

Aktum.

FOR EVERYONE WORKING AT UMEÅ UNIVERSITY • OCTOBER 2016 • NO 3

Fighting sexual violence

Honorary doctor Mukwege at the Annual Celebration

A day at work

Gardeners watering, pruning
and safely handling GMO

THEME

STUDENT

RECRUITMENT

Defending human dignity

Ethical Review Board
balances benefits against risks

Scholars at Risk

Academic freedom
under threat in Europe

MEET GUNILLA OLIVECRONA

Professor spinning off



Firstly...

Tell me what's on your mind and the coffee's on me

I feel an urge to say "Hi and welcome!" You are now reading the Umeå University staff magazine Aktum and the author of this text is me, editor-in-chief.

As a journalist, it's easy to fall back into a comfortable and rather invisible role of being an indiscernible middle-man between what's being depicted and the reader. That's why it feels rather unusual to now stand as sender of the entire magazine, with my picture visible in the byline and all. So, are my views really that interesting and important?

Nah, I'm obviously not more important or more worth listening to than anyone else on the university payroll. But Aktum has a vital function to fill. As a channel for information, as a forum for the exchange of thoughts, and as a mutual channel for all members of staff at Umeå University.

The theme of this issue is student recruitment, but it also covers other themes that weren't planned in advance. Research ethics happened to be discussed in several articles, the same goes for commitment in social issues, or the challenges that internationalisation can give rise to. This is not uncommon in the sphere of universities; some connections are made in advance, whereas some arise without anyone foreseeing it.

Since Aktum is moulded in its shape by the connections I as editor-in-chief make when I put contents together, it suggests that my role isn't insignificant after all.

Regardless, if you as a reader have opinions about the paper, you turn to me. An email to aktum@umu.se is one way. Otherwise, I will also be moving my workplace temporarily to room 7 at Info-center at Universum on Friday 14 October and Tuesday 17 October so that readers can easily come to meet me and provide feedback on this issue, as well as previous and future ones. Coffee's on me! ●



JONAS LIDSTRÖM
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

"Aktum has a vital function to fill. As a channel for information, as a forum for the exchange of thoughts."

Contents



THEME *Student recruitment*

8 The printed catalogue is discontinued now when the new student recruitment web is up and running.

- 6 Signed**
Hans Adolfsson on the Macchiarini case
- 14 Profile**
Gunilla Olivecrona
- 17 A day at work**
The UPSC greenhouses
- 21 5 questions**
Pia Sandeskog
- 22 Who is who in the Management?**
Riklund, Hansson and Müller about their new assignments
- 24 Outlook**
Researchers escape Turkey
- 26 Culture**
Exhibition penetrating risks of nuclear power
- 28 Finally...**
Anna Baranowska-Rataj



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aktum.umu.se

At Aktum online you can read Aktum, comment on it and present your own opinions.

www.aurora.umu.se/en

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





Hi there!

Marianne Eik and Petra Hellgren who work at Umevatoriet.

Astronomical introduction

Umevatoriet, Umeå's observatory with cosmic activities, turns ten. The operations are supported by Umeå University and Umeå municipality. The anniversary will be celebrated with art, music and a series of lectures on Astrobiology.

How has Umevatoriet developed in the last ten years?

"First and foremost, we have transitioned from being a project idea to a permanent operation. In ten years, we have had ten themes aimed at pupils from preschool to upper-secondary school. Some examples of themes have been *Chemistry detectives*, *Berta the Dragon* and *Astromathematics*. Nowadays, we have 10,000 visitors per year. The rumour about us has spread to the point where all our visiting slots for schools are fully booked within two days. We are actually dreaming about an expansion and

the possibility to accept more school classes, as we are so sought-after."

How will the ten-year anniversary be celebrated?

"On 8 October, we organised *Astronomy Day and Night*, which was paid extra attention to this year, for instance with live music by the band Planetariet. An art exhibition by Börís Helena on the possibility to live on Mars is being shown now, which is well worth a visit. Additionally, we will host a series of lectures on Astrobiology to look out for this autumn.

Petra Hellgren are one of four educationalists at Umevatoriet who inspire children and young people to learn more about the natural sciences.



For school kids between the age of five and eight, we have borrowed the theme *Nobelväskans hemlighet* (The Secret of the Nobel Case) from the Nobel Museum. Using that we experiment and play through the history of Alfred Nobel and his work."

How come space is so fascinating?

"People in general are mesmerised by space. But what's most exciting about space is that the more we learn, the more we realise that we don't understand. Here at Umevatoriet, we use space as a starting point to teach other fascinating subjects such as maths, chemistry, biology, physics and technology. We also get drama, culture and history into the bargain when we put on costumes and teach kids about old mathematicians and physicists such as Platon and Albert Einstein. The visits are usually very appreciated by pupils and teachers alike."

What can university employees get out of Umevatoriet?

"We can strongly recommend a visit to the planetarium. Some can sit for hours studying the stars, galaxies and the solar system. You can come here during one of our special events, but otherwise we are open to the public just about every Tuesday between 18:00 and 22:00. Then you can gaze at stars in our telescope; challenge others in mathematical and logical games; and build constructions using the material 4D Frame. University employees can also book an appointment for joint staff activities at Umevatoriet."

Keep a lookout for events at Umevatoriet this autumn, on Facebook or the web page www.umevatoriet.se.

ANNA LAWRENCE

1,300

HOURS were spent by employees at Umeå University on reading and commenting on the articles on the intranet Aurora regarding the public procurement of the fitness card. Three Swedish articles on the subject were viewed 21,000 times between 15 August and 12 September. The single English article was viewed 565 times during the same period. In comparison, all news on Aurora had been viewed 37,000 times in total from the start of the year up until 15 August.



For years on end, Denis Mukwege has performed surgery on and treated tens of thousands of women and children who have become victims of sexual abuse in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Heroic honorary doctor with strong ties to Umeå

As a side-event to the Annual Celebration, Umeå University will welcome honorary doctor Denis Mukwege who is fighting sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo. During his visit, he will talk about the strive for peace in his home country and he will also participate in a film viewing.

TEXT Anna Lawrence **PHOTO** Torleif Svensson

DENIS MUKWEGE HAS been a strong candidate in the speculations of the 2016 Nobel Peace Prize. When you are reading this article, the announcement has already been made.

As a side-event to this year's Annual Celebration, Umeå University has invited Dr Denis Mukwege to talk about the fight for peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo in a lecture entitled *A road to peace*. The lecture will take place on Friday 21 October at 11:00. The film producer Thierry Michel and Ellinor Ädelroth, professor emerita at Umeå University, will also take part.

Denis Mukwege is chief physician and gynaecologist at the Panzi Hospital in eastern DR Congo in Central Africa and is since 1999 the leading force in the fight against sexual violence in a country that through history has been called both 'the heart of darkness' and 'the rape capital of the world'.

For years on end, Denis Mukwege has performed surgery on and treated tens of thousands of women and children who have become victims of sexual abuse. He is highly

respected, praised and awarded around the world for his fight. To many in his home country, he has become hope personified. In 2014, he received the prestigious Sakharov Prize by the European Parliament that is awarded to people who have contributed considerably to the fight for human rights.

DENIS MUKWEGE HIMSELF has lived under threat for a long time. In October 2012, something other than the usual phone and mail threats took place when a group of armed men broke into his house, held his family at gunpoint in the wait for Denis Mukwege to return from a quick errand. Denis Mukwege survived the assassination attempt all thanks to a heroic act by an employee who instead lost his life that dreadful evening.

Ellinor Ädelroth, professor emerita at the Department of Public Health and Clinical Medicine at Umeå University, commuted with Denis Mukwege back from the hospital shortly before the disastrous attack. She is a person who has become very important to Denis Mukwege's work. In his absence, she

took the role as acting manager of the Panzi Hospital. At present, she is the administrative manager of the special unit at the hospital that treats and rehabilitates women who have been raped or suffer from birth trauma after mishandled deliveries.

It was also thanks to Ellinor Ädelroth that Denis Mukwege was promoted Honorary Doctor of Medicine at Umeå University in 2010. It took place after she had invited him to Umeå to account for his mission: to make the public and people in power around the world aware of what takes place in eastern Congo, and create a change.

Denis Mukwege is currently in the spotlight with the documentary *The man who mends women – the wrath of Hippocrates* on his work. The film recently had its Swedish premiere and it has been viewed by politicians in the Riksdag. In conjunction with Denis Mukwege's visit to Umeå, the film will be shown at Väven on Friday 21 October at 16:00 and 20:00. Free tickets to the viewings can be picked up at Infocenter or at Umeå City Library. ●

Annual Celebration installs Vice-Chancellor

Seven honorary doctors will be conferred and sixteen professors installed. Also, ten awards and two Medals of Honour will be presented. As an addition, 32 popular science lectures will be held. Although, the main event will be the installation of the new Vice-Chancellor of Umeå University.

CHARLOTTE WIBERG, Master of Ceremonies at Umeå University, is responsible for the Annual Celebration.

