STRÖMSTAD ACADEMY
Nordic institute for advanced studies

News Forum Strömstad Interdisciplinary Academy

Content

Editor's corner: Anders Gustavsson 1
Per Flensburg: Thoughts after the Science Festival 2025....2
Per Flensburg: Ideas to develop....5
Per Flensburg: New Theme Ideas....7
Rune Wigblad: Report on the Technology Assessment Seminar....8
Marylou Wadenberg: Report from AU 9

Editor's corner: Anders Gustavsson

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.

Vice-**Chancellor and Information System Scientist Per Flensburg** reports from the Science Festival in Strömstad on June 2-4 and develops thoughts for the future of Strömstad Academy.

Business economist Rune Wigblad argues for the need for a technology assessment council in Sweden.

Physicist Lars Broman discusses nuclear power in relation to coal, oil and natural gas.

Pharmacologist Marylou Wadenberg presents summary of activities in the Strömstad Academy Executive Committee/AU January - June 2025.

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 July issue of the Newsletter sent to my e-mail address with deadline on 27 July 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

Redaktör: Anders Gustavsson
Layout: Per Flensburg

Per Flensburg: Thoughts after the Science Festival 2025

Thoughts after the Science Festival 2025

Below I present my thoughts after the Science Festival. They are inspired by Åsa's headings in the evaluation and can be seen as my evaluation of the festival.

Time

Many members are busy during midsummer week. Having the VF later in the summer means that it is difficult and expensive to get hotel rooms. The week before midsummer is school graduation and then it is difficult to attract Strömstad residents. The first week of June is therefore preferable if we are to have the festival before the summer. The alternative is to have the festival in August, just after the town closes down, so to speak. Probably in mid-August. Of course, schools start then, but there is not the same requirement for parents to be present as it is at school graduation, I think. It may be worth a try, but we should discuss it with our Strömstad residents in the Academy. It is important that we pick a time when the Strömstad residents are not busy with anything else.

Venues

I think Folkets Hus/the Comunity Center is perfectly OK. For those of us who have difficulty walking it is ideal, with a parking space right outside. It is also free. There was plenty of space in the venue and we could easily make coffee, which was also very good. The sound worked OK and so did the projector. The price was also affordable. The disadvantage is that it is a long walk both from the station and to the restaurant.

Skagerack is centrally located, has good facilities and there is a café next door. The disadvantage is that it is usually rented out/booked well ahead of time, and that it is difficult to find a parking space, which is also very expensive and has to be renewed every three hours.

Fars sal is in the most beautiful building, but there are a lot of stairs to climb to get there. The size is otherwise just right. The image and sound system is difficult to handle and requires help from experts. But the biggest problem is getting into the building, during office hours you have to go via the municipal center but after 16:30 it is closed.

Laholmen has excellent premises and if you are lucky you get them for free if it is not too busy. In that case as many people as possible should stay at Laholmen and everyone has to take their lunch buffet. We will then have a conference fee that includes everything, both accommodation and food. I would think around 6,000 SEK. A big disadvantage is that there is a shortage of parking spaces and those that are available are very expensive. Then it is very difficult to get up to Laholmen. But this is without a doubt the most comfortable (and most expensive) option.

Other framework factors

If we are at the People's House/the Community Center we can eat together at the restaurant above Coop and those who have difficulty walking can get a ride with those who have cars. There is plenty of space there and we do not need to book a table in advance. The gala dinner should be around 500 SEK, it can be at Laholmen but why not try another restaurant? The absolute best coffee was the one that Peter made on Monday.

An important framework factor is the balance between participating members and the general public. As it is now, we meet physically once a year and this suggests that the Academy's members should be favored. At the same time, we are in Strömstad and we receive funding from the municipality and we hope to be able to establish a cooperation with the

business community there. This suggests that outward-looking activities should be emphasized. We should probably include more lectures on, for example, innovations, organization, etc. This leads to the program.

