Arts sees a greener trend arising among the otherwise so meat-focused Christmas dishes.

WE ARE RAPIDLY APPROACHING one of the biggest festive periods in the Swedish society. To many, it's seen as a time for family fun, relaxation and not least – good food.

Björn Norén, university lecturer and deputy director of the School of Restaurant and Culinary Arts, finds the traditional Swedish Christmas buffet (*julbord*) as a fabulous tradition. Not least as it includes many of our traditional dishes, but it also opens up for contemporary food trends. More vegetables and, for instance.

“A modern Christmas buffet offers a reduced selection of dishes compared to previously. We're encouraged to separate the meal into courses and food is often served in individual portions instead of on piled plates. This feels promising from a sustainability perspective,” says Björn Norén continuing with some fresh ideas for the buffet:

“A new approach to the Christmas buffet could be more vegetables, more local specialties, but also elements from other parts of the globe. New influences that have been introduced to more high-profile buffets are a vegetarian selection, shellfish and specialties from other countries.”

“Don't hesitate to mix new flavours – an Asian touch to your spare ribs, for instance. Reduce the number of dishes and aim for quality and flavour. Present the dishes in small portions to make it easy to serve.”

“There's a great variety of nice locally produced charcuteries that puts less focus on the ham. And particularly, don't forget to make coriander and tahini falafels. Pick a cabbage of your choice to boil, prepare a salad with or make crisps. Above all, black cabbage (*svartkål*) is delicious dried with olive oil and salt.”

ONE OF BJÖRN NORÉN'S personal favourites when it comes to more traditional Christmas food is risalamande (*ris à la Malta*), Christmas ham (*julskinka*) with a spicy mustard, and a particular rye bread called *vörtbröd*, Spanish nougat *turrón** and the fizzy drink *julmust*.

“Having boiled ling (lutefisk) on Boxing Day is also a special event. It has a very unusual texture and the side dishes – petite peas, brown butter and white sauce ... Tasty!”

Last but not least, he adds that a Christmas buffet is about more than just food – it's about the community spirit experienced around food and festivities. This goes for family relations, colleagues and friends, which is worth remembering. ●

PER MELANDER

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA



* A typical turrón is traditionally a form of Spanish nougat with almonds eaten around Christmas. Turrón is often eaten with a glass of sparkling wine. The two most famous types are *Turrón de Alicante* (hard turrón) and *Turrón de Jijona* (soft turrón).

Figuratively speaking **Erik Domellöf**



2,360 women 2,052 men

Number of employees at Umeå University. Spread across 13 job categories
Source: fokus.umu.se

PHOTO: SIMON ÖHMANN JONSSON



Shekarabi pays tribute to Umeå legal officers

MINISTER FOR PUBLIC Administration, Ardalan Shekarabi, was one of the guests when the Department of Law at Umeå University celebrated its 40th anniversary on 10 November. The minister mentioned that he often meets legal officers in public administration who have earned their degree in Umeå.

“They’re successful, so you’re doing a good job in Umeå. Congratulations!”

The minister also took the opportunity to recount that apart from what’s already been decided, more governmental relocations to other parts than Stockholm will take place. When it comes to administration law, Ardalan Shekarabi mentioned that it’s time for Swedish public authorities to expand its ability to take action within EU law and maybe test the limits.

“Formerly, law in Sweden was subordinate to politics. We weren’t really prepared for the EU membership leading to law testing politics,” says Ardalan Shekarabi.

Many people visited the 40th anniversary of law at Umeå University, one of which was Elisabeth Rynning, the Swedish Parliamentary Ombudsman, and lectures covered wide-spanning fields such as begging, artificial intelligence, self-determination and mock trials with Master of Laws students.



PHOTO: ELIN BERG

New international staff member or researcher?

DON’T MISS THE University’s introduction programme in English for newcomers! Starting on 7 February 2018 with a Welcome Day, the introduction programme offers many interesting events throughout the year and also Swedish courses. If you would like to meet other international staff members or see more of Umeå — please join us! For most events, accompanying family members are also welcome.

Welcome to visit our webpage on Aurora — under “New Staff”.



Royal flair at Umeå University's 2017 Annual Celebration

On 20–21 October, Umeå University held its 2017 Annual Celebration. The programme offered lectures, an Arctic seminar and an Annual Celebration Ceremony complete with a banquet dinner and dance.

TEXT: Markus Välimaa **PHOTO:** Mattias Pettersson

THE 2017 ANNUAL CELEBRATION Ceremony was started with an inauguration of an exhibit of this year's honorary doctors, new professors and award recipients. The exhibition was opened by chief librarian Mikael Sjögren in the University Library on the Friday. Also, Associate Professor Virginia Langum held the lecture 'Reading and health'.

ON THE SATURDAY MORNING, the public were invited to lectures that filled several lecture theatres in the Humanities Building and the Social Sciences Building. These lectures covered a number of themes. For instance, the new professor in sociology, Malcolm Fairbrother, talked about social trust and how he uses surveys to study the general public view on environmental issues. Honorary doctor at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Carol Bacchi, spoke about the concept of 'problems' and effects of policy-making.

The most popular lecture on the Saturday filled an entire auditorium and was held by Professor Emmanuelle

Charpentier explaining the ground-breaking gene-editing technology behind CRISPR-Cas9.

UMEÅ UNIVERSITY gave H.M. King Carl XVI Gustaf an Arctic seminar for his 70th birthday in 2016, which was held in the Saturday afternoon with the King present. At the event, Professor John Anderson, senior lecturer Ellen Dorrepaal, and senior lecturer Jonathan Klaminde each held a presentation on an Arctic theme. For instance, there was talk on how earthworms affect the Arctic climate, how Arctic climate change affects the globe, and why the Arctic environment is important for understanding climate change. Many spectators had found their way to the seminar but if you missed it, you can watch it on the University Bambuser channel.

