

MEETINGS WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON (17-18 FEBRUARY 2021)

CALIE PAPERS #9

CALIE Paper 9: Meetings with the University of Washington

On February 17-18, 2021, a delegation from the Swedish CALIE partner universities; Gothenburg (GU), Lund (LU), Stockholm (SU), and Uppsala (UU), had digital meetings with the University of Washington (UW) to learn more about, and exchange experiences on, the role of academic leadership in facilitating institutional change. The meetings replaced the study visit that was planned to take place in the spring of 2020. Similar meetings with the other participating US universities, namely University California Berkeley and Stanford University, took place in the fall of 2019.¹ A transatlantic dialogue on covid-19 and higher education between the project partners and its three American collaborating institutions took place in October 2020.²

The delegation to UW included the CALIE steering committee; Sylvia Schwaag Serger (former deputy vice-chancellor, LU, chair), Mattias Goksör (deputy vice-chancellor, GU), Clas Hättstrand (deputy vice-chancellor, SU), and Anders Malmberg (former deputy vice-chancellor, UU), Anders Hagfeldt (vice-chancellor, UU), Anki Wallengren (pro vice-chancellor for education, LU), and the CALIE project group; Hans Abenius (University of Gothenburg), Erika Dabhikar (Uppsala University), Petra Moser-Nørgaard (CALIE/Lund University), Teresia Rindefjäll (CALIE), Richard Stenelo (Lund University), and Maria Wikse (Stockholm University).

UW has a long history of social engagement and community outreach, excellence in transboundary and innovative education and research, and excellent research environments of relevance for education. Of great interest is the university's recent experience with major interdisciplinary initiatives. UW also shares important features with the CALIE universities, e.g. that it has a strong foundation of faculty-driven advancement of education and research, and is mainly organized along disciplinary lines. The Nordic countries have a strong historical and cultural influence in the Seattle area, and the city hosts the Nordic Museum since 2018. In addition, UW has the largest Scandinavian Studies Department in the US.

Despite some context-specific differences between Swedish and US institutions, the CALIE universities and UW face similar challenges concerning how to adapt higher education and research to the rapid societal changes, not least the ongoing pandemic. The changes place high demands on all levels of the academic leadership to advance constructive development within the university as a whole.

It is evident that the universities involved in CALIE can learn a great deal from each other. The reflections below highlight issues at the core of the project and the conversations that took place during the joint meetings.

¹ See CALIE Paper #2 <https://calieproject.com/caliepapers/>

² See CALIE Paper #7 <https://calieproject.com/caliepapers/>

Strategic initiatives and institutional change at University of Washington

In the conversation about UW's strategic initiatives two questions were in focus: what is the best way to initiate strategic processes of change, and what is the best way to make the initiatives evolve? Another important question regarded the structural characteristics that support or inhibit the success of initiatives. And the overall question of how to create a culture of change.

UW has nine initiatives in total: Population Health, Race & Equity, Innovation Imperative, Husky Experience, Teaching & Learning, Transforming Administration Program, Institutional Assessment Effort, Community Engagement, and Tri-Campus.³ The first three were discussed in more detail during the meetings. The UW Initiatives all represent strategic processes of change. They are holistic, open to all areas and have a transdisciplinary approach. They are goal-oriented, iterative processes (e.g. in Health) where areas of strength were identified and then reinforced.

Visionary leadership was identified as absolutely necessary for the success of UW's initiatives, not least when the Race & Equity Initiative for which the role of President Cauce was pivotal. All initiatives have been launched from the top leadership, but the ensuing process has been characterized by an interplay between top-down and bottom-up. There is an emphasis on academic leadership and on broad-based engagement at all levels, but with an understanding that all will not be able to participate equally in all initiatives. The role of leadership in the initiatives is to facilitate, not dictate.

In all initiatives education and research are intertwined; educational initiatives are thus expected to align with large research initiatives.