The program

The theme sessions became traditional presentations that were not advertised. If we are going to have them, they should be in the program and presented in exactly the same way as the others. Each theme can have two or three presentations with 20 minutes for questions afterwards. Alternatively, the theme can be presented in a different way, for example through a dramatization, panel debate, etc. So far, we have placed similar topics next to each other; we could insert something completely different to arouse interest among the individuals forming the external audience.

If we want to involve the business community, we should have presentations specifically aimed at companies, for example cross-border trade between Sweden and Norway. Together with the business association, we should work out some questions they may want answers to and then we simply ask members to provide answers. It will then be a short introduction to an upcoming full-day or multi-day activity that the companies will have to pay for. This can provide a lot of money for the Academy.

The members' meeting

This year we talked about money only. But we should also talk about more academic things, what subjects we have, how they can be grouped, if we are going to focus on something special, where there might be synergy effects or interesting points of contact. For example, one theme came up: Culture tours around the Black Sea that provide opportunities for interdisciplinary cooperation between language, ethnology, history of ideas, cultural history, geography, climatology, geology, etc. Politics and religion should not be forgotten. Academic development can also be an interesting theme.

Costs

Here I would like to present a different way of calculating the costs, namely the total cost of participating. I am calculating a few different options.

If we calculate the maximum alternative, which means that we all stay at Laholmen, have a lunch buffet there and also have a gala dinner there and have the venue for free, the calculation will be as follows:

Everything at Laholmen	Cost
Accommodation 2 nights	5,000 SEK
Lunch buffet 2 pcs	500 SEK
Venue	- SEK
Gala dinner	500 SEK
Marketing	1,500 SEK
Entertainment Monday	1,000 SEK
Coffee	1,000 SEK
Food mingle	3,000 SEK
Drink mingle	2,000 SEK
Unforeseen	2,500 SEK
Fixed costs	11,000 SEK
Contribution	20,000 SEK
Profit	9,000 SEK
Number of participants	20

Everything at Laholmen	Cost
Sponsorship	450 SEK

This means that we can sponsor either the lunches or the gala dinner with SEK 450. The real conference cost will then be SEK 6,000-450, i.e. SEK 5,550. If we instead calculate on the cheapest option, Fars sal which costs nothing and individual accommodation in a hostel or budget hotel, the calculation looks like this:

Fars sal, low price	Cost
Accommodation 2 nights	3,500 SEK
Lunch buffet 2 pcs	300 SEK
Venue -	SEK
Gala dinner	500 SEK
Marketing	1,500 SEK
Entertainment Monday	1,000 SEK
Coffee	1,000 SEK
Food mingle	3,000 SEK
Drink mingle	2,000 SEK
Unforeseen	2,500 SEK
Fixed costs	11,000 SEK
Contribution	20,000 SEK
Profit	9,000 SEK
Number	20
Sponsorship	450 SEK

Here the real conference cost is 3,850 SEK. But finding accommodation for 1500 SEK per night can be difficult, for example, it would cost 3400 SEK at Hotel Krabban for two nights, 2790 SEK at Crusellska for the same amount of nights but there is an additional breakfast that you can make yourself. If we choose Folkets hus/the Community Center or Skagerack, there will be a rental cost for both and it is about the same. Finally, I calculate the Folkets hus and get the following:

Folkets hus	Cost
Accommodation 2 nights	3,500 SEK
Lunch buffet 2 pcs	300 SEK
Venue	4,000 SEK
Gala dinner	500 SEK
Marketing	1,500 SEK
Entertainment Monday	1,000 SEK
Coffee	1,000 SEK
Food mingle	3,000 SEK
Drink mingle	2,000 SEK
Unforeseen	2,500 SEK
Fixed costs	15,000 SEK
Contribution	20,000 SEK
Profit	5,000 SEK
Number	20
Sponsorship	250 SEK

Here the real conference cost is 4,050 SEK. All this is calculated on the assumption that everyone stays two nights and that there are 20 participants. If there are more participants,

the sponsorship will be lower because the profit is a fixed amount regardless of the number of participants. At Laholmen we will probably be charged for 20 rooms even if there are only 17. Therefore, it is required that the conference is binding and that the fee is paid in full by a certain date before the conference. The prerequisite is also that we get a free room at Laholmen.

