STRÖMSTAD ACADEMY
Nordic institute for advanced studies

News Forum Strömstad Interdisciplinary Academy

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Editor´s corner

Anders Gustavsson

Vice-Chancellor and Information System Scientist Per Flensburg and **Educator and Chairman of the Board Åsa Morberg** inform about Strömstad Academy news. Flensburg writes about research themes within Strömstad Academy.

I want to urge a previous call for all members to verify and complete their personal information on the Academy website. Also try to recruit new members to the Academy, not least young scholars. Please, send suggestions to Vice-Chancellor Per Flensburg at per.flensburg@stromstadakademi.se

I wish new contributions to the March issue of the Newsletter sent to my e-mail address with deadline on 27 March 2025: anders.gustavsson@ikos.uio.no . Send short articles, opinion articles and/or reviews of new scientific literature. Swedish contributions should have an English translation. Texts should be in Word- or Open Office format!

Please, also send contributions to the Academy´s publication series Acta Academia Strömstadiensis, AAS, to peter@wahrborg.se , the video series SAV to: gudmundbergqvist@hotmail.com and the Reprint Series and the Free Series to: per.flensburg@stromstadakademi.-se

Report from chairman and Vice-Chancellor

February monthly report from Per Flensburg, Vice-Chancellor, and Åsa Morberg, Chairman of the Board

February has almost come to an end. Spring has started to make itself known. We have signs of spring in southern Sweden. It gives us all new strength and new energy. The light is coming back to us all. And the Vice-Chancellor is walking around in shorts in Spain!

The communication pattern in Strömstad Academy needs to be tightened

Redaktör: Anders Gustavsson
Layout: Per Flensburg

It is the Board's responsibility to be accessible and to provide information to its members. How do we do this? First of all, we have our News Forum,

where information from the Chair and the Vice-Chancellor is posted once a month. All members can submit contributions to the News Forum. We have all the minutes/records from meetings on the website available for all members to be downloaded as soon as they are approved. Members can also access the minutes of the AU by contacting our eminent Secretary Marylou Wadenberg. She will provide a code to be used. There are webinars where you can participate as well. For webinars, information will be sent out by the person responsible for each webinar. We also have a plan for how to reach out to potential members. So how do we make sure that potential members hear and see what we do in Strömstad Academy? We communicate with potential members through our regular Newsletter, News Forum. Strömstad Academy also has a Facebook page. Strömstad Academy is also visible on You Tube. There is a collaboration with Strömstads Tidning on regular guest columns.

Our website is also important for potential members. Communication by all members is very important. In our role as a member of Strömstad Academy, we communicate with other members on a regular basis. We communicate when we speak, when we listen, when we write. Communication is about trying to reach each other: speaking, listening and understanding. Communication builds relationships, binds individuals to groups and enables the achievement of common goals. Our communication is one of our most important tools in our role as a member of Strömstad Academy. Currently, the communication pattern is problematic. When communication breaks down, misunderstandings and poor cooperation easily arise. It is therefore important to consider how we can best communicate what we want to convey. In Strömstad Academy, there is a pattern of communication that is difficult to understand and disrespectful! When we address some members in a matter, the entire board does not need to be addressed. The amount of emails sent is very large and very difficult to understand.

A quote from member Sten Philipsson's email 2024-0-05: "I think it would be great if emails from Board members could be put in a single loop. Now they drip in consecutively and fill the inbox in a way that makes it difficult (at least for me) to keep track of the various contributions and maintain an overview. In addition, I think it would be very good if we could enforce discipline so that the posts that do not directly relate to the work of the Board are placed in a separate discussion forum. We have talked about this before, but perhaps a reminder is warranted." There needs to be a change in the pattern of communication. The way we communicate is not compatible with good association practice. Communication needs to be tightened up to make it compatible with good association practice. Use discussion forums. Do not automatically address emails to all board members. Address the email to those it concerns. The pattern of communication today is more reminiscent of the pattern of communication in a club, and not in an association! It is well known that academics are difficult to manage, but the fact that they cannot respect a communication pattern and good association practice is actually surprising. Surely it cannot be due to forgetfulness?

Another thing about communication is **what** we communicate about. We are academics and used to an academic -like format of communication. A researcher almost never makes a definite statement about his or her field, but at best in probabilities. At the same time, one might suspect that only a few are interested in such things as archive policies, graphic profiles, font templates, etc. We are used to such things being taken care of by secretaries and other administrative staff. Now we don't have that and we need to design our operations to minimize the administrative burden on all of us and especially on management. Just churning out e-mails puts a burden on the irrelevant recipients. Especially when you reply, if you send a simple reply or even worse use the reply all function, the whole thread will be included. If five people do this, the entire email thread will be in five editions and it will be completely hopeless to find out who replied what to what! At the same time, it is very inte-

resting and both Per and Åsa get to know a lot about what is going on in the Academy and this is absolutely correct. But it is enough that we get it once!

The failed courtship of the Minister of Education - shame on those who give in

The courtship of the Minister of Education came to a somewhat disappointing end. The Minister of Education declined and referred to something that was not requested in the letter. Åsa has just courted the Minister of Education, Lotta Edholm, together with four network members in the so-called village school rebellion. First of all, four different letters were sent to the Ministry of Education. When the 21 days of the Administrative Procedure Act had passed, a new letter was sent. After four letters, we were put in touch with a political secretary who guided us to an online meeting with the department. This wake-up call was that the government must care about the closure of village schools and give the National Agency for Education the task of working on the issues surrounding the closure of village schools. We were tentatively given a full two hours for courting. The main person was the political secretary who became a very positive contact. We presented our material and it was very well received. We were not only allowed to hand over our presentation material, but we were allowed to send in extra material together with our advice on the government's actions.

