UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

RESEARCH STRATEGIES AT UNIVERSITIES

A brief survey of research strategies at institutional and departmental level.

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REPORT

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Introduction

The University of Gothenburg is currently in the process of developing a new institutional strategy, named *Vision 2020*. Such strategies and processes have been going on at universities in the Western world for a number of years, and they have been studied to some extent (Anderson et al. 1999; Reichert 2006). As an input to Vision 2020, and on suggestion by the Dean of the Faculty of Education Sciences Mikael Alexandersson and by the Vice-Chancellor's advisor Staffan Edén, the Division for Analysis and Evaluation set out to investigate the university strategies, on institutional as well as departmental level. The investigation focused on research strategies.

Why do universities have strategies?

Reichert (2006) investigated research strategies at ten European universities. The reasons for creating a research strategy naturally varied between the universities, but several reasons were common to many of them.

- *External pressure.* In several cases national or regional government agencies had asked/required institutions to create research strategies. This was typically focused on identifying areas of strength or research profiles. It is sometimes also a part of a trend to increase the institutional differentiation within countries. In other cases it was the funding bodies that asked about research-related goals, wishing to ensure that funded research projects were embedded in a suitable institutional environment.
- *Increased competition and cuts in budgets.* Reichert writes that most groups at all visited universities "agreed that the strongest external factor contributing to the need to develop a research strategy was the fiercely increasing international competition, especially in the natural and technical sciences". This competition mainly concerns highly skilled researchers, from doctoral to professorial level. Further, cuts in public funding combined with increased institutional autonomy creates a similar pressure to prioritise between areas of research, and to find areas where universities have or could have "critical mass". The rising costs of scientific infrastructure and the concomitant need to prioritise acquisitions is but a special version of this.
- *A desire for quality.* Many institutions want to foster excellence in research, either as a rather independent strive towards quality, or as an attempt to counteract national funding mechanisms (which typically allocate money primarily based on teaching). The increased fragmentation of science has also created a need to bring opportunities for cross-disciplinary research. Similarly, handling "the grand challenges" of modern societies is difficult in the traditionally organised university disciplines. Furthermore, a large share of the professors will retire within a few years, and institutions want to make the generational shift into something good.

- *There is a need for a more coherent approach and institutional support for dialogue with external partners.* The external partners include employers of examined students, but also potential supporters of research projects. In some cases it was felt that big business partners often are excellent lobbyists for increased public spending on research. Potential private donors also often wish to know about the institutions' areas of strength.

From a Swedish perspective one cannot help noticing that the increased institutional autonomy of later years is likely to have created a need for university managements to make up their minds about where they university should go. Rae (1997 p. 185) puts it in a way that emphasises the communicative aspects of this: "The strategic plan has an important role to play in declaring to members of the university, and to clients and observers outside the university, that the institution is being guided on its course and is not simply drifting."

Anderson et al. (1999) studied strategic planning at Australian universities, and describes a number of perceived benefits of institutional strategies:

- "The chief value of an overall [strategic] plan is that it helps to set institutional priorities which then translate into priorities for budget allocations."
- "[A strategic] plan is a way of thinking clearly about where the university should go."
- "[A strategic plan] is an instrument for developing a sense of coherence and common purpose".
- "The [strategic] plan also has secondary uses as an instrument for communications with outside agencies: with government as part of accountability, with other patrons and with potential partners."
- "Distinct from the value of a plan is the value of the planning process. (...) An essential part of any plan is a good understanding of one's own business and the market and context in which one is operating. The processes of planning help to spread this understanding through the university community."

What are university strategies?

The word *strategy* often causes a certain amount of confusion, and a number of similar terms are in use, such as *strategic plan, strategic focus,* or *strategic framework.* One might want to clarify what this is.

Mintzberg (2000 pp. 23–25) writes about strategic planning from a general and rather theoretical viewpoint, and not restricted to the university sector. He distinguishes between different types of strategies: The *intended strategy* is the plan than an organisation makes about how to behave in the future. The parts of this plan that are fully realised is called the *deliberate strategy.* At the same time, a pattern of behaviour may arise without anybody having planned it, but still clearly perceivable for anybody looking at the organisation's actions over a few years. This pattern is sometimes also referred to as a strategy, and

Minzberg calls it the *emergent strategy*. The deliberate and the emergent strategy taken together forms the *realised strategy*.

