

Notes from SLU's board meeting April 27th 2016

- A substantial amount of time was spent on discussing the draft for a **new strategy for SLU** valid for 2017-2020. PhD students fall under the category *students and education* (studenter och utbildning). It was clear that this part of the strategy had been written by someone working with education on bachelor and master level. I pointed out that PhD students were hardly mentioned in the new strategy and gave suggestions for how the document could be improved. Comments from the council for PhD education (FUR) will also be taken into consideration. **The board of SLU will take a final decision on a new strategy in June 2016.**
- **Financial follow up.** Figures show a decreasing number of postdocs and PhD students. I stressed that if no actions are taken SLU will soon reach a critical number of PhD students and ultimately this will negatively affect the quality of PhD education. The proportion between professors and PhD students is skewed, 227:304. Ideally each professor should have around three PhD students. Over the years the faculties have saved up a lot of money and it is time to spend it, eg. on employing PhD students. One possible explanation for why less PhD students are hired is the financial insecurity among supervisors. With more supervisors employed on permanent contracts (tillsvidareansättning), they would be more willing to invest time and money in PhD students.
- The internal audit at SLU (internrevisionen) presented a **report on PhD education at SLU**. The aim with the report was to investigate if the PhD education is well-organized and point out any major issues. The number of PhD students has decreased over the last years, especially the group of student with a degree from a Swedish university. The internal audit found no major issues but recommends the university administration to do a risk assessment.
- Every three years the **student unions** have to ask the university for permission to continue acting as student unions. Applications have been sent in by seven student unions at SLU and deputy vice-chancellor Karin Holmgren is evaluating the applications. A decision will be taken by SLU's board in June 2016.
- **Action plan for SLU's property holdings** (in total 431 buildings, forest land and farmland). Currently there is no intention to sell land. The University administration (Egendomsförvaltningen) will go through all the buildings SLU possess and evaluate however they 1) are in use, 2) not in use but can be rented out, 3) can be sold or, 4) should be torn down. I pointed out that they should look



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into the possibility to renovate building and rent them out as apartments for student or researchers. The university administration was not too happy about this idea since according to him it is not economically beneficial to provide student housing.

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Chairperson SLUSS PhD council