

STINT  
Programme for  
Excellence in  
Teaching

2000-2006

A follow-up  
report

**Patrik Mehrens**

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# Introduction

The main purpose of this report is to give an account of the accomplishments and outcomes of STINT *Programme for Excellence in Teaching* during the years 2000 – 2006. Although the programme was initiated already in 1998, this report will only account for the development after 2000, i.e. the period during which the programme has been fully oriented towards liberal arts education at American colleges. During this period, the STINT Foundation has sent forty-four teachers from twenty-one Swedish colleges and universities to altogether seventeen liberal arts institutions in the U.S. Of fundamental interest in this report, are the ambitions and experiences of these former STINT fellows. What motives have they and their home institutions in Sweden had for participating in the programme? In what ways have they conducted their visits at the American colleges? And what have these participants accomplished after their return to Sweden?

Although this report puts special emphasis on missions accomplished, it does not forbear to look ahead. One important aim with the above questions is to begin a discussion on the future potential of *Programme for Excellence in Teaching*. This does not, however, imply an ambition to change the programme in itself. It rather invites a discussion on how future actors within the programme, i.e. individual teachers as well as Swedish and American institutions can utilize the programme in more efficient and purposeful ways. Given the past shape of *Excellence in Teaching*, and the experiences and accomplishments made within it, how is it possible to optimize the planning,

realization and utilization of future visits within the programme? The latter question also implies a discussion on how participants within the programme can address the specific demands for development of undergraduate education in Sweden.

In order to accomplish these aims, this report investigates several sources of information. To begin with, the report gives an account of the background and development of *Programme for Excellence in Teaching*, as described in the STINT Foundation's documentation of the programme. The purpose is to bring out the initial intentions of the programme, and discuss how these intentions have changed and developed over the years. This account will provide a basis for the assessment of the programme's fundamental mission.

The second section of the report describes the motives of participation among Swedish institutions of higher education, as well as among individual participants, and the third part covers administrative aspects concerning the nomination procedures at participating Swedish institutions. The basis for the latter considerations is a questionnaire answered by sixteen out of twenty-one participating Swedish institutions. The questionnaire contains the following questions:

1. What have the motives been for your institution to participate in *Programme for Excellence in Teaching*?
2. When the STINT Foundation invites your institution to nominate a teacher for the scholarship, how does the institution distribute this information internally?
3. Where in your organization are these scholarships administered, and how do you decide who will be nominated? If your institution has certain application

procedures, please describe these, and note how many applications you have received.

4. In what ways does your institution make use of the experiences of returning participants in the programme? What possibilities and what obstacles for this kind of utilization have you experienced?

5. Have participations in the programme led to any exchanges, agreements or other international activities?

The second and third section of the report only deals with the first three questions of this formula, and special emphasis will be given to the motives for participation among the Swedish institutions. Yet another valuable source regarding these motives is the applications made by Swedish institutions as well as the personal letters enclosed.

An account of the individual and institutional motives for participation is necessary in order to identify some of the essential needs and expectations among institutions of higher education in Sweden. In the end, the description serves as a basis for the comparison with actual outcomes of the visits, and for the discussion on how activities within *Programme for Excellence in Teaching* can meet the requirements and expectations among Swedish institutions of higher education. In a corresponding fashion, the account of administrative and nomination procedures aims at providing tangible recommendations as to how future nominations should be handled.

The fourth part of the report contains a description and discussion of the actual experiences made by individual participants during their visits in the U.S. In this section, the final reports and executive summaries by participating teachers provide the most important source of information. Vital

questions are how participating teachers have pursued their visits at their host institutions, and what experiences they put forward as of considerable value for themselves and for undergraduate education in Sweden. This section also describes what specific difficulties participants have experienced, and what prospects of utilizing the experiences and knowledge gained they report. The aim of this discussion is, in the end, to provide future participants, both Swedish and American institutions, and individual teachers, with valuable advice as to how to plan and perform the visits. Essential, though, is that this section also tries to identify specific aspects of liberal arts education put forward as particularly interesting for and vital to undergraduate education in Sweden. An important aim with this discussion is thus to facilitate for future participants in the programme to focus on issues of essential importance for the development of undergraduate education in Sweden.

A momentous part of the following report concerns the actual outcomes of *Programme for Excellence in Teaching*. The fifth section, thus, is dedicated to a description of how participating Swedish institutions have utilized the experiences and knowledge gained by their scholars. This section also gives an account of how individual teachers have made use of their experiences. Two main sources of information will be used in this section. Questions 4 and 5 in the above questionnaire provide answers as to how participating institutions have employed the knowledge. However, this account will be supplied by the information collected at a symposium held in April 2007 with thirteen former STINT fellows. The discussions held at this meeting provide a more complete and profound insight into the significance

of the programme, just as it opens for reflections on the importance of the programme for individual teachers.

The exchange of views made at the STINT symposium also plays an important part in the final discussion of this report. In this section, the observations made throughout the report will be brought together in a discussion on the relevance and potential of STINT *Programme for Excellence in Teaching*. This discussion will also highlight specific drawbacks of the programme, and initiate a discussion on measures for improvement. However, the main purpose of this section will be to reflect upon the overall relevance of the programme for the progressive development of undergraduate education in Sweden. The aim is to increase our knowledge on what aspects of higher education in Sweden call for improvement, and how experiences from the transatlantic context can facilitate developmental work. The ambition is thus to provide a knowledge base with the potential to deepen the understanding of how Swedish higher education can benefit from the international perspectives provided by *Programme for Excellence in Teaching*. Two main themes will be given special attention with regard to these ambitions. First: the question of how the expansion of higher education in Sweden during the last decade has enforced the need of radical developments at both universities and university colleges. Second: the question of how the *Bologna Process* have changed the conditions for developmental work within higher education in Sweden, and how this might affect the utilization of international influences.

This report also contains an appendix with statistics regarding the programme. The appendix presents, among other things, the number of

teachers involved in the programme, scientific areas represented, institutions of higher education involved in the programme, and economy. Throughout the report, Swedish institutions of higher education have been given the English designations established by the *Swedish National Agency for Higher Education*.

# STINT Programme for Excellence in Teaching

## *History*

In 1998, *STINT Programme for Excellence in Teaching* was initiated as an answer to the vast expansion of higher education in Sweden. One explicit motive for launching the programme was the commission of the STINT Foundation to support, not only the internationalization of research and scholarship, but of higher education in general (*KVA Report 2001:1*, p. 10). The programme was launched in co-operation with the *Council of Undergraduate Education* (Grundutbildningsrådet) at the *Swedish National Agency for Higher Education*, and was initially designated “Anseende och utbildning”. The time chosen for starting the programme was indeed right. The growing number of university colleges in Sweden during this time, and the consequently increasing importance of undergraduate education and teaching, clearly motivated a scholarship programme entirely devoted to these issues.

Initially, *Programme for Excellence in Teaching* was not oriented towards liberal arts education exclusively, but instead towards teacher exchanges. In the year 2000, though, no further budgetary allocations were made for pure exchanges within the programme. Instead, *Excellence in Teaching* was developed towards the funding of full term stays at American liberal arts colleges, although formally, the programme was still open for ordinary teacher exchanges and exchanges for younger post-doc teachers (STINT Dnr 1/231). Thus, in the spring of 2000, six Swedish “pilot” teachers were given the opportunity to spend an entire semester at three different liberal arts

institutions in the U.S. As from the start, the scholarship provided individual participants with economic means to cover additional costs during their visits. The commitment of their Swedish home institutions was clearly manifested in that the participants were given a paid sabbatical.

It is worth noticing the gradual but expedient development of the programme towards the shape it has today. In the year 2000, the programme was still oriented towards individual as well as institutional cooperation, and the ambition of the STINT Foundation was that the programme should generate more bilateral exchanges than had been the case between 1998 and 2000. The new orientation of the programme towards liberal education and full term visits was not fully developed until 2001. This year, however, the STINT Foundation provides more detailed instructions on the purpose of the programme, and on how to accomplish this purpose. Now it is emphasized, for instance, that participating teachers should have the ambition to engage in educational activities at their host institutions. In 2001, the STINT Foundation also puts forward a more detailed account of important aspects to study during the visits abroad. It is recommended, for instance, that participants should make inquiries about employment procedures, how educational merits uphold promotional value, and how high quality education can be maintained without a close relationship to scientific research. An important ambition of the foundation during this era of the programme is also to contribute to an increased international experience for Swedish teachers of higher education (STINT *Annual Report* 2001).

This is also a period when the STINT Foundation emphasizes the importance of liberal education for the programme. The foundation actually

refers to the increasing interest within the Swedish debate for this system of education, and one expression of this interest is a seminar held by the STINT Foundation in Stockholm in April 2001, a seminar gathering several delegates from institutions of higher education in Sweden. As arguments in support of the emphasis given to liberal education, the STINT Foundation at this time puts forward the importance of breadth within higher education, as well as the need to facilitate for less prepared students to enter higher education. In other words, from 2001 and onwards, the programme explicitly addresses clearly identified needs within higher education in Sweden, just as it sharpens its focus on American liberal education (STINT *Annual Report* 2001).

In 2002, when the programme changes its name from *Teaching Excellence* to *Excellence in Teaching*, it has also assumed a stable identity. In the *Annual Report* of this year, the STINT Foundation does not dwell on the importance of liberal education, but instead refers to how the expansion of higher education in Sweden has given paramount significance to the issue of high quality undergraduate education (STINT *Annual Report* 2002). This tendency is clear also in the *Annual Report* of the following years, where the foundation emphasizes the importance of the programme for individual academic teachers. In 2004, the foundation also refers to a commission made by the *Swedish National Agency for Higher Education*, stating the importance for academic teachers in Sweden to gain international experience during a significant period of time. Also in the documentation of 2004, it is referred to liberal arts colleges as institutions characterized by very high quality standards. The STINT Foundation also puts forward the importance of the relationship between education and educational breadth (*Bildung*), thereby

maintaining the interest for traits specific to liberal education. Another important aspect is that the STINT Foundation, during this period, points at cooperative projects realized within the programme. These co-operations have been student exchanges, joint courses, excursions and teacher exchanges (STINT *Annual Report* 2004).

