

# Academic Leadership in Transition - Academic or Managerial?

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# Outline

## Part I Facts

- Swedish higher education - some facts
- Academic leadership - Then and Now
- Appointing/electing a rector
- Leadership support structure
- Career and gender pattern
- Training programs
- IDAS - women's network



# Outline (cont'd)

## Part II

- What do the rectors think themselves?

## Part III Discussion

- The situation today
- 7 discussion points
- My ideal rector



# Swedish Higher Education - Some Facts

- 9 million inhabitants
- 38 HE institutions
  - 15 universities
  - 22 university colleges, with and without PhD awarding rights
  - 7 university colleges of art
- They are state agencies (!)



## Swedish Higher Education - Some Facts (cont'd)

- Participation rate: target 50 % of an age cohort
- R&D: 4 % of GDP (public and industry)
- State funding of research: 1 %
- Very few independent research institutes, therefore high % for external funding at universities



## Swedish Higher Education - Some Facts (cont'd)

- Ministry of Education, National agency for HE (for QA mainly), Rectors' Conference, 38 institutions
- Development over the last three decades: From a centralised national system to a fairly decentralised one



# Academic Leadership - Then and Now

## THEN

- Rector as *primus inter pares*
- Board: Full professors, with rector in the chair
- Full academic control - but with a narrow scope for decision in a centralised system



# Academic Leadership - Then and Now (cont'd)

## GRADUAL DEVELOPMENT

- More and more decision-power was handed over the universities/university colleges
- Discussion started about academic leadership
- Board: Students and external people are included, first on a trial basis (students) and in a minority (external), then as full members and in a majority





# Academic Leadership - Then and Now (cont'd)

## NOW

- Full discussion on academic leadership
- Training programs
- Rector's mandate period: 6 + 3 years
- Board: 15 members, of which 8 (majority) are lay members, 1 rector, 3 students, 3 elected academic staff
- The rector represents the institution. The board oversees all matters, but not the academic ones



# Appointing/Electing a Rector

- The board sets up a search committee
- The board is obliged to get the advice of academic staff, other staff and students - this is practised in different ways
- The board takes a decision, hands over to the Government
- The Ministry decides on the salary, the Government appoints
- Concrete example: University College of Dance



# Leadership Support Structure

- Rector
- Pro-Rector (Deputy) (elected)
- More Pro-Rectors or Vice-Rector (appointed)
- Registrar/Director
- A management team - or a means to balance opposing (academic) factions?



# Career and Gender Pattern

- Universities: In most cases the candidate is chosen from within her or his own university
- University colleges: Chosen from other institutions (for natural reasons); this might change
- Only a few of them move around



## Career and Gender Pattern (cont'd)

- Most , but not all, have solid academic background. Many have been deans, some have a little external experience. Just a few have been recruited from outside academia
- At the moment: Almost 40 % are women



# Training Programs

- For newly appointed rectors: Official introductory program by the National Agency - both “facts” and group interaction
- “Academic Leadership Program” for potential leaders (pro-rectors, deans etc)
- “Retreats” by the Rectors’ Conference every second year - for the “soul”



## Training Programs (cont'd)

- Many institutions run their own leadership programs (example: Luleå Technical University)
- Programs for tomorrow's leaders, by institutions and by external financiers
- IDAS, a program for promoting female academic leadership



# IDAS

Identification, Development,  
Advancement, Support

Goal: More women in high level positions  
at Swedish universities and university  
colleges

Initiated by the Swedish Rectors'  
Conference





## IDAS (cont'd)

- The network consists of about 70 women, successful in the academic world
- Central activities, in combination with local activities. Participants in the network are driving forces. New participants are identified at each institution



## IDAS (cont'd)

### Rectors : Gender balance

	1999		2006	
	F	M	F	M
Universities	3	11	5	9
Un colleges	0	17	7	11
Un coll of art	2	5	3	4



# What Do Rectors Think about their Mission?

20 rectors have been interviewed, in personal terms

## Questions:

What do you want to achieve?

What support have you had in your leadership?

What personal qualities are necessary for a rector?

What qualities have been your own best asset?

How did you become a leader?

What has surprised you most?

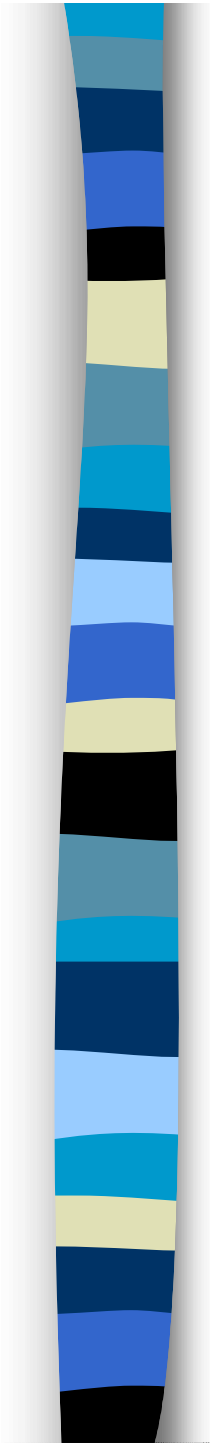
Advice to a new rector?



# What Do Rectors Think about their Mission - Some Results

What support have you had?