In contrast to Minzberg's taxonomy, Anderson et al. (1999) makes a distinction between *biological* and *teleological* planning. The former type describes strategies of institutions that adapt successfully to ever changing circumstances. This type of planning recognises that the future can not be controlled, and that organisations must be agile enough to seize opportunities as they arise. Teleological planning is more purposive and intends to move the organisation towards goals that have been defined in advance. These two types are not exclusive, and should perhaps be seen as difference aspects of strategic plans.

It is also possible to separate between *goals* (what you want to achieve)*, strategies* (ways of achieving goals), and *plans* (a set of decisions), as for example Minzberg (2000) does.

The universities that Reichert (2006) investigated did not bother very much about these distinctions when putting together their research strategies. Their documents can be described as rather eclectic combinations of all of the above concepts. This mixing is probably due to the many different reasons behind the strategies, as described in the previous section.

What do university strategies contain?

Reichert (2006) describes a number of things that the investigated universities put in their strategy documents. These are summarised in the list below.

- Internal incentives and procedures to strengthen the quality and/or quantity of the research. Examples:
  - Redistribution of considerable amounts of money to the strongest units.
  - Explicit demands for improving from weak units.
  - Very clear communication of expected quality levels.
  - Internal competitive research grants.
  - Indicator-based performance funding.
- A prioritisation of a few thematic areas of research – which to a "remarkably" degree were overlapping between institutions – and sometimes how these areas are supported.
  - Extra funding.
  - New appointments.
  - New research institutes.
  - Marketing/communicating these areas to relevant external partners.
- Actions to improve internal communication and cooperation, in order to create stronger and more visible research. Interdisciplinary was an aim at all of the investigated institutions.
- Goals of different kinds, and sometimes planned activities to reach these goals:

o *Recruiting top scientists.* This was typically seen as increasingly expensive, due to tougher competition for the best scientists. Several measures were attempted to make available the necessary funds, for example by prioritising efforts to a select set of areas, or by attracting extra financial support (private or public).
o *Internationalising the faculty (hiring more foreign researchers).*
o *Improving the quality and/or quantity of doctoral and master level teaching.* Different aspects of this were addressed, such as strengthening the link between doctoral and master level teaching and the link between graduate programmes and top research areas; creating larger and more structured environments such as graduate schools; improved supervision and mentoring; and internationalising graduate programmes.
o *Creating institutes, clusters or centres.*
o *Increasing external funding.*
o *Expanding the research support services.*
o *Improving activities for knowledge transfer and innovation.*
o *Intensifying partnerships with regional authorities or businesses.*
o *Improved usage of common infrastructure.*

What strategic issues do departments worry about?

As an input to the on-going project of developing a new strategic plan for the University of Gothenburg, fifteen heads of departments, divisions, faculties or centres with strong research were interviewed about what kinds of strategic issues they dealt with, and how. Eleven of the selected environments were located at Swedish universities, and four at Danish, Dutch or British universities. The study is presented in detail in appendix 1.

All interviewees emphasise the importance of having good faculty, and by consequence of making good recruitments. However, the conditions for recruitment vary considerably – some research bodies compete internationally and find it impossible to attract the people they want, while others can only employ Swedish speaking faculty and have problems finding people with sufficient qualifications.

Several interviewees said that a good and cooperative social climate is important, but that it is difficult to give such issues the weight they deserve in a selection process. Another thing that was mentioned several times was the importance of a research focused culture.

When recruiting new faculty, many of the investigated bodies prefer to make as broad announcements as possible. Other bodies have decided on a number of subfields (research groups) and find it important that each such group has "critical mass". For that reason they announce positions directed at one of these subfields. In other bodies again the recruitment may be strongly determined by the curriculum, in that they must have teachers for large undergraduate programs.

Cooperation and networking is considered a strategic issue for the department, division, faculty or centre by three of the non-Swedish interviewees. The Swedish interviewees consider cooperation important, but best handled by individual researchers and/or research groups.