One important change of the programme takes place in 2006, when the programme adopts a new financial policy. From now on, no additional funding on behalf of participating Swedish institutions is necessary. Instead, the STINT Foundation covers all costs during the visits abroad. This reform is partly a consequence of insights gained already in 2003, when the STINT Foundation, in its *Annual report*, points to the fact that teacher exchanges, in comparison with scholarly exchanges, demand alternative contributions by universities and university colleges (STINT *Annual Report* 2003). Considering the scarce economic resources among Swedish institutions of higher education, this reform clearly provides a welcome incentive for institutions and departments in Sweden to nominate appropriate candidates for the programme.

### *Mission*

One fundamental motive behind STINT *Programme for Excellence in Teaching* is to contribute to the internationalization of Swedish teaching faculty (Director's note, STINT F1EC:2). The programme is thus developed against the background of the widely spread and well established internationalization of research at Swedish seats of learning, but also as an answer to the desire of the *Swedish National Agency for Higher Education* to develop and deepen

internationalization on a wide front. When *Programme for Excellence in Teaching* was initiated, the STINT Foundation already had five main programmes oriented towards the internationalization of scholarship and research. *Excellence in Teaching* supplements the lack of a regular teacher oriented programme, not only within the framework of the STINT Foundation, but within Swedish higher education as a whole. As it is stated in one presentation of the programme, Swedish undergraduate education is in need of impulses from abroad, both as concerns the content and the structure of education (STINT Dnr 01/231).

The ambition of the programme to internationalize Swedish undergraduate education, explains its exclusive orientation towards American private liberal arts colleges. The choice of these institutions is motivated by their focus on undergraduate instruction, and by the high quality of their education. The intention of the STINT Foundation has been to let Swedish teachers experience institutions where educational rather than scholarly activities dominate, and where teaching itself upholds a status and dignity foreign to Swedish circumstances.

As is clear in the documentation of the STINT Foundation, the purpose of *Programme for Excellence in Teaching* has never been to induce straight implementations of liberal arts education at Swedish institutions of higher education, or as stated by the foundation in 2001: "The purpose of the programme is certainly not to provide blueprints for how things should be done at Swedish institutions of higher education" (STINT F1EC:2). On the contrary, the programme has been developed out of an awareness of the importance of national traditions of excellence in teaching. Thus, the

fundamental purpose of the programme has been “to widen an understanding of teaching possibilities in different contexts, to gain experience and make useful comparisons” (STINT F1EC:2).

Another important feature is that the programme has been oriented towards the development of both individual teachers and the institutions and departments they represent. As concerns developments at an institutional level, it is clear that the STINT Foundation has chosen private liberal arts colleges as host institutions because of their unique abilities to create dynamic learning environments. One important question that motivates this orientation is in fact how institutions of higher education can create such learning environments without being oriented specifically towards research and development. The latter aspect also explains the initial orientation of the STINT Foundation towards smaller university colleges in Sweden as candidates for the programme. As shall be clarified later in this report, several of the concerns regarding undergraduate education at Swedish university colleges also apply to the conditions at larger research universities in Sweden, a fact which explains the invitation of larger universities to participate in the programme during the later years.

The latter aspect relates to another motive for the STINT Foundation for orienting the programme towards liberal arts education. As is clear in the declarations made by the foundation, liberal arts education contains several features relevant for higher education and society at large in Sweden. The STINT Foundation actually refers to the fact that “the formation of the individual, preparation for citizenship, leadership and public responsibility” are aims increasingly expected from higher education in Sweden (Letter from

the Director of STINT, 2001). It might be added that several of these aims are also stated in the *Swedish Higher Education Act*. This emphasis on behalf of the STINT Foundation on features essential to liberal arts education, in fact invites a discussion on the status of liberal education within the programme. As will be discussed later in this report, there has been certain confusion among some former participants as to the importance of liberal education for Swedish higher education. On the one hand, the STINT Foundation has emphasized the importance of features intimately connected with liberal education. On the other hand, the programme has been oriented towards high-quality undergraduate education at large, where liberal arts education has been used as an example of such high-quality education. Given that the purpose of the programme is not to “provide blueprints for how things should be done at Swedish institutions of higher education”, then what line of attitude towards this educational model should participating institutions and teachers in Sweden adopt in their planning of the visits and in their utilization of the experiences? As will be discussed later in this report, there are good reasons to reflect upon specifically what aspects of liberal education are relevant for Swedish higher education, and to procure knowledge for future participants in the programme as to how the focus of attention during the visits can be adjusted to specific needs of development and change within higher education in Sweden.

## Motives for participation

What motives have Swedish institutions of higher education had for participating in *Programme for Excellence in Teaching*? An answer to this question not only provides an insight into actual needs of development within Swedish higher education, but also reveals the expectations among Swedish educators as to what a scholarship entirely devoted to undergraduate education and teaching should accomplish. Furthermore, it gives an important indication of what relevance the programme has for participating institutions. The aim of the following account is thus to help prospective participants to identify specific areas of interest among Swedish educators, but also to facilitate more profound reflections on specific needs for development, and consequently on reasons for participating in the programme.

Two main sources have been used in order to gain information on these motives: 1) a survey made among participating Swedish institutions, and 2) applications made by these institutions for attending the programme, as well as the personal letters enclosed in these applications.

The motives described in the applications made by participating institutions are, for reasons of rhetoric, to a large extent adjusted to the formal requirements of the programme, whereas the motives formulated in the survey give a more reflected and distanced view of the reasons for participation. Nonetheless, the applications and personal letters sometimes give a more detailed account of expectations and needs at the Swedish

institutions. For these reasons, the following account will emphasize the motives represented in the survey, but sometimes deepen the perspective on the reasons for participation by reference to applications and personal letters.

The questionnaire answered by universities and colleges in Sweden gives a valuable account of, not only the motives themselves, but also how the reasons for engaging in the programme have changed and developed over the years, and how motives differ between institutions who have participated several times and those who have only sent one or two teachers.

It is significant, for instance, that early and non-frequent participants like Jönköping University Foundation and the National Academy of Mime and Acting (Teaterhögskolan), express rather shallow motives for participating. In the former case, the institution refers exclusively to the high quality of the programme, and in the latter case, the institution refers to the lack of international exchanges for staff involved in the education. Among other early participants, it is also clear that the main reason for participation is formal policies of internationalization. This is evident, for instance, in the accounts given by Växjö University, Kristianstad University College, and the University College of Trollhättan/Uddevalla (now University West). Växjö University in fact refers to its policy that the majority of teachers *should* participate in international exchanges. Internationalization, however, is not the only motive mentioned by these institutions. The University West, for instance, specifically refers to its own profile as an institution inspired by liberal arts education, an aspect which appears among several of the university colleges who have been engaged in the programme more than once. It should also be noted that Kristianstad University College also

mentions *competence development* and an interest for *alternative education* as important motives.

Among institutions with a more frequent engagement in the programme, the motives for participation are clearly more elaborated than among non-frequent participants. One example is the University College of Mälardalen, which also mentions internationalization as an essential motive, but, more importantly, emphasizes the ambition to develop an international educational environment with the potential to foster an increased intercultural understanding among students. Mälardalen also puts forward the importance of high merits for their teachers. Another interesting example is Karlstad University, which has also participated several times in the programme (every second year since 2000). In their case, the motives for engaging teachers in the programme have become even more elaborate. Internationalization is still put forward as one important factor, but *pedagogic development* and the importance of *encouragement for teachers*, stand out as significant reasons for participating in the programme. It is interesting to notice that Karlstad also highlights the narrow understanding of the relationship between teaching and research at institutions of higher education. Karlstad wishes to put more emphasis on the role of teaching, and stresses the importance of connecting teaching to the development of competence at the university, i.e. to increase the status of teaching. It is also noteworthy that this university specifically acknowledges liberal arts education as one system of education with the potential to give a valuable perspective on higher education in Sweden.

It is important to notice the entrance of these more elaborated motives among frequent participants in the programme. The wish to renew

undergraduate education, to develop teaching skills, to encourage individual teachers, and the emphasis on the troublesome relationship between teaching and research, clearly testifies to a more profound understanding of the programme's purpose and potential among frequently engaged institutions. Karlstad University is one example of how the knowledge of and interest for liberal arts education has been increasingly rooted among institutions of higher education in Sweden, and this institution clearly testifies to what appears to be a growing interest in Sweden for this specific educational model. This tendency is even more evident at Södertörn University College, an institution which, from the start in the 1990s, has developed an educational profile with several features in common with liberal arts education. Södertörn University College, which has participated three times in the programme, expresses an intimate knowledge of and high interest for the American model, not least in its emphasis on questions regarding personal development for the teacher, high quality undergraduate education, and the development of interdisciplinary work, cross-cultural perspectives and civic education.

Another frequent participant in the programme is the University College of Kalmar, an institution which also expresses a deep commitment to several ideas connected with liberal education. As one reason for engagement in the programme, Kalmar mentions the ambition to foster a core of teachers with the interest to apply pedagogic principles associated with liberal education. Both Kalmar and Södertörn also put forward pedagogic development as an important reason for engaging in the programme. These institutions are not the only ones who express a proximity to ideals connected with liberal arts education. As mentioned before, the University West also

verifies this orientation, as well as the National Academy of Mime and Acting and Kristianstad University College. As is evident in the applications made by the University College of Borås, their profile also, at least partly, stands in close connection to the practice of liberal arts education, since they have offered courses with an explicit orientation towards the breadth of liberal education.

Judging from the above descriptions, it is clear that university colleges with an outspoken affinity with liberal arts institutions display a more elaborate interest in the programme. For these institutions, participation in the programme implies much more than formal requirements of internationalization. A surprisingly large number of these relatively small institutions in fact display a highly specialized interest for specific features of liberal education, just as they share the fundamental ambition of the STINT Foundation to develop and improve undergraduate education at large.