“Getting the chance to participate in the installation of our new Vice-Chancellor is exciting of course. At the Ceremony, Hans Adolfsson will be receiving the symbolic Vice-Chancellor’s chain by chairperson of the Board, Lennart Evrell, and hence be officially installed as Vice-Chancellor.”

The 2016 Annual Celebration has an extensive programme. It starts already on Friday 21 October at 10:00 when chief librarian Mikael Sjögren inaugurates the 2016 exhibition on honorary doctors, professors, award and medal recipients. Shortly afterwards, food writer and honorary doctor Ella Nilsson will hold a lecture: *En resa i matriket* (A Travel Through the Culinary Heritage) about her lifelong love for the Västerbotten food and culture. This year, all popular

science lectures will be held on Saturday 22 October starting at 9:00. The selection ranges between 32 various lectures on subjects such as antibiotic resistance; if radicalisation is a question of friendship and fictive blood ties; the designer role in the automotive industry; societal support to mental health disabilities; the importance of exercising like an athlete in old age; from poisoned seals to flying eagles; and ellipses in Southern Sami. Just as an appetiser.

This year’s Annual Celebration Ceremony takes place in Aula Nordica on Saturday 22 October, at 17:00. ●

MATTIAS GRUNDSTRÖM MITZ

Would you like to participate in the audience during the Ceremony?

Please contact promotion@umu.se to be assigned a seat in the front section. The rear section often has spare seats on the night.



PHOTO: ANDREAS NILSSON

Campus Umeå top ten

TOP TEN. The international network Landscape Architects Network has compiled a list of regional top ten highest quality projects. One of these is the central park area surrounding the university pond with its wooden seatings, sun decks, jetties and varied vegetation. The park has been designed by Thorbjörn Andersson, architect at Sweco, who is also behind six projects on the Swedish top ten list.

www.umu.se/en/campus-development



PHOTO: ULRIKA BERGFORS

Figuratively speaking ▶ Erik Domellöf



How does it feel?

ANDERS FÄLLSTRÖM, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of education has been recommended as Vice-Chancellor of Mid Sweden University.

“It’ll be exciting and I’m honoured to try something new. It also feels strange and sad to be leaving Umeå University. I’ve been here for over 25 years.”

Why did you choose this new path?

“I’m a person who likes to develop things. Being Vice-Chancellor increases my chances of making a change, and I think Mid Sweden University has good opportunities to develop. Not least as it’s a smaller university with shorter decision paths.”

At least you will stay until the end of the year. What is important to complete before then?

“First of all, I need to be appointed by the Government, My aim is then to start on 1 April. It’ll be tough for me to leave Umeå, but you will do just fine without me. The Faculties collaborate so well when it comes to education these days that I often jovially say that no management representative for education is needed any longer.”

An eventful autumn

PHOTO: ELIN BERGE



“Could it have happened here? In all honesty, yes it could.”

AUTUMN TERM HAD HARDLY started when upheaving events struck higher education. I’m mostly thinking about the recently presented investigations of Karolinska Institutet (KI) and the Karolinska University Hospital in the wake of the Macchiarini case. Investigations led by Sten Heckscher and Kjell Asplund resulted in the resignation of the University Chancellor Harriet Wallberg and the decision to exchange certain board members of KI.

This case is obviously tragic to the patients who underwent synthetic trachea operations, and to their loved ones. And the pressing question on many people’s lips is – how could this have happened?

At Umeå University, we should also ask ourselves if this could’ve happened here?

The answer to the first question – why KI pursued the recruitment of Macchiarini despite very negative references that emerged – probably stems from a number of weighted decisions, and this is where Heckscher’s investigation offers a thorough analysis of the process and it’s made obvious that the employment didn’t follow routine.

Could it have happened here? In all honesty, yes it could. The investigations show the importance of recruiting with great care. Employing lecturers and researchers are the most important decisions we make. Having clear guidelines and transparent processes for recruitments goes without saying to me and I would also urge for this to be a guide to all members of staff at Umeå University. As an authority, we have rules to follow and they aren’t to be waived in any way, neither regarding new employments nor work environment or equal treatment. It should be clear to members of staff and students alike to follow our moral compass-

es in ethical topics of research and examinations. Public trust for our operations is high and it’s our mission to keep it that way.

LATER ON THIS AUTUMN, we will be presented the new government bill on research that will suggest long-term guidelines for Swedish research and education. Expectations are high. Already in the 2017 budget proposal, the Government suggested increased government funding for research and research education, but the surplus is small when increased costs in the form of prices and salaries have been taken into account. Another important question that the government bill on research will answer is how government funding will be distributed.

A small clue on future research investments was given at the beginning of September when Helene Hellmark Knutsson, Minister for Higher Education and Research, and Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation, presented upcoming research investments aimed at important societal challenges. In total, SEK 680 million will be apportioned to projects on sustainable social structuring, climate, health, life sciences, migration and digitalisation until 2020. Several of these research areas fit within our operations at Umeå University. Therefore, I hope that we’ll see some of these funds come our way. ●

HANS ADOLFSSON

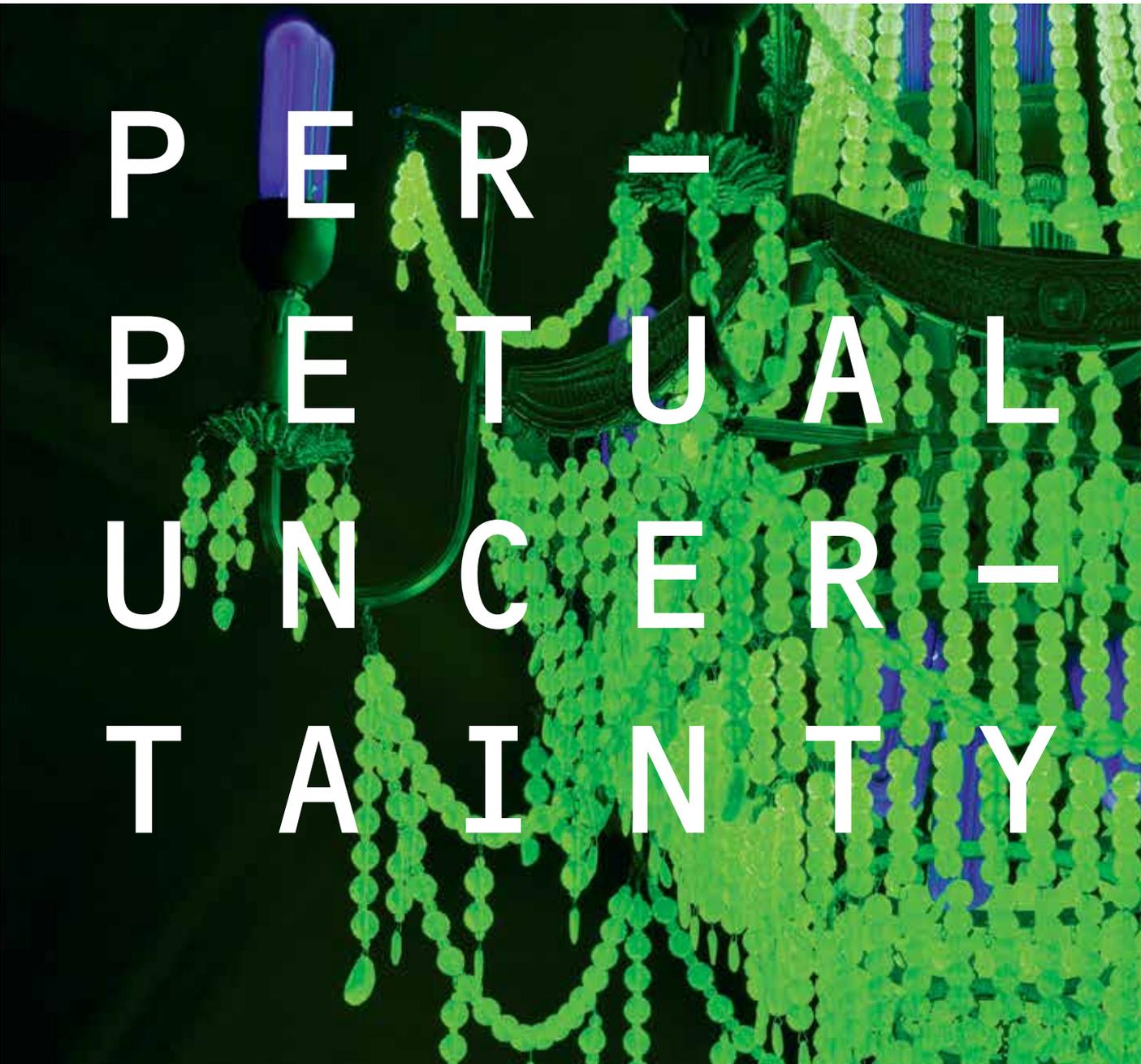
“Only the Stockholm and Uppsala universities have more first choice applicants. That’s good evidence of our success.”

blogg.umu.se/ledningsbloggen (in Swedish)

This autumn, the University Management and I’ll visit all areas of the University. I know it’ll take some time, but the visits will be well worth it for my sake and for the rest of the Management. I hope all members of staff will agree. Looking forward to seeing you!