A study very similar to this one was made at the University of Minnesota in 2005 (Bland et al. 2005), and the results were also very similar to the ones found here. However, the Americans differed from their European counterparts in that they were more interested in finding good (graduate) students, often used and valued mentoring programs, used salary increases and other rewards to put emphasis on research, and in general saw no big problems finding and attracting good faculty.

From a university point of view, there are a few conclusions worth drawing from this:

    i.   Recruitment is important and must be handled with great care.
    ii.   Recruitment is highly context sensitive, with different needs and conditions in different areas.
    iii.   A viable economic situation is fundamental, and in order to prevent economic worries, the rules for distributing funds must be made clear and stable.
    iv.   In order to attract good junior researchers, there should be a lucid and predictable career path system.

Concluding remarks

Institutional strategies have several motivations and purposes, and do not adhere to the stricter theories of planning. Goals, choices, actions and communication are intermingled in the strategic plans of European universities.

Comparing the strategic worries on departmental level with the strategic plans on institutional level makes it clear that theee is a considerable distance between these two areas. There are some overlaps, primarily concerning recruitment, and no direct conflicts have been discovered, but largely the issues dealt with by heads of department are different from the ones dealt with by vice chancellors. There is thus no direct connection between the strategic plans for the university and that of the department. This is most likely not a problem – universities are highly decentralised organisations, and strict top-down planning would probably be useless at best and detrimental at worst.

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Appendix 1 – Study of strategies at department level

Introduction

The University of Gothenburg is currently in the process of developing a new institutional strategy, named *Vision 2020*. Such strategies and processes have been going on at universities in the Western world for a number of years, and they have been studied to some extent (Anderson et al. 1999; Reichert 2006). As an input to Vision 2020, and on suggestion by the Dean of the Faculty of Education Sciences Mikael Alexandersson and by the Vice-Chancellor's advisor Staffan Edén, the Division for Analysis and Evaluation set out to investigate the strategies on departmental level. The strategic issues dealt with by departments, divisions, centres and faculties ought to be highly relevant also on institutional level. The basic question was: *What strategic issues are of concern to faculties, departments, divisions and centres, and how are they dealt with?*

Method and Data

A very limited amount of work-hours were available for this study, and the approach chosen to investigate strategic issues on department level was a very straight-forward one:

1. Identify a number of departments, divisions, faculties or centres – here generically referred to as *research bodies* – with strong research.
2. Ring the directors (or corresponding) and ask them what they do.

Since the range of possible actions for a research body may differ considerably between research systems (employment regulations, funding systems, etc.), most of the investigated bodies were located at Swedish universities, assuming this would be more relevant for the University of Gothenburg. A number of foreign research bodies were added to the list for comparative purposes. A very similar study, although considerable more thorough, was carried out at the University of Minnesota in 2005 (Bland et al. 2005), and so comparisons to the American situation is also possible.

The research assessments performed at several Swedish universities during the last couple of years (KoFF 07 at Uppsala University, RQ 08 at Lund University, RAE 08 at KTH Royal Institute of Technology, and RED 10 at University of Gothenburg) provided the basis for locating strong (or otherwise interesting) research bodies at Swedish universities. In the Netherlands and in the United Kingdom, national research evaluations have been done for decades, and strong bodies were located using those. In Denmark, no such research assessment was found, and instead a web search guided by intuition was used to locate strong research bodies.

The original attempt was to investigate research bodies from different scientific fields in a reasonable balance, but it turned out to be difficult to find excellent bodies in all fields (using the sources at hand), and also to get in touch with the heads of department (or corresponding) and have them agree to an interview. The resulting list of investigated

bodies (see Table 1) is therefore somewhat skewed towards natural sciences and health sciences.

Table 1: Participating research bodies.