It is of course interesting to compare the motives among these small institutions with reasons for participation among larger seats of learning who do not already have a liberal arts profile, but who wish to adopt and develop certain ideas connected with this educational system. One example is Uppsala University, which expresses a profound interest for the practice of general education and core curriculum at liberal arts colleges in the U.S., and for the possibilities to integrate educational breadth in its present, highly specialized curriculum. The reason for this interest has been the development of a diverse and multicultural university, where undergraduate education must be reformed in order to meet the actual needs of new categories of students. Behind this interest lie also considerations of the relationship between

teaching and research. It is interesting to notice that similar motives for participation also appear at Stockholm University, where the importance of emphasizing questions of pedagogy in a research based environment is being put forward. Clearly the expansion of higher education in Sweden has also affected these larger institutions of higher education, and it is evident that these developments have enforced reforms of undergraduate education in ways that have motivated the participation of these institutions in *Programme for Excellence in Teaching*.

It is important to consider also the individual motives for participation in relation to the institutional motives. Although many institutions mention pedagogic development as one important factor for participating in the programme, this motive becomes much more evident in the personal letters written by participating teachers. These letters also give a more detailed account of specifically what aspects of the educational practice need development, just as they contribute to a deeper understanding of how participating teachers wish to change, not only the methods of education, but also the content and orientation of undergraduate education. The above mentioned motive to find ways to reform undergraduate education and methods of teaching in order to meet the demands of new categories of students, for instance, also appears in applications from smaller institutions. It has, for instance, been an important motive for teachers from Dalarna University College, although it does not appear as an institutional motive for participation. One possible explanation for this lack of correspondence between the motives among institutions and the motives among individual teachers is that the increasing lack of basic knowledge among first-year

students at Swedish institutions of higher education has not yet been thoroughly acknowledged at higher levels of participating institutions. Individual teachers, however, have close experiences of these difficulties. Regardless of how this lack of correspondence should be understood, it is important that this factor actually appears as an important reason for several individual teachers to partake in the programme.

Among individual participants, it is also clear that the educational breadth appears as an especially attractive feature of American liberal arts education. Noteworthy is furthermore that this aspect is most commonly put forward by participants from the field of Science and Technology. One participant from the University College of Kalmar, for instance, explicitly refers to the scientific orientation of the home institution, and wishes to explore the significance of humanistic and classical knowledge at this institution. In fact, this aspect turns out to be a common interest among teachers of Science, just as the interest to deepen the understanding of how multidisciplinary work can be integrated in undergraduate education. The latter aspect has been of special importance for the University West, where both multidisciplinary work and the transgression of borders between academy and society are put forward as important concerns. The fact that educational breadth and multidisciplinary perspectives appear as important for teachers within Science and Technology, testifies to the narrow and highly specialized education within these fields in Sweden.

Related to these issues is the interest among several teachers for the practice of problem based learning, but also, especially among teachers working at university colleges, the interest to deepen the understanding of

how high quality undergraduate education can be developed in symbiosis with creative research environments. The latter aspect touches on the somewhat infected debate on the role and identity of Swedish university colleges. Should university colleges remain institutions which concentrate on high quality undergraduate education, or should they try to combine this role with their efforts to become universities and develop research departments? As a consequence of this interest among several teachers engaged in the programme, the relationship between teaching and scholarship also appears as an essential interest. The potential of *STINT Programme for Excellence in Teaching* to contribute to a vitalization of Swedish undergraduate education with respect to the narrow relationship between teaching and research in the Swedish context will be discussed later in this report.

Several additional aspects can be found in the applications and personal letters of participating fellows. In many cases these give a fair account of actual needs within Swedish undergraduate education. One important motive mentioned in these letters is the urge to develop the relationship and dialogue between teachers and students. The development towards diversity at institutions of higher education have increased the awareness among university teachers of this aspect, and several participants display a marked interest for ways to individualize education. The collective approach of Swedish higher education is thus put forward as a fundamental concern among Swedish teachers. Yet another important motive for participation is the wish to develop pedagogical methods for distance studies. Within Science, one interesting motive is to find ways to attract female students to studies in Natural Science and Technology. During later years, the

development of the Bologna Process also appears as an important motive for individual teachers to attend the programme. The interest for developing creative learning environments, and the interest for the relationship between practical and theoretical knowledge also stand out as important factors, just as the interest within liberal arts education for thematic approaches to knowledge and learning.

As can be seen in this account, participating institutions in Sweden clearly point at departmental development as one important reason for participating in the programme. Several institutions, however, also put forward the importance of personal development for the individual teacher. The expectation among these institutions is clearly that the programme should be of both personal and institutional relevance. Among other motives of participation are found the ambition to create exchanges, not only among teachers but also among students. This motive does not, however, dominate among participating institutions. The development of teaching, and the ambition to use participating teachers as resources for pedagogic development, stand out as much more important. Only a couple of the participating institutions actually mention teacher exchanges as an important motive, for instance The Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), who refers to the abundance of research exchanges and the will to increase teacher and student exchanges. The absence among participating institutions of teacher exchange as a motive for participation, however, should be measured against the fact that several institutions have actually become engaged in exchanges as a result of *Programme for Excellence in Teaching*. An account of these exchanges will be given at a later stage in this report.

To summarize the motives of participation in the programme among the Swedish institutions, it should be noticed that during the period 2000 – 2006, participating institutions show a growing interest for issues of teaching and learning, but also a more outspoken interest for features specifically related to liberal arts education. The impression is that the programme has in fact contributed in a positive way to an increased knowledge about and interest in this educational model. Although the programme does not advocate large-scale applications of liberal arts education within the Swedish system, it is evident that certain key-institutions, like Södertörn University College, and the University College of Kalmar, show an interest for more thorough adaptations of the American model. One further indication of this increased interest is the fact that the University College of Gotland, which participates for the first time in 2007, in their application expresses an intention to develop an entirely new educational structure using liberal arts education as a model. As one motive for participating in the programme, the university college thus mentions the ambition to re-structure “the academic year in order to enhance cross-cultural and interdisciplinary studies.” This institution also puts forward the development of a “menu of courses offered for the students to stretch their perspectives beyond the normal program content.” As is evident, these ambitions stand in close relationship to the theory and practice of liberal education in the American context, and they clearly testify to the importance of *STINT Programme of Excellence in Teaching* to support institutions with a deeper dedication to develop liberal education in Sweden.

## Nomination procedures

One crucial criterion for successful accomplishments within *STINT Programme for Excellence in Teaching* is the recruitment of appropriate candidates, i.e. university teachers dedicated to teaching as well as to the development of educational activities at their home institutions. One important question in the following section is how Swedish institutions invited to participate in the programme proceed in their nominations of candidates. How do they distribute information about the programme, and at which levels of the institutional organizations are nominations and applications handled? Do these institutions have any special procedures regarding applications, and who makes the final decisions?

As regards the distribution of information at institutions invited to participate in the programme, the most common case, is that they distribute information to teachers through department chairs. In some cases information has been distributed to department chairs directly from the vice-chancellor, but at larger institutions like Göteborg University, and the universities of Stockholm and Uppsala, information about the programme is often distributed through the faculty board or administrative directors at faculty level. At some institutions, special boards or counsels with responsibility for questions of teaching, also distribute information about the programme. This is the case at Karlstad University and Södertörn University College. In the latter case, the Center for Pedagogic Development handles several issues in

connection with the programme. At one institution, the University West, information about the programme is distributed by the International Office.

Something often missing in the accounts given by participating institutions is information on *methods* for distributing information about the programme. In a few cases, as the University West and the University College of Mälardalen, it is stated that the information is sent out via e-mail, and published on the homepage of the institution. This appears to be an effective way to spread knowledge about the programme among the faculty. In some cases it is evident that information has simply been distributed by word of mouth. In order for the information to reach as many interested and motivated teachers as possible, invited institutions should strive for an as efficient distribution of information as possible. Publications on homepages and by e-mail are good means, but an even better example is the custom at the University West to actually inform teachers about the programme at faculty meetings. This institution also uses these meetings as forums for discussing appropriate candidates.

As regards procedures for application, it is evident that most of the participating Swedish institutions have no such procedures. Only three of the participating institutions testify to some kind of application procedure, Karlstad University, the University College of Mälardalen, and Luleå University of Technology. Only the latter institution practice an application open for every teacher at the university, whereas Karlstad and Mälardalen practice a system where certain teachers are recommended by their department chairs to apply for the programme.

As for the internal nomination of candidates, procedures vary between institutions. The most common procedure is that candidates are nominated by department chairs and that final decisions are made by the vice-chancellor, sometimes in consultation with the vice-chancellors staff. This has been the case at seven of the participating institutions. In some cases, however, centers for pedagogic development take certain responsibility for the nominations, although the final decision is made by the vice-chancellor. This is the case at Södertörn University College, Karlstad University, Stockholm University and Uppsala University, although at Stockholm University, every faculty is invited to nominate a candidate for the programme. In other cases, nominations are handled entirely by the vice-chancellors staff, however often in consultation with department chairs.

The administrative management of the nominations is most often made at high levels of participating institutions. In some cases, the nominations are handled by the vice-chancellor or the vice-chancellors staff, in other cases the International Office or the Center for Pedagogic Development take responsibility for the management. Only one institution, Kristianstad University College, reports that the nominations are handled at department level.

Conclusions to be drawn from this account is that nominations of and decisions about candidates for *Excellence in Teaching* are generally handled at a high level at participating institutions. This is in accordance with the wish of the STINT Foundation that the activities within the programme should be beneficial, not only for the individual teacher, but for the participating institution as a whole. The engagement of the vice-chancellor and instances

responsible for pedagogic development, not only facilitates, but indeed encourages institutional development after the return of the teacher. Given the former financial policy of the programme, stating that home institutions should give adequate financial support to the participants, this handling of nominations at high levels appears as highly rational.

What is most striking in the accounts given by participating institutions is the lack of application procedures. Only in rare cases have the program been open for applications by the faculty as a whole. In most cases, appropriate candidates are recommended by department chairs or other representatives at faculty level, and it is obvious that this routine is more efficient than internal application procedures. The question is whether this procedure is optimal also for the STINT Foundation, and for the possibilities of the foundation to attract appropriate candidates for the programme. Judging from the applications made by Swedish institutions, they have often picked out candidates with a reputation as highly interested and engaged in questions of pedagogy and undergraduate education. In fact, several of the individual participants have been awarded pedagogical prizes at their home institutions. The positive outcomes of these procedures notwithstanding, it is worth considering a system where a larger number of teachers might be given the opportunity to apply for the programme in open competition. This would perhaps attract even more motivated and dynamic candidates for the programme. Regardless of this, it would no doubt facilitate for institutions to discover areas within undergraduate education in special need of development. If applied, open application procedures in themselves would thus have the potential to contribute to the mapping of every institution's

need for development of undergraduate education and teaching. Problematic areas could be discovered, just as the competitive aspect would contribute to the quality of *Excellence in Teaching* and the quality of developmental work at each particular institution.