Lifelong Learning (LLL)

Learning throughout the life-time cycle is an attractive idea and one that is important at UW. LLL is seen as a multi-stage and multi-career path that is non-linear and that spans from youth to beyond retirement. The ideas translate well and can be used and adapted for the Swedish context. However, the differences between US and Swedish systems make it challenging to transfer the implementation model used at the Continuum College (for more information about UW's approach to lifelong learning see Rovy Branon's chapter in the CALIE volume *Renewing Higher Education: Academic Leadership in Times of Transformation* (2021). How could we design a model for LLL and a 60-year curriculum in Sweden? Given the Swedish context, a business model would need to be developed for universities to use going forward.

A 60-year curriculum would entail rethinking the role of universities. LLL is an increasingly prioritized issue in Sweden, and is given prominence in the Research Bill from 2020; *Collaborating for knowledge – for society's challenges and strengthened competitiveness*. There is also a discussion going on in Europe, more specifically connected to the anticipated development towards a European Education Area (EEA) where

³ For more information, see <https://www.washington.edu/leadership/initiatives/>

micro-credentials or badges are expected to be developed within the framework of the European Universities Initiative. Since all four Swedish CALIE universities are members of alliances in the European University Initiative, these are very pertinent issues.

It is important to keep questions of inequity in mind during these transformations i.e. how do we make sure that this system does not exacerbate existing inequities?

Inclusion and equity

There are some fundamental differences between the US and Sweden in regard to race and equity. In Sweden race is not discussed as much, there is more emphasis on inequalities in a broader sense, with a special focus on gender. There are nevertheless important lessons to be learnt from each other. UW's Race & Equity Initiative is an ambitious initiative that has inspired change both at UW and across the US. The initiative takes race as a point of departure, as it is often interconnected with other types of inequities. UW has adopted an inclusive approach that permeates the institution. It is multi-faceted and holistic with the quality and mission of universities in focus rather than metrics. The approach includes values, culture and attitudes, as well concrete actions such as multicultural outreach and recruitment teams targeting schools. Part of the work is to help children from under-privileged areas to image themselves in higher education. For staff, UW has various faculty recruitment initiatives, and uses a diversity recruiter.

In Sweden, it is since 2001 part of the mission of universities to promote diversity through widening participation according to the Higher Education Act. During 2019-2022, this work is being evaluated by the Swedish Higher Education Authority. The evaluation includes self-assessments on how institutions work with diversity and to counteract biased recruitment (snedrekrytering). The question of how this is sometimes a complicated to discuss internally was raised, as some think that diversity will mean less qualified students.

Comparing the US and Swedish experience, the question of how diversity is an important aspect of leadership culture was also emphasized, as well as the fact that it is imperative not only to focus on access, but also retention.

Interest in Sweden

There is a strong and historically long interest in Scandinavia and Sweden in the Seattle area, and a focus on the Nordics via the Nordic Museum. At UW, there is a great interest in increasing collaborations in research, education, as well as mobility. There is an increased interest among US students to go abroad for graduate studies. At UW there is a vibrant Scandinavian Studies Department with several collaborative opportunities that can move beyond existing ones. There are also connections to Sweden via major endowments; Barbo Osher's support for an Endowed Chair in Swedish Studies and Life-long learning – OLLI-UW as well as other initiatives in areas such integrative medicine, and the Hans Rosling Center (gift from Bill and Melinda Gates in honor of Hans Rosling, one of many collaborations between UW and Microsoft/Gates) which is a hub for



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& INNOVATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

addressing global challenges like poverty, equity and health-care access. In the AI field, there could be interesting collaboration opportunities for Swedish universities involved in national initiatives (e.g. WASP and others) and UW, which has one of the leading centers for AI research in the world.

APPENDIX A: Notes from the University of Washington meetings

On February 17-18, 2021, Lund University, University of Gothenburg, Stockholm University and Uppsala University, had digital meetings with the University of Washington within the framework of the CALIE project. The project aims at strengthening the capacity for universities to respond to future challenges by developing tools on a strategic level in regard to the renewal of education and academic leadership.

Key questions for the conversations held during the meetings and presentations included:

- 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?
- How does the academic leadership at all levels facilitate and support processes of change?
- Which structural characteristics support/inhibit interdisciplinary education and research, especially at big comprehensive universities?
- How can broad research universities best make use of their comprehensiveness in responding to societal challenges and supporting sustainable development? How do we play to our greatest strengths?
- In order to meet societal challenges, what mechanisms strengthen the connection between education and research? What enables research-based or research-integrated education?
- What is the role of universities in a rapidly changing world and how do we educate the citizens of the future?
- How does the university influence change in society (e.g., through the development of a new product, influencing policy, etc.)? How do we translate campus-ideas into societal impact?