Name	Research Body	Institution
Gunnar Nyman, Head of Department	Department of Chemistry	University of Gothenburg
Per Åberg, Head of Department	Department of Marine Ecology	University of Gothenburg
Anders Oldfors, Head of Institute, and Claes Gustafsson, Assistant Head of Institute	Institute of Biomedicine	University of Gothenburg
Irene Söderhäll, Head of Department	Department of Evolution, Genomics and Systematics (IEGS)	Uppsala University
Carl-Henrik Heldin, Branch Director	Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research	Uppsala University
Örjan Frans, Head of Department,	Department of Psychology	Uppsala University
Ulf Lindström, Head of Division	Division of Theoretical Physics	Uppsala University
Hans Hertz, Head of Department/Head of Group	Department of Applied Physics /Research Group *Biomedical and X-Ray Physics*	KTH Royal Institute of Technology
Zaal Kokaia, Director	Stem Cell Center	Lund University
Kerstin Svensson, Head of Department	School of Social Work	Lund University
Lars Edgren, Head of Department	Department of History	Lund University
Flemming Besenbacher, Director	The Interdisciplinary Nanoscience Center (iNANO)	Aarhus University
Werner Raub, Research Director/ Head	Department of Sociology	University of Utrecht
Robin Hogan, Director of Research	Department of Meteorology	University of Reading
Carl May, Dean of Research	Faculty of Health Sciences	University of Southampton

The participants at the University of Gothenburg were interviewed face-to-face, while the other ones were interviewed over the phone. An interview schema was used (see Appen-

dix 1), although mostly as a check list to make sure all areas were covered – the interviews were allowed to take different paths for different participants.

The first interview was performed on May 10, 2011, and the last on November 8 the same year.

Results

When reading the results, many questions and thoughts may arise about differences between countries and disciplines, or about what is really important for a good research environment. But only 15 research bodies were investigated here, and when reading the results of this study it is important to keep in mind that other departments and faculties may successfully organise their research in other ways. The main use of this study is to show the great variety between different research bodies, as well as the few things that they all have in common.

Money first

> *Even though we were in budget hell we said that the budget is only a means. It is not an ends. It is something that has to work for us to be able to do what we want, but it must never overshadow. Then of course it overshadows when numbers are red and people get sad when you muscle in on them and staff changes and such, but it must never overshadow the discussion, it is only a means.*
>
> *Natural Sciences, Swedish university*

Some of the interviewees reported experiences with economic difficulties at their research body, and it seems that a viable economic situation is a precondition for any research environment. If the economy is faltering, money takes precedence over any other strategic issue.

Recruiting good researchers may be a way to get more funding, but of the investigated bodies that have had experience of economic problems none have had any option to invest their way out of that situation by recruiting researchers. Rather, they had to make do with existing faculty.

Recruitment is the key

> *We have given up trying to invite or attract established or senior scientists. Moreover, more and more people are leaving Sweden, there is a big brain-drain of established scientists, they get offers they cannot refuse and leave Sweden. It is difficult. So we go for more junior scientists, but it is very difficult to offer them anything but two-three years of terrific environment and salary and funds, and then if they are successful they [still] have to attract money and compete. We can't promise a position. We hope*

that [a position] will be announced during this period by the Faculty, but that is not really a solid promise. [In terms of] career development [Sweden] is not really anything that people are thinking about. There is no structure [here] which allows people to plan, to be motivated for success. (...) Even if you are successful there is no firm guarantee that you will get a position.

Health Sciences, Swedish university

A common theme for all interviewees is that they consider the main instrument for realising their long term goals is recruitment of faculty. The long term securing of funding is heavily dependent on having good researchers, and making good researchers out of bad/inexperienced ones is considered a slow and uncertain method.

Swedish research bodies that compete internationally for the best researchers often find it difficult to attract senior researchers with strong track records, and they mention low salaries and the peripheral geographical location as reasons. Some interviewees seem rather despondent about this, while others try to find ways around it. In some cases, the reputation of the research body is strong enough to recruit top senior researchers anyway.

There is also a clear interdependency between *attracting* good researchers and *having attracted* good researchers. A research body with good researchers gains a strong reputation that attracts other researchers, and the prominent researchers in themselves attract other researchers. Similarly, good researchers make it more easy to secure external funding, which can be used to build a better environment, making it easier to attract good researchers.