PHOTO: MATTIAS PETERSSON





PERPETUAL UNCERTAINTY

BILDMUSEET 02 OCTOBER 2016 – 16 APRIL 2017
CONTEMPORARY ART IN THE NUCLEAR ANTROPOCENE

Perpetual Uncertainty brings together international artists to investigate experiences of nuclear power, radioactive waste and the complex relationship between knowledge and the deep time of radiation.

How can we understand and visualise the ungraspable timeframe of radioactive half-life? How can we archive and communicate knowledge about radioactivity from generation to generation, hundreds of thousands of years into the future?

The exhibition includes a rich programme of films, open discussions and talks. In roundtable discussions, artists, researchers and experts meet in discussions on art and deep time radiation. You will find all events on Bildmuseet's website. Free admission. Welcome!

Perpetual Uncertainty is produced by Bildmuseet and curated by Ele Carpenter, Goldsmiths College, University of London.



Assignment: Recruiting the right

Just filling places is no longer sufficient, it is just as much about getting the *right* students hooked on Umeå University. But how do we figure out who they are? And how should we persuade them our way? The future is digital, but lots also depend on human interactions.

TEXT Jonas Lidström **ILLUSTRATION** Cecilia Lundgren

THE YEAR 2010 WAS a turning point. Umeå University accepted more full-time equivalents than ever before: nearly 18,000. A sure success in one way, but also a problem. With the increased number of students to educate, Umeå University exceeded the overall limit in allocated funds from the Government in the budget – costs exceeded revenues and only one thing could turn it around: reducing studyplaces.

A huge overhaul of the courses and programmes offered was initiated. Through that the idea of a common education portfolio took shape, according to Anders Fällström, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of education.

“The guiding-star has always been cohesion as far as

the educational offer goes and when it comes to how the courses complement each other. That’s where the biggest change of ideas occurred,” says Anders Fällström.

This resulted in a noticeable reduction in the number of courses. The ruling principle was to prioritise study programmes, in particular campus-based ones. More emphasis was put on measurable quality aspects, for our educations to be ‘nationally prominent and internationally respected’, as the Vision 2020 suggests.

Quality over quantity. That has been the underlying principle for the recent change in courses and programmes offered at Umeå University. Knowing what signifies good quality is far from easy in terms of education, but it is even trickier to discuss quality, as an opposite to quantity, when it comes to prospective students.



students

Anders Fällström chooses his words carefully when he attempts to put his finger on the idea:

“Umeå University stands for diversity, being yourself and being motivated to learn in order to make a change. The *right* students are those students who actually come here because they want to be here.”

YOU CAN BOIL it down to one measurable parameter: the number of first choice applicants to the University educations. The number of applicants per place is certainly also a relevant number. But the number of first choice applicants is the prime measurement of how many prospective students choose an education in Umeå before an equivalent education at prestigious universities and big city universities. Students who choose Umeå as their first choice are motivated.

Luckily, the graph has also pointed upwards in recent years, both when it comes to applicants per place and first choice applicants.

“In the last four to five years, the number of first choice applicants has increased more for us than the national average. Student recruitment has been a success,” says Anders Fällström with an appreciative nod.

The pieces are coming together more and more for Sofia Wiesler, Head of the Student Recruitment Unit at the Communications Office. In the middle of September, the new student recruitment web was launched.

A huge amount of work has been done to refine and

elucidate the content describing the programmes. In line with that aspiration, the way of working and the organisation behind the student recruitment web has changed. Henceforth, a few editors will work continuously on developing the pages to ensure high quality on information aimed at prospective students.



PHOTO: MATTIAS PETTERSSON

Sofia Wiesler.

THE WEB PAGE opens up for a highly epoch-making change: Umeå University will not offer a printed programme catalogue for the upcoming spring admissions round. Everything is available online.

“To the target group, namely the prospective students, this won’t be such a drastic change. They prefer using the Internet to look for information and inspiration in their search for a suitable education anyway,” says Sofia Wiesler.

“The printed catalogue has required time and resources. We can use the time that has been spent on the printed information – which is already more easily accessible on the Internet – and instead spend it on actions that will increase the interest in educations at Umeå University and in Umeå as a study destination.”

Towards the end of autumn, the new student recruitment web will be complemented with an additional part ►

THEME *Student recruitment*

“You just need to make a call and stick to it. And one needs to dare to not let prestige run the operations.”

that goes under the name ‘the inspirational web’.

“It will be a channel where we can describe the destination Umeå and the University from a student’s point of view. It will be a tool to package content on a regular basis, somewhere to collect information and material that is created on different ends and bring it together into a neat entirety,” says John Wernvik at the University’s procured creative communications agency, Le Bureau, which works closely with the Communications Office regarding communication aimed at prospective students.



John Wernvik,
Le Bureau, Stockholm.

THE WHOLE POINT is certainly not for prospective students to simply surf the Internet in the search for the most appropriate education on his or her own. Student recruitment fairs have a central part in the national student recruitment activities at Umeå University these days. A team consisting mainly of students employed as student ambassadors man a 25-square-metre exhibition stand that tours the Swedish recruitment fairs and similar activities mostly in November–December and January–March.

Attending fairs has probably been important in making upper-secondary students

in more densely populated areas of Sweden more aware of what Umeå has to offer.

“Previously, it was aimed more at upper-secondary schools in northern Sweden,” says Anders Fällström:

“At present, we put huge focus also on the country’s most densely populated areas. The initiative to this important step has been taken entirely by the Communications Office, I suppose.”

SOFIA WIESLER REFERS much of what is good about the fairs to the student ambassadors. Those who approach Umeå University’s exhibition stand are greeted by students, who embody the open, welcoming and diverse environment that Umeå University has to offer. But above all, they are full of facts, information and insights that enable them to be of great help and guidance to the young people they come in contact with.

“Working with student ambassadors has proven very efficient. By giving them good training before their work commences, they soon form a closely-knit team. And when we have these student ambassadors, they can contribute to so much more than just the fair team. Other actions in student recruitment include educating others, for instance,” says Sofia Wiesler.

THE COMMUNICATIONS concept that runs through the national student recruitment at Umeå University at present builds upon a strategic platform that was developed using Le Bureau as a sounding board. When the new way of addressing the audience was launched for the 2014 spring admissions round it surely stuck out. Hues were toned down, student photos depicted stern rather than smiling faces, the basic information was drastically refined and headlines contained more questions rather than promises.

In a market where competitors long since have relied on similar methods and messages, Umeå University has spent years swimming against the stream. Where Swedish higher education institutions have invested huge amounts of full-page spreads in newspapers and poster campaigns in the Stockholm underground – which in reality is a zero-sum game over students using a kitty made up of tax-funded millions – instead Umeå University has chosen to largely go

completely without such advertisements.

“We hardly buy any ads and don’t believe in traditional advertising,” says Sofia Wiesler. “However, we do spend money on Facebook campaigns, Google Adwords and other forms of digital marketing. It’s so much more effective.”

It is actually so efficient in its targeting of audience that we as university employees are never exposed to our own marketing, Anders Fällström notes.

“It happens on a regular basis that colleagues ask why Umeå University doesn’t buy ads in for instance financial newspapers. ‘Luleå University of Technology can be seen there, but not us’, a lecturer or professor might say with a slight worry on his or her voice. We are reaching out to the target audience we want to reach – namely the prospective students. But we aren’t reaching business CEOs and old age university members of staff,” says Anders Fällström.

BY GATHERING ALL the activities that are included in the Umeå University student recruitment operations in one basket, it is easy to see a connection in approach, address and packaging. There is still lots to do, however, mostly in the case of coordination and setting overall targets, both Anders Fällström and Sofia Wiesler agree. Not least, the collaboration between the two of them could be much more fine-tuned, Anders Fällström reckons.

“The Educational Strategy Council, has the educational portfolio as its centre of attention, whereas to the Communications Office it’s communication. It’s good to have a clear-cut divide. But there could definitely be a much closer connection between these parts.”

Sofia Wiesler agrees that a close dialogue with the top leaders of education would be beneficial.

“In some ways, the instructions from above are still rather brief. In student recruitment, we have embraced the idea of putting quality first and we are working target-oriented on activities to support our end objective of increasing the number of first choice applicants. But if the objective is to single out the right prospective students for our educations, there are many other things to go on. Are we after fewer drop-outs during the course of the education? Increased throughput, that is. That could be



Anders Fällström.

PHOTO: ULRIKA BERGFORS

PHOTO: ULRIKA BERGFORS



an aim with our student recruitment, but at present it isn't."

Anders Fällström adds that the topic of widening participation is climbing on the agenda, all since Helena Lindvall at Student Services has started working actively with this issue.