The 2017 Annual Celebration also installed new professors, conferred our new honorary doctors and presented a number of scientific awards at the Ceremony in Aula Nordica. During the Ceremony, H.M. King Carl XVI Gustaf thanked the University for the gift. ●



Honorary doctors:

Carol Bacchi, Faculty of Social Sciences
 Emmanuelle Charpentier, Faculty of Medicine
 Stewart Clegg, Faculty of Social Sciences
 Paul Jenkins, Faculty of Medicine
 Marco H.D. van Leeuwen, Faculty of Social Sciences
 Björn O. Nilsson, Faculty of Science and Technology
 Bo Nilsson, Faculty of Arts
 Gary Siuzdak, Faculty of Science and Technology

New professors:

Mattias Alenius, Department of Molecular Biology
 Jim Andersén, Umeå School of Business and Economics
 Patrik Andersson, Department of Chemistry
 Mattias Derlén, Department of Law
 Rikard Eriksson, Department of Geography and Economic History
 Malcolm Fairbrother, Department of Sociology
 Giovanni Forchini, Umeå School of Business and Economics
 Matthew Francis, Department of Molecular Biology
 Thomas Moøe, Department of Public Health and Clinical Medicine
 Christina Ottander, Department of Science and Mathematics Education
 Olov Rolandsson, Department of Public Health and Clinical Medicine
 Eva Samuelsson, Department of Public Health and Clinical Medicine
 Christina Segerholm, Department of Education
 Britt-Marie Stålnacke, Department of Community Medicine and Rehabilitation
 Stefan Söderberg, Department of Public Health and Clinical Medicine
 Karin Wadell, Department of Community Medicine and Rehabilitation
 Thomas Wågberg, Department of Physics

Award recipients:

Mads Greaker, the Erik Kempe Award
 Jan-Håkan Jansson, the Margareta and Eric Modig Award
 Virginia Langum, the Royal Skyttean Society's Young Researcher Award in Arts and Humanities
 Frank Lobbezzo, the Sven and Maud Thuréus Award
 Tommy Lundgren, the Nordea Science Prize
 Kristoffer Midttømme, the Erik Kempe Award
 Nasim Sabouri, the Eric K. Fernström Prize
 David Seekell, the Royal Skyttean Society's Young Researcher Award in Science and Technology
 Torbjörn Tomson, the Swedbank Science Award in Memory of Amanda and Per Algot Mångberg

5 questions for Virginia Langum

Researcher in medieval culture and literature, appointed by the Science Festival in Gothenburg as one of Sweden's 100 *häftigaste* (coolest) researchers and 2017 recipient of the Royal Skyttean Society's Young Researcher Award.



TEXT: Per Melander PHOTO: Elin Berge

1 How does it feel to be one of Sweden's 100 *häftigaste* researchers?

"I'm not sure how often medieval researchers are considered *häftiga*, so I think it's surprising and delightful."

2 What does it mean to get this kind of attention?

"Well, it's very nice and gratifying, of course. I came to Sweden six years ago, so I think for me, it suggests a feeling of welcome and appreciation."

3 How do you feel as a researcher about trying to reach beyond the walls of the academia?

"I think it's incredibly important and an underrated aspect of our jobs as academics. Especially when we're funded by the public, we shouldn't just talk among ourselves."

4 What do you consider to be the most important things to reach the public within your own field of research?

"I believe that knowledge of the past allows us to take a more critical and incisive view of the present. From my own work on the role of medicine in religion and culture, I would like people to understand that the Middle Ages wasn't as dark and ignorant as is often thought."

5 Since Christmas is coming up, can you briefly summarise the differences between a general medieval Christmas celebration and a general Christmas celebration of today?

"Well, I suppose the biggest difference is what happened the month before Christmas during the season of Advent. Medieval people fasted the month before Christmas. Another difference is that gift giving is associated with the Twelfth Night and the Feast of the Epiphany rather than Christmas itself. This is when the three wise men offered their gifts, so medieval people followed this tradition." ●



Umeå University's coolest procurement

New premises at Umeå University are now home to the results of a very exclusive procurement. Umeå and Stockholm are unique in Sweden with the hailed technology behind the now so topical subject – cryotechnology. This subject has received great attention not least after the announcement of the 2017 Nobel Prize in Chemistry.

TEXT: Markus Välimaa **PHOTO:** Mattias Pettersson



PUBLIC procurements are a recurring event in the Umeå University operations. These processes can be long and time-consuming, and they can also go rather unnoticed to employees and students. Something that has caught some people's attention, though, is the procurement of an electron microscope for Umeå Core Facility for Electron Microscopy (UCEM) in the KBC Building.

The microscope enables research in a high-resolution structure of biomolecules in a solution. The more simplified description of the method is that water or water solutions are rapidly cooled, without forming crystals in the process. Instead, the structure becomes transparent like glass. With the electron microscope, researchers are

able to see through the examined material as it's made solid yet without any disturbing ice crystals. It's a pioneering technology developed by Jacques Dubochet, Joachim Frank and Richard Henderson, who were awarded the 2017 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for their development of the method.

Research is first and foremost conducted through the study of proteins, cells and viruses in a so called Ångström resolution.

THE ELECTRON MICROSCOPE is a good example of how a high-tech installation comes at the price of a long procurement process. Many aspects need to be taken into consideration and several criteria need to be fulfilled. Something that was characteristic for the microscope procurement is the precision required as the machines are sensitive to the slightest vibration.

"Luckily, we are located in an area where vibrations are not that common. The train line is far away and there's not that much traffic around," says Linda Sandblad, director of UCEM.

During the procurement process, it wasn't just machines or the interior that needed upgrading, but also the building's foundation and the premises themselves. The foundation is laid on a clay-based soil that was exchanged for crushed stone to allow for a more stable research premise and to make the foundation heavier.

Inside the facility, nearby elevators have been removed to reduce the risk of disturbing vibrations. Another risk was the building's ventilation system that had to be restructured as the research is not only sensitive to vibrations but also to changes in temperature. ▶

SOMETHING UNIQUE ABOUT the procurement of the cryoelectron microscope and the surrounding facilities is that it, together with Stockholm University, makes Umeå exclusive in Sweden to have this technology. Umeå also has the biggest machine of this kind in Sweden, the Titan Krios.

The unique nature of the project caused the problem that only a few suppliers had the ability to manufacture the advanced technology that came in question. When the tender was published, there was potential for competition among those with resources. However, only two companies appeared to have the ability to manufacture the microscope; the American FEI Company and the Japanese company JEOL. In the end, a collaboration with FEI was selected as this supplier was considered to have a generally more tested and better product.

“The idea was to give even small companies the chance to compete with various parts to increase competition and provide us with a wider span of opportunities to choose suitable partners. But in the end we agreed that FEI offered us a better package deal,” says Linda Sandblad.

THE PREPARATIONS THAT were necessary bear witness of what a huge project this was. Linda Sandblad visited several laboratories in Europe before the procurements were initiated, for instance the EMBL, European Molecular Biology Laboratory in Heidelberg, Germany, where Nobel laureate Jacques Dubochet formerly worked.

The first step of the procurement was made in contact with Irina Geibrink at Public Procurement and Purchase at Umeå University. After the initial stage of planning, Akademiska Hus joined the collaboration as they were responsible for the necessary refurbishments in the KBC Building.

“Hindsight is a wonderful thing. We’ve learnt lots from this project and know what could’ve been done differently. Firstly, we should’ve planned for more efficient liquid nitrogen storage, one of the most important resources,” says Linda Sandblad.