The general recruitment strategy for bodies that cannot attract top senior researchers is to find good junior researchers and help them develop into excellent senior researchers.

The Minnesota study confirms these results. (Bland et al. 2005 p. 20) quotes a research director from Marketing and Logistics Management: "An excellent department for research develops well-regarded, highly visible senior faculty, and then hires junior faculty who are better than them." Further, the American departments in some cases also find it difficult to attract the best researchers, but they do not seem to worry about peripheral location or low salary levels. Rather, the report discusses strategies such as highlighting the department's reputation; accenting the unique qualities of the community; and providing a generous, detailed and firm letter of offer (Bland et al. 2005 p. 32).

The departments in the Minnesota study seem to think that good students, particularly good graduate students, are more important than the European research bodies in this study do. The Americans make more use of (graduate) students as teaching assistants and research assistants, and they consider the recruitment of good students almost as important as the recruitment of good faculty. None of the interviewees in this study spoke about students in this way.

Teachers or researchers or both?

Our recruitment strategy is simply to get people here. Recently we advertised for two professorships and after much ado we ended up with only half a professor. We are having huge problems finding people with disciplinary competence that are both teachers and researchers. We have scoured half the country and got the ones we found. A recruitment strategy in the sense of getting research strength here is something we do not really have. If I am allowed to boast a little I can say that we have a pretty good reputation within our field and because of that we get very good applicants. But I think we have emptied the field right now. We are waiting for new growth.

Humanities & Social Sciences, Swedish university

Some of the investigated bodies have very little or no undergraduate teaching (although the researchers usually are engaged in teaching elsewhere). These bodies can focus on the research ability of the people they recruit.

Other bodies have a substantial amount of undergraduate teaching, but research skills are still the main concern when recruiting new faculty. Sometimes there are so many researchers and PhD candidates compared to the teaching load that teachers is an abundant resource. In some cases the ability to teach is considered a basic requirement that any qualified researcher has.

In both these cases the bodies can employ researchers with no knowledge of Swedish, and they do this on an international market, where the competition for researchers is fierce.

Bodies for which a substantial part of the funding comes from teaching in Swedish are in practice limited to recruiting Swedish researchers. All such bodies investigated here have a strong reputation in Sweden, and their primary recruitment problem is not to compete with other universities about the best researchers, but rather to find anybody at all who is competent and willing to move. Bland et al (2005 p. 26) reports similar mechanisms at work at the University of Minnesota – in some departments the recruitment is strongly driven by their curriculum.

Creating excellence

We gave scientific quality very heavy emphasis. That was kind of the goal of the body, the research part of the body.

Natural Sciences, Swedish university

As mentioned above, almost all interviewed persons state that the key to excellence is good researchers, implicating that recruitment is the main strategic tool. Several of them also mention that it is vital that the social climate at the research environment is good, that it is important that people talk with each other in a fruitful way. At the same time they say

that it is difficult to give social and cooperative skills the weight they deserve in a selection process. This difficulty may be a consequence of systems where recruitment is handled by a committee and where requirements need to be formalised, a situation that the American department heads in the Minnesota study do not seem to be in – they unconditionally emphasise the importance of cooperative skills, not least in the selection process (Bland et al. 2005 p. 52 ff).

Several people talk about the importance of a research focused culture. It is not clear exactly what this means, and whether there is a conflict between teaching and research here or if "research focus" is simply a way of placing emphasis on quality and ambition in general. One interviewed department head reported that they had made research the top priority, and at the same time made teaching into something prestigious – faculty that received bad teaching evaluations were not allowed to teach.

The importance of research emphasis is reported by Bland et al (2005 p. 40 f) too. The Americans also make use of salary increases and other rewards to put emphasis on research (Bland et al. 2005 p. 156 ff), something that was not found in the current study.

A large share of the investigated bodies have a more or less formalised system for reviewing research proposals, where colleagues effectively help each other to write better applications. One non-Swedish research body reported having contacts in the EU administration that helped them preparing for calls before they are made, and also influencing which calls are made.

Two departments, both of them in the humanities and social sciences, pointed at vigorous seminars as key elements behind their success as research environments.