This is a decision basis and we welcome comments on it. It will be discussed both by the AU and the Board.

Per Flensburg: Ideas to develop

Ideas to develop

Per Flensburg Vice-Chancellor

At the members' meeting on June 2, 2025, the theme was development and I presented the following ideas. My talk is recorded and can be viewed as SAV-112.

I started by asking three questions:

1. How do we get fixed funding?
2. How do we get more of our members to be active?
3. How do we recruit more members?

If we start with number 1, the question arises: How much do we need? I have made a rough calculation:

- Full-time office staff: SEK 650,000
- Other expenses: SEK 100,000
- In addition to this, there is a science festival and other separately financed projects

Let's say that we roughly need SEK 1 million in fixed annual income.

To get that from membership fees, we need 1,667 fully paying members. That is unrealistic. We could get a fixed grant from the government and we have tried to get a ministerial appointment. It is a small chance, but worth taking and Åsa and Per are working on it. Another way to get funding is to sponsor local companies, for example in cross-border trade. But that requires us to have activities that the companies can benefit from and we have to create such activities. Examples could be management structures, AI aids, cultural differences between Sweden and Norway, etc. We can also apply for grants from private research funds, such as Wallenberg's. But such an application usually only applies to special projects and requires us to demonstrate a social benefit that fits the funds' values. Not applicable if you want fixed grants. In that case, tax deductions on project funds are more rewarding. Regular universities and colleges have administrative overheads of 50-60%. The research funds allow significantly less, 35% was the last time I looked into the matter. They require that we apply for projects, that we start projects and that we have them running constantly/on a regular basis. If we want a million (SEK) for administrative expenses, we need to get an appropriation for about three million. All of this, except possibly the first point, requires **increased commitment from the members**. And how do we make it happen?

There is a “law of nature” called the Pareto distribution (named after the Italian economist Wilfredo Pareto (1848-1923)) and which, simply put, means that 20 percent of the causes account for 80 percent of the effects. It is therefore often called the 80-20 rule. We are currently about 100 members in the Academy and about 20 of those are active. By dividing it into themes, we can increase commitment and the members get the opportunity to deal

with things that interest them. Our administrative routines are in order and we do not need to waste energy on improving them. We can concentrate on the core business. The keyword is freedom!

The last question is to recruit more members. In order to recruit new members, it is required: That Strömstad Academy is well-known and that it can offer something attractive that a regular university/college does not have.

How do we become known then? The traditional academic way is through publications that are interesting and of high quality. We have them, but how do we spread them? Right now through our website, which for a fee of a few thousand kronor (SEK) can be developed into a webshop and be more easily found. If we ally ourselves with a university/college, we can get access to DiVA and/or Swepub, which is the place where all Swedish academic production ends up. We have been allied with Högskolan Väst, but they no longer feel they have the time to keep it up. The question is whether someone else can step in. I have been assigned to contact Borås University and see if they can help us.

Another way to become known is to publish a journal at https://publicera.kb.se/ . We have already discussed this in the Editorial Committee/Board, but the idea was dropped because we doubted we would get a sufficient number of contributions from our members. Other ways to become known are to participate in the public debate (debate articles, participate in UR, the world of science, the philosophical space, etc.), develop cooperation with the Folkuniversitetet through courses/study circles and lectures on interesting topics. Yet another way is to be active on social media. All methods must be used, it is not possible to rely on just one of them.

But all this requires **commitment from the members** who are the foundation around which everything revolves.

So what can we offer that a regular university/college does not have? Mainly two things: Academic freedom and interdisciplinary cooperation. The question is how much it is worth. The activities at our universities and colleges are becoming increasingly controlled and there is less and less time to devote to thinking. More and more time is spent on more or less meaningless activities such as filling out self-evaluations, discussing quality policy, having gender-neutral teaching materials, etc. This should lead to increased interest in academic freedom, but paradoxically it seems to be the opposite. The supervisors clone themselves into their doctoral students and everyone is caught in the publishing wheel.