However, there are already plans in action to improve the mentioned storage facilities in the future. There’s room for improvement of the facilities, but the microscope technology itself is expected to last for up to twenty years. ●

Becoming a procurement pro at work

When purchasing products or services as a university employee, you have to check if there are valid framework agreements internally or in the procurement catalogue called E-avrop. If your desired product or service is not listed — a procurement is needed.

TEXT: Anna-Lena Lindskog **ILLUSTRATION:** Ida Åberg

“IT ISN’T THAT complicated. In general, if you do not find a framework agreement, you should contact the University’s Public Procurement and Purchase,” says Irina Geibrink. “We can help guide the purchaser through the process.”

Each year, products and services for University operations are purchased for millions. Much of it concerns what many employees regularly need. That’s why framework agreements have been signed with suppliers of everything from pens and copying machines, to IT consultants and lab equipment.

So, before ordering something, you need to check if the product or service can be purchased internally. In the University’s web store Wisum, you can find office supplies and electronics such as computers. Chemicals are purchased through the Chemical Store, and printing services are purchased through the Printing Service. If these parties cannot deliver what you’re after, you need to look in the procurement catalogue E-avrop. It contains framework agreements with suppliers regarding small and big purchases, from fruit baskets to PR services.

Here’s one example: New pot plants would brighten up the winter gloom. However, there are no flowers in Wisum, and E-avrop lists no plant suppliers. Do I have to start a formal procurement just for some pot plants?

“We don’t have framework agreements for everything. Plants is one example of things we’re in the process of procuring, which means we’re currently not abided by an agreement,” says Irina Geibrink.

So, what happens when there’s no agreement? Can I shop wherever?

“No, but some circumstances allow for a direct award of contract. We may even have a temporary agreement, often with a previous supplier, until a new framework agreement has been procured.”

A DIRECT AWARD OF contract means to follow through a purchase that isn’t as formal as a public procurement. In order to make a direct award of contract over SEK 50,000, you need to consult Public Procurement and Purchase about the conditions, which for instance include asking more than one supplier. When purchasing for less than SEK 50,000,

Procurement costs

MSEK **114**



you're allowed to make a direct purchase. Nevertheless, even if your pot plants in the example would mount up to less than SEK 50,000, there are often more entities at the University who buy pot plants. If the total amount of purchases of a specific item or service exceeds SEK 534,000, the law requires a procurement.

"That's why it's always good to contact us, so we can give advice on the particular case," says Irina Geibrink.

If a procurement of the product or service is needed, Public Procurement and Purchase will be happy to assist. The first step of the process is for the customer to make a careful analysis of the needs. What requirements do you have on the product or service? Irina Geibrink emphasises the importance of asking yourself the questions: what, why, how and when.

In the next step, the procurement document is prepared: a request for a quote specifying the requirements, terms and rules of the game to appoint a winner. An invitation to tender is advertised in E-avrop, which is linked to a national database for procurement, which in turn is linked to a corresponding European database, called TED.

AT THE END OF the tender period, the incoming tenders are reviewed based upon the requirements set, forming the decision on which supplier the purchaser may purchase its products or services from.

Sometimes procured products are more expensive than offered at shops in town. Wouldn't it be better to buy it there instead? How often do you get that question?

"A lot. All products we purchase aren't based on the cheapest deal, but in total it can often be a very good agreement," says Irina Geibrink.

For example: Why can't we purchase furniture from Ikea? Firstly, Ikea usually never answers to tenders. Secondly, we need to consider quality. Beside the purchase itself, many Ikea furniture items require assembly, and we're not supposed to spend working hours on assembling furniture. Those are factors that also need to be taken into consideration in a procurement.

Some procurements, such as those about telephony and fitness cards, have received criticism among employees.

"It's hard to please everyone, particularly when it comes to products and services that many people use. Sometimes the procure-

ment officers get barked at, but they're not the ones who make the decision on purchasing. The responsibility for the needs analysis and strategic decision-making on what path to take and what requirements to set on products or services always lies on the party that ordered the procurement." ●

FACTS on procurements

- The University purchases products and services through invitations to tender for nearly MSEK 500 per year.
- Besides those, there are existing framework agreements with suppliers, many of which comprise purchases for MSEK 45–50 per year.
- Less complex procurements, so-called direct awards of contract, are made mounting up to about SEK 2 million per year.
- Some larger ongoing public procurements are a travel agency for business travel, IT consultants, catering and library systems.
- Read more about purchasing products and services: <https://www.aurora.umu.se/en/service-and-support/purchase-of-products-and-services/>

Fitness card stirred up emotions

PHOTO: ULRIKA BERGFORS



online. Academics are no exception. When talking face to face, you can decipher the recipient's reactions and make adjustments if someone takes offence, but that goes amiss online since the conversation doesn't take place in real time," says Elza Dunkels.

What most people seem to have forgotten is that the procurement that Iksu won nine years ago also caused an upheaval as it meant a stop to the healthcare allowance of SEK 1,000 per year, which only about 700 employees had chosen to make use of.

"Back then, I also received heaps of emails. The criticism was instead that we subsidised Iksu. This time we seem to have taken something from our members of staff that was very dear to them," says Christer Åkerberg.

At most, about 2,000 employees, which represents nearly half of all members of staff, have had a fitness card at Iksu, and the card has been used on average 1.5 times per week. After the agreement expired, many employees have carried on with Iksu at their own expense. So far, 500 members of staff have signed up for the subsidised USM card.

The issue that has caused the most irritation about the change is the distance from campus and the services offered.

"This is one of the most stupid decisions I've ever encountered. This means the end of subsidised exercise. What incompetent negotiators have been at it this time?" (senior lecturer)

SENIOR LEGAL ADVISOR Chatarina Larson suggests that some of the criticism boils down to not understanding what requirements are possible to set in a procurement.

"The requirements we set must be based on facts and be neutral to competition. Hence, we can't specifically demand a squash court, which only one supplier can offer, unless we can show that this activity is a decisive reason why employees exercise at all," says Chatarina Larson.

When it comes to distance, the tender required a facility within the city of Umeå, and it would count as favourable if it was accessible by public transport from campus. All suppliers fulfilled this requirement.

The agreement with USM runs for two years and was started in August 2016. Information about future fitness agreements will be provided shortly. ●

"This seems like a playpen for university bureaucrats who fail to understand the implications of such a decision. Narrow-minded bureaucrats. I'm inclined to call the decision an outrageous scandal." (comment on Aurora by a senior lecturer)

NEVER BEFORE HAVE so many people had so much to complain about so little. To be precise: the procurement of a fitness card and Christer Åkerberg, coordinator for personal development in health, fitness and occupational health care, who received 250 reactions to the procurement via Aurora, email and social media.