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& INNOVATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Meetings with the University of Washington 17-18 February 2021

Welcome & Introduction to UW's Signature Initiatives

Participants: Mark Richards, Provost & Executive Vice President; Jeffrey Riedinger, Vice Provost for Global Affairs

The conversations revolved around the questions of how to initiate and manage initiatives that go beyond disciplinary, and national, boundaries. Questions that were brought up included: How to reduce barriers for transdisciplinary collaborations/between faculties both at the university and in international collaborations? How can opportunities to meet and collaborate be created? How can barriers between initiatives and innovative funding sources be overcome?

University of Washington's Provost Mark Richards described four of UW's Signature Initiatives <https://www.washington.edu/leadership/initiatives/> All except one were initiated by the President of UW in response to pressing societal challenges, such as climate change, race and equity, and sustainable development. They are carried out in the very decentralized environment that characterizes UW. To be successful, the initiatives have needed the support of, and collaboration between, different department chairs, deans and faculty. They have relied heavily on a broad interest for knowledge exchange.

- The multiyear initiatives at UW that were presented were the following:
 - o *Innovation Imperative*: The initiative focus is on innovation and how to innovate education, and to change the way in which education and research relate with industry, e.g. actors such as Microsoft. Industry staff has for instance been engaged in short courses for certificates, in a new innovation degree, but also as mentors. A holistic approach, and problem-, and team-based learning are important aspects. - <https://www.washington.edu/innovation/>
 - o *Population Health*: The field has a long tradition at UW and the initiative is characterized by a holistic, open to all areas, transdisciplinary approach. The process leading up to the initiative included the identification of domains in which UW had a critical mass of staff where they should be world leaders. For other areas, the main question was with which partners to connect to in order to create a critical mass. One challenge has been to establish links between curricula in the academics units involved. - <https://www.washington.edu/populationhealth/>
 - o *LLL – Continuum College* www.continuum.uw.edu (For details see Rovy Branon's presentation)
 - o *Race and Equity Initiative* <https://www.washington.edu/raceequity/> (For details see Rickey Hall's and Ed Taylor's presentation.)



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COLLABORATION, ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP
& INNOVATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

- How to initiate and make interdisciplinary initiatives evolve?
 - o All strategic initiatives except for teaching and learning were launched by the President of UW.
 - o It is important to facilitate, not dictate.
 - o Providing infrastructure is imperative e.g. Hans Rosling Center for the Population Health Initiative, a physical presence is helpful.
 - o Million-dollar budget/year used (including investment from Bill and Melinda Gates), for instance for seed money to fund small projects, including international collaborations.
 - o An acceptance that all will not participate equally in all initiatives, more engagement by some. Natural infinities arise.

Presentation of CALIE & Swedish Higher Education Landscape

Participants: Mark Richards, Provost & Executive Vice President; Jeffrey Riedinger, Vice Provost for Global Affairs

Sylvia Schwaag Serger, Former Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Lund University, presented the CALIE project. CALIE addresses the question how the academic leadership can contribute to core values, evolve with the times and address societal challenges. The main objective of the project is to exchange experiences and lay foundations for deeper collaboration between the involved institutions.

Anders Malmberg, Former Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Uppsala University described the Swedish Higher Education system. Swedish universities have a high degree of public funding, and a relatively low degree of autonomy (almost part of the national government). There is strong political support across the political spectrum for extensive public funding in education. Swedish universities were not hit very hard financially by the pandemic as they do not rely on fee paying students. Swedish universities have strong collegial structures, and are decentralized and characterized by a bottom-up approach.

Anders Hagfeldt, Vice-Chancellor, Uppsala University, **Mattias Goksör**, Pro-Vice-Chancellor University of Gothenburg, **Clas Hättestrand**, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Stockholm University and **Ann-Kristin Wallengren**, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education, Lund University, presented their respective universities.

