

Statement of Intent – Fredrik Fernqvist (Alnarp, 2026-02-04)

Decisions lead to effects in practice. What we know about practice, and how different decisions may influence practice, should inform those decisions. As a representative of teachers and researchers, I want to bring knowledge of practice into SLU's Board and contribute to sound and well-considered decisions. I have more than twenty years of practical experience from working as a teacher and researcher at SLU, and I have worked with teaching, research, and collaboration.

Naturally, I am shaped by SLU, as it is my *alma mater*, but I have also influenced SLU in various ways. My background is in horticultural science, which I began studying in 1995; I was active in the student union during my studies, later a research assistant after graduation, then doctoral student, lecturer, senior lecturer, associate professor, and distinguished university teacher. I have served several terms on the Programme Board for Landscape and Horticulture, as well as in other steering groups and assignments (see CV). I am currently a deputy member of the Docent Board at the LTV Faculty and the board responsible for appointing Distinguished University Teachers. I know the organization well and have a broad network both within and outside SLU. Through collaboration with companies, public authorities, organizations, and other universities—both nationally and internationally—I have seen the value SLU offers through our subject expertise and our highly committed teachers and researchers. But I have also seen where SLU could develop further and become even better. I believe that SLU can strengthen its strategic position in the landscape in which we operate, in several ways, and I want to contribute to that. Beyond serving as a link between practice and the University Board, I carry with me a substantial portfolio of ideas that I have accumulated over the years.

More concretely, here are a few particularly important issues I see: Strengthen and further develop our educational programmes! SLU offers strong programmes and committed teachers, but we need to work harder to make engagement in teaching more attractive. It should be a valuable merit. The academic world at large prioritizes research, while teaching is not valued as highly. Yet research and education are interconnected. I believe that teaching and our educational programmes are among our most important contributions to society—just as important as research and knowledge development. Teaching efforts need to be valued more highly, and teachers need better conditions, for instance through smoother administrative tools, resources for course development, and support for collaboration with other teachers and courses. We need stronger support for involving industry and external actors, improved infrastructure (classrooms and equipment), including better conditions for distance education between campuses, and more (also to support *one SLU*). I also believe that our programmes would benefit from more genuine cross- and interdisciplinary elements—through increased collaboration between (and within) programmes and courses, as well as greater internationalization.

In the field of research, I see, among other things, the need for more coordinated support for collaboration across subject and faculty boundaries. For example, the work with the *Interdisciplinary Academy (IDA)* should be further developed, scaled up, and become a central platform to strengthen SLU as a university and generate synergies among our different competencies. Increased collaboration and understanding of our various subjects and perspectives are essential for addressing complex problems, forming new partnerships, and attracting funding. There may also be a need for increased support to help researchers translate research into practice, as well as platforms and forums for collaboration and dialogue with external actors. Collaboration with industry and other societal actors needs to be strengthened overall so that new knowledge can more quickly influence practice and policy. I believe this is an important part of achieving the vision that “*SLU has a key role in the development of sustainable life, grounded in science and education.*”

While these are just a few reflections, I look forward to further discussions, and I want to be a teacher representative who is actively engaged in conversations with colleagues, on all matters that are important for our SLU.