"Many comments indicated clearly that this is a topic of great concern. The procurement in itself can't really be criticised. Still, we can learn from the experience and consider potential improvements for next time, such as informing members of staff about the ongoing procurement at an earlier stage," says Christer Åkerberg.

The reason behind offering fitness cards is based on evidence showing that it's a good way to improve health and well-being among members of staff. First and foremost, the University Management was the purchaser in the procurement based on a given budget, and was also the party making the final call on agreement. The requirements were based on statistics on the activities used during the ongoing agreement at

the time. The case was prepared by Public Procurement and Purchase with support from a reference group containing employee representatives. There was a considerable difference in price among the suppliers who eventually fulfilled all demands in the tender, and all deciding parties were in agreement that USM had the overall most advantageous offer.

"I wonder if Umeå University has completely lost its senses! Is procurement exempt from what is called science?" (lecturer)

MUCH OF THE criticism against the procurement was both objective and constructive, whilst other comments were made in a tone that you don't expect at a university. Elza Dunkels at the Department of Applied Educational Science has studied heated and aggressive expressions in the digital sphere.

"On television, online antagonists are portrayed as oddballs taking snus and wearing caps, but in reality, even ordinary people can express themselves in extreme manners

OLA NILSSON

What's happening with the universities' autonomy?

The Swedish Riksdag has decided that institutions of higher education should have a far-reaching autonomy. That means that the institutions to a great extent decide over their research, education, premises and resources. But is this really the case? And how will this pan out in the future?

LATELY, VOICES have been raised against an interfering Government control. Dalarna University is one example. If you haven't been in the loop, here's a recap: last year, the Government forced the aforementioned university college to retain its operations in both Falun and Borlänge – despite the University Management and students' desire to do the opposite. The decision joined Vice-Chancellors of 35 higher education institutions, Hans Adolfsson alike, in Svenska Dagbladet protest: "The Government should not overrule universities".

Much of the problem stems from two separate steering systems: linear and collegial governance. Greatly simplified, we can establish that the Government and the Swedish Riksdag have the right to decide on certain matters, whereas others are controlled by the institutions themselves. The current governing principles for Government control and academic freedom have hardly been updated since 1993, which doesn't really help the matter.

HEIDI HANSSON, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Umeå University, suggests that the trust in Swedish higher education institutions needs to be increased as things stand now:

"Universities' most important distinguishing mark is competence in education and research. That doesn't mean that political manifestations aren't important, but our perspectives must be taken into consideration. We know what we're doing."

According to Heidi Hansson, the decision of where and when education should take place should be up to the universities



The Swedish Riksdag.

and the surrounding society. On campus, an external location or online; during normal term time or summer holidays.

"We're responsible for the quality of education. Hence, we must also be granted influence over quality-related issues such as, for instance, the offering and use of resources," says Heidi Hansson.

The same goes for research, where an important activity would be to increase core funding to the universities, she suggests.

At present, research funding bodies such as Formas, the Swedish Research Council and Vinnova have influence on what domains and issues are promoted.

"The problem is that the research councils' choice of priorities must be very comprehensive and be applicable to all higher education institutions. That means that universities with other specialisations can get less funds than they deserve. Researchers having to redirect their research focus or reprioritise threatens its long-term objectives."

Heidi Hansson wishes that universities would get strategic responsibility of research funds allocations instead of councils.



Heidi Hansson, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Umeå University.

SHE ALSO INQUIRES after other, more strategic long-term models, when it comes to allocations of means for annual performance equivalents – study places, that is.

"Humanities and technology are valued differently, which has non-advantageous steering effects stemming from the 90s. This needs revising," says Heidi Hansson.

At the moment, the Government's investigator, Pam Fredman, is doing just that: revising the universities' governance and allocation of resources. Her conclusion will be presented in December 2018. ●

LENA HOLMBERG

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

PHOTO: MATTIAS PETTERSSON



Singing the praises of popular science

Promoting interest and enthusiasm with others is a driving force in Kristina Lejon's life. This applies both when she teaches medical students and when she holds popular science lectures at lunch-time. Or when she leads the Snowflake Singers barbershop choir.

TEXT: Ola Nilsson PHOTO: Johan Gunséus

HAVING SEVERAL IRONS in the fire or juggling many things at once is something of a normal state for Kristina Lejon, senior lecturer and docent in immunology genetics, researcher and Vice Dean at the Faculty of Medicine. During her free time, a barbershop singer and director of the Snowflake Singers.

Additionally, she has a passion for popular science; to distribute the light of science to people other than her colleagues. These may include popular science lectures at Kafé Station, learning lunches at the County Council, meetings with patient associations, talks at upper-secondary schools or the Faculty of Medicine's Fika after a researcher (Fika efter en forskare) at the Väven cul-

tural centre, which Kristina is involved in and organises through the faculty's information committee.

"As researchers, we have a responsibility to take the lead in spreading knowledge throughout society. It becomes increasingly important to be able to explain the difference between facts and myths, for example, with a hot topic like vaccinations. Then you need to be able to be open to things that can change over time as you obtain more knowledge," says Kristina.

Even if the level of prior knowledge is obviously completely different for medical students and visitors to public lectures, Kristina can experience the same.

"I get a feeling, it's like there's an aura in the room. You look in people's faces and sense the mood if they're still interested. I listen a great deal to that feeling, and ►

“My vision is that Umeå will have the best medical education in the nation, both in terms of knowledge content and how we instruct.”



Kristina Lejon

Does: Docent and senior lecturer in immunology genetics, Vice Dean at the Faculty of Medicine.

Hobbies: Song and music, spending time with the family.

Watches: I don't watch much TV, but programmes that capture my interest are documentaries about people and how things work.

Favourite dish: Grilled fish that's prepared by myself or my husband Leif.

Latest book-read: I only read books while on holiday. On a flight to Las Vegas, I read *All the Light We Cannot See* which is about human destiny during World War II.

Dreams of: To do what's good for many people.

often make short summaries in the middle in order to say the same thing from a different angle.”

THE PATH INTO THE exciting world of medicine was defined early on. Since her childhood days in Luleå, Kristina was interested in science and how everything actually functioned. She took medical undergraduate studies in Uppsala prior to earning her doctorate in Umeå in 1996. By that time, she had come to focus on the immune system in medicine. It’s like its own world that is dispersed in the body where a lot of different cells and molecules interact.

In 1998, she journeyed across the Atlantic Ocean. Kristina had received a generous stipend from the Wenner-Gren Foundations and earned a postdoctoral fellowship at Stanford University in California, USA. It became two and half years *over there*, something that provided other experiences apart from scientific merits.