One view put forward by a few former STINT fellows, is that U.S. host institutions should supply motivations as to why they have accepted a candidate. One reason for this wish is that such commentaries would facilitate for participants to understand how the U.S. institutions look upon the prospective contributions of Swedish visitors. It is a fact that such motivations have been distributed in some cases. It is wishful, however, that U.S. institutions in the future, provide the STINT Foundation and individual participants with this kind of commentaries. Such material would provide a valuable basis for the planning visits made by each individual participant in the programme.

## Activities at American host institutions

The following section contains a description of what activities have governed the visits of previous STINT fellows within *Programme for Excellence in Teaching*. The purpose is to facilitate a discussion on what kind of activities are most productive for individual teachers and participating institutions, but also to identify significant difficulties and obstacles connected to the performances during these visits.

At first, it is important to notice that the STINT Foundation has adopted a rather moderate approach as regards guiding principles for participating STINT fellows. A dynamic feature of the programme has been the possibility for teachers to perform activities at their own discretion, or in accordance with their respective purposes and/or the purpose of their home institution. Already in 1997, when ideas for a teacher exchange programme was planned by the STINT Foundation, this independence on behalf of the teachers was put forward as essential: "In general, there is no use in forcing teachers into exchange programmes with altogether too predetermined conditions. This runs the risk of idealized forms of exchange not fitting for the daily routines at our universities and university colleges" (STINT Memorandum 97/97:9.1). One important ambition on behalf of the STINT Foundation, however, has been that Swedish institutions participating in the programme should make productive use of the experiences and knowledge gained by teachers attending the programme (STINT Dnr 01/231). In their invitation to nominate candidates, the STINT Foundation has consequently

stressed the importance of thorough preparations and dedicated commitments among participating institutions. The STINT Foundation has also emphasized the importance for these institutions to prepare follow-up activities for returning teachers.

As for what has been expected of each individual fellow, the ambition of the STINT Foundation has been to get participating teachers involved as much as possible in the planning and performance of educational activities at the American seats of learning. The intention has been to integrate visiting teachers in the daily educational procedures at the host departments, and to raise each participating teacher to the same status as the ordinary staff. The aim of this ambition to create close contact with the host institutions has been to facilitate the understanding of how these foreign institutions manage to pursue high quality undergraduate education (see, for instance STINT Dnr 02/218). Tangible activities put forward as important by the STINT Foundation have been a high degree of classroom exposure (notably teaching), attendance at faculty meetings, and discussions and interviews with faculty and students, as well as the participation in social events and extra-curricular activities. During later years, STINT fellows have also been requested to arrange a seminar at their host institution, a seminar where they can summarize their impressions of American higher education, and make comparisons with Swedish undergraduate education. As has become clear in discussions with former STINT fellow, these seminars have been quite successful. Individual participants have also been obliged to write an executive summary of their visit, and to give an oral presentation at the STINT Foundation.

One plausible reason for the STINT Foundation not to provide more specific instructions or guidelines for the Swedish teachers is that it is difficult to outline a frame of activity appropriate for all American host institutions, as well as for all of the visitors. The conditions for involving visiting teachers in educational activities vary significantly among participating departments in the U.S., and the preparations for each stay thus need to be made in consultation with each individual teacher. To facilitate for the visitors to actively participate as teachers in educational activities would probably demand a much earlier planning of the visit, considering the long-term planning at American colleges. A more organized planning of educational activities on behalf of the STINT Foundation would furthermore demand relatively arduous processes of negotiation with American host institutions as well, not least since – according to some reports by Swedish participants – there is a certain degree of reluctance among some American institutions to involve visiting teachers in their education. The policy of the STINT Foundation to delegate the responsibility for planning the visits and educational activities to each individual participant, thus stand out as a highly rational. Given an adequate utilization of the early planning trip, visiting scholars have every chance of customizing their visits in ways appropriate to the interests and needs of themselves and their institutions.

Despite the possible drawbacks of this moderate approach of the STINT Foundation, it must be said that the lack of a more detailed frame of instruction for how to pursue the visit has also been the strength of the programme. As can be noted in the final reports of the STINT fellows, there has been a great deal of variation as to how the visits have been organized

and pursued. It is obvious that different teachers from different kinds of institutions have various needs and expectations, just as participating Swedish institutions expect different outcomes of the visits. This variation in needs and expectations comes out strongly in the final reports, and it is, at least partly, also reflected in what level of engagement teachers testify to. Judging from the reports, three main forms of activities stand out as customary during the visits:

- 1) A full course commitment
- 2) Various forms of co-teaching
- 3) Observation and research

Judging from the final reports, approximately 20 % of former participants have conducted a course of their own during the visit. Nearly 60 % of the STINT fellows have participated in various forms of co-teaching, and 15 % have based their work on observation, including interviews, discussions and the like. In 5 % of the cases, there is no information as to what activities have been pursued. As for the distribution of these forms of activities during the history of the programme, it is obvious that observation and research was predominant during the first year of the programme. Co-teaching enters on a broad front in 2001, and remains a common feature throughout the years. Full course coordination enters the programme in 2002, but experiences a distinct breakthrough in 2004. Since the above figures demand further explanation, the following section will discuss each form of activity somewhat more extensively.

### *A full course commitment*

As for participants who have conducted their own courses, it is of interest to notice how relatively difficult it has been for some teachers to obtain these courses. Some individual features among teachers who have succeeded in obtaining a course of their own are worth commenting upon. Excellent linguistic skills, or native English, for instance, stand out as, if not a necessary, then at least a favorable condition for teachers aiming at a course of their own. Previous experience from academic life in the U.S. also appears to be an important quality among teachers who have conducted their own course, at least among teachers within the Humanities and Social Sciences. One impression is also that it has been easier for teachers of Technology and Science to gain full responsibility for courses, than for teachers within the Humanities and Social Sciences. There are a couple of exceptions from this pattern, and in these cases, the teachers involved have shown a remarkable fixity of purpose in their ambition to gain full status as teachers at their host departments. There are also a few examples of teachers who have made great efforts to obtain full course commitments, but failed.

Another issue regards how teachers who pursued their own courses have evaluated this form of activity. The main impression when studying the executive summaries is that teachers, who have conducted their own courses, express strong satisfaction with the line of work chosen. One teacher even estimates this conduct as the best way to become involved in campus life, and to gain deep insights into American academic life. Several of the teachers within this category also testify to how the responsibility for a whole course indeed deepens the understanding of how liberal arts education functions,

just as of the conditions under which American teachers work. Evidently, this intense form of exposure also facilitates highly valuable contacts with students. Yet another important experience is that the responsibility for a whole course provides adequate pedagogical training in a new educational environment, and furthermore invites critical reflection on established or ingrained methods of teaching.

Among the drawbacks mentioned in connection with full course commitments, is that the coordination of an entire course somewhat restricts the possibilities for alternative activities during the visit. Some participants refer to the relatively heavy teaching-load, a negative condition that restricts the opportunity to participate in other activities at the college. A full-time schedule, with class activities on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, also limits the prospects for non-educational activities during the stay. Much time is spent on preparations for class, and less time on observation, discussion, and social activities. It is worth mentioning, though, that although this aspect is emphasized in a couple of reports, it is evident that these teachers, despite difficulties, have in fact participated in activities outside of class. However, the possibility to visit other classes, in order to get a broader perspective on the educational content at the college, has been significantly limited by the full course commitment.

### *Co-teaching / team-teaching*

An impressive majority of former STINT fellows (60 %) have conducted their visits through various forms of co-teaching. It is important to notice that co-teaching in this context implies a vast variation of activities. In most cases, it means that the teachers have followed one or more entire courses. Within these courses they have given lectures, held workshops, participated in seminar discussions and laboratory work, as well as in individual tutoring. The degree of participation varies, from occasional lecturing to more regular co-operation. One STINT fellow reports the advantages of attending a class dealing with student's individual research projects. For this teacher, reading drafts provided a natural cause for the preparation of additional lectures connected to issues in the projects. An obvious advantage with this mode of activity is that it facilitates for the visiting teacher to employ his or her expertise with respect to the actual needs and aspirations among the students. Another positive effect is that this line of conduct might lead to unpredicted and creative changes of the courses, in a way significant for the wide perspectives welcomed within liberal arts education.

In some rare cases, visiting teachers have been placed in departments less proper for their line of expertise. As a consequence, those teachers have experienced large difficulties in their ambition to participate actively in class. However, the more outspoken examples of this experience are found among early fellows within the programme. Judging from the final reports, it is evident that, over the years, participants have gained an increasingly profound understanding of the benefits of active participation in education at the American host institutions, and that the ability to use the early planning

trip for preparatory work in this respect has become stronger. A plausible explanation for this is that the importance of preparatory measures has been more clearly emphasized by the STINT Foundation.

An overall impression is that co-teaching has been easier to obtain than full course commitments, and that this form of activity has facilitated a larger scope of activities during the visits. One important argument in defense of co-teaching is that it facilitates a broader approach to college life, than do full course commitments. Teachers involved in co-teaching have, to a larger extent, made use of the opportunity to attend several courses and classes, and the consequently larger degree of observation has facilitated the experience of various educational environments. Yet another advantage with this form of collaboration is that it offers more time for reflection. One participant involved in co-teaching writes in his report: "Working beside the U.S. teacher, inside and outside the classroom, may be a quicker way to provide insight in the practices of liberal arts. Furthermore, in a fellowship that aims for excellence in teaching, it is crucial to give time to the rare possibility to step outside your ordinary teaching experience: sitting in on other classes, interviewing other teachers, pursuing interests at the outskirts of your own field." This statement clearly testifies to the efficiency of close collegial cooperation, and the advantages of immediate feed-back. As is evident in several of the final reports, co-teaching is a model that often combines observation, participation, reflection and productive dialogue with experienced teachers.