"When it comes to the socioeconomic dimension there are still lots to do, not least in our own backyard. It's a tough task, in the short term it can even lead to reduced rather than increased quality of the individual education, in the same way as it has in terms of internationalisation of education. But the return is so incredibly much higher. You just need to make a call and stick to it. And one needs to dare to not let prestige run the operations," says Anders Fällström. ●



FOTO: LISA ERLANDSSON

Student ambassadors in the exhibition stand meet about 500 people per day and most visitors get more certain of their choice of education after their visits. In the team, all faculties are represented and each and every one is an expert on the courses and programmes offered within their field.

Many are called but few go the whole hog

International student recruitment is entirely focused on the English Master's programmes that in 2017 will increase from 32 to 40. Thousands of applications are flowing in. Only two per cent start an education, though.

SIMILAR TO THE Swedish printed programme catalogue, the English equivalent will be replaced entirely by a digital solution. Well, not completely.

"We have a new folder concept that we developed last year. The folder itself is quite generic, but the contents and inserts can be switched out depending on what countries you're aiming for, if the information is aimed at exchange students or programme students. It also provides information on specific programmes, for instance," says

David Meyers, who works with international student recruitment at the Communications Office.

"This is a step towards working entirely digitally. But we're not there yet."

International student recruitment at Umeå University is conducted at a much

smaller scale than the Swedish recruitment. The University takes part in international recruitment fairs, but instead of sending a dozen marketers and a lorry full of exhibition stand material, what it boils down to is one person, one flight ticket and one suitcase with marketing material.

"This autumn, we will travel to four or five countries to promote our degree programmes: South Korea, India, Indonesia, Brazil and maybe also China. Indonesia is a new destination for Umeå University as of this year," says David Meyers.

THE GREATEST DIFFERENCE between national and international student recruitment is not mainly the effort and size. In terms of national recruitment, all actions lead up until application deadline. In the international case, that date actually marks the start of the real work, according to Wasif Ali at the International Office.

"In marketing terms, the application period is all about 'lead generation' – arousing interest and building a relationship with

International application round in figures

In the 2016 international application round, over **8,000** people applied for a programme at Umeå University through Universityadmissions.se, the English equivalent of Antagning.se.

3,000 of those had an education in Umeå as their first choice in Sweden.

Approximately **900** of those who applied received an admission decision from Umeå University in March. Barely **160** of these turned up in Umeå and enrolled at a programme.

the customer – the prospective student in this case," says Wasif Ali, before he starts explaining the most important English trade term in this context:

"In student marketing, nearly everything circles around retention marketing, retaining customers who have already shown an interest, that is."

When the international application round closes in mid-January, the work starts on contacting 3,000 first choice applicants and answering their questions. Because they are all full of questions. About the content of the education, accommodation, scholarships, Swedish rules and regulations.

"There's no sharp division between retention marketing and what's just good service. But international students are dependent on ▶



David Meyers.

PHOTO: MATTIAS PETTERSSON

THEME *Student recruitment*

personal contact,” says Wasif Ali.

One can assume that practically everyone who has applied in Sweden has also applied in another country. For those who apply from non-European countries, fee-paying students that is, the possibility of applying for and getting scholarships are of huge importance. It is also Wasif Ali’s job to administer the scholarships that are given to a number of fee-paying students every year.

AT THE END of March, the admission and scholarship decisions are sent out. This is when the recruitment work goes into its final and decisive phase. New from 2017 is that several countries where Umeå University is actively recruiting students will offer so-called pre-departure events after the admission decisions have been sent out. All in order to clear out the questions and motivate

PHOTO: MATTIAS PETTERSSON



Wasif Ali.

to a final decision in favour of Umeå. The events will mostly take place at the Swedish embassy in each respective country, and those who answer questions are often international Umeå University alumni.

FROM 8,000 APPLICATIONS, via 900 admission decisions, to 160 international students. Wasif Ali reckons that Umeå University already reaches all the international students that we want to attract. Getting more applications is not prioritised, but getting the right students to accept is. To increase that number, what is missing above

all is a better overview and structure.

“Many European students are applying for Master’s programmes in the regular, national admission period. For us working with international recruitment, there is no way of keeping track of those students,” says Wasif Ali. Both he and David Meyers say that a database listing those who apply for an education at Umeå University, a so-called customer relationship management system, is high up on their wish list. David Meyers develops upon it:

“Such a system would enable us to follow the contacts we have with prospective international students. It takes nearly ten months from when the application round opens in October to when the term starts, and many questions pop up along the way. Life for a young person can change drastically in that period.” ●

JONAS LIDSTRÖM

A campaign that turned the tables

Recently, the Faculty of Social Sciences suffered from falling applicants per place to some programmes with rather general degrees. The solution became ‘Jag är samhället’ (I am society) – a digital campaign that aroused commitment and desire for learning – but also bred some bad blood.

THE FACULTY OF Social Sciences offers about thirty undergraduate programmes. Many are vocational and well-known, like the programmes in Law, Psychology and Social Work. But there are also some programmes that lead to more general degrees, such as the programmes in Social Science, Public Administration, Urban and Regional Planning, and International Crisis and Conflict Management.

“To the prospective student, it’s harder to grasp what such an education may lead to. It’s not so easy to answer the question ‘What do you become?’,” says Nils Eriksson, faculty subjects coordinator for the Faculty of Social Sciences.

Returned administrative capital enabled the Faculty to further market the four programmes.

“Discussions led to us wanting to evoke feelings for contemporary social issues in order to make those suited and interested to stop and become curious, and as a next step want to know more

about what you can study,” continues Nils Eriksson.

It was a new way of marketing education that the programme co-ordinators were not quite used to. Ann-Sofi Rönnbäck, programme co-ordinator at the Programme for International Crisis and Conflict Management:

“For several years, we bought ads in trade journals but stopped in the end, which was much due to the results of the New Student Survey where we ask new students how they found out about their programme. Nobody ever said they’d seen the ads, instead they had searched for information online.”

THE ASSIGNMENT RESULTED in a 90 seconds long film campaign. In the film, a voice speaks of unsolved societal problems with a background of news footage and suggestive electronic music. Students from the four programmes conclude the film by saying things like ‘I am society. I will fight for equal rights for everyone’.

“I was positively surprised about the end result. It was different from what I’d expected, but a very good solution to the assignment, and another approach to what we traditionally would’ve done,” says David



PHOTO: MATTIAS PETTERSSON



Nils Eriksson.

Feltenius, programme co-ordinator of the Study Programme in Public Administration.

The communications agency Le Bureau, that produced the campaign, describes the first edition of the 'Jag är samhället' campaign as the most successful single communication activity they have performed for Umeå University.

"It had about 900,000 viewings which was really good considering the budget we had," says John Wernvik, project manager at Le Bureau.

Hans Jörgensen, programme co-ordinator of the Study Programme for Social Science mentions that 5 out of 30 students who came at the start of the autumn term 2016 had seen the campaign.

COMING UP TO the spring 2016 admissions round, the Faculty of Social Sciences wanted to continue using the campaign once more. John Molander, marketing officer at the Communications Office, got involved to further bridge collaborations between the purchaser and the executer.

"A campaign like this requires perseverance for it to have the desired effect. It's a

greater challenge than conveying a straightforward sales message, but in my mind it has succeeded," says John Molander.

With the upcoming spring 2016 round in sight, the refugee crisis was raging in Europe and it put new demands on the actuality of the campaign. For that reason, the first ten seconds of the film were recut. The new and updated content caused quite the reaction, especially on the University Facebook page. For some weeks, people with antagonistic views commented and expressed their opinions of Umeå University pursuing political propaganda.

David Feltenius from the Study Programme in Public Administration, however, strongly object to the message of the campaign being political in any way at all:

"No, there was no political statement in that film," says David Feltenius. "What was shown were events that we are all aware of."

Faculty subjects coordinator Nils Eriksson takes the online commenting and discussion as proof that the campaign nailed it:

"Social issues are supposed to get people engaged, and that's also what attracts students." ●

JONAS LIDSTRÖM



“Social issues are supposed to get people engaged, and that’s also what attracts students.”



News footage mixed with studio images of students from Umeå University conveying the core message of the campaign. The film can be watched at samfak.umu.se/utbildning/jagarsamhallet



“Never change a winning game”

Gunilla Olivecrona has spent the last forty years on successfully researching how the body takes up fat from the blood. She is now hoping that the scientific feat will be celebrated with a drug helping to improve the health of obese and type 2 diabetes patients.

TEXT Jonas Lidström PHOTO Elin Berge

THE YEAR WAS 1971 when a nineteen-year-old Gunilla Bengtsson moved from her hometown of Krokomb in Jämtland to start her medical studies in Umeå at the then youngest and most northern university in Sweden.

“I came from a setting where people could hardly spell university. But school was so easy for me that I found it natural to continue studying,” says Gunilla, whose surname has now changed to Olivecrona.

A study adviser in Östersund convinced her that medicine was the subject to go for. The choice fell on Umeå.

“I’ve always liked winter, snow and skiing. I couldn’t see myself moving south.”