Now, I think that we in Strömstad Academy should do the same. We will continue to write letters and ask for a meeting with a political secretary. We must reply to the letter holding that strange answer. We will start again and ask to meet a political secretary. We'll have to sharpen our arguments, of course. Asking for a meeting at the Ministry of Education is a persistent effort and we will not give up. This is important to us at Strömstad Academy. If we take new steps and sharpen the tone a little, it will surely be possible eventually. If we still can't get a meeting, we can use other methods and take other routes.

Honorary professors and an interesting letter to the full board by Sten Philipsson Sten Philipsson's letter on honorary professors is important. Firstly, we no longer have honorary professors, only honorary members, and such a member must have contributed to the Academy's development. It is also conceivable that an honorary member could strengthen an area we are working on within the Academy. One of our themes is faith and knowledge, and it is conceivable that a theologian could possibly contribute. If there is a well-known theologian and he or she is willing to be part of such a context, it should be possible to make him or her an honorary member. But we need to know what the purpose of honorary membership is and what criteria must be met. This was certainly present from the very beginning of the Academy. The Board needs to have a common understanding of honorary members, and if we are to make well-grounded decisions here, we need to take a new approach.

We also need to be able to answer questions about what we want them to mean for in the Academy? How should we now appoint honorary members? There have been countless suggestions for potential individuals. What method should be used to appoint them? I have asked Prof. Philipson to send his article to the News Forum. All Members should read his article and a critical review of the work with Honorary Members. We need to highlight the purpose and criteria for appointment. We fully agree with Sten Philipson that we should not deviate from the existing practice. We should be restrained, says Sten. We also need to think about what purpose honorary members should serve? Not just to spread a glory of Strömstad Academy. Sten says that such a way would "only mean that we don't have enough self-confidence but need the status and rank of outsiders to feel that we belong to and represent an organization we can be proud of". Surely, we want to analyze the phenomenon of

honorary members and take steps to find suitable candidates. We will raise this issue in the Executive Committee. This is an important issue.

The Science Festival is approaching Welcome to the Science Festival. In the last news forum there was a lot of interesting information about the Science Festival, Strömstad Academy's biggest and most important event. It is exciting to have new dates for the Science Festival that is not in the Midsummer week. It is good for long-distance participants who want to celebrate Midsummer with loved ones. It has been difficult to get home for the Midsummer celebrations. Get the Science Festival dates down in your calendars. The Block Programme has now been transformed into a more tentative programme, which the Programme Team presents elsewhere. The Science Festival is Strömstad Academy's main event. We meet mostly digitally during the year, but during the Science Festival we have the opportunity to meet in person. We all look forward to the Science Festival. Don't miss out on participating in the Academy's main event. Sign up. The Science Festival is open to everyone. We get to meet and enjoy ourselves together.

Recruitment days as part of marketing - a proposal to reflect on Strömstad Academy needs to continue to grow and we could try so-called local recruitment days. Those who want to become new members can go to our website and see what is going on in Strömstad Academy. They should also be able to subscribe to our external newsletter.

Recruitment days are an interesting event that we have not tried. We can try in some place or places. Recruiting members is not the easiest thing? Starting recruitment processes that run smoothly and easily is not always easy. If we start locally, the coordinators of the local chapters could possibly be responsible with the help of local members. We need a budget for this. Recruitment days can also be linked to fairs that target academics. Are there local fairs for academics where we can have a stand/both and use it as a base to recruit members. Book fairs could be a possibility? A both at the Gothenburg book fair is already booked. The one in Gothenburg is visited by many seniors who have worked all their professional life in an educational institution.

We need to take good care of prospective members. Prospective members need to meet our current members who speak well of the Academy. The critics who whine and pour out their displeasure to everyone cannot be at recruitment days. What are the strengths and opportunities of membership of Strömstad Academy? We will highlight that. When we recruit new members, we plan for a nice introduction of new members. In the best case, we get a new member with a lot of energy and a great deal of hopefulness about being a member of Strömstad Academy.

Per Flensburg: Themes report

Per Flensburg, Vice-Chancellor

The status of the themes is described in the table below.

Theme	Members
Faith and knowledge	Anders Gustavsson (convener) Per Flensburg Sten Philipson Sarah Philipson

Technology assessment	Rune Wigblad (convener) Per Flensburg Inga-Britt Skogh Bengt Johanisson Stig Ottosson
Overpopulation	Dag Lindgren (convener) Lasse Broman Johanna Deinum Gudmund Bergqvist
Climate	Per Flensburg (convener) Dag Lindgren Lasse Broman Johanna Deinum
Energy supply	Lasse Broman Tomas Kåberger Per Flensburg Göran Bryntse
Natural sciences with a focus on medicine	Marylou Wadenberg (convener), Peter Fritzell, et al./and others The group is being formed
School and teaching	Åsa Morberg (convener) Per Flensburg The group is being formed

Climate, overpopulation and energy supply are interconnected and have many common members. They could possibly be merged. The last two themes need more members. And of course, all themes are open to multiple members. Just contact the convener. I have actually taken the liberty of adding people who have not explicitly stated that they want to become members, but whose interests and previous activities fit into the respective theme. If someone wants to be removed, I will of course do so.

In addition to these, we actually need a couple more themes, namely one about interdisciplinary studies where everyone should actually be involved and one about combating stupidity and collective idiocy. The last two are close to my heart. In that context, I should perhaps not be involved in as many themes as I am, but time will tell how active I can be in the different areas. I think it is important to deal with different areas and keep different parts of the brain going. In time, the plaque will clog the synapses.