The above quotation also mentions interviewing other teachers, i.e. faculty with whom the visiting teacher does not collaborate directly. This kind

of activity has also been put forward by the STINT Foundation in their instructions to participating teachers. A maximum of exposure in class has been emphasized as the most important factor, but activities such as interviews outside the classroom have also been stressed as vital for a successful visit. Virtually every participant in the programme reports a high degree of activity outside the classroom. Interviews and discussions with teachers and students have been an evident and productive way to gain knowledge on liberal arts education, just as the participation in departmental and faculty meetings. Some fellows have taken a special interest in extra-curricular activities, and most of the fellows report valuable experiences of participation in social events.

### *Obstacles*

As mentioned earlier, the guiding lines provided by the STINT Foundation have been recommendations rather than regulations, an approach that clearly has facilitated for the STINT fellows to organize their visits in accordance with their own demands and expectations. In some cases, participants have expressed discontent with the moderate approach offered by the STINT Foundation. The programme has been criticized for not specifying what is expected from its participants. Sometimes, there seems to have been a widely spread confusion regarding whether participants should be involved in teaching activities or not. At some occasions, although for the most part in the beginning of the programme, participants have also asked for a more active support from the STINT Foundation in obtaining admission to teach their own courses at the American host institutions. As mentioned, though, this

tendency was more outspoken in the beginning of the programme, and judging from reports written during the last three years, participants seem to have gained a deeper understanding of their own responsibility in preparing for teaching activities. The impression is also that the STINT Foundation has improved its process of information towards candidates. In discussions held with former STINT fellows, there has been an outspoken satisfaction with the responsibility given to the individual participants. Another difficulty has been that some American institutions have not been adequately informed of the purpose of the programme and the role of visiting teachers. To a large degree, this problem also belongs to the beginning years of the programme. During the last years, participants are more inclined to report warm receptions when arriving to colleges in the U.S., and the overall impression is that these colleges have a passable understanding of the purpose with the programme.

One idea put forward in discussions with former STINT fellows and with representatives of the STINT Foundation, is that, not only individual participants, but also participating colleges in the U.S. should supply reports after the visits. One conclusion of this report, is that such summaries would have the potential to strengthen the commitment of U.S. colleges, but also work as an incentive for STINT fellows to utilize their visits in as efficient ways as possible.

## Experiences and ideas

The following section contains a description of what aspects of undergraduate education at liberal arts colleges have been put forward as especially important for Swedish undergraduate education by former STINT fellows. The most important source of information is again the executive summaries. Although many of these reports contain straightforward comparisons between the American and Swedish system, and thus provide a rather detailed account of the history, theory and practice of liberal arts education, the following outline will be limited to what tangible ideas for development of undergraduate education in Sweden that the visits have inspired. The general purpose of listing these ideas is to provide a basis for the later comparison between these suggestions and testimonies as to how participating institutions in Sweden have actually applied the experiences brought home by individual participants. An important question in this respect is whether the potential of the programme is actually reflected in the work done by participating Swedish institutions.

Judging from the executive summaries, certain key features of liberal education have caught special attention among participating teachers as potentially vital for the development of higher education in Sweden. Among the most important of these features are: the educational breadth implied in liberal arts curricula, the relationship between education and society, and the learning environments established at liberal arts colleges. Below follows an account of how these aspect have been described by previous fellows.

### *Educational breadth*

One important structural feature often put forward as important in the final reports, is the broad character of the American model, and the realization of breadth through *core courses* or *general education*. The inclination at liberal arts colleges towards the combination of artistic, scientific and humanistic approaches is consequently put in very high esteem by Swedish teachers, just as the combination of scientific, applied and ethical knowledge. Early in the history of the programme, one participant refers to this feature as an important way to level out inequalities between generations and different social groups, thereby implying the need for this approach within the Swedish system of education. Frequently, the concept of “Bildung” is also put forward as exemplary with respect to the American tradition. However, it is important to notice that different understandings of the concept of “Bildung” circulate among former participants in the programme. Some teachers stress the ethical aspect of this concept, and consequently put forward the inclination towards character formation at liberal arts colleges, whereas others point at the capacity of general education to compensate for the lack of basic knowledge among first-year students. In some rare cases, both of these aspects are emphasized as relevant for higher education in Sweden.

Although the breadth of liberal arts education is generally described in positive terms by former STINT fellows, there is often cautiousness among these teachers as to whether models of general education could or should be applied in Sweden. Swedish higher education is sometimes put forward as in need of freedom and choice. At the same time, the broader selection of course material is promoted as something exemplary of the American system. It is

worth noting, also, that several participants express an open unwillingness towards the adaptation of core courses in Sweden. One important argument against this model is that it is time-consuming and expensive. Another notion is that core courses in Sweden should be provided by the Upper Secondary School, and that, despite the fact that a large number of students enter higher education without sufficient basic knowledge; it should not be the function of universities or university colleges to provide this kind of knowledge. It might be noted, however, that among these opponents, there is also a tendency to acknowledge and esteem the focus on character development and ethics that core courses at liberal arts colleges generally provide. The fact that the concept of “Bildung” was erased from the curriculum of the Swedish Upper Secondary School already in the 1960s clearly testifies to the inclination of the Swedish system of education towards specialization during the last decades. As is evident in the final reports of the STINT fellows, the experiences made at American liberal arts colleges have increased the awareness of this high degree of specialization, but also resulted in critical reflections on the difficulties to reform this aspect of Swedish higher education.

### *Academy and Society*

Another more or less structural issue often discussed by former STINT fellows concerns the relationship between academic and public life. As noted by several participants in the programme, liberal arts colleges have a long tradition of fostering close relationships between school, society and working life. This is in fact a tradition with roots in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the U.S. experienced a separation between the academic, specialized approach to higher education, and the practice of a liberal education, where the ambition to foster students into flexible human beings well suited for life was emphasized. Several participants in the programme have acknowledged the benefits of this close relationship between education and civic life, just as they have reflected upon the relatively secluded character of Swedish higher education, a feature related to the high degree of specialization. As is evident in the testimonies of several STINT fellows, the close connection between education and public and working life respectively at American liberal arts colleges, can be observed at several levels. It is, for instance, represented in the idea of the campus as a reflection of society and the world, and in the importance given to civic education. The abundance of international programmes at many liberal arts colleges is also put forward as something exemplary with respect to the relationship between education and public life. Several participants also put forward the overall pragmatic approach to knowledge at liberal arts colleges, i.e. the ambition to emphasize the applicability of knowledge, as an example of how these colleges in an exemplary way strive to relate knowledge to the tangible world.

### *The status of teaching*

Further structural circumstances emphasized by former participants are the role and status of teachers, as well as routines for employment and promotion applied by liberal arts colleges. Many STINT fellows testify to the vast differences between the American and the Swedish systems with respect to these issues. As for the question of promotion, there is, among former participants, a widely spread acknowledgement of the deficiencies of the Swedish system, where teaching skills are not valued as much as scholarly excellence in the recruitment and promotion of teachers. It is worth noting that this understanding is evident among teachers from both universities and university colleges in Sweden. The impression is that within the Swedish system there is lack of procedures for measuring teaching skills, a fact which has opened the eyes of many participants for the American tenure system. And although this system displays certain characteristics foreign to Swedish labor legislation, some Swedish teachers testify to the fact that it implies well-structured methods for measuring and evaluating teaching skills. Another observation is that the American tenure system in itself reflects the importance given to the role of teaching, in that it is elaborated in order to attract academics with a dedicated attitude to the mission of teaching. This should be compared to the Swedish system, where employment and promotion are supposed to be based on both scholarly and pedagogic qualities, but where, in reality, teaching skills are of subordinate importance. A few STINT fellows have also observed how the setting of wage rates at American colleges is related to the quality of teaching, something quite foreign to Swedish circumstances. Related to this issue is the question of what

status research and scholarship have at American liberal arts colleges. Some former STINT fellows have reflected on the importance given to research merits in the recruitment of teachers. American liberal arts colleges in general recruit teachers with a doctorate degree. However, once employed, research merits become less significant, in favor of teaching skills. It is also important that, during tenure-track years, the quantity of research is not as important as in Sweden. At some American liberal arts colleges, research and scholarship is regarded as highly important. However, at institutions where research programs are mandatory, the teaching-load is very low.

Another significant aspect concerning the role of the teacher is the independence given to tenured faculty at American liberal arts colleges. Several participants in the programme testify to how academic freedom at these colleges pertains to, not only scholarly activities, but also education. To a much larger extent than their Swedish colleagues, American teachers decide the content and performance of their courses. Several Swedish participants testify to an education liberated from the kind of centralized directives common in Swedish higher education. Furthermore, some STINT fellows also acknowledge that this freedom is in fact the reason why the American tenure system implies such efforts to measure the academic and teaching skills of prospective teachers. It is thus evident that *Programme for Excellence in Teaching* has contributed to an increased understanding of the efforts put into the safe-guarding of academic freedom at American liberal arts institutions.

### *The marketing of education*

Other structural aspects put forward by participants concern the marketing of education and of specific courses at liberal arts colleges, just as the tendency at these colleges to provide extensive information, not only on the content of the education, but on the ends and future prospects of the education. A specific idea put forward in one executive summary, is that Swedish institutions of higher education should use the opinions of former students in their marketing of courses and programmes, that is, to adapt more aggressive forms of marketing. Former students should also, according to the same report, be used as public relations officers, lecturers and so on. Another report defends the positive aspects of external financing and sponsorship at liberal arts colleges. Emphasized at several occasions is the important role played by alumni at American colleges, both financially and morally. Alumni to a very large degree contribute to uphold the status of the college, and the vision of the college as an important hallmark in life.

The marketing of education at liberal arts colleges also becomes evident in some reports on the importance given to descriptions of learning outcomes. As reported by several teachers, American institutions put a lot of effort in the task of describing the practical benefits of courses and educational programs. The latter aspect is highly relevant for the changes within the Bologna Process in Europe, where learning outcomes are emphasized as highly important for the education of students competitive on a global labor-market.