During the second year of the Medical Programme, a Chemistry course was offered in the then new Natural Sciences Building. Gunilla Olivecrona remembers how impressed she was with the laboratories:

“They were really nice, new and bright. I instantly knew that was the place for me.”

She applied and was offered a job as research assis-

tant at the Department of Medical Biochemistry. After four terms she took a leave from her studies to work full-time at the lab. Later, the opportunity to take on doctoral studies opened up, and later work kept coming.

Her first project was to investigate how chicken embryos take up fat from the yolk.

“I actually kept hens of my own in university premises! I ran to the library to borrow books on hens and poultry farming,” Gunilla Olivecrona recalls amused.

EVER SINCE, GUNILLA Olivecrona has studied lipid metabolism – the enzyme lipoprotein lipase to be precise. The body needs this protein to handle triglycerides, a type of blood lipids that medical research has pinpointed as an important cause for the hardening of the arteries and accompanying cardiovascular diseases.

“The proteins that I’ve studied have never followed the rule book. They are supposed to bind fat, which makes them very difficult to dissolve; they are lumpy, sticky and not particularly cooperative. It has forced us to find special solutions, but it has also meant that our

“But to me, it’s nice to know that the knowledge we have built up will continue to grow through the company.”



Gunilla Olivecrona

Age: 64 years.

Does: Professor at the Department of Medical Biosciences.

Hobbies: The dog, golf, skiing and outdoor life.

Latest book-read: *My Brilliant Friend* by Elena Ferrante.

Listens to: “I prefer classical music. I love Beethoven and wish that I would have become a good enough piano-player to play his sonata unhampered. My husband and I have signed up for the frequent visitor package for the NorrlandsOperan concerts and their programme constantly offers new surprises.”

vast experiences have been very important in collaborations with other researchers,” says Gunilla Olivecrona.

These collaborations have often lasted for years and have crossed subject fields and geographical borders. “I believe Umeå has become well-known around the world within our research area.”

Gunilla Olivecrona agrees that it is somewhat unusual for a researcher to be so devoted to and spend so long on the same small range of molecules. Changing settings and project a few times during your research career is otherwise something she recommends to her students.

“But both paths are good in their own right. If you have found a research path that seems to work and progresses, and you obtain funding that allows you to continue, well then you know what they say: ‘Never change a winning game.’”

IT WAS DURING her doctoral studies that she met Thomas Olivecrona, then professor in Medical Chemistry at Umeå University, who later became her husband. Ever since, they have been closely tied to one another, both at home and at work.

“I suppose we became ‘a research couple’ and we have worked closely together for years. It’s a strength to be able to work together. You get a common focus and great understanding for your partner’s everyday life.”

“The drawback is the difficulty to separate work and spare time.”

“Before this interview, I was trying to think what my real hobbies were. I even asked my daughter, who answered: ‘You’ve got several interests, but you’ve never had any time to act on them.’”

“But I usually say that I’m an average golfer. Golf takes time if you want to become good at it, and I haven’t had that time. But I enjoy playing.”

GUNILLA OLIVECRONA BECAME professor in 1996. A few years prior, she had shouldered the responsibility of leading the research team.

“I had the opportunity to create a distinctive image for myself, which was probably good and developing.”

At present, she is not only research leader, but also Head of the Department of Medical Biosciences with around one hundred employees. Previously, she has also been Pro Dean of the Faculty of Medicine.

“I’m a rather modest head who tries to listen to my co-workers, help those who ask for it and stimulate to a development where we are successful both now and in the future. I very much believe in collaboration and dialogue.”

Even if her husband long since has been retired, he still has ties to the research team.

“He usually says that he wants to be my best co-worker. And he has been,” adds Gunilla Olivecrona with appreciation.

EARLY STUDIES OF CHICKEN embryos also bring us to the subject of experiments on animals. It’s a part of research that is necessary, but which has to be conducted with great respect and consideration.

“It’s all about not making more damage than what the relative good use can motivate. Most people are aware that medical research is based on experiments on ani-

mals, because we can’t experiment on people. It’s not allowed,” says Gunilla Olivecrona.

She thinks it’s important to discuss and give insights into experiments on animals. Even if there are good reasons why the topic is handled with great care.

“The animal rights movement was quite strong here in the nineties. Flyers were handed out in town with the text ‘Gunilla Olivecrona has killed a thousand rats’, and similar messages. One of our doctoral students was confronted on a daily basis by activists who were trying to stop him from going to work,” she says.

“Even then, we had a vivid and open dialogue within the team.”

Today, she sees that the number of experiments on animals in medical research is increasing, after experiments grown in cell cultures had been considered the method of the future for several years.

“In later years, it has become more evident that an entire body is required in order to fully study such processes. Even if you succeed in learning all there is to know about one cell, the situation is completely different when things are put into context.”

IN HER OWN research, Gunilla Olivecrona is edging closer and closer to the end goal: to understand how fat is taken up by the blood, how fat is distributed to the right organs and what regulatory functions fail when the system is disturbed. At the same time, she has spent the last ten years developing a treatment to patients where the breaking down of fats does not work as intended.

“We’re developing a drug to help clear the blood of fats and make sure it ends up in the right places in the body, all in order to prevent the hardening of the arteries and other serious diseases. It should be really useful for obese patients and patients with type 2 diabetes. Plenty of experiments suggest that the drugs could normalise the disruptions to the metabolism. As there are so many patients affected, we really hope to contribute.”

Gunilla Olivecrona started the spin-off company Lipigon Pharmaceuticals AB in 2010 together with two then doctoral students and one visiting research fellow. She is now member of the board.

“Lipigon is based on my research, but I’m not the driving force. One of the previous doctoral students, Stefan K Nilsson, is CEO of the company and is very important to the business, the same goes for our prominent collaborative partners at the Department of Chemistry with Mikael Elofsson in the forefront.”

Earlier in 2016, Lipigon landed a collaborative agreement with the pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca. The collaboration means that the journey towards a final drug candidate has been sped up, and it gives extra power and legitimacy to both the company and the research team.

Gunilla Olivecrona will carry on as Head of Department until the end of next year. After that, the plan is to focus some time on her own research.

“When a research leader retires, that research specialisation often comes to an end at Umeå University. There is rarely a successor. Instead, new projects line up. In one way, that’s how it’s supposed to be at a university. But to me, it’s nice to know that the knowledge we have built up will continue to grow through the company.” ●

Transgenic poplars thriving in the thousands



Twice per week, the gardeners Anna Brännström and Jenny Lönnebrink measure the growth of the poplars. This time in a room in the Wallenberg greenhouse where a new type of LED lighting is being tested. "We can see that they're energy saving and we are investigating how the LED light is affecting the growth. But the built-in fans make a fair bit of noise," says Jenny.

The day starts early in the greenhouses where Umeå Plant Science Centre (UPSC) has its research cultivations. The gardeners here are among the first on campus in the mornings. Every day, all year round, the plants need watering and tending to.

TEXT Michael Nordvall PHOTO Mikael Lundgren

A day in the greenhouses



Gardener Anna Brännström (on the left) cuts poplars that have literally ‘hit the roof’, whilst colleague Jenny Lönnebrink is watering.

UMEÅ PLANT SCIENCE Centre (UPSC) is one of the most prominent environments for plant research in Europe. But to be able to conduct any research – or have any plants to study – an entire team of plant technicians and gardeners are needed to tend to the cultivations at Campus Umeå.

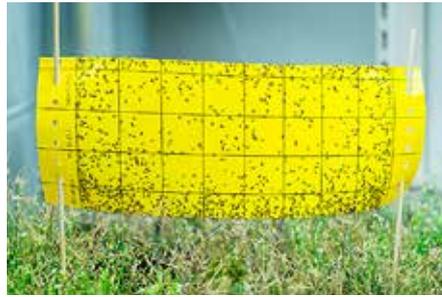
“We start at half past six by reading emails and planning the day. After seven we start our watering round here in the Wallenberg greenhouse. Then, we water in the Plant Growth Facility and the climate chambers at UPSC and at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU),” says Jenny Lönnebrink.

Anna Brännström, Frida Lejon and Jenny Lönnebrink are all gardeners employed at SLU in Umeå.

“From ten o’clock, we continue with other chores: re-plant, tie up or cut down plants that have outgrown us, clean, or prepare for new growers. Maintenance, quite simply,” says Jenny Lönnebrink.

After lunch, the next watering round takes place. Thanks to the Wallenberg greenhouse’s new steering system installed last year, humidity, temperature and light can be automatically controlled. Another system controls watering – but watering is also done manually, it is up to the grower. The climate chambers and the growth cabinets at the UPSC facilities in the KBC Building can be controlled even more precisely with the use of

A day in the greenhouses



In the climate chamber with rockcress (*Arabis dopsis*) well-filled fly traps suggest there are spongers in the premises. “This room doesn’t require as much maintenance by us, but more biological control of plant lice (aphids),” says Anna Brännström.



Despite the poplars being pruned down to a few decimetres, they soon grow back up.



All garden waste is handled as hazardous waste and is sent to Däva landfill and waste disposal north of Umeå.



