

Pledge Göran Spong

The chance to be a part of SLU's board is appealing. On a personal level, I would appreciate the challenge of such important strategic work. But more importantly, the questions and decisions within the board's mandate may fundamentally affect our path towards a sustainable future. To be a part of these discussions would surely be very interesting.

Born and raised north of Uppsala, I went to universities in Umeå, Minnesota, and Uppsala, where I also received my PhD. I am married and have a sixteen-year-old daughter and a fourteen-year-old son. Since 2008 we live just outside Umeå, before this in Uppsala and abroad.

Writing a pledge is difficult. Actions count, words are malleable. The persons nominating me say I communicate clearly and directly, have high integrity and know SLU well. Visits to the campuses where we have PhD education have allowed me to better understand SLU in its entirety. These visits have reconfirmed my belief in SLU's unique role in research, a belief supported by my previous affiliations to universities that primarily focused on basic sciences. My move to SLU made clear to me our superior entrenchment with the world outside academia. The collaboration with industry, government and NGOs bestow us with huge advantages, but also present some particular challenges. As the director of PhD studies and responsible for the PhD course Scientific Writing I see much of our research. To protect and further develop outstanding research environments and opportunities are key. Being a research intensive university, our long-term performance is contingent on our ability to attract the best students. Some of these students should also, in international competition, embark on PhD studies to satisfy the internal and external demand for their skill sets. Training tomorrow's successful researchers in SLU's subject areas demands both a high quality research component as well as strong course work. Increased external competition, in areas traditionally the reserve of SLU, challenges us to improve. Fewer admissions is another trend that may have large implications for the research environment and development across SLU. The direction mapped out by the board's decisions may directly affect these processes. With substantial international background and experience of environmental monitoring, research education, supervision and research with national and international partners in government, research groups and research councils I hope to contribute important perspectives to the board's work for all of SLU.

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