“It was very beneficial to test being an immigrant with children in the United States. My husband was on parental leave during the first year and our neighbour was quite sceptical about us because of it; my husband was not a real man because he didn’t work. At the same time, it’s a country with a variety of cultures and it’s understood that beyond basic human dignity and respect, there’s truly nothing right or wrong in how one chooses to live their life.”

EVENTUALLY, THE FAMILY was pressed to make a decision regarding where in the world they wanted to live. Kristina was offered a position at Stanford, a chance that many researchers would be willing to ski backwards across the Antarctic for, but when the newly formed biotech company Uman Genomics simultaneously offered her a job, first as lab manager and later as marketing manager and business developer, the decision was to move home to Sweden. The oldest son had already begun in an American school and life as a researcher at a prestigious university would’ve certainly meant a place on the sunny side of the American dream, but in the end having the children grow up as Swedes rather than Americans and be closer to relatives in the home country outweighed staying.

The time in the United States also gave a new spark for the other big passion in Kristina’s life – music. Also that had existed since her childhood days. Her sister-in-law had begun with barbershop in Sweden and when she visited Kristina in California, it turned out that a world-renowned choir was practicing just a few blocks away. The encounter with this choir resulted in an instant and mutual love for barbershop singing. It entails always performing without notes, you dance, wear performance costumes and deliver an experience on all levels.

The choir that Kristina quickly joined was going to compete in the 1999 international championship. Incidentally, Kristina’s sister and her Stockholm barbershop choir also competed in the same competition and earned a silver, while Kristina’s American choir earned seventh place. When back in Sweden, Kristina naturally continued with barbershop and since 2007 she has been director of the Snowflake Singers. She also sings in the quartet RING that competed in Las Vegas for the inter-

national championships in October, representing the Nordic countries. Unfortunately, the choir’s bass singer was afflicted with chronic laryngitis, so there was no top prize. But winning isn’t always most important.

“As a matter of fact, I don’t think so much about the competition itself. But I enjoy the path to get there, to strive to do your best. It’s the same with research. I can conduct the same experiment five times and be satisfied every time I get the same results. In the choir, we can continuously work on a four bar harmony over and over again. That really triggers me, to never give up.”

KRISTINA’S OWN RESEARCH is focused on autoimmune diseases, especially in childhood diabetes. There hasn’t been a gene-editing type breakthrough, but a number of puzzle pieces about the role of white blood cells in why type 1 diabetes occurs in some but not others. Autoimmune diseases such as arthritis, type 1 diabetes, MS, and certain thyroid diseases depend both on genetic vulnerability and on surrounding factors such as infections, diet, environment and sun exposure.

“It’s like a cup that eventually overflows when different factors interact. But it also means that there’s hope. When you see who has the genetic propensity for diseases and understand what other factors can affect it, you may only need to change one or two factors, simply stated, such as vaccinating against a certain infection, so that the cup doesn’t spill over and the disease breaks out.”

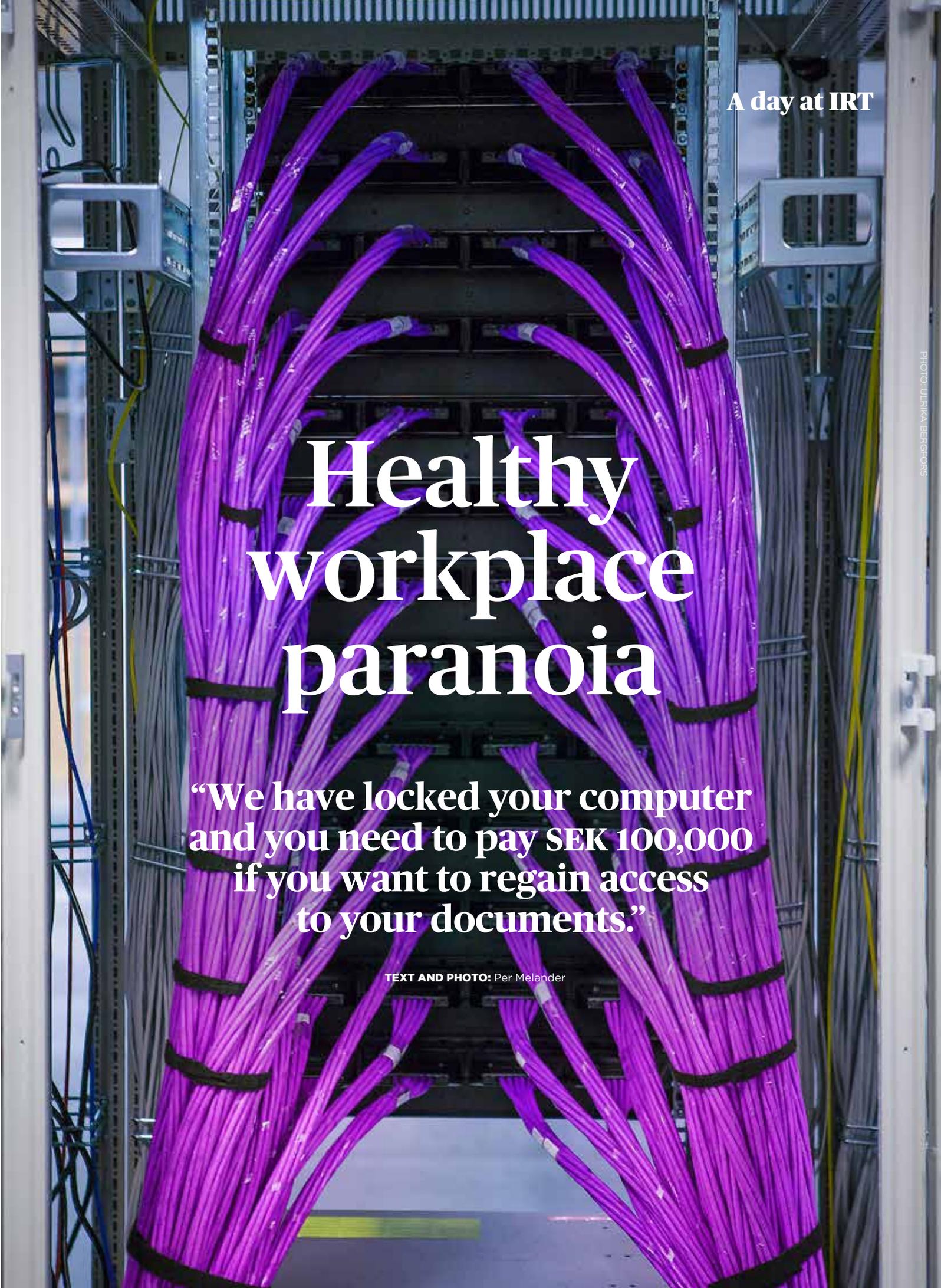
At the present time, Kristina is engaged as a partner in several projects on the role of the immune system in rheumatic diseases and dental care. But in the upcoming years, her research projects will take a small step back. In addition to teaching, since mid-year she has been Vice Dean of the Faculty of Medicine with responsibility for education, an assignment that takes up roughly half of her working hours.