One way to become known is to announce a reasonably large scholarship, at least 100,000 SEK as a prize for researchers in a competition for the best paper in, for example, interdisciplinary science. But that requires that we have at least 100,000 SEK to distribute and where will we get this from? We are thinking of setting up a scholarship fund but again: Where do we find the money? Venture capital? Lottery? Writing detective stories? Dig for bitcoin? Pan for gold in the River Dalälven? Yes, the possibilities are many but it requires **commitment from the members**! So my call to you, dear reader, is clear, unambiguous and unequivocal: **Get involved!** It really does matter what you do, you will influence and you will be influenced and together we will form a genuine Academy with freedom, sharpness and openness as guiding stars!

Per Flensburg: New Theme Ideas

New theme ideas

Per Flensburg, Vice-Chancellor

This year's Science Festival was a success. The idea of a 20+20 presentation worked well, and it was well received. There weren't many people in the city, at my hotel (Crusellska) there was only one other person and the number of external people from Strömstad increased again by 100%. This year there were eight different individuals who came, admittedly not at the same time but over the total time. And I came up with two new themes. Here is the background.

On Tuesday, Olle Häggström first talked about how AI researchers were just rushing along without thinking about the consequences, which in the worst case could result in AI wiping us all out. Then Dag Lindgren and Anders Johnsson talked about how we humans are causing this, but in a different way, by overpopulating the earth. Lasse suggested that nuclear waste can fix the remains that may be left when we have cut down so much forest that it does not absorb enough CO2, which I told you about. Inger Enkvist put the nail in the coffin by talking about the self-destructive behavior of education, where one focuses on everything other than the result. And with that, I think the theme is given: Society's self-destructive behavior. In essence, one could talk about humanity's self-destructive behavior.

A related idea is Mats Alvesson's stupidity thinking, where the organization's management focuses on a number of peripheral functions such as values, equality, diversity, visions, brand and more or less ignores the core business. Schools and healthcare are excellent examples of this functional stupidity. There are lots of examples, but I haven't found much that analyzes the phenomenon itself. Mats Alvesson claims that it is because employees are afraid of breaking the rules so they follow them in absurdum. That is one explanation, but there are probably more. I think many can agree with these thoughts and give good (read scary) examples of self-destructive behavior. There are also many who have ideas about causes and underlying conditions and together we can perhaps come up with what a societal therapy could look like.

So I see a three-step rocket with lots of examples first, then analysis of these examples and then ideas about how to deal with the misery. The first step is mainly descriptive, the second analytical based on existing theories and most importantly: Their shortcomings! The last step is more speculative: How do we deal with the misery. Three books that get thinner and thinner!

I came up with the second theme when Karina showed the Georgian colonies around the Black Sea in her presentation. To make a joke about it, I realized that the Black Sea was a white hole in my knowledge, but touched on my interest in the Greek heritage of knowledge. So why not write a book about the cultures around the Black Sea. Karina was there and Sveza is from Bulgaria and she also volunteered. We have Cenab who is Turkish (or at least former Turkish) who is interested in history and gave lectures on the Sumerians and we have some Russian members too. With a little luck we might be able to cover all the beaches around the Black Sea! I imagine the result to be a popular science fact book: The cultures around the Black Sea, possibly with a time limit. We are basically responsible for each chapter, but of course we review the facts and then we have either sections or entire chapters that in some way summarize and draw up developmental lines, show the influence and help the reader understand the whole thing. Maybe the book can be something more than an ordinary anthology, something we can all sign off on!

Rune Wigblad: Report on the Technology Assessment Seminar

Vetenskapsfestivalen sommaren 2025, Report on the Technology Assessment Seminar and the need for a Technology Assessment Council

Rune Wigblad, professor in Business economy

Strömstad Academy held its traditional Science Festival in June 2025. Professor Rune Wigblad reports on the theme: "Sweden's need for better technology assessments", as well as a few words about our contacts with the ministries regarding a possible future Technology Assessment Council.