Discussion/questions:

Mark Richards would like a fifth initiative: quantum information system/quantum computing. Microsoft and Google are spending a lot of money in this area. A concern and challenge is the use and misuse of AI, e.g. invasion of personal privacy.

Anders Malmberg pointed out that this is a very important and interesting development. Sweden is not in the position of developing this kind of computer, but academia has the ambition to keep up with developments. On a national scale Sweden is investing in large computing facility



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COLLABORATION, ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP
& INNOVATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

(<https://kaw.wallenberg.org/en/research/putting-sweden-forefront-quantum-technology>). Anders Hagfeldt underlined that it is important that Sweden is part of this development and can contribute in e.g. software development, education. This is an important area for collaboration.

Jeffrey Riedinger expressed interest in continued conversations about where the five universities can continue to collaborate; to identify areas where interests coincide, buy-in from faculty can be found and connections to funding can be made, as well as potentials to facilitate the movement of students and faculty.

Dept. of Scandinavian Studies Meet and Greet

*Participants: **Andrew Nestingen**, Chair, Dept. of Scandinavian Studies; **Kim Kraft**, Undergraduate Advisor & Lecturer, Dept. of Scandinavian Studies; **Amanda Doxtater**, Assistant Professor & TA Coordinator, Dept. of Scandinavian Studies; **Katherine Kroeger**, Sr. Program Manager, UW Study Abroad, **Barbro Osher**, Swedish Consul General in San Francisco.*

This meet and greet session focused a lot on shared interests, and possibilities for continued collaboration. The department of Scandinavian Studies has an Endowed Chair in Swedish Studies. The Endowed Chair, a donation from the Osher Foundation, supports teaching and research in Swedish Studies, especially in literature, language, and cultural studies.

The US participants emphasized that Sweden has a competitive advantage in the US as it is a well-known and liked country. Many students are interested in Scandinavian studies, often doing double majors. A major in Swedish studies gives them some advantages for their careers and that is what the students are interested in. Examples of past students of Scandinavian Studies were presented. One of the important features of their program is the international exchange. Currently UW has student exchange with UU and SU, and also do study abroad programs. However, many students studying Scandinavian studies never go on exchange to Scandinavia. More creative opportunities need to be offered, such as short term research projects, and virtual mobility.

There is an increased interest of US students to go abroad for graduate studies. LU has seen a 70 % increase of US applicants for next fall, and UU has also noticed a considerable increase. Sweden is attractive for many reasons. It is "safe" and even though students pay tuition in Sweden, it is still more affordable than many graduate programs in the US. There is a lot of knowledge about Sweden in the Seattle area, and UW has very popular courses that reach a lot of students. A Graduate School in Sweden webinar was organized in 2020 by UW, with participation from the Swedish CALIE partners.

It was noted that CALIE has created an interesting dialogue between the deputy presidents of the involved institutions, and the project is seen as an important avenue for continued collaboration. It was pointed out that the timing of the project is fortuitous as a new international outlook can be foreseen with new US administration in place. There is a lot of potential to continue the conversations that have



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COLLABORATION, ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP
& INNOVATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

started, but also to extend collaborations to exchange programs (traditional as well as virtual), summer schools, and joint educational programs. Follow-up in terms of concrete actions is important in order to build on what has already been initiated.

Lifelong Learning

Participant: Rovy Branon, Vice Provost for Continuum College

Vice Provost Branon described the concept of the 60-year curriculum (learning throughout practically the whole life-time cycle). In an ever-changing world with major societal, technological and demographic changes, offering opportunities to learn and re-learn is imperative. There is a major shift in needed qualifications: more and more jobs request higher education (70%) but only 32% of employees in the US have a higher education.

Rovy Branon also described UW's work with the 60-year curriculum. Continuum College (www.continuum.uw.edu) provides relevant education for anyone interested to learn over a lifetime by offering self-sustaining programs. They are the fastest growing institute at UW. One reason is that they have a greater degree of flexibility to create new professional degree programs without having to go through the state funding processes. Continuum College can provide funding to start a program since it takes a long time to get state funding. Their niche is primarily academic entrepreneurship and their main attributes are 1) lifespan learning, 2) partnership expertise, and 3) continuous program innovation. Degree programs at the Continuum College are professional, fee-based master programs (not leading to PhD). What is important is that there is a market to sustain these programs. The age range of participants is 8 -98+ years.