Room after room, table after table with poplars suitable for trial cultivations as they grow really fast, up to 20 cm per week. The black cottonwood poplar (*P. trichocarpa*) was the first tree ever to get its genome mapped out – in 2006.

cooling systems and fans, and that facility is only manually watered.

The latter facilities – the Plant Growth and the Transformation facilities – belong to Umeå University, whereas the Wallenberg greenhouse belongs to SLU – but they are all used mostly by UPSC, which is a collaboration between the Department of Forest Genetics and Plant Physiology at SLU, and the Department of Plant Physiology at Umeå University.

“And we also fertilise, all according to the researchers’ own requests,” says colleague Anna Brännström. The plants are showered on a daily basis to prevent mildew. Spider mites, thrips and aphids are prevented with biological pest control.

“Every few weeks, we get deliveries with new ‘animals’ such as hymenopterans, flies and nematodes. If pest control takes place regularly, we can reduce the use of chemicals, which is our main objective.”

SOMETHING ELSE RECURRING is garbage handling. Since transgenic plants are cultivated in the facilities – which is allowed as long as the plants do not flower – we need to handle all waste as if everything is GMO. Double bin bags clearly marked are transported to their end station – Däva landfill and waste disposal north of Umeå. Flowering transgenic plants can only be found on the top floors of the KBC Building, where they are kept in a sealed system. ▶

A day in the greenhouses

The areas for cultivation in the greenhouse in the KBC Building are smaller. Climate chambers, of at the most about twenty square metres, and smaller growth cabinets where light, humidity, temperature and other factors can be controlled more exactly – for instance to simulate different lengths of daylight.

Research engineers Sofie Johansson, Verena Fleig, Ioana Gaboreanu and Veronica Bourquin and the technician Marie Nygren work at the transformation facility at UPSC where they serve a dozen research teams.

“If someone wants to do experiments with transgenic poplars, the work in the transformation facility is the first step,” says Verena Fleig, and shows a room where walls are covered from top to bottom with shelves stacked with jars and Petri dishes.

IN MOST OF THEM, one finds cuttings of poplar, where one or more genes have been edited for researchers to study various characteristics. For instance what genes control growth, budding, the annual cycle and other characteristics, and how signals like light and temperature have an effect on the plants.

“You can ‘turn off’ a gene to see what happens – whether the growth increases or decreases, if the leaves wither sooner or later,” explains Sofie Johansson.

She brings a jar into a room nearly completely taken up by a laminar flow cabinet. She sterilises some tools and opens the jar. Then, she carefully cuts off small bits and move them to empty jars, with a nutritional gel in the bottom.

“If a researcher wants to continue his or her cultivation in the greenhouse, several copies are needed,” says Verena Fleig.

Copies are also needed for the biobank in the same building. The biobank is a collection of transgenic poplar lines from former experiments. These are kept as in-vitro material and are available to all groups at UPSC so that experiments can be resumed, repeated or altered.

And so it carries on. The growth cycle that will hopefully never end. ●

“You can ‘turn off’ a gene to see what happens.”



Cloning in the traditional way at the laminar flow cabinet. Research engineer Sofie Johansson cuts off small shoots from a grown poplar cutting and transfers them to a new pot.



Poplar shoots in different stages of development, in Petri dishes with agar plates in the bottom that provide nutrients and liquid.

Five questions for judge of appeal **Pia Sandeskog** who is chairperson of the Regional Ethical Review Board at Umeå University. The department she is in charge of deals with all scientific areas apart from medicine.

TEXT AND PHOTO Per Melander

1 What is the Review Board's assignment and composition?

“The assignment is to protect the integrity of human research subjects to avoid leakage of sensitive research data. The purpose of the Swedish Law on Ethical Review is to protect individuals and human dignity in research on living people. Our assignment is to balance the benefits of research against the risks to the research subjects and their integrity. If the risk for the research subjects is small, the benefits to research often weigh heavier. In integrity sensitive projects, the benefits must be great to outweigh the risks. When it comes to the composition of the Board, Swedish law states that the chairperson and the deputy chairperson should be or should have been a judge. These are appointed by the Government. Other members are often competent within the various scientific fields.”

2 What cases are most common?

“It all varies, but registry-based studies are quite common where one registry is compared to another. In general, these cases are not so ethically challenging as they do not pose great risks to the research subject because the data in itself has already been collected and approved for use previously.”

3 What cases are the most sensitive?

“Generally everything concerning sexual inclinations and ethnicity. Another issue that we have assessed several times is research on depression and suicide, for instance among reindeer-herding Sami. Such research topics are sensitive and concern a relatively small group of society that risks being identified. On the other hand, the research can be very important; there is a need for studies on the well-being within this group and hence the benefits of the research is great both to the particular group of the population and to society at large.”



“However, I’m certain that there are several projects that should, but never undergo ethical review.”

4 Is consensus required within the Board?

“No, separate members can disagree, but it very rarely happens. Our decisions can also be appealed to the Central Ethical Review Board in Stockholm. If we reject the application in Umeå, the applicant often supplements the application with new material and data before reconsideration in the central review board.”

5 How well-equipped are Umeå researchers in dealing with research ethics?

“In general, very good and many take into account what the Board points out. However, I’m certain that there are several projects that should, but never undergo ethical review. That means that the researcher stands the risk. If a researcher breaks the law, he or she could face a fine or go to prison.” ●



VICE-CHANCELLOR
Hans Adolfsson



University Director
Caroline Sjöberg



**Deputy
University Director**
Per Ragnarsson



Pro-Vice-Chancellor
responsible for research and
doctoral education in medicine,
natural sciences and technology,
and research collaboration,
Katrine Riklund



**Deputy
Vice-Chancellor**
responsible for
internationalisation
and equal opportunities,
Heidi Hansson



**Deputy
Vice-Chancellor**
responsible for research and
doctoral education in social
sciences, arts and humanities,
and research collaboration,
Dieter Müller



**Deputy
Vice-Chancellor**
responsible for education
and education collaboration,
Anders Fällström

Management cogs are turning

An additional Deputy Vice-Chancellor, new collaboration methods, and special focus on internationalisation and equal opportunities. Here are the people that will lead Umeå University over the next few years.

TEXT Jonas Lidström **ILLUSTRATION** Matilda Odelsheim Lund

SINCE HANS ADOLFSSON took over as Vice-Chancellor on 1 July, the Management has been reconstructed. In contrast to the previous Management, one Deputy Vice-Chancellor has been added. The responsibility for research has been split between two – the Pro-Vice-Chancellor and one Deputy Vice-Chancellor. What else is new is having a Deputy Vice-Chancellor responsible for internationalisation and equal opportunities.

Collaboration will now be a shared responsibility. A part of the University Management that remains intact is University Director Caroline Sjöberg, but a new addition is Deputy University Director Per Ragnarsson.

Hans Adolfsson is pleased about his management, both in terms of experiences and personal chemistry.

“Looking at the Management in its entirety, we cover the whole spectrum of the University, all faculties and the administration. I reckon this could be a good model to give all university members of staff a feeling of connection to the University Management.”

When it comes to the set-up of the management work, there have been some initial changes to the meeting structure, according to Hans Adolfsson.

“The long Monday afternoon sessions have been shortened and are focused on current topics. To compensate, we have management lunches once per week that leave room for discussion and bringing each other up to speed on each person’s activities,” continues Hans Adolfsson.

“I’m hoping that this arrangement will enable us to address issues efficiently and to make space for good dynamics.”

Despite changes, continuity has been key. Anders Fällström has continued as Deputy Vice-Chancellor of education, although he is likely to leave in 2017 to become Vice-Chancellor of the Mid Sweden University. Former Deputy Vice-Chancellor of research, Marianne Sommarin, continues as senior adviser regarding research infrastructure. Agneta Marell’s term of office as Deputy Vice-Chancellor of collaboration and innovation has been extended until end of October. Thereafter, she will continue as senior adviser to the Vice-Chancellor on issues regarding innovation and innovation support.

“What’s new is to merge collaboration into the core assignments. A rather natural change of course, because it’s within research and education that collaboration takes place,” says Hans Adolfsson. ●

“Time is constantly added, all you need to do is use it well.”

KATRINE RIKLUND

As Pro-Vice-Chancellor, you are the deputy to the Vice-Chancellor and therefore work closely with Hans Adolfsson. How do you complement each other?

“We complement each other in many ways. I’m hugely familiar with the local aspects, especially the Faculty of Medicine and its collaborations with the county council. I also have a huge international network of contacts. Hans has other experiences. Honesty and openness are two catchwords that both of us hold dear. We will have many creative discussions together in the next few years.”

Together with Dieter Müller, you have research as your area of responsibility. What topics are important to deal with when it comes to the area of research?

“The challenge that overshadows most is research funding and infrastructure. We have to put energy into providing our prominent researchers with the opportunity to continue their work and not least to educate the doctoral students needed both at the University and in the surrounding community.”

What is your background?