Sven Moosberg, who is a very experienced and well-known politician in Strömstad, once told me that politicians want good decision-making data. It is a bit embarrassing to stand there with a bad decision and the subsequent criticism of the decision, if alternative facts emerge. When there is good decision-making data available, politicians can instead proudly show the result. A technology example that I lectured on, concerned a new standard for water bombing planes for counteracting forest fires, that came to Sweden. In the summer of 2018, it turned out that the expert authority MSB was not aware of the technological development in the area and gave politicians the wrong data. When, after a debate, they understood that there was new technology (small water-scooping aircraft) available, they turned to SAAB, which knows about aeronautical engineering, and SAAB was given full responsibility. The politicians were then able to proudly report on a success, the decision to purchase small water-bombing aircrafts. There are currently 4 of these in Sweden, that constitute a new higher standard.

This sequence of events illustrates the need for better technology assessments in Sweden. In October 2024, Strömstad Academy proposed to the Ministry of Climate and Enterprise the establishment of a Technology Assessment Council, which could provide us with facts about technological breakthroughs in the world. This could increase interest in technology among our young people and also create a basis for better adaptations to new technology. Strömstad Academy has now received a double ministry registry number (KN2024/02279), because we pointed out that the AI-commission had a positive proposal for building up technical expertise at our embassies (previously called “Technical Attachés”). The AI Commission’s report is being processed by the Ministry of Finance and recently we have proposed that the Ministry of Education should also be involved, since better technical knowledge is needed in the school area.

In my lecture during the Science Festival, I mentioned 10 examples of technology areas that would benefit from better technology evaluations. After the lecture, I asked the audience to rank which of the 10 were most important to receive reports on. 8 people (n=8) filled out the ranking survey.

The result was that four technology areas were perceived as clearly more important than others to receive popular science information and updated reports on:

1. Battery development
2. Thorium fuel and/or better cooling for nuclear power
3. Vertical axis wind turbines
4. Next generation solar cells

The other technology areas received a clearly lower priority among the audience. This gave a quick indication of what is currently most in demand, partly due to reports in the mass media. The indication concerns what a Technology Assessment Council could prioritize when

building technical expertise at our embassies. This is to provide future reporting to the Swedish public about technological breakthroughs in the world.

Marylou Wadenberg: Report from AU

Summary of activities in the Strömstad Academy Executive Committee/AU January - June 2025.

Marylou Wadenberg, secretary

In the first part of this 6-month period, the Executive Committee/AU consisted of Per Flensburg - Vice-Chancellor, Åsa Morberg - Chairman of the Board, Anders Gustavsson – Pro-Vice-Chancellor, and Sten Philipson – Deputy Chair. Marie-Louise/Marylou Wadenberg serves as Secretary of the Board and of AU. The Academy treasurer John Fletcher also attends the AU meetings on a regular basis. AU runs digital meetings (Google meet, zoom) generally once a month.

The agenda for the meetings has, among others, focused on the following items:

- Review of written Memo from previous meeting
- The Science Festival in June
- The Annual Meeting in April (digital meeting)
- Setting up a digital archive (Google Drive) and forming an archive policy
- Presenting an IT-policy/budget (Per Flensburg)
- Creating a memorial fund (following the passing of Carl Olivestam)
- Economy/marketing etc
- Attending the Gothenburg book fair in the fall of 2025 (initiated by Peter Währborg who presented the set-up as an adjunct at an AU meeting)
- The website – maintenance
- Local chapters/theme groups - start-ups
- Members – recruitment/fee
- Additional items (the Science Festival – evaluation/survey answers)

General Information:

AU works between Annual Meetings, the highest decision-making authority, with a mandate from the Board, and regularly executes decisions made by the Annual Meeting and the Board. Meetings (via the Google meet or zoom platform) start with a brief review of previous written memo. Then items on the agenda are reviewed and discussed concerning what has happened since last meeting and how to proceed. Some decisions can only be made at a Board meeting. In those cases AU works on/prepares these matters for the next upcoming Board meeting. Occasionally joint positions/decisions may be carried out per capsulam by means of a memo from AU addressed/sent to the Board for a decision, or via the Board itself if there was not enough time to discuss this matter at the ordinary Board meeting.

