Mission statement

Since its formation in 1999, the Department of Information Technology has grown from 138 employees to the about 300 people we are today. Over these years, we have been very successful in educating talented students, conducting outstanding research, securing external funding and recruiting excellent co-workers. After the founding, when a number of smaller departments and other units were joined together to form the IT-department, we have gone through a number of minor reorganisations but we are still a multi-layered organisation with many different structures which originate in how we—and the outside world—used to be. Personnel responsibility is currently delegated to the divisions, faculty funds for research are distributed to the research programs, doctoral education is organised in postgraduate programs, and the funds for undergraduate education are allocated to the department but are then largely channelled down to the divisions. All these layers and structures involve a large number of leaders including head of department, heads of division, heads of education and research, directors of undergraduate and graduate studies, and professors responsible for graduate and research programs. We are in many ways a very well-functioning department today, but I believe we need to simplify our sometimes impenetrable organisational structure and create a more appropriate organisation for the activities we conduct today. It is by succeeding in the three main tasks of the university—education, research, and collaboration with our surrounding society—that we will gain success and we need to organise ourselves in order to make efficient use of our resources to accomplish this.

With the support of the KoF-panel’s report, we have a unique opportunity to implement such an organisational change to be better adapted to today’s activities. We need to look around and find good models in other successful departments and organisations, in order to jointly identify a vision for what kind of organisation we want. With this vision and the KoF-report as a starting point, we can together create a new organisation that is more efficient and with fewer time- and cost-consuming layers of management and administration, giving us increased resources to conduct our core activities. The KoF-panel’s report is a thorough and—in my opinion—wise review of our activities carried out by international “critical friends” and we should transfer its central principles to a Swedish context that suits us. With an efficient and less complex organisation with short and transparent processes for decision-making, we can come together to build an organisation with increased opportunities for:

- new joint ventures in education for our ever-changing society,
- innovative research spanning our traditional subject boundaries,
- new and challenging collaborations with our surrounding community, still maintaining and continually strengthening our core competences.

In addition, I believe we should adopt the KoF-report’s proposal to create an overarching vision with goals and strategies for the department’s activities and well-defined methods for
carrying out annual reviews. A clear common vision for how we conduct high quality education, research, and collaboration, would increase the incentives and opportunities to utilise the full capacity of the department in our future development. We need to further develop and create new contact areas within the department where we can gain deeper insight into each other’s interests and competences, thereby creating better opportunities for establishing and deepening cooperation across our subject boundaries. Our PhD students are important in this area and should be offered good opportunities for collaboration within and outside the department, with companies and internationally strong research environments.

I consider the role of Head of Department a facilitator for the department to achieve high research-, education-, and cooperative goals. His or her most important function is to bring together and facilitate the activities of the department and to create conditions in which all employees can do their work in the best way possible. The ambition should be that everyone, regardless of position, background, gender or ethnicity, can come to their fullest and feel that we all have a key role to play in making our department successful. The Head of Department needs to be clear in his or her leadership, responsive to the desires of the organisation and possess a certain measure of courage in combination with humility. Externally, the Head of Department should represent the department in various contexts and there highlight our excellence and breadth in research and education as well as meeting and securing our common interests in the best way possible.

By way of the courses in leadership and management I have attended within and outside the university, I have had the opportunity to develop and deepen my leadership in both theory and practice. My personal keywords are clarity, responsiveness, efficiency and accuracy. In my assignments as for instance Head of Division and Chairman of the Election Committee for the Electoral Assembly, I have been given the opportunity to try to translate these keywords into practice and thereby continually worked to improve these qualities. During my almost three years as a Head of Division, we have among other things produced a joint goals- and strategies document for the division’s activities, developed a “Guidelines for PhD studies at TDB” (based on Erik Hagersten’s matrix for graduate studies), organised an alumni event for the division that garnered much support, and arranged a conference in scientific computing that became the prelude for a series of national conferences. These years as Head of Division have also given me a very good insight into how the department works today, which I believe is a good platform to stand on when leading the department’s further development.

I think that most of my work is enjoyable and I easily get involved in my tasks regardless if it concerns teaching, research, or the management of different activities. If I were to be appointed Head of Department, I would be very grateful for the confidence, motivated to lead the department’s work forward, and assume the mission with joy and enthusiasm.

Lina von Sydow, 2017-10-30