“I’m a professor and chief physician in Diagnostic Radiology and Nuclear Medicine since 2002 and have been at Umeå University for a long time. In later years, I’ve had a number of assignments both nationally and internationally. Therefore, I’ve spent a lot of time travelling, but I’ve always returned to my alma mater. For instance, I’m chair of the European Society for Radiology, an international association with 64,000 members, and I’m also a member of the board of Örebro University.”

For how long will you continue juggling all of this whilst being Pro-Vice-Chancellor?

“Several of my assignments run out in spring 2017. It’s hard to abruptly leave previous commitments, instead, a transitional period of puzzling things out is required. But with a bit of planning, most problems can be solved. Time is constantly added, all you need to do is use it well.”

“Topics concerning the entire University can sometimes be out of focus.”

HEIDI HANSSON

What is your background at the University in brief?

“I’m professor in English with a background of teaching languages and literature. My research concerns literature and culture, at the moment focusing on projections of the Arctic.”

Your two responsibilities, internationalisation and equal opportunities, have previously not been tied to a particular Deputy Vice-Chancellor. Why are these areas separated now?

“I don’t see it as a separation. Rather, they are topics concerning the entire University and can sometimes be out of focus. That means they are easily overlooked and not given enough space. My job is not to dictate what needs to be done in terms of internationalisation and equal opportunities. I’m rather a channel to raise topics that several people at the University actively work within to the highest level – the Management.”

What is the next step in the area of equal opportunities?

“A new version of the 2014 plan will be ready by the end of the year with greater clarity and demand for action. We’ve also been assigned by the government to complete a plan for gender mainstreaming to be completed by May 2017. That includes recruitment, career paths and also a visible equality perspective in courses and programmes. It’s a huge task.”

What is happening when it comes to internationalisation?

“A project to increase student mobility externally is underway. We’re good at accepting exchange students from abroad, but it’s also important for our own students to gain international experiences.”

Being a humanist, are you supposed to act as a link between the Management and the Faculty of Arts?

“It’s not like I represent the faculty in the University Management. On the other hand, I bring to the table heaps of experience about the situation, thoughts and competences present within the Faculty of Arts. Having such a width is valuable.”

“In my mind, our researchers are good at collaborating.”

DIETER MÜLLER

You have been Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences since 2011. Did you leave your assignments at the faculty as soon as you started as Deputy Vice-Chancellor?

“In terms of no longer being part of the Faculty Board – yes. But I’m still professor in Human Geography at 40 per cent. Keeping that link to research is something that both the Vice-Chancellor and I find very important. It’s also essential should you ever want to return to a faculty career.”

You are assigned responsibility for research in social sciences, arts and humanities. Is that all?

“No. One part is to form an integral part of the Management, and in that job your portfolio is rather unimportant. The other part, however, is to be the one who is committed to research, doctoral education and collaboration within the social sciences, arts and humanities. The systematic focus on collaboration is probably what’s most new to me. But in my mind, our researchers are good at collaborating, at least within the fields I’m familiar with.”

What topics did you commit most to during your term as dean?

“Everyday life for single researchers in the social sciences is focused to a large extent on the search for external funds. It makes it hard for researchers to go too in-depth and stick to a clear topic. That’s where we’ve made several contributions to improve the conditions. In the social sciences, it’s usually only internal funds that stipulate the conditions for in-depth research into a particular subject.”

Are these the topics you will continue to work on in your new job?

“Well, the perspectives are expanding. I’ll be able to spend more time on competitive intelligence and analyses. Another tangible action coming up is that the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) will start evaluating doctoral education. Therefore, we need to make an overview of how we want things to work at Umeå University. That’s a task where it’s necessary to work from all sides of the pond, so to speak, in order to create common solutions.”

Academic freedom in Turkey under threat

Turkish universities have been affected by recent disorder. As a consequence, the network Scholars at Risk has seen an increase in Turkish researchers needing protection.

TEXT Mattias Grundström Mitz and Jonas Lidström **PHOTO** Mustafa Bahar, Johan Wingborg/the University of Gothenburg, Mattias Pettersson

IN JANUARY, OVER 1,100 Turkish academics at 90 different higher education institutions signed the petition *Academics for Peace* where they demanded an end to the injustice performed by the Turkish government against the population in the Kurdish parts of the country. The petition received international attention, but also led to attacks by the Government on researchers and lecturers who had signed.

After the failed military coup in Turkey on 15 July, the pressure on academic institutions has intensified. Fifteen private universities were closed down only weeks after the attempted coup. At the beginning of September, the news agency Reuters reported that over 2,000 university researchers had been dismissed.

The main task of the international network Scholars at Risk (SAR) is to protect researchers who are under threat and cannot work in their native countries. The Swedish branch is coordinated from the University of Gothenburg, which has been a part of SAR since 2013. The person in charge is Karolina Catoni at the International Centre at the University of Gothenburg.

“Scholars at Risk has its headquarters in New York and that’s where threatened researchers send their application for protection to. When I’ve been in contact with the headquarters, they’ve passed on an image of a dramatic increase in applications from Turkish researchers, in particular after 15 July. During the first half of 2016, about 60 applications from Turkey had been submitted, whereas between July and the middle of August, nearly the same amount again was handed in.

Now, Turkey is definitely one of the dominating countries as far as applications go,” says Karolina Catoni.

This spring, a Swedish branch of the network was formed containing thirteen Swedish higher education institutions, of which Umeå University is one. On the side of organising protection against researchers who are under threat, Scholars at Risk also works with influencing public opinion and spreading information on topics of academic freedom. A few weeks ago, the Swedish branch organised its first large common activity where



Karolina Catoni, the University of Gothenburg.

“When a researcher who needs protection comes here, the university's responsibilities go even further. That's exactly how it should be.”

the branch was one of four main partners to the Book Fair in Gothenburg. The theme of this year’s fair was freedom of speech to which SAR Sweden organised a number of seminars where issues on academic freedom were raised. Görel Granström from Umeå University took part in a seminar on hate crimes, whilst Therese Enarsson

and Karin Åström spoke about academic freedom and online antagonism in the exhibition stand for freedom of speech.

The University of Gothenburg has accepted four SAR researchers since September 2015, of whom two are still active at the University. All three researchers were offered an employment of one year. To enable this, the Vice-Chancellor put aside strategic funding of approx-

Previously, the Department of Physics at Umeå University has had a student exchange agreement with the Fatih University outside of Istanbul. It is one of the fifteen universities that have been shut down by the Turkish Government after the military coup in July this year.



imately SEK 2 million per year. However, the greatest investment cannot be counted in currency.

“A great deal of practical details need to be taken care of before we are able to accept a researcher. In terms of employment, these researchers often come as visiting researchers, which means the normal routine with the Swedish Migration Agency needs to be followed. But when a researcher who needs protection comes here, the university’s responsibilities go even further. That’s exactly how it should be,” says Karolina Catoni.

SHE RECOUNTS A case where the University of Gothenburg had to collaborate with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to get a researcher out of its home country. Neither is it unusual that the threatening situation against the researcher continues also when he or she is in Sweden. Some need to work under a pseudonym or have protected identity.

Even if there are always both humanitarian and symbolic aspects of accepting a researcher under threat, Karolina Catoni still maintains that the mutual interest and the benefits for the researcher and for the higher education institution are key.

When the central Scholars at Risk receives an application that fulfils all criterion, the researcher is matched against different participating locations. The University gets to assess lists of publications and interview the applicant via video link. Greg Neely, Head of the International Office at Umeå University emphasises the importance of this matching process.

“By securing the need from both the individual and the accepting institution, there are great chances of the University benefitting from the addition, at the same time as the individual can grow as a researcher despite being on the run.”

So far, Umeå University has matched one researcher to a department, which was ready to accept the researcher. But the researcher later chose to continue to another university. According to Greg Neely, phone calls and emails regularly come in from researchers who live under threat or are on the run due to violence and conflicts in their native countries. All these are now referred to Scholars at Risk. Swedish universities can offer an agreement for six months up to two years and the idea is for the individual to find a permanent solution to their situation in that time.



Greg Neely.

Despite the added pressure on the Turkish higher education institutions, Umeå University has not been greatly affected as no members of staff or students from Umeå University are currently in Turkey. Such exchanges have, however, previously been common and Greg Neely says that a number of Turkish partner universities are since the attempted coup this spring not allowed to send or receive exchange students.

“Probably, the greatest problem right now, as I see it, is that the exchanges have stopped and, more importantly, that new collaborations may not start with us or other European universities. There is a great risk that it will take several years before the trust has been regained,” says Greg Neely.

He reckons that the efforts made by Umeå University through Scholars at Risk – but also other investments – are of great importance to both individuals in the short term and in the long run from a societal perspective. ●



Shuji Akagi's work of art *Decontamination of my Yard, Fukushima City* (2013). The artist's home town is located right next to the Fukushima nuclear power plant and was hard hit when wind brought radioactive waste with it from the 2011 disaster. The photographs are part of a comprehensive documentation of how they remove surface layers of lawns, gardens and parks around the city.

from the radioactive zone around the nuclear power plant to exhibit them.