### *Teaching and learning*

Several issues addressed in the former section are also connected to questions of teaching and learning highlighted by former STINT fellows in their reports. The idea of the campus as a reflection of society, for instance, and the emphasis put on pragmatic aspects of knowledge, is also reflected in the teaching methods and approaches utilized by many American college educators. As one former participant in the programme notes, this becomes clear, for instance, in the tendency at liberal arts colleges to let students display the results of their work in public contexts.

Another issue especially noticed by former participants with respect to teaching, is the close relationship at liberal arts colleges, between teachers and students. This relative intimacy is one manifestation of the *in loci parentis* principle of American colleges, that is, the more or less parental responsibility on behalf of the colleges for their students. However, it is also an essential expression of the ambition to develop inspiring learning environments at these colleges. Several Swedish teachers display an appreciation of this close relationship between teachers and students, and it is clear that their visits have led to critical reflections on the prevalent collective approach towards students within Swedish higher education. Another expression of the appreciation among Swedish teachers for the relative intimacy between teachers and students, is the reference to the American system of *advising*, which is frequently put forward as exemplary, just as the immense efforts put on feedback and individual tutoring at American colleges. Widely esteemed is the overall focus on each individual student, and the high degree of throughput that these efforts actually attain. An important expression of this

concern for the individual student is also the importance given to various forms of help centers at American colleges. An overall majority of the Swedish teachers, who consider this aspect as highly exemplary, also reflect upon the financial conditions which facilitate these approaches. Few participants display any hope of being able to integrate this kind of close interaction within the Swedish system.

One important aspect of the learning environments established at American liberal arts institutions is the idea of the campus as a reflection of society. Several STINT fellows report positive responses to the ability of these institutions to create a feeling of unity among all of its members. Every member of a liberal arts college society, not only teachers and students, but also librarians, technicians, cleaners, security personnel and others, belong to the same collective, which is clearly reflected in the social atmosphere and sense of fellowship prevailing at these institutions.

Another important aspect noticed by participating teachers, is the ability at liberal arts colleges, to activate the students in their search for knowledge. Several methods and approaches facilitating this process are mentioned as exemplary, e.g. the use of short lectures, the combination of lectures and discussions, classes with less than 20 students, the various forms of homework, the highly frequent use of writing assignments, the time offered for discussions and reflection, the inter- and multidisciplinary approaches common at liberal arts colleges, the orientation towards developed forms of student research, and the use of elaborate and detailed syllabi. All these methods are connected to the ambition at liberal arts colleges, to establish dynamic learning environments, where students should be inspired to initiate

processes of learning on their own. As for student research, for instance, it is interesting to notice, that some STINT fellows have praised the tendency at some liberal arts colleges to let their students present their results, not only in class or in a social context, but also in larger research oriented forums. Although the quality of such presentations may not be appropriate for research forums, these endeavors clearly testify to the value educators at these colleges put in letting students be exposed to and communicate in contexts outside of class. Another example of this is the tendency to let senior students function as mentors for freshmen students. In connection with the positive estimations of these features, several STINT fellows also observe the importance at liberal arts colleges of extra-curricular activities.

The orientation towards communication skills at liberal arts colleges has also been observed by many STINT fellows. Several participants have put forward the significance and efficiency of methods like *Writing Across the Curriculum* and the importance given to discussions, debates and oral presentations as means for effective learning. As acknowledged by some of the Swedish teachers, these methods clearly strengthen qualities important to undergraduate education in Sweden, for instance the faculty of critical thinking.

As for the possibilities of implementing these approaches within the Swedish system, judgments vary among former participants in the programme. As becomes evident in the final reports, and in the discussions made with former fellows, the visits have made great impact on the individual teachers, and in many cases led to, not only reflection, but to actual development of teaching methods and approaches to educational activities.

Some participants have also argued for the importance, as a teacher, to develop well-reflected visions on the ends and means of high quality education. There is a tendency, however, to stress the difficulties involved in structural changes of the Swedish educational system. In discussions held with former STINT fellows, it has become clear that structural changes have to be made in the long term, but also that large-scale development must begin at a ground level, in the practice of individual teachers, and in the influence they can exercise on colleagues and departments.

### *Disadvantages*

A minority of former STINT fellows have also testified to negative conditions at American liberal arts colleges. Some maintain, for instance, that the system is conservative, and even well behind the Swedish system of higher education. In many cases, this judgment is explained by fundamental differences in basic values between Swedish and American educators. A number of Swedish teachers have, for instance, had negative experiences of the markedly religious profile at some liberal arts institutions, a profile which sometimes has been experienced as an obstacle for a scientifically adequate education. Other teachers have noticed conservatism in the strict hierarchy at liberal arts institutions, and concluded that tradition is often stronger than the will to reform education and adjust it to important changes in the world.

The sometimes heavy working-load at American colleges has also been put forward as one negative condition. Although teachers at private liberal arts colleges in most cases have a considerably lower teaching-load than their

Swedish colleagues, the close relationship with students, the larger number of office hours, the demand to attend department and faculty meetings, and the ambition to provide adequate feed-back on, for instance, large number of writing assignments, implies a considerable degree of engagement for American teachers. Some STINT fellows, however, have noticed that the often low demand for scholarly assignments at liberal arts colleges, and the possibility for teachers to focus on educational matters, in fact facilitates this high input. Since, in Sweden, scholarly activities are generally required for promotion and status, similar conditions for a dedicated relationship to teaching and education do not exist.

Yet another critical view on the practice of liberal arts education is that the methods of teaching observed have not always corresponded with the ideals of this educational model. Some Swedish teachers maintain that the teaching has not been oriented towards activating students and creating an interest for the process of learning, but instead characterized by traditional one-way communication from teacher to student. However, this view is often balanced by the observation that classroom activities form only one part of an education that involves the whole dynamic learning environment at liberal arts colleges. Another point of view concerns the expectations to deepen the understanding of problem-based learning at institutions that pride themselves of the practice of this educational model. Some Swedish teachers have concluded that American institutions in certain cases are far beyond Swedish practices of problem-based learning. Other issues of concern are course evaluations. One Swedish participant in fact concludes that course evaluations have not been constructive, aimed at improving education, but rather directed

at pure assessments of past activities. Others, however, have put forward the less formal and sometimes dynamic use of course evaluations, for instance the fact that tenured faculty at some institutions have the freedom to put together evaluation sheets proper for their specific course.

Another issue discussed among former STINT fellows has been the fact that the STINT Foundation has not involved any public liberal arts colleges in the programme, although this has been a wish among later participants in the programme. As Professor Sheldon Rothblatt writes in one of his reports on the programme, one reason behind this choice has been that there are few public colleges or universities in the U.S. “with a primary commitment to the teaching of liberal arts, or where undergraduate instruction in general is the dominant institutional purpose.” Another reason pointed out by professor Rothblatt, is that the needs of *Programme for Excellence in Teaching* are best met by institutions of small size (STINT F1EC:2). The choice of private colleges with an outspoken and well-known liberal arts-profile thus rests upon both criteria of quality and matters of comfort for participating teachers.

A majority of the STINT fellows do acknowledge the high quality of education at the private institutions they have visited. A vast majority also testifies to the benevolent social environments provided by faculty and students at the American institutions. Apart from these basic qualities, it is also clear that several STINT fellows have experienced liberal arts education as a model of education with qualities specifically appropriate for the development of undergraduate education in Sweden. At the same time, and this has become evident in discussions with former STINT fellows, there is an interest among participants in the programme to study and observe not only

excellence, but also difficulties attached to the ambitions at liberal arts colleges. Two issues of special interest are the differences in rate of throughput at public liberal arts colleges, and the question on how these colleges recruit their students. Throughput and recruitment are two essential concerns within Swedish higher education. Considering this interest, it might be a positive thing for the STINT Foundation to, not necessarily involve public liberal arts colleges in the programme, but inform participating Swedish teachers of their existence and of the possibilities to make shorter visits to institutions of this kind. Some participants have in fact made such visits, and made valuable observations.

## Post-activities and accomplishments

### *Individual and institutional development*

As is evident in the executive summaries by former STINT fellows, *Programme for Excellence in Teaching* has had, with few exceptions, a remarkable impact on individual participants. One teacher describes her stay at an American liberal arts college as a vitalizing injection that has opened for deep and far reaching reflections on teaching and learning. Other participants give expression to the immense importance of a scholarship programme entirely dedicated to questions of education and teaching. On a wide front, thus, *Programme for Excellence in Teaching* has generated deep satisfaction among former participants, and judging from discussions with previous fellows, the programme has indeed affected their professional exercises in markedly positive ways. The importance of the programme on an individual level thus seems unquestionable. The question remains, however, what tangible effects the programme has had on the daily work of former participants, and how the experiences gained have been utilized by their home institutions.

The latter aspect is of special significance, not least since that in the invitations to partake in the programme, the STINT Foundation has stressed that participating institutions shall provide a plan of action for returning teachers. Judging from the questionnaire filled out by participating institutions, however, and discussions held with previous STINT fellows, the realization of such plans has been highly irregular. In some cases it is actually doubtful whether the Swedish institutions have in fact systematically taken

advantage of the experiences gained by returning teachers. Some measures, however, are recurrent among several of the participating institutions.

Something that nearly all participating seats of learning have done is to give returning teachers the opportunity to lecture on and discuss their experiences. Quite often, this has been done on both an institutional and a faculty level, and in some cases, the STINT fellows have also presented their experiences in seminars arranged by centers for pedagogical development. At the University College of Mälardalen, which has been involved several times in the programme, there have even been seminars where students have been invited to these presentations and discussions. This indeed seems exemplary as concerns the ambition to increase the knowledge and interest for foreign models of education on a wide front.

A common development is also that former participants become key figures at their departments with respect to questions of teaching or international programmes. In some cases, STINT fellows have even been tightly connected to the activities of pedagogical forums at their institutions, and in one case involved in the production of pedagogic manuals for the department faculty. There are also examples of fellows who have become consultants with respect to questions of pedagogical reform. The latter is most evident at institutions who have participated several times in the programme, for instance Södertörn University College. Some teachers with experience of the programme have also become involved in matters regarding internationalization, and as a spin-off effect they have been engaged in other international activities.