Responsibility, for and being in charge of the different main items on the agenda, is distributed between the individuals being part of AU as follows:

- Per Flensburg holds, together with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (and in some cases the Chair), the overall responsibility for: planning of the Academic Ceremony, the Annual meeting and the Science Festival in Strömstad; he is also responsible for the website maintenance and layout of the newsletter, and to some extent keeping in touch with the Strömstad Municipality and the Strömstad Highschool. Per also handles certain records (such as the list of members).

- Anders Gustavsson holds the overall responsibility for: planning of the Academic Ceremony, the Annual meeting and the Science Festival in Strömstad (together with Per Flensburg), for lectures, and, within the framework of the Editorial Board, for writing series/anthologies, and for the Newsletter/Newsforum.
- Treasurer John Fletcher is responsible for overall economic issues.
- Deputy Chair holds, together with the Chair, responsibility for Board meetings; and, together with the Vice-Chancellor and Pro-Vice-Chancellor, for Annual meetings. Former Deputy Chair Mariana Back stays on working on the recruitment of members for chronicle writing in 'Strömstads Tidning'.
- Chairman of the Board Åsa Morberg, AU Chair and convenor, holds responsibility for Board meetings; and together with the Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Chair, also for Annual meetings. She also keeps a close oversight over the regular agenda items at AU meetings (please see above).
- The Vice-Chancellor, the Secretary and the Deputy Chair have during the Jan – June 2025 time period been responsible for the storing and archiving of the Academy documents on Google Drive.

Working Groups (ordinary) in some cases have someone in charge that is not part of AU. These individuals then most often report to Åsa Morberg and Anders Gustavsson.

The local chapters, Gothenburg and Falun currently being the most active ones, arrange and send invitations to meetings and webinars on various topics. Video records are posted on the Academy website (http://stromstadakademi.org) and when appropriate also published in the video series (SAV) and on the Academy youtube-channel. Several new theme groups are also now up and running holding digital meetings and discussions on the Academy Discussion Forum.

Important results during these first 6 months:

In addition to regular issues, the most important issues for AU during these first 6 months of 2025 have primarily been:

- To prepare documents, issues/items and motions for the Board meeting on February 24th and for the Annual Meeting on April 7th 2025.
- Deputy Chair Sten Philipson has (together with Vice-Chancellor, Per Flensburg and member of the Board Bode Janzon) been working on an archive together with an archive policy for Academy documents (posted on Google Drive). This was approved by the Board (at the April 7th board meeting) following a presentation from Sten Philipson.
- Practical arrangements during the Science Festival in June were provided by assigned members (Lasse Broman, Peter Fritzell, Sveza Daceva Filipova and Rosa Jörgenson).

Finally, there have been discussions about:

- the website maintenance
- working routines in the Nominating Committee; proposals for the election of back-up individuals for the Academy Trustees
- activity in the local chapters and theme groups
- recruitment of new members
- economy in general; funding for establishing an office, marketing etc
- the establishment of a grant – and a development fund, respectively (proposals from Peter Währborg)

Additional issues

1. Members are active providing contributions/chronicles for 'Strömstads Tidning'; presentations posted on social media (Youtube) are also ongoing.
2. Members, for example Rune Wigblad, are active participating in media debates.
3. A number of projects/working groups and theme groups are active – some of them presented their work at the Science Festival.
4. Local chapters are in general active.
5. Peter Währborg (the Editorial Board convenor) has made arrangements for the Academy to attend the Gothenburg book fair (Sept 2025)

AU has in the spring of 2025 had meetings via Google-meet/zoom:

on Jan 13, Feb 17, March 3, April 4 & 29, May 23 and June 9.

Marylou has been keeping written memos during the AU meetings. These have been revised by Åsa Morberg and then e-mailed out to the AU members, and to the Treasurer John Fletcher.

Marylou Wadenberg	Åsa Morberg
Secretary	revision