The Minnesota study devotes a separate chapter for mentoring (Bland et al. 2005 p. 64 ff), a concept that did not show up in any of the interviews in this study.

Anybody interested in more concrete ideas for creating a successful research department is encouraged to read (Bland et al 2005), and the other literature referred to there.

Research profile

> *The first decision is whether to recruit a new person at all, and at that time both teaching and research are considered. Once you have that decision and you see which people apply [for the position] you have another discussion about the profile. (...) The most important strategy that this body has had has been to announce positions broadly and internationally without considering the local situation. That way we have managed to employ people in such a way that I don't think we have a single person who comes from here originally. (...) It has been successful. That one is warmly recommended as a method to get the best ones.*
>
> *Natural Sciences, Swedish university*

Several interviewees say they do not aim for any specific research profile, but simply try to find good researchers, often very deliberately so. Others report that they focus on a limited number of subfields, in the form of research groups, and that each such group need to have "critical mass". Some research bodies that are heavily dependent on external funding keep track of which fields funders are interested in at the moment, and try to move into those fields, usually by cooperating with other environments.

None of the interviewees try to change the research direction of employed researchers, at least not on strategic grounds. However, when new recruitments are to be made, discussions often occur about what areas the body wants to move towards. Sometimes a researcher has left for some reason (retirement or other), and there is a need to replace him or her with a person in the same area, in order to maintain competency of a broad area for the body as a whole. Sometimes new technology has appeared, and knowledge about that technology is desirable for the researchers at the body, and so they try to recruit someone with that knowledge. Sometimes a certain domain has grown important as an ancillary for one or more research groups, and recruiting a researcher in that domain is desirable.

(Bland et al. 2005 p. 26 ff) reports similar attitudes. A Law School representative is quoted explaining that they "focus more on finding a star and fitting around what he or she might teach". Most departments, however, decide on at least a broad area within which to recruit.

Cooperation and networking

> *It is a bit unusual to sit down and analyse what we do and say "we lack a person who can do this particular thing", and then to contact somebody you do not know. Rather, cooperation's most often arise with researchers you know, in one way or another. You take time by the forelock.*
>
> *Health Sciences, Swedish university*

The Swedish interviewees leave cooperation issues to each researcher or research group, but three of the four non-Swedish interviewees consider cooperation a strategic issue for their research body (department, faculty or centre). The reasons for strategic cooperation vary somewhat: to form alliances in order to attract external funding, to keep track of what competing research bodies do, to broker external opportunities, or to give researchers intellectual stimulation.

The participants in the Minnesota study have a similar attitude to cooperation as their Swedish counterparts – cooperation is important, but something that is handled on the level of individual researchers. The management's involvement in cooperation concerns creating settings that encourage cooperation, such as collocating researchers from different fields and generally promoting a culture of cooperation (Bland et al. 2005 p. 80 ff).

A strategy document

> *[The strategy] ought to represent a set of common assumptions of what we collectively are working towards and what our collective aim is. That is its value. That it represents a set of shared objectives and shared beliefs. [...] If I was going to tweet what a strategy was I would say it was a device to coordinate belief and ambition rather than activity.*

> *Non-Swedish university*

Most of the investigated bodies have no strategic document at all, and few of the interviewees see any need for it. The bodies that have a written strategy document have usually had an external demand to produce such a document, for example as part of research assessments. But almost all the interviewees have strategies for their research body, in the sense that they have long term plans regarding at least recruitment and funding. In two cases recruitment and funding are largely handled at some other part of the organisation. In one case there did not seem to be any strategy at all, but simply habits of doing things.

The respondents at bodies that do make use of a strategy document mention two main benefits of it. One is that the quality of the strategy is improved when more people sit down together to work on it properly, and the other is that it disseminates the strategy better – people at the body, and outside, come to know the strategy better and more easily if there is a written document. In some cases the entire body have participated in the creation of the strategy document, while in other cases it has been a concern of the management group.

The interviewees at bodies that do not have a written strategy document feel no need for one, usually because the group of people that produce and maintain the strategy is small enough and meet often enough to handle it orally.