One especially important issue concerns the work within the Bologna Process. Although the STINT Foundation during later years has emphasized the significance of this aspect, few STINT fellows report any closer engagement in questions regarding these developments. However, one Swedish institution reports that its former participant, as a consequence of *Programme for Excellence in Teaching*, has been actively involved in the reforms pertaining to the Bologna Process. It is reasonable to assume, that this aspect will become more significant for STINT fellows in the future, when an increased understanding of this process and its consequences has been developed.

Another proceeding at Swedish institutions has been to distribute reports written by participants in the programme through internal channels at the university. This measure, however, has been less common. One exception is Uppsala University which has published a combined report and study on liberal arts education written by its first STINT fellow. Among the more elaborate articles or treatises on how to develop Swedish undergraduate education can be found Roger Renström's article "An example of organisation for learning in Engineering Education" (2002), and the above mentioned publication from Uppsala university: *Learning from Liberal Arts Education. Ideas for the Improvement of Undergraduate Education in Sweden* (2006), by Patrik Mehrens. In 2002, Anki Koch-Schmidt produced a preliminary draft for a liberal arts education at the University College of Kalmar (STINT 2000 – 2002. F1EA:8).

Institutions who have participated several times in the programme show more elaborated plans of action for their returning teachers. The University College of Kalmar is one notable example. The ambition to involve

returning teachers in this kind of systematic development is also more evident at institutions who wish to develop or strengthen an already existing liberal arts profile. A prominent example is Södertörn University College, whose STINT fellows are routinely involved in the work governed by the centre of pedagogical development. Other institutions emphasize the inspiration that returning teachers extend to their colleagues. It is put forward as important enough that these teachers talk about their experiences and influence the faculty at large to develop and reform education and teaching. This view is put forward by the University College of Kalmar, which claims that several teachers outside of the programme have in fact been inspired by the principles of liberal arts education.

A common observation among participating institutions is that the *Programme for Excellence in Teaching* is of deep significance for the individual teacher. In some cases, these institutions refer to actual reforms made by former participants of their own education. These reforms concern the integration of new methods of learning, like, for instance, the use of frequent writing assignments, but also of new ways of examination. Yet another result put forward as beneficial for the institutions is that returning teachers increase the possibilities for their departments to offer courses in English. It is evident, however, that some efforts to apply methods essential to liberal arts education must be compromised within the Swedish system. One example is the use of frequent writing assignments among former STINT fellows. It is clear that, within the Swedish system of higher education, it is possible to apply a higher degree of this kind of assignments, but virtually impossible to create the broad application of *Writing Across the Curriculum* utilized at American liberal

arts colleges. To a large extent, Swedish teachers are thus constantly referred to selective measures of development, and in practice have limited possibilities to procure changes on a larger scale.

At the same time as the individual benefits of the programme are emphasized, several of the participating institutions testify to the difficulties of applying the experiences on an institutional level. As some remarks in the questionnaire disclose, it is extremely important, especially at large institutions, that faculty leaders take active responsibility for the utilization of the experience and knowledge gained. On a departmental level, however, the possibilities to make use of these experiences are more favorable. Some institutions have specified the obstacles that prevent productive use of the returning teacher's experience. Among these obstacles, the lack of resources, both timely and economical, stand out as most crucial.

Against the background of the changes in 2006 of the economic terms for the visits, the latter point is of special interest. Since 2006, participating institutions in Sweden do not have to provide any additional funding for their candidates. This change will no doubt make it easier for institutions to nominate candidates for the programme; just as it will forward some of the responsibility for utilizing the experiences to returning teachers. In light of the difficulties conveyed by participating institutions to utilize the experiences of their candidates, this economic reform thus appears as satisfactory. Judging from testimonies given by individual teachers and their institutions, it is evident that the programme so far has been more beneficial for the teachers and their respective departments than for the universities and university

colleges at large. This fact indeed seems to justify the release of economic responsibility for the universities involved in the programme.

Important, however, is that it is still the universities and university colleges that nominate candidates for the programme. Individual teachers cannot themselves apply for the scholarship. This implies that the release of economic responsibility on behalf of the institutions should not be understood as a release from the responsibility of utilizing the experiences of their candidates. On the contrary, the release from economic responsibility should function as a further incitement for systematic and well-reflected adaptations of these experiences. It is thus even more important in the future to emphasize the significance of thoroughly motivated nominations for the programme. Furthermore, the STINT Foundation should take into special consideration these motivations in their approvals. Judging from applications throughout the history of the programme and from the participating institutions' reports on their programmes of development, there is a clear correlation between highly motivated applications on the one hand, and tangible lines of developmental work on the other.

### *Teacher and student exchange*

In the period 2000 – 2006 *Programme for Excellence in Teaching* has not been focused on the necessity to develop teacher exchanges with the American host institutions. Yet, it has been the wish of the STINT Foundation that participants of the programme investigate the possibilities of both teacher and student exchanges. The motive behind this recommendation has been the function of the programme to contribute to the internationalization of

undergraduate education in Sweden. In this context, it might be added that according to the *Swedish National Agency for Higher Education*, internationalization involves not only teacher and student exchange, but in fact covers a large field of activities. The Agency refers to one definition where internationalization is described as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education.” (Jane Knight: *Journal of International Higher Education*, no. 33, Fall 2003. See also: *En gränslös högskola. Om internationalisering av grund- och forskarutbildning*, Högskoleverkets rapportserie 2005:01 R, pp. 16 – 17). Considering these descriptions, it is clear that the participation of Swedish teachers in *Programme for Excellence in Teaching*, in itself constitutes a process of internationalization. It is also evident that the experiences and knowledge brought home by participating teachers contribute to the integration of an international dimension into Swedish undergraduate education.

In terms of regular teacher exchanges the outcome of the *Programme for Excellence in Teaching* has been rather scarce. At the same time, several Swedish institutions report other forms of continuous co-operation as a result of participating in the programme. As for the regular teacher exchanges, Växjö University and the University College of Kalmar report a high degree of commitment. Växjö University has been engaged in three exchanges, and they also report future plans for exchanges. One side-effect of the programme has been the establishment of contacts in order to procure a stay at UCLA for one post-graduate student at Växjö University. Kalmar has also been involved in several teacher exchanges as a result of the programme. Student exchanges

have also been realized at this particular institution. Several other seats of learning, as Stockholm University and Uppsala University still have plans for exchanges. A more common consequence of the programme than regular teacher and student exchanges, however, are various forms of co-operation with American colleges. Several institutions report how the programme has generated useful contacts with American institutions, contacts which in some cases, for instance at Karlstad University has led to occasional visits by teachers from the U.S. In some cases, Swedish participants have revisited their American host institutions, as for example participants from Karlstad University and Luleå University of Technology. The University College of Mälardalen reports the development of joint projects with American institutions, and the National Academy of Mime and Acting reports a co-operative project with an institution from Asia, as a side-effect of the participation in *Programme for Excellence in Teaching*. A majority of the Swedish institutions also report that individual teachers have maintained their contacts with American host institutions.

This account testifies to the previously mentioned importance of the programme for each individual teacher. The programme clearly invites the establishment of personal contacts, and in several cases discussions have been initiated with the American institutions on possible developments of joint projects. On an institutional level, however, some obstacles have been reported. To establish teacher and student exchanges is both time consuming and costly. Växjö University also reports that one obstacle for further development of teacher exchanges might be that American teachers involved in exchange programmes have not had the possibility to promote institutional

co-operation, and that the governmental structure at American institutions differs significantly from Swedish circumstances.

### *Measures for improvement*

A minority of former STINT fellows have expressed dissatisfaction with certain aspects of *Programme for Excellence in Teaching*. One important objection concerns the lack of responsibility among home institutions for utilizing the experiences of returning teachers. Although the STINT Foundation has emphasized the importance of elaborate plans of action for their candidates, this lack of commitment appears as one of the major drawbacks of the programme. As put forward by a number of individual participants, the institutions applying for the programme should provide more extensive plans of action, and it is put forward as important that these plans are made in collaboration with individual teachers, just as they should be reported to the STINT Foundation. An alternative view put forward is that the programme should not be directed towards institutional participation at all, but instead entirely focused on individual teachers. This is an interesting point, since there has been certain confusion as to who is actually responsible for the utilization of the experiences gained. It is doubtful, however, that such a model would facilitate for individual teachers to pursue developmental work on an institutional level. The recommendation of this report is that *Programme for Excellence in Teaching* is oriented towards institutional participation also in the future, and that participating institutions in Sweden strengthen their efforts to utilize the experiences of their candidates.

Several STINT fellows have furthermore put forward the idea of more elaborate assessments of the programme. One idea launched in discussions with former participants is that the STINT Foundation should provide several evaluation sheets during the visits. Some participants even suggest that evaluations should be made anonymously. Another suggestion is that the programme should contain not only planning visits, but also follow-up visits at the American institutions. Some participants have arranged such visits by themselves, and it is likely that mandatory follow-up visits would facilitate the prospects of future exchanges and collaborations on a wider front, not least since several participants report that essential ideas and insights emerge only after their stays in the U.S. Follow-up visits would no doubt make it easier for individual participants to track down some loose ends, but also strengthen the courage to initiate exchanges for teachers and students. The latter aspect is of special importance since the degree of bilateral exchanges has been fairly low within the programme. Another reason for initiating follow-up visits is that it could increase the engagement of the Swedish institutions involved in the programme. One suggestion is that department chairs or other representatives of the home institutions should accompany the STINT fellows during their follow-up visits.

Another issue regarding the possibility to utilize the experiences gained within *Programme for Excellence in Teaching* has to do with the profile of the programme. Some participants have expressed confusion as to whether the basic purpose of the programme is internationalization at large or a more focused study of liberal arts education. Discussions on this issue have emphasized that the two aspects are not mutually exclusive, but that it lies in

the interest of both the STINT Foundation and the participating institutions to develop a more profound understanding both of how internationalization is to be comprehended, and how the focus on liberal arts education answers to different policies of internationalization. In discussions with former STINT fellows, it has become clear that a majority favors the orientation of the programme towards liberal arts education. However, it is also clear that there is no consensus as to how internationalization is to be comprehended; a fact which reinforces the impression that future participants of the programme should familiarize themselves with the scope of this concept within Swedish higher education.