“My vision is that Umeå will have the best medical education in the nation, both in terms of knowledge content and how we instruct. It’s otherwise easy for us in the north to be marginalised. We need to boost and reward teaching even more in everyday life.”

However, an almost inevitable question triggers a moment of hesitation with the gender-conscious writer before it can be proposed. Would you ask it if Kristina was a man and named Krister? Well, you would presumably. So the question is: How do you squeeze everything into a 24 hour day?

“I was born with the ability to focus on one thing at a time. I rarely worry and I’m a really good planner. I decide what to do and then do it. And I’ve never required a lot of rest and I hardly watch television. I also have trust in the fact that others will do their job. This is true at work, in the choir and in family life,” replies Kristina without looking the least bit stressed.

The plethora of activities reached a pinnacle when Kristina turned 50 years old on 9 December. On that very day she directed the Snowflake Singers in their big Christmas concert at Norrlandsoperan together with the international championship winning male quartet Ringmasters from Stockholm. Being a Lion (Lejon) is suitable for someone able to juggle so many things at once. On the way to the next half century. ●



A day at IRT

Healthy workplace paranoia

**“We have locked your computer
and you need to pay SEK 100,000
if you want to regain access
to your documents.”**

TEXT AND PHOTO: Per Melander

A day at IRT



Björn Linder, Kenneth Lindberg, Fredrik Johansson and Maria Edblom Tauson. Missing in the photo is Einar Hillbom, the fifth cog in the IRT team.

WHEN MANY OF US are on long holiday breaks during Christmas and Easter, that's when hackers strike. In the past, it was mostly about exploiting internet capacity, but it's all about money today. But the IRT team that protects our digital trenches at Umeå University consistently shouts out: 'We won't pay!'

Every week, deception attempts appear in your inbox: 'My aunt must transfer SEK 22 million to an account in Sweden.' Or they are more sophisticated and look exactly like a Umeå University web page with a Umu-id login.

IRT stands for Incident Response Team and is a part of the ITS organisation. There are five people who monitor the university's data networks, systems and fibre infrastructures. Nipping it in the bud, quite simply. Or if a deception attempt is successful, make certain the damages are as limited as possible.

In order to meet them, I finally pass through the high glass walls that surround the ITS reception in the MIT Building. I'm soon greeted by Maria Edblom Tauson. She is the manager of the IRT team and has worked at Umeå University for 30 years.

"It's turned out quite nice in here, hasn't it?" she says and happily presents the newly renovated staff lounge. Walls have been taken down and the room feels well thought out with its mild pastel colours, stylish furniture and elegant luminaries.

"I HAVE THE BEST job at the entire University. I love digging deep into technical things and it's incredibly satisfying to be able to help people and stop things before it's too late," says Maria Edblom Tauson, and explains how she began as a programmer, and took on IT security issues around 1996. When questioned about her title, she answers: 'I don't know' and has a good laugh.

"I usually refer to myself as an IT security specialist, but we don't have specific job titles here. Everyone is listed as system administrators in the staff directory. But it's important that people know who we are and that we have a very good collaboration with 'sysadmins' at the departments. They're our tentacles out there. Even if it's about IT and technical things, it's important to have good personal relationships."

Maria Edblom Tauson describes how these online attacks are becoming more and more about commercial interests that make everything bigger, more advanced and not as transparent.



Maria Edblom Tauson also works as an ITS representative at the Swedish University Computer Network Computer Emergency Response Team (SUNnet CERT), which operates under the Swedish Research Council. Umeå University has always been in the forefront and its IT operations were one of the first in the country. Maria Edblom Tauson believes that it reflects the interests and driving force that is evident in Umeå.



"A fidget spinner comes in handy during all the long video meetings," says Maria Edblom Tauson.

"Those 'people out there' still believe that we in the world of higher education are an easy prey. But as it was formerly about driving traffic via our online resources, it's now about accessing our money and sometimes our research. So we need to always be on our toes."

HEALTHY PARANOIA IS Maria Edblom Tauson's buzzword for how to behave in your computer usage.

"Don't browse suspicious web sites, don't download software from sites you can't trust, double check everything, avoid using the same password everywhere and keep your computer up to date."

Nevertheless, she points out that there is a greater preparedness today, which means that the IRT team can take steps forward and don't have to explain 'basic things' all the time.

"People no longer click everything without first considering that there are evil persons that want to target us. Because there are actually individuals behind everything. People who spend time considering how to best trick people at Umeå University."

The monitoring at IRT is performed by automated logging and warning systems, and partly through manual monitoring and checking what's happening around

the world in order to see if there are things showing up on computer screens here.

Attacks do not always come in large numbers, rather they can arrive in isolated cases and then it's not so certain that the IRT team will see it. Therefore, they are dependent on individual users submitting tips and alerting us if something seems strange.

"What I think is most frightening right now are the different kinds of ransomware. This is when someone tries to place a malicious software into your computer that encrypts your entire hard disk and locks it. Then they expect you to pay money to unlock it again. From a user's point of view, it's probably the most unpleasant thing we have to fight against right now."

You will not notice anything until a dialogue box appears and says you have to pay. Maria Edblom Tauson emphasises to never pay ransoms. If you're hit, just shut down and reinstall your computer, and then recover your backup.

MARIA EDBLOM TAUSON believes that many people have now learned to delete spam emails and deny attempts to steal login and account information, for example, through messages like: '... you have received a tax refund', etc., but that doesn't prevent new ways to



Screenshot of a copied umu-webpage where the URL is the only thing revealing the deception.

Report suspicious emails to abuse@umu.se

Read more about current IT security issues at Umeå University at the IRT blog (in Swedish): it-status.umu.se/irt/



Björn Linder keeps an eye on hacker attacks.



Fredrik Johansson says that hacker attacks often derive from low-income countries.

trick us from popping up. Right now, for instance, there is a circulation of intrusions where they attempt to make it look like a message from a financial administrator at your workplace.

“An email with a correct-looking signature may state: ‘Hello, this is your finance administrator. I have a payment that needs to be processed quickly, can you do it today? Here’s the account number. You’ll get the invoice tomorrow.’”

“This is what we’re trying to explain so that people can be a step ahead if this appears. I occasionally receive these types of emails, so it seems to have increased.”

THE CORRIDORS OCCUPIED by the IRT team are lacking the same ambiance as the renovated staff lounge. Narrow, slightly dark and partly used as a temporary storage room. In order to be a bit more respectable, *creative chaos* is the euphemism that best describes the feeling.

