As you all know, I am strongly committed to the internationalisation of LU’s education and research – something that I think is important for a large university. The Government agrees and has launched an inquiry with the aim of increasing the internationalisation efforts of Swedish higher education institutions. In this context, I would like to call attention to the following:

ACCESS is a collaboration between primarily Lund, Uppsala and the two largest universities in Chile. An initial seminar with researchers will take place in Lund on 17 and 18 August, and anyone interested in or in contact with Chile is invited to visit the website www.accesschilesweden.com.

MIRAI is a major collaboration project with Japan, scheduled to hold a seminar and workshops this autumn (17/18/19 October). Anyone interested in developing contacts with Japan can find more information at www.mirai.nu.

Finally, the French government has launched a national alumni network for Sweden, and anyone interested in contacting this can register on www.suede.francealumni.fr.

In this letter, I would like make a final observation on the subject of agency capital, and then I promise to keep my mouth shut. I have stopped arguing the importance of having a substantial agency capital for our activities; nowadays it has become practically shameful to have it. In 2013, the University Board decided that LU’s entire agency capital is not to exceed 15% of our annual turnover by the end of 2018, but did not say anything about what happens if there is too much (here referred to as prohibited agency capital). However, the LU management has now said that the allowed 15% is per faculty, not all of LU combined, and that 10% of the prohibited agency capital will be taken back in 2019. There is also talk about reducing the allowed agency capital to 10% over the next five years. The faculties have been ordered to reduce their capital, and we have initiated a process for doing so. We have reviewed the situation at every department, each of which has serious plans for how to use the capital in the coming years. In order to really make sure that everyone is working according to plan, the faculty will monitor the developments closely, requesting the departments to have an annual deficit equivalent to at least 30% of the prohibited agency capital from the year before. For example, if department X reports a prohibited agency capital of SEK 1 million in its annual report for 2017, X will be expected to report a deficit of at least SEK 300 000 in 2018. If it does not succeed in doing so, the faculty will collect the difference, but the risk of this is small.

Indeed, the situation is very different from one department to another. Some are below or at 15%, and really just need to prepare for the percentage of allowed agency capital over time to diminish to 10%. Others are significantly over the limit, and are required to take immediate action. After the summer, we will review the status of the situation with the departments, to ensure that everything is going according to plan.
But before then we have summer – enjoy and recharge your batteries! I'll see you at the faculty’s summer party on 24 August.

Olov Sterner, dean