A majority of former STINT fellows express deep satisfaction with the choice of private liberal arts institutions as hosts for their visits. However, some participants have maintained that given the orientation of the programme towards the development of education and teaching, important experiences could be made at other kinds of institutions, not only liberal arts colleges. One view put forward is that liberal arts education is a complicated model of education that demands a lot of time and reflection in order to be fully understood. One suggestion has therefore been to investigate alternative institutions marked by high quality undergraduate instruction. An alternative view has been that the visits at American liberal arts colleges should be extended in time.

A brief look at the statistics of the programme shows that the distribution in terms of sex among STINT fellows has been dissatisfactory. Between 2000 and 2006, as many as thirty men have attended the programme,

but only fourteen women. The distribution throughout the entire history of the programme looks as follows:

	Female	Male
2000	2	4
2001	0	5
2002	0	5
2003	4	3
2004	1	7
2005	1	4
2006	6	3

As can be seen in this overview, there has been a tendency towards improvement during the development of the programme. During the first three years of the programme, only two women participated in the programme, whereas between 2003 and 2006, as many as twelve women have attended *Excellence in Teaching*. In 2003 and 2006, women in fact were in majority. However, the positive development has been highly irregular, as can be seen in the figures for 2004 and 2005. Possible reasons for the overall imbalance are the obstacles that family circumstances raise for prospective female participants. It is the conclusion of this report that Swedish institutions applying for the programme should make every effort to attract female teachers to the programme. The STINT Foundation can contribute to an improved balance through the encouragement of Swedish institutions to nominate female teachers.

## Discussion

This section aims at a more profound understanding of issues regarding undergraduate education in Sweden, and the prospective role of STINT *Programme for Excellence in Teaching* for the development and internationalization of higher education. The basis for these reflections is the symposium held with former STINT fellows in April 2007, and the account of these discussions will be gathered with the most important conclusions made earlier in this report.

Judging from discussions held with former STINT fellows, the orientation of *Programme for Excellence in Teaching* towards liberal arts education indeed provokes reflections on several issues of controversy as regards undergraduate education in Sweden. One of these issues concerns the identity and status of university colleges in Sweden, compared with research oriented universities. One important question discussed among former STINT fellows has been what identity and function these different kinds of institutions should have, but also how *Programme for Excellence in Teaching* can inspire creative reflections on the potential of these various institutions.

It is interesting to notice, that although many university colleges in Sweden today show a marked ambition to develop research environments, the tendency among former STINT fellows has been to emphasize the importance of high-quality undergraduate education at these institutions. To a large extent, this view appears to be the result of, or at least strengthened by the experiences gained from the theory and practice of liberal arts education

in the U.S. One important view is that the ambition among Swedish university colleges to grow beyond undergraduate education may result in a conflict of interest potentially threatening to the quality of undergraduate instruction. However, teachers at Swedish university colleges also display an understanding of the ambition to establish graduate and post-graduate studies at these smaller institutions. One reason is that it is, and indeed will become even more, difficult for undergraduate institutions to compete with larger, research oriented institutions, especially in light of the importance given to the new Master's degree as a result of the Bologna Process. One essential concern for prospective participants of *Programme for Excellence in Teaching* is thus the future profile of university colleges, and questions on how high-quality undergraduate instruction can be maintained given the growing importance of advanced studies within Swedish higher education at large. Among former participants in the programme, there appears to be agreement on the fact that, if Swedish university colleges wish to compete with larger institutions of higher education on both a basic and an advanced level, they must find ways to secure and further develop undergraduate education. *Programme for Excellence in Teaching* clearly has the potential to support such endeavors.

Another important concern for university colleges in Sweden is to attract qualified teachers dedicated to the specific challenges of undergraduate instruction. One apparent obstacle, though, is the lack of status among teachers entirely devoted to this task. Excellence in research and scholarship still outdo teaching merits in the appointment and promotion of faculty. One view put forward by former STINT fellows is that questions of

recruitment and status must remain important issues for participants in *Programme for Excellence in Teaching*, and that liberal arts colleges indeed have the potential to provide valuable ideas for the reforms of the Swedish system, or at least to contribute to a gradual change of attitude towards the value of teaching skills in Swedish higher education. Moreover, former STINT fellows also testify to equivalent difficulties at the larger research universities in Sweden, where the development towards diversity, makes it more and more important to attract teachers dedicated to the special demands of undergraduate education. The focus on scholarship and research at these institutions tends to interfere with the necessity to address the conditions of growing diversity, and an important question is how these institutions can uphold an undergraduate education well suited for its purpose when scholarly activities become increasingly important for promotion. One view put forward is that visits to liberal arts campuses adherent to larger research universities in the U.S. would have the potential to provide valuable experiences of the relationship between undergraduate and graduate studies in the U.S.

One essential problem at university colleges as well as universities in Sweden, a problem connected to the above issues, is that the Swedish system does not provide any established methods for measuring teaching excellence, like the methods implied, for instance, in the U.S. tenure system. The measurement of educational quality is still highly dependent on the impression of scholarly excellence. A plausible development is that these problems will become even more articulated during the Bologna process, since many university colleges will strive for the right to award Master

degrees, and hence put more efforts into the refinement of research skills. This development will no doubt intensify the competition between universities and university colleges in ways that put the quality and content of basic as well as advanced education in sharp focus.

In connection with these difficulties, it is also important to notice how the developments within the Bologna Process further affect the education at universities and university colleges in Sweden. The well-defined distinction, within the Bologna Process, between a basic and an advanced level implies, *inter alia*, that courses at an advanced level cannot be included in the education at the basic level. In principle, this means that the element of specialization will be increasingly emphasized within the new Master's degree and that the basic character of undergraduate education will be strengthened. In this manner, the Bologna Process will, at least in principle, facilitate the development of educational breadth at basic levels of higher education. If interpreted creatively, this system thus has the potential to inspire students to broader choices of education at the basic level, and to the postponement of research oriented specialization to the advanced level.

Consequently, the impression among former STINT fellows is that the Bologna Process, for instance through this new definition of educational levels, is a strong argument for a continued orientation of *Excellence in Teaching* towards liberal arts education. The clean-cut frame of the basic level of education is just one argument. Another important aspect is the commitment to life-long learning expressed in the Bologna documents, a feature closely connected to the ideals of liberal arts education in the U.S. In the Bologna documents, life-long learning is described as an important quality

in the continuously growing global labor-market, and in face of the development of new technologies. Life-long learning is thus put forward as necessary for competitiveness among students. As emphasized by former STINT fellows, this understanding of the status of life-long learning stands in an intimate relationship with the significance of the concept at American liberal arts colleges. The orientation within liberal arts education towards life-long learning clearly has its basis in the ambition to develop knowledge producing individuals. In this process, the close relationship between the content of the curriculum and society plays an immensely important role. Life-long learning within liberal education is grounded in the ambition to put knowledge in relationship to the surrounding world. If students are given the chance to understand the relevance of the knowledge gained, the chances increase that they will continue to develop and deepen their knowledge throughout life. Since liberal arts education to such a large extent focus on inspiring students to produce knowledge by themselves, it is indeed an exemplary model for the ambition to foster the flexibility promoted within the Bologna Process.

One important issue discussed among former Swedish participants in the programme, is the necessity within Swedish higher education to reflect upon the mandate of undergraduate education at both universities and university colleges. There appears to be a lack of discussion among Swedish educators as to how institutions of higher education look upon their educational mission. Former STINT fellows put forward *Excellence in Teaching* as one important step in the effort to increase understandings of the significance of such reflections. In this respect, the issue of the conflict

between society and the working life, on the one hand, and the ideals among educators, on the other, is put forward as especially significant. Several of the STINT fellows express a dedicated wish to compensate for the disciplinary narrow-mindedness prevailing within Swedish higher education, and to widen the perspectives provided in undergraduate instruction. But they also acknowledge the anxiety among Swedish educators to sacrifice educational depth, an anxiety deeply rooted in actual demands for specialization in society and working life. Polls like the one provided by *United Minds* in 2006, showing that knowledge breadth is currently the most important mark of status in Sweden, do not appear to contest this attitude ([www.unitedminds.se](http://www.unitedminds.se)). Swedish higher education is thus put forward as a highly rational system partly characterized by a distinct hostility towards educational breadth.

However, among former STINT fellows, it is also recognized that educational breadth is not the only issue at stake in liberal education as an exemplary model for the development of undergraduate instruction. Just as important is the ability within the American context to put knowledge in close relationship with the world, i.e. the ability to facilitate for students to understand the purpose of knowledge. This feature must be considered as highly relevant as regards the traditionally narrow focus of undergraduate education in Sweden. An important challenge within the Swedish context is thus to deepen the understanding of how the mission to make knowledge more accessible is closely connected to the idea of educational breadth. One important insight for prospective STINT fellows must be that educational breadth at liberal arts colleges is not an end in itself, but instead deeply rooted in the ambition to foster individuals with the capacity to apply knowledge in

a constantly transforming world. The main quality of educational breadth is thus that it supports creativity, flexibility and critical thinking, in other words, that it is practical. This pragmatic dimension of educational breadth is seldom put forward in the Swedish context, but is in fact the key to how undergraduate education can be adjusted to the demands of society and working life.

The latter aspect can be discussed further with reference to the different understandings of educational breadth – or of “Bildung” – among educators in Sweden. Some maintain, in a fashion foreign to the ideals of liberal arts education, that educational breadth should be made accessible to highly ambitious students and put a gilt edge on already achieved degrees. Others put forward the democratic aspect of undergraduate education, and propose educational breadth as important for all students. A third category looks upon educational breadth as a compensatory measure for students who lack the basic knowledge required for higher studies. Yet another difference in focus can be observed between those educators emphasizing the importance of knowledge and those who put forward ethical awareness as the most essential quality of educational breadth. The lack of conformity with respect to these issues, clearly testifies to the importance for prospective STINT fellows to reflect upon actual needs of development within Swedish higher education. At the same time, it is an evident value of *Programme for Excellence in Teaching*, that it has increased the understanding among teachers in Sweden of these issues. One quality of the programme especially emphasized by former STINT fellows is that the visits have in fact made it easier to identify difficulties and drawbacks within the Swedish system. The programme not only provides

knowledge on a foreign model of education; it also creates new perspectives on Swedish higher education.

The latter aspect is of special importance when it comes to one of most crucial obstacles mentioned among former participants in