Björn Linder sits in the room next door to Maria Edblom Tauson. He mainly works with incident management conducting security scans and evaluating vulnerabilities that

may be found on the university network.

“When scanning, you review all IP addresses at Umeå University. The software, in turn, sends signals back about all that a computer contains. Above all, if there are any open ports that can pose as a vulnerability,” says Björn Linder.

He explains how there are different levels of vulnerability: low, medium, high and critical. Critical is the one that has to be immediately addressed. The department is then contacted and informed about what has been discovered.

“The satisfying thing is finding holes and vulnerabilities, which can then be blocked.”

BJÖRN LINDER SAYS that most things come via email. How a virus can be delivered straight onto a computer with the touch of a button. He confirms the old saying that an email should be regarded like a postcard, a postcard that is written in pencil. It’s easy to read and easy to change – for anyone who comes across it.

Fredrik Johansson, who sits a few steps down the corridor, points out that most hacking attempts originate from low-income

countries. And so, every bit of money they manage to obtain via trickery is still more than what an ordinary worker earns per month.

He then shows an example that startles most people. It’s a seemingly exact copy of one of our university web pages where you need to log in with your Umu-id.

“They’ve copied our page, and only by looking at the web address you can see that something isn’t right. But on a stressful Friday afternoon, it’s easy to get fooled,” says Fredrik Johansson.

THE WORKING TEAM at IRT also includes Kenneth Lindberg. He isn’t as involved in the daily business like the others, but for him it’s more about keeping an eye on the data infrastructure. For instance, there shouldn’t be any restrictions for research and teaching. Neither locally nor nationally via the Swedish University Computer Network (SUNET).

We return outside the high glass walls and it’s easy to acknowledge how a day at work for many at Umeå University doesn’t have to be the same as another. ●

PHOTO: MATTIAS PETTERSSON



Democracy in the public eye

“I’m convinced that the year will be stimulating and interesting.”

I RECENTLY RETURNED from a conference in Catalonia. The tensions surrounding the eagerly awaited Catalanian independence left impressions in the city with Spanish and Catalanian flags hanging from balconies and windows. Even at the conference, our hosts spoke a great deal about the ongoing conflict. Was it a democratic right to decide whether to be an independent country, or was the Spanish government entitled to defend the constitution, a result of the return to a democratic regime after Franco’s military dictatorship. Colleagues at the local Rovira i Virgili University, named after a Catalanian nationalist and president of Catalonia’s Parliament, spoke their mind even though they were expected to take a stand. It became quite evident that democracy is not a simple undertaking but rather requires continuous discussion about conflicting interests and ambitions.

The experience in Catalonia also was a confirmation that democracy was a good theme for Umeå University to take on during 2018. Most of you have probably noticed that the Arctic is currently in focus, and the experience of investing an entire year on the same theme has been positive. It has provided the opportunity to have in-depth discussions about the university’s research within the area and communicate results to stakeholders both inside and outside the University.

AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, the University has now decided to place democracy in the centre. There are many reasons for doing so. An obvious one is that 2018 is an election year, but an important issue is also what role knowledge and universities should take in a democratic society. Not least the recent disdain for knowledge and post-truth trend updates the need to reconsider how universities act in relation to the ongoing societal debate. But even different stakeholders attempt to control universities and the production of knowledge is an important reason for focusing on democracy.

THE WORK ON THE programme for the democracy year has just begun, but it has already been taken into account that the event Kunskapsnoden will present current democracy-related research at Umeå University, and many of the University’s other activities such as Vetenskapsluncher and Culture on Campus will be influenced by the democracy theme. I’m convinced that the year will be stimulating and interesting. Above all, the activities and discussions during the upcoming year will be relevant and contribute to further developing Umeå University’s role as a vital stakeholder in the community. ●

DIETER MÜLLER
DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR

“How our higher education institution should systematically coordinate our interests and needs of research infrastructure is an altogether important issue. We also have an ongoing project making an inventory and an encompassing image of both our current situation and future needs.”

Hans Adolfsson, Vice-Chancellor



PHOTO: MATTIAS PETTERSSON

“No wounds are healed by pretending they don’t exist. No unacceptable exercise of power is restrained by turning the other cheek in the belief that next day, week or year will be better.”

Heidi Hansson, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of education



The wind will carry us

Mandana Moghaddam, 2015

A ROOM WITHOUT CEILING or walls placed between Umeå University Library and the Humanities Building. An unmade bed, a desk with a pencil-box and a lit desk lamp, a chair, a stool and a big patterned rug on the floor. Everything in grey concrete, so realistically made that you start doubting the uniform hardness of the material. Many feel an urge to touch the pillow and duvet to be convinced of the concrete material. When entering the room, fragments of phone conversations in various languages can be heard. It's hard to understand what is said, at the same time as the situations and tone of voice are so familiar.

Mandana Moghaddam (born 1962) has made a sculptural installation that can be seen as both obvious and mysterious at the same time. It's evident what the work of art resembles, it's inviting to enter and experience, but what's the room really telling us?

Due to its positioning on campus, it's easy to associate to a student dorm room's standardised interior, where the mat acts as an attempt to add a personal touch. Likewise, it

also reminds you of any temporary accommodation that may pass by in a person's life: a hotel room, bedsit or refugee housing facility. A life is full of movements that in one way or another affect our everyday: maybe for studies, business or pleasure. Many places carry great meaning and we may remember details, scents and specific events, whereas others are forgotten the same moment you close the door to leave.

When Mandana Moghaddam came to Umeå in preparation for her work of art, she was reminded of her first time in Sweden. She came as a quota refugee and was placed in a refugee camp in Kristineberg in 1979, where she lived alone in a room together with constant thoughts of and worry for her friends and family back in Tehran. Her instrument to tame her thoughts and worry was the phone. Phone calls are a recurring theme in Mandana Moghaddam's art as it was and still is an important lifeline for people on the run, as well as those who live away for less dramatic reasons. We want to know how loved ones are doing, be in touch

with the environments we are used to, and be assured that what you have left behind to some extent is still there.