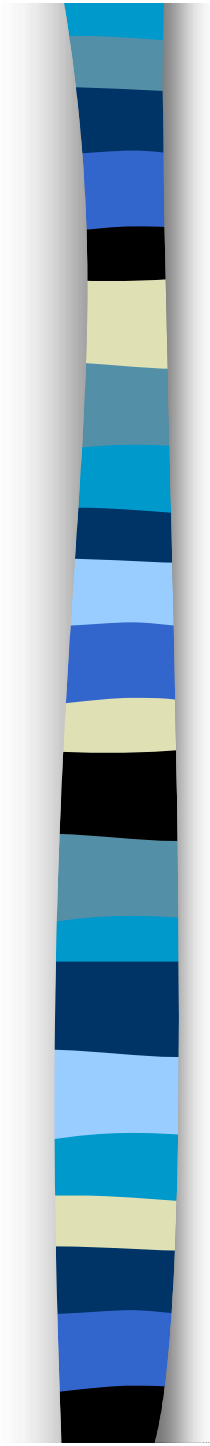
- The management team
- Other rectors, through training programs
- Someone outside the university
- Chairman of the board
- Former rector
- Wife



# What Do Rectors Think about their Mission? (cont'd)

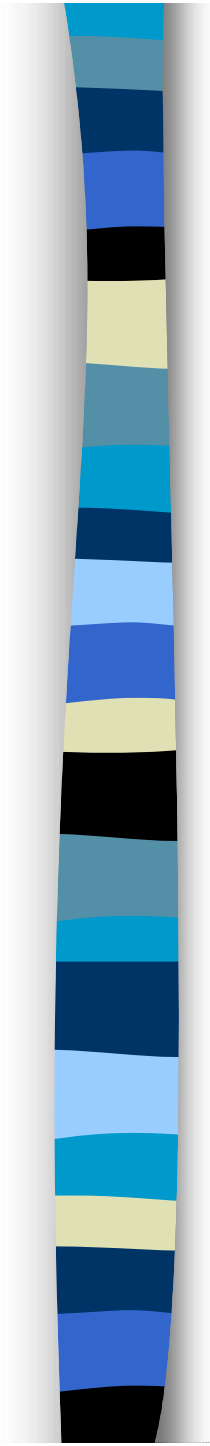
## What has surprised you most?

- You have power
- You are exposed, no support from the employer; alone with tough decisions
- Media are tough
- Everything you say is analysed
- Hard work, 11 hour per day
- Enormous variety of issues, expectations are high
- You meet a lot of kindness



# What Do Rectors Think about their Mission? (cont'd)

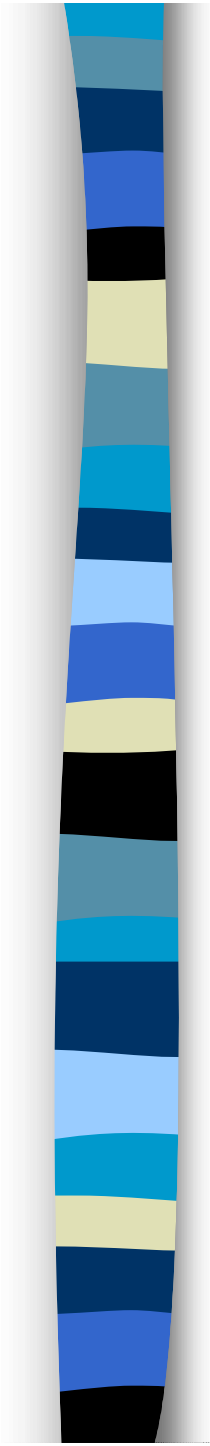
- I was interviewed about artistic and pedagogical aspects, but the work was most about budget, human resources etc
- Conservatism of the academic world
- Difficult to carry out reforms - you have the arguments but meet the mountain
- It's easier to manage an organisation based on technology



# What Do Rectors Think about their Mission? (cont'd)

## Road to rectorship?

- I had not thought about this until they asked me
- I'm interested in changing things, and changes presupposes power
- Aristotle: The importance of practical knowledge
- I attended a leadership course at Volvo
- Step by step within academia, dean the latest one
- I like leadership, but I have had no systematic plan
- I have worked with good leaders



# What Do Rectors Think about their Mission? (cont'd)

- I think I'm good at planning and organising, this gave the start
- It's OK to accept a job because you are a woman
- Among academics leadership is suspicious, you have to make it on your own
- Started on the PhD student board, and it has gone on; the importance of mentors





## To Sum Up

- A tradition of a rather “weak” rector, but it has definitely developed in the direction of management. Still there is a tension - is a new managerial style compatible with a true academic orientation?
- Is the Board a competing power? No - it's there mainly to support the rector.



## To Sum Up (cont'd)

- Highly increased expectations from society: More management, give the rector the instruments for it
- Government expectations: Improved gender balance (also demands from within)
- No systematic career planning, but a number of training opportunities
- Are the rectors prepared when asked?



## To Discuss

- How do we spot possible managers at an early stage? Should one do this? What do we do with them?
- ✿ Is the choice of rectors too traditional? Only academics, a few with additional merits. Big universities: Mostly from within. The balance between academic merits, giving legitimacy, and prior management and administrative merits



## To Discuss (cont'd)

- 🕒 More women - seems under way, but is the situation stable enough?
- ✂️ How can a rector improve in her/his job? Is it only for natural talents - or can one learn to become a competent manager? Training programs, and of what kind? The importance of self-reflection!



## To Discuss (cont'd)

- ❧ The proper basis for exercising power. The mandate period? Salary and other symbols of power (cars or bicycles)? Composition of the top management team
- ❧ **THE HEART OF THE MATTER:** How to balance a managerial style with collegiality?



## To Discuss (cont'd)

- ✧ The career after the mandate period - too poor!