"They are everyday objects, which makes the consequences of the disaster tangible and very striking," says Katarina Pierre.

THE RISKS OF STORING radioactive waste, terminal storage and the breakneck lapse of time are recurring topics, says Katarina Pierre:

"How are we going to communicate our knowledge on radioactivity to future generations when the time span is more or less unimaginable? The artists also use their works of art to raise a few philosophical questions regarding memory, knowledge and time."

Several of the artists discuss issues that the nuclear power industry is also struggling with at present.

"On 19 November, we are hosting a roundtable discussion where art, research and people from the radioactive radiation trade will be represented," says Katarina Pierre.

The exhibition comes with an extensive programme of films, lectures and conversations. It is all open to the public.

"Several researchers from Umeå University will participate in the programme, which feels really exciting."

EVEN THE CURATOR of the exhibition, Dr Ele Carpenter, is a researcher by profession, at Goldsmiths University of London. *Perpetual Uncertainty* is the result of a several year-long research project funded by the UK Arts & Humanities Research Council, continues Katarina Pierre:

"We decided two years ago to set up this exhibition together. But the background is quite interesting; already in 2008–2010, Ele Carpenter did a postdoc at Umeå University and then had her workplace at Bildmuseet."

"Not everyone realises what a pronounced international business operation we run here," says Katarina Pierre.

Finally, she would also like to mention a permanent offering from Bildmuseet:

"As an employee or student at Umeå University, you can book a guided tour with one of our professional art educators or museum hosts. The tours are given in both Swedish and English and can be booked through the Bildmuseet web page. That also goes for when you for instance have international visitors." ●

JONAS LIDSTRÖM

Art that penetrates the risks of nuclear power

The Bildmuseet autumn exhibition *Perpetual Uncertainty* has just opened. Artists from several countries, not least from Japan, take on topics with a strong bearing on public debate and research.

THIRTY YEARS HAVE passed since the Chernobyl nuclear disaster struck. And five years have passed since the accident in Fukushima. This autumn's biggest exhibition at Umeå University's museum of contemporary art, Bildmuseet, is called *Perpetual Uncertainty*, in which artists investigate experiences of nuclear power, radioactive half-life, radiation and how they have changed our outlook on the world.

"Chernobyl and Fukushima were two separate events that turned everything upside down and really exposed the challenges of nuclear power. At Bildmuseet, we are interested in artists who explore and comment on contemporary issues. Art that raises questions, that is. When art succeeds in doing so, that's when it's at its absolute best, I find," says Katarina Pierre, director

of Bildmuseet. The exhibition continues until Easter next year. Artists from Europe, Japan, the US and Australia take part. Many of the works of art take a documentary starting point, says Katarina Pierre:

"Several of the Japanese artists who participate in the exhibition have been part of projects on Fukushima."

The artist Shuji Akagi has photographed decontamination work after the nuclear disaster (see picture). Another group of artists goes under the name of Don't Follow the Wind and has taken decontaminated objects



Katarina Pierre, Bildmuseet.

PHOTO: MIKAEL LUNDGREN

“Quick, hyper and just somewhat indecent”



PHOTO: PRESS PHOTO

Stand-up with Emma Knyckare and Josefin Johansson, Friday 21 October at 12:10–12:50 in Ljusgården Atrium in the Teacher Education Building. Organiser: Culture on Campus in collaboration with Fanny Stand-up.

Stand-up comedy is a recurring and appreciated part of Culture on Campus' events, which is why it will welcome comedians Josefin Johansson and Emma Knyckare in October. The headline above nails what the audience can expect from the show, according to Josefin Johansson.

What should we expect?

“Great jokes and perhaps some seriousness. Daytime shows usually lead to really good contact with the audience. You don't have to fight for attention, which you might have to in a pub late at night. I'm also hoping for some conversations, it's always more fun if the audience engages.”

Where do you get your inspiration?

“From people all over, I talk to people, think of something fun and have to write it down straight away. I always carry a pen and paper. I suppose I try to be observant of my surroundings and want to find stuff that'll create amusing images in people's minds. Stuff that might give people new perspectives.”

Any favourite comedian?

“Definitely Amy Schumer. She's an American comedian behind the show *Inside Amy Schumer*. She is a feminist with a rather dirty mind and a sharp tongue. Hysterical and one of the world's foremost comedians.”

What will happen later this autumn?

“This autumn, actor Robert Noack and I will host a show called *Drottningstytta* focusing on all Swedish queens from the Middle Ages to present-day. Queens tend to be hidden in history books. Instead, all focus lies on the kings. Therefore, we make queens visible here instead. Personally, thinking back on the difficulties former Queen Christina faced can be helpful when I struggle with getting on in a male-dominated business.” ●

JONAS ERICSON

JOSEFIN JOHANSSON is a comedian and artist who has written for and acted on radio, TV and on stage since 2007. Known from Swedish events, TV and radio. She is also active on tour doing stand-up comedy and is one of the initiators of Humorkollo – a humour seminar aimed at girls.



Kristina Issa
18 November

PHOTO: DONOVAN VAN MARTENS

Culture on Campus autumn 2016

From the autumn programme for Culture on Campus. See the entire autumn calendar on: www.umu.se/kulturpacampus (press English flag)

The events take place in the Ljusgården atrium in the Teacher Education Building unless other location is specified.

THURSDAY 13 OCTOBER 12:10–12:50
Mattias Alkberg (concert and reading). In Swedish.

FRIDAY 14 OCTOBER 12:10–12:40
Umeå University Library: Sofia Sundberg “The surplus” (art exhibition).

FRIDAY 21 OCTOBER 12:10–12:50
Emma Knyckare and Josefin Johansson (stand-up comedians). In Swedish.

FRIDAY 28 OCTOBER 12:10–12:50
Dida (concert).

TUESDAY 8 NOVEMBER 12:10–12:50
Katarina Wennstam (author). In Swedish.

WEDNESDAY 16 NOVEMBER 12:10–12:50
Al Pitcher (stand-up comedian). In English.

FRIDAY 18 NOVEMBER 12:10–12:50
Kristina Issa (concert).

THURSDAY 24 NOVEMBER 12:10–12:50
Nina Björk (author). In Swedish.

THURSDAY 8 DECEMBER 12:10–12:50
Skuggteatern's crossword improv (improvisational theatre). In Swedish.

TUESDAY 13 DECEMBER 12:10–12:40
Lucia on Campus with the Umeå Student Choir, Aula Nordica (concert).



Dida
28 October

PHOTO: PRESS PHOTO

CULTURE ON CAMPUS offers free culture for students and members of staff at Umeå University — every week and always at lunchtime. Music, literature, theatre, circus, dance and much more. Each year, about 35 events are carried out with about 15,000 visitors.

Finally... **Anna Baranowska-Rataj**



PHOTO: PRZEMISŁAW CHROSTOWSKI

Diversity or comfort?

INTERNATIONALISATION IS A topic that has been shown a lot of attention at Umeå University in the last few years. Since our University emphasised the importance of internationalisation in its Vision 2020, the Department of Sociology, where I work, has decided to develop our own approach to implementing the internationalisation strategy in practice.

In many respects, my department has integrated an international dimension to both education and research. Our courses offered in English are popular, and teaching international students is a source of inspiration for our staff thanks to the students' varying experiences.

IN RECENT YEARS, our department has employed a number of researchers from abroad who have contributed a lot to the department's activities by bringing in new pedagogical ideas. They've also organised international conferences, which has strengthened our department's connections with internationally renowned senior researchers. The access to international networks through our international researchers has made us more competitive in applications for research funding.

But still. During discussions that emerged among members of staff while developing our approach towards internationalisation, one fundamental question was raised: To what purpose should our university, and our department, become increasingly internationalised?

In fact, there are many reasons to think that internationalisation does come at a substantial cost. Once we accept international students, we need to deal with their skills being different to those of Swedish students as different educational systems focus on diverse aspects of competence development.

Also, integration of employees from abroad requires effort and an altered style of management. Whatever seems obvious to a Swedish-born employee may not be as straightforward to a person with a different background. This is not just a matter of language. It's always easier and more comfortable to function in a homogenous group than in a diverse one. My conclusions may seem rather obvious, but looking at my department's experiences, it seems that we shouldn't underestimate the challenges related to increasing diversity at the workplace.

PERSONALLY, I FEEL strongly for the cause of internationalisation. My wish is that Umeå University's ambitions of becoming a more diverse workplace and provider of education will be realised, and that the 2020 Vision and objectives document will not end up as a piece of paper with no practical meaning.

By disregarding the strive towards further internationalisation, much time and effort would be spared. However, it makes sense to take not only the direct costs into the equation, but also the costs of lost opportunities. My strong belief is that being open for diversity results in substantial benefits to us all in the end. ●

Anna Baranowska-Rataj is a researcher at the Department of Sociology, Umeå University, and at Umeå School of Business and Economics in Warsaw. Her research concerns family structures and child health.

Would you like to write an Aktum column?

Get in touch with the editorial board!
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