Dear all,

The departments’ finances are always an important factor when discussing the faculty’s activities, even when the focus is actually on education or research. The departments receive the majority of their funding for research either from the faculty in the form of direct government funding, or from external funding agencies (the Swedish Research Council, Formas, etc.). The allocation of direct government funding to the various departments is performed by means of an allocation model; the most recent version of it was adopted by the former faculty management in 2008. The model takes account of, among other things, the number of senior lecturers and professors, how much external funding has been received by the department, and how frequently the publications produced at the department were cited by other researchers. Forty per cent of the salary of senior lecturers and promoted male professors is covered by direct government funding, while the entire salary for recruited (fully financed) and female professors is subsidised. The allocation model is to ensure that the distribution is correct and fair so that all parts of our science activities can function properly, including teaching. The model is also to encourage researchers to publish more and of higher quality, and to apply for external funding whenever possible.

Despite the fact that our current model enables certain departments to grow while others shrink, it turns out that the allocation has been very consistent throughout the years. Everyone has adapted to the model and apply it the same way, and the question is whether or not it is needed. Although, in the long run, certain research fields will become more significant and others fall back, it seems that this development mainly takes place internally within the departments. So, we have come up with a new model, which simply gives all departments the same amount of direct government funding in the coming years as the amount they received for 2017. This is a minimum; the amount could increase if the faculty receives more funding to allocate. Such a model would provide financial stability that facilitates long-term planning, and enables the department to invest more in certain areas that are considered particularly important, instead of speculating how to receive the maximum return from a model. Today, as 40% of a senior lecturer’s salary is reimbursed, the cost of employing a senior lecturer is virtually the same as employing a doctoral student, so it is perhaps not so strange that the number of doctoral students at the faculty is dropping steadily and rapidly. With the proposed model, we would also not have to distinguish between promoted and fully financed professors, and the financial officers at the faculty office, as well as at the departments, would save a lot of time on the simplified procedure.

Obviously, the faculty will continue to want to make special and time-limited investments, which are skimmed off the direct government funding before the resources are distributed to the departments, such as funding for infrastructure and graduate schools. However, it is important to always question these investments; when one expires it is not necessarily be replaced. Therefore, certain funds will probably be freed up over the next few years, and these could also be distributed to the departments. We do, however, want to invest in a new gender equality initiative, in order to achieve a more even gender balance among professors. We want to attract truly talented women to become associate senior lecturers and, for four years, give them the resources they need for a great start to an academic
career. For those who are appointed, it is only a matter of time before they become professors, so after ten years of making this investment, the faculty may no longer be referred to as “single-gendered”.

Olov Sterner, dean