

SWEDEN-USA PROJECT FOR COLLABORATION, ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION (CALIE)

CALIE PAPERS #1

Project Description

Preparing for the needs and challenges of a future society is a common responsibility of universities worldwide. In order to strengthen the capacity of higher education and research to respond to these needs and long-term challenges, the university leadership of four Swedish universities—Lund University, University of Gothenburg, Stockholm University and Uppsala University—have joined together to explore the topics of academic leadership and renewal of education in the collaborative project CALIE: the Sweden-USA Project for Collaboration, Academic Leadership and Innovation in Higher Education. These are viewed as key aspects for enabling change for the future.

The primary target group is university leadership. Through joint workshops and seminars with Stanford University, University of California at Berkeley and the University of Washington, the project participants will explore strategic and operational aspects of their work, share experience, best practices and strategies in order to inspire change in the participating institutions and to develop a platform for further academic collaboration. In addition, acknowledging that all participating universities have examples of good practice, study visits to and/or in-depth knowledge about selected educational programs/centres or other initiatives will give the participants opportunities to compare and be inspired. The analytical outcomes will be disseminated throughout the project via the project website and CALIE Papers. They will also be published in a final report and presented at a final conference. The project seeks to influence policy on a national level in Sweden and to be a source of inspiration to all Swedish universities.

Key Questions

- Which structural characteristics at a university support/inhibit change?
- Which structural characteristics support/inhibit collective leadership and accountability?
- Respecting academic freedom, how is a common understanding of strategic choices anchored?
- What is the role and mandate of academic leaders to drive development and how is it supported?
- Which structural characteristics support/inhibit interdisciplinary education/research, especially at broad comprehensive universities?

PROJECT OVER VIEW

OBJECTIVE

To strengthen the capacity for universities to respond to future challenges by developing tools on a strategic level in regard to renewal of education and academic leadership.

PROJECT PERIOD

1 April 2019 to 31 August 2021

PROJECT PARTNERS (SWEDEN)

Lund University (coordinator)
Stockholm University
University of Gothenburg
Uppsala University

IN COLLABORATION WITH

Stanford University (USA)
University of California at Berkeley (USA)
University of Washington – Seattle (USA)

FUNDING AGENCY

Vinnova – Sweden's
Innovation Agency

MAIN ACTIVITIES

2019

- Swedish delegation visit to UC Berkeley & Stanford (1-4 October 2019)
- CALIE Papers

2020-2021

- Swedish delegation visit to UW-Seattle (*prel. May 2020*)
- US partner visit(s) to Sweden (2020)
- Final Project Conference & Report (2021)
- CALIE Papers

- How can broad research universities best make use of the comprehensiveness of the institutions in responding to societal challenges and supporting sustainable development?
- In order to meet societal challenges, what mechanisms strengthen the connection between education and research enabling research-based or research integrated education?
- How is the inclusion of education at advanced research facilities encouraged?

Challenges

The need for universities to respond to pressing societal challenges and so-called ‘wicked problems’ is clear. The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals identify research and education as important tools for eradicating poverty and for achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental. In addition, the strong connection between having higher education and confidence in the importance of democracy, underlines the vital role universities play.

Rapidly changing societies, economies and labour markets put increasing demands on individuals to continuously develop their skills and knowledge. Fast structural transformations risk leaving people without updated competencies behind and may widen societal inequalities. This development increases the need for universities to provide relevant educational suited to ‘lifelong learning’ and to explore different possibilities to meet society’s needs for lifelong learning.

Some trends that undeniably affect universities are the evolution of digital technologies, new geopolitical formations, the increased political questioning of scientific knowledge and the massive information flows. These on-going changes in society place high demands on *academic leadership* and the ability to *renew higher education*, to build new capacity for handling these challenges.

Academic Leadership

Universities are built on a strong foundation of faculty-driven advancement of education and research. At the same time, the over-arching questions regarding relevant responses to societal challenges require that academic leadership on all levels is well equipped to channel those issues into constructive development within the university as a whole. There has to be a profound understanding of what prerequisites are needed to initiate, fuel and support change in that direction. A key objective of the project is to strengthen the understanding of how strategic renewal of education is driven in a collegial setting and of mechanisms that support collective leadership and accountability. The project aims to identify important prerequisites in academic leadership both in regard to steering and funding as well as culture, values, and norms.