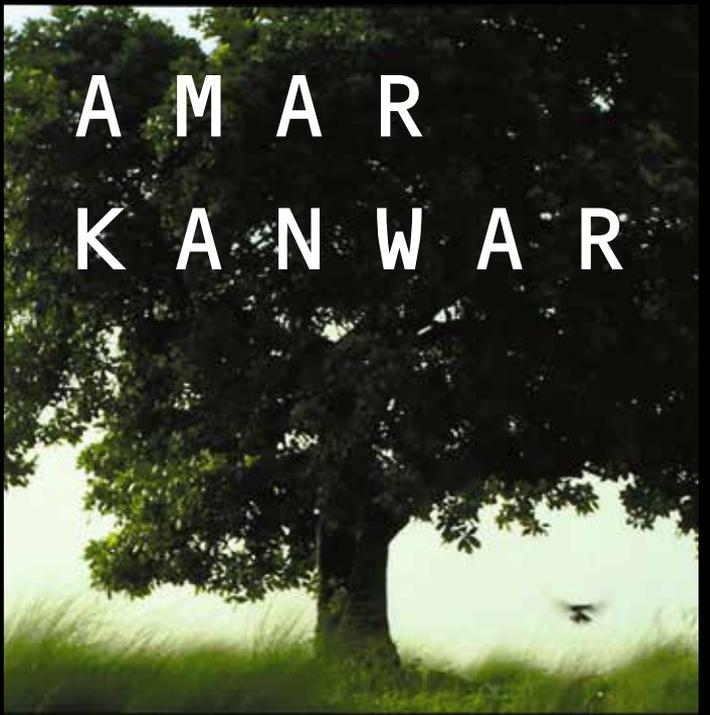
The title *The wind will carry us* has been taken from a poem by the poet Forough Farrokhzad (1935–1967), an artist, poet, film director and playwright. The poem deals with our memories and things we've forgotten or we think have been destroyed forever. Many times, places that we've visited will forever disappear, be lost or destroyed for one reason or another, but our memories and experiences of those locations will never go away. According to Forough Farrokhzad, these memories are carried by the wind and can always return – even if we think we have forgotten them. They will come back to us through a name, a detail, a sound, or a scent kept in the archive of the wind. This work of art can hence be seen as a loading station for everyone's memories of rooms that have once been called 'homes'. ●

ANN-CATRINE ERIKSSON,
senior lecturer in art history and faculty programme director at the Faculty of Arts Office.

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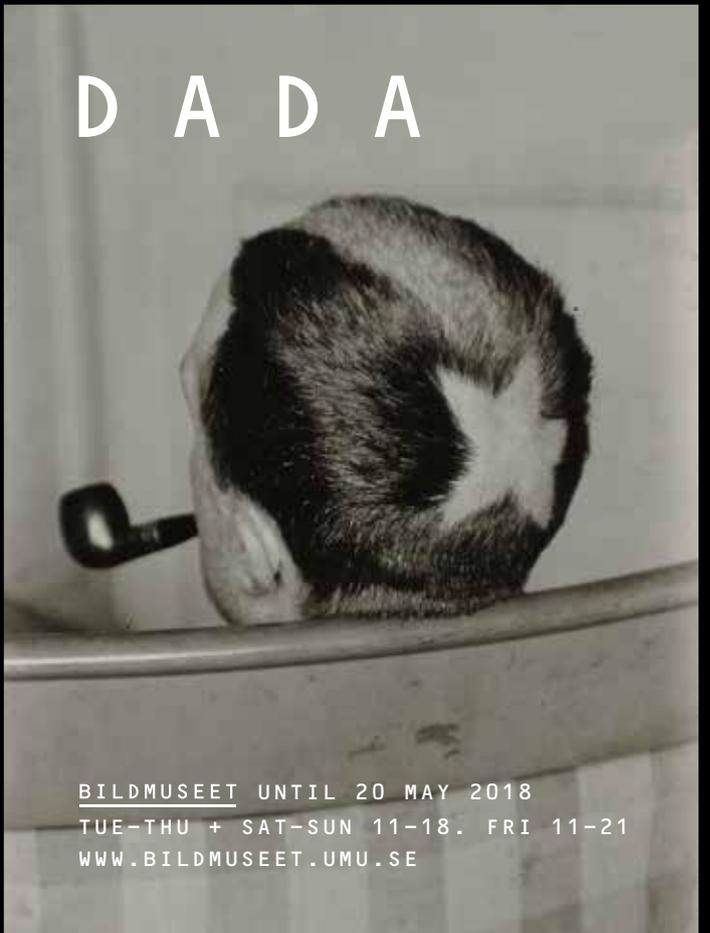
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PHOTO: PÅR LÄRKERYD

Christer Nordlund as Ernst Kirchsteiger at the Jubilee farce in 2015.

Christer Nordlund is a professor in the history of science and ideas, with a focus on environmental and scientific history, and also a member of the University Board.

Would you like to write an Aktum column?

Get in touch with the editorial board!
aktum@umu.se

A collaborative vision lives on

UMEÅ UNIVERSITY was established with a decision adopted by the Riksdag in 1963. The establishment was a major event in the small regiment town and a significant investment for Sweden, which thus obtained its first higher education institution north of the river Dalälven. It became the country's fifth, after the institutions in Gothenburg and Stockholm received university status in 1954 and 1960, respectively. At the same time, it was an event that was characteristic of the time in an international perspective. The university movement spread across the world and also reached northern Finland and Norway, where new universities were founded in Oulu in 1958 and Tromsø in 1968.

The arrival of the new universities was linked to a growing population and economic prosperity, which allowed institutional expansion of the educational system as a whole. In the spirit of welfare policy, everyone would be given the opportunity to develop themselves. Important for the development was also the notion that the prevailing industrial society was about to transition into a state of science-based knowledge and technological development. More and more sectors in society were based on science and demanded highly educated personnel. Research was attributed to both production capacity and solutions to complex societal problems.

CHARACTERISTIC OF THIS time was also an understanding that universities were in a state of change. If universities previously had the character of being closed, elitist and conservative castles of learning, they were now expected to become more open and flexible in their undertakings. This applied in particular to the new universities. Umeå University's most important task was to rectify the shortage of university educated staff in the public sector and to support the northern region of Sweden in its entirety, both economically and culturally. But there was also a vision that Umeå University would contribute to scientific and educational renewal.

ECCLESIASTICAL MINISTER RAGNAR Edenman advocated 'for the development of science motivated organisational innovations' in Umeå. For example, a number of professorships would be established in subjects that were new to the country. Concurrently, all subjects (with the exception of medicine and odontology) would be placed within the framework of a joint Faculty of Arts and Sciences. The idea was, as expressed in a bill in 1964, that 'the coherence of subjects into a faculty creates greater preconditions for, and facilitates cooperation in various contexts over traditional subject boundaries'.

HOWEVER, THE FACULTY of Arts and Sciences did not last long as it was divided into three separate faculties in 1968 – a Faculty of Mathematics and Science, a Faculty of Social Sciences and a Faculty of Arts. A rationale for the disunion was that the teachers quickly became so numerous that they simply could not be accommodated within the same organisation. They were a total of 59 at the time. But even though the notion of a collective faculty was quickly forgotten and the scientific disciplines were physically separated on their side of the University campus pond, the vision of collaboration across subject boundaries has endured at Umeå University, and that thought certainly lives on today. ●

CHRISTER NORDLUND