

Ishi Buffam – Letter of intent, SLU – januari 2023

Ishi Buffam - ENGLISH

I am motivated to sit on SLU's board to work for an inspired, engaged, and supportive academic environment for faculty, staff and students. SLU has been a home for me for a long time – for 5 years as a PhD student in the department of Forest Ecology and Management in Umeå (2002-2007), and again starting 2018, in the department of Landscape Architecture, Planning and Management in Alnarp. I have been a PhD student, researcher, and now senior lecturer. This range of perspectives has given me a great appreciation for the important work SLU does, and I embrace the vision of SLU as a driving force for a sustainable, thriving world, grounded in scientific and teaching expertise.

As a member of the board, I would support SLU in its work to strengthen and develop research, monitoring and assessment (EMA) and teaching of the highest quality. All of these are key to SLU's role in supporting sustainable change. Both basic and applied research need to be encouraged, as well as innovation and EMA - when possible, in collaboration with societal actors. At the same time, quality of work life and job satisfaction is an important core ideal, with equal opportunities for all community members as a central pillar. I am particularly passionate about: facilitating opportunities for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research; strengthening internationalization; linking teaching and research more closely; supporting early-career faculty; and enabling consistent administrative support to help minimize distractions/time-wasters that we all experience sometimes.

One of SLU's greatest strengths is a broad knowledge base in many disciplines with relevance to societal and global sustainability. SLU has initiated programs supporting interdisciplinary collaborations, and should continue to do so. This is a challenge worth tackling even within the smaller context of our department, where I organize research "Jam Sessions" - where we share ideas from different disciplines and develop joint proposals - a rewarding way to communicate and collaborate across disciplinary boundaries.

I think that my experience and personal qualities will help me contribute to the SLU board. I have a broad, varied training and research background – starting in Chemistry, followed by Ecosystem Ecology, and for the last decade mostly within the fields of Urban Ecology and Sustainable Development, including strong collaborations with social scientists and societal actors. I have as much experience with teaching as with research, and see both as equally important. I've also had considerable international experience, primarily in the USA, where I am originally from – most recently for 8 years as an Assistant/Associate Professor of Biology, University of Cincinnati, before returning to Sweden. These experiences have given me a broad and open perspective.

I am a reflective person, who likes to discuss carefully and hear all arguments for and against a motion, before a big decision is made. Changes should be made thoughtfully, with an eye to sustainability and long-term impacts. At the same time, I am not afraid to make decisions and stand for them, and to make needed changes. I would be honored to help make those important decisions as a member of SLU's board.