Five core components of the 60-year curriculum:

- The 'meta curriculum' (not a single program, multiple specialization, multiple credentials, over a number of years, multi-stage and multi-career – youth programs, and programs for adults over 50, e.g. [OLLI-UW](http://www.ollu.edu))
- Digital credentials (alternative to degrees and certificate, credentials will be digital and contain extensive data about learner performance and the program)
- 'The new academic stack' (evolving technology picture)
- Learner services (learners need great content but also: enrollment services, retention specialists, career coaches, learning concierges, learning record counselors)
- Funding and policy (needed changes: financial system to solve issue of debt that will increase with spending on lifelong learning, portability of credentials, access and affordability for growing privatized educational opportunities)



SWEDEN-USA PROJECT FOR
COLLABORATION, ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP
& INNOVATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Discussion/questions:

The issue of competition from private actors was discussed. At UW, they acknowledged that lifelong learning is a space with increasing competition. For example, Google is eliminating the need for degrees and are developing their own certificate programs. However, the demand is currently so high that the competition is no problem; it is good as long as it is not harming the students. However, it is important that the government makes sure that the private market maintains a high quality. Private companies are interested in connecting with universities, which will make pathways to employment smoother. With digital credentials, students that can move seamlessly. However, it is still challenging to design the 60-year curriculum. American universities are increasingly looking at this area to compensate for the loss of fees from international students.

The 60-year curriculum and the Continuum College model were very well received among the Swedish participants. Sweden is in high demand of similar models, but it is difficult to implement since universities are not allowed to take fees from Swedish students. Often it is also difficult to engage faculty in this kind of course. Sweden has the advantage, and the challenge, that people do not pay for their education.

Race & Equity Initiative

*Participants: **Rickey Hall**, Vice President for Minority Affairs & Diversity; **Ed Taylor**, Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Academic Affairs*

Vice Provost Taylor and Vice President for Minority Affairs and Diversity Hall described the background of the initiative, and its goals and implementation. The [Race & Equity Initiative](#) started in 2014, against a back-drop of racism and racial conflict. The interim president at UW at the time, the current President, Ana Mari Cauce, took a stand and started the initiative. Race matters, and there is a need to address how we teach and talk, and a need to change institutional policies how we admit students, and grant scholarships. The key role of the President in the initiative was emphasized. To get the initiative going, they needed to get every academic and administrative unit to align their work.

Six aspirational goals

1. Assess and Improve Campus Climate
2. Attract, Retain, and Graduate a Diverse and Excellent Student Body
3. Attract and Retain a Diverse Faculty
4. Attract and Retain a Diverse Staff
5. Assess Tri-Campus Diversity Needs
6. Improve Accountability and Transparency

For each goal, strategic priorities and suggested action steps have been identified. Among the focus areas of the initiative are: scholarships, annual dialogues on race, and annual summits, educational training (knowledge skills), culture, place and values efforts, faculty diversity initiative (to be launched).



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COLLABORATION, ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP
& INNOVATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Discussion/questions:

UW has been one of the forerunners in this area, and other universities have followed. More universities are engaging in this work now than in 2014. In 2014, Black Lives Matter (BLM) was seen as controversial, but that is less so today, following George Floyd's death and the mobilization during 2020. Because of the pandemic the world watched, and many people joined the BLM movement. Now more US universities are doing race and equity work.

UW sees it as an educational value to have a diverse student body and also considers it an important aspect of its leadership culture. UW has a multicultural outreach and recruitment team, and recruits from underrepresented minorities, and students with a first generation and low income background etc. The team targets schools that have a large portion of those groups. At the human resources unit there is a diversity recruiter, rolling out a faculty diversity initiative. Ed Taylor pointed out that there is still a lot of work that needs to be done.

The concept of diversity was discussed. Race is important, and other inequities are often interconnected with it. But diversity also includes gender and indigenous people etc. UW adopts a multi-faceted, inclusive approach and works with culture and values as well as recruitment and other concrete actions.