Two respondents air a strong scepticism towards written strategy documents in their usual form. They perceive strategy documents as having acquired a style or rhetoric of their own, and that that style is detrimental. The respondents express a wish to create strategies that deal with somewhat different issues than the existing documents.

The Minnesota study does not address the issue of strategic documents directly, but some departments in that study make use of a formalised process for strategic planning in order to focus the efforts of the faculty and make the goals of the department clear to everybody (Bland et al. 2005 p. 47 ff).

Conclusions

The results from this study do not stand out very much from general understandings of what makes a good research environment, nor from previous research on the topic (such as the Minnesota study). Anybody interested in more concrete ideas for creating a successful research department is encouraged to read (Bland et al 2005), and the other literature referred to there.

From a university point of view, however, there are a few conclusions worth drawing from the current study:

- **Since recruitment is so important, it should be handled with great care**. If departments are responsible for strategic issues, then they should also be responsible for the recruitment, and be given ample support for this. Support may include help with issues concerning employment legislation, methods to create attractive offers, and pooling of experience.

- **Recruitment is highly context sensitive, and so one should be careful when enforcing a single policy across a university.** A department in the life sciences and a department in the humanities may have radically different needs and problems in the area of recruitment. Forcing all departments to adhere to a single recruitment policy may therefore be counter productive (depending on the level of detail in the policy).

- **Since economy is fundamental the rules of that game should be clear and preferably stable.** A department that wants to build a strong research environment must secure the economy. If the system for allocating funds is in flux or unpredictable, the departments will worry about that rather than about research quality.

- **In order to attract good junior researchers, there should be a lucid and predictable career path system.** The American tenure track system is one, well-known career path system, but under the current employment legislation it is not possible to adopt that at Swedish universities. Further, most departments seem to be too small to emulate such a system themselves. Rather, clarity about how positions are announced and what is expected from contingent faculty in order for them to advance to tenured positions must be created on faculty or university level.

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Appendix 2 – Interview Template

1. Do you have a strategy document for the department/body?
    1.1. If not, why don't you have one?
    1.2. If so, would you like to share it with me?
    1.3. If you have one, why? What is the purpose of the strategy?
        1.3.1. To coordinate the activities of the faculty in order to avoid double work and similar?
        1.3.2. To focus the efforts of the faculty in order to excel?
        1.3.3. To increase the understanding of the body's situation and activities, to clarify the reason to certain decisions?
        1.3.4. To sit down and ponder what goes on around you, and thus be able to act while there is time – rather than waiting for change to happen you see them coming and act in time.
    1.4. What is the relation between the budget and the strategy? Do you have a large and flexible budget that requires planning, or does it more "happen"? Do you use the strategy as an input for the budget?
2. If you have a strategy, does it include a plan for the research of your department/body for the next few years? Do you want to change in some way? And if you do not have any strategy, or if it does not include any plan of this type, do you perhaps have a plan anyway, written or not?
    2.1. What does the plan contain?
        2.1.1. What to research?
        2.1.2. Recruitment?
        2.1.3. How to acquire funding?
        2.1.4. Establishing or developing cooperation's with other bodies, at your university or elsewhere?
    2.2. How do you intend to reach this goal?
        2.2.1. By changing the direction of research for one or more of the existing researchers?
        2.2.2. By recruiting PhD candidates for that direction?
        2.2.3. By recruiting senior researchers for that direction?
    2.3. How did you arrive at this plan?
        2.3.1. Was the entire body involved, or was it a task for the management?
        2.3.2. What was you method? Did you use any particular material (documents) as input?

3. Do you have a plan for the teaching/education of your department/body for the next few years?
    3.1. What does it contain?
        3.1.1. The subject matter (curriculum).

      3.1.2. The teaching methods.

      3.1.3. Student recruitment.

      3.1.4. ...

4. When you recruit new faculty, do you feel that you can do so "fully strategically", i.e. based on the strategy, or are there other factors that influence the choice? (Requirements from the university/school/institute/faculty; negotiations between factions within the department; personal commitments; ...)

5. [Bodies that have had a strategy for a number of years.] If you look back at what has happened at the body during the last few years, do you feel that you have followed the strategy?