Renewal of Education

It is uncertain which competences will be needed during the lifetime of graduates. It is, however, clear that society is facing major transformation and that universities will have to be visionary and able to develop in relation to the societal challenges in order to stay relevant and purposeful. Universities will have to respond to the needs of future students, also in regard to changes in demographics and culture etcetera, and simultaneously uphold excellence. This stresses the necessity for universities to identify driving forces and good practice for the renewal of education.

Areas where a long-term vision is of particular importance include the following:

- Sustainable development
- Life long learning
- Inclusive education and outreach
- Artificial intelligence and inclusive intelligence
- New literacy (i.e. 21st-century skills/data literacy, tech literacy, humanics)
- Digital learning tools
- Combination of research and education at advanced research infrastructure facilities

Objectives

The project objectives target both the institutional level and the national Swedish level and include the following.

At the Institutional level

- Increased understanding of structures, mechanisms, and methods for the development of renewal of education, particularly from a leadership perspective
- Developed competence for academic leadership
- Identification of best practice and inspiration for the renewal of education
- Strengthened strategic and academic connections between the universities
- Deepened insight into possible responses to common challenges such as sustainable development, lifelong learning, inclusive education, and artificial intelligence

At the National Level (Sweden)

- Input for policy development on a national level regarding the legal and financial instruments for the renewal of education and academic leadership in response to the above-mentioned challenges.
- Inspiration and increased understanding for other Swedish and international higher education institutions to develop their responses with regard to the above-mentioned challenges.

Project Stakeholders

In collaboration with, and with support from Vinnova, the Swedish Innovation Agency, the following universities have been identified as potential participants in this project:

Swedish Universities	American Universities
Lund University ¹ University of Gothenburg Stockholm University Uppsala University	Stanford University University of California at Berkeley University of Washington

These universities are all well-positioned to take leading roles in identifying and developing tools needed for adapting higher education and research to the societal transformations taking place. The universities involved in the project each have their own specific goals and strategies. Despite their differences, the continued development of the quality of education and research and the need to address current and future global challenges are common to all of them.

The four Swedish universities are all public universities and have an established relationship through their current participation in the SLUG project² as well as their involvement with multiple, bi-national international projects (e.g. SASUF³, ACCESS⁴, and MIRAI⁵). The comprehensive nature of these universities coupled with their interest in quality improvement makes them natural partners for this type of project. The four universities involved have 36 % of all registered university students in Sweden and 42 % of the research funding to Swedish universities.

In addition to being the four best-ranked comprehensive Swedish universities, they have a strong tradition of working for inclusive education and broadened recruitment of students as well as sustainable development; these are all aspects required of quality development that national legislation requires universities to advance. Active involvement of students and strong student influence are key features of Swedish higher education. It is the ambition of the four Swedish universities to actively involve students in the project, particularly in relation to the best practice of the renewal of education.

The selected American universities were chosen based on their excellence in academic leadership, education, and research and based on earlier collaborations with Swedish universities. All three universities have succeeded in developing outstanding education and

¹ Lund University will serve as the project coordinator in Sweden.

² SLUG (Stockholm, Lund, Uppsala, Gothenburg) project, a benchmarking activity focusing on university operations.

³ <https://sasuf.org>

⁴ <http://accesschilesweden.com>

⁵ <http://www.mirai.nu>

research in line with the needs of society. Of particular importance is the long history of social engagement and community outreach, excellence in transboundary and innovative education and research as well as excellent research environments of relevance for education, such as in artificial intelligence, cognitive sciences, multi- and interdisciplinary research, and education.

The four Swedish universities have separate collaboration with many American universities. However, combining the separate connections, it is clear that there are particularly strong ties to the universities on the American west coast within many fields. For example, at Stanford, Swedish engagement has resulted in long-term organizational collaboration through Wallenberg Research Link and ScanCor. At Berkeley and the University of Washington, the existence of well-established departments for Scandinavian studies create a strong foundation for continued joint collaboration. In addition, Vinnova has one senior representative placed in Palo Alto who can support the project collaboration.

Overall, it may be said that the national, financial, and juridical structures vary between the Swedish and American universities, however these characteristics are seen as of lesser importance as the overall understanding of the societal role of a university is similar to all. To this end it is meaningful to examine the strategies employed to address pressing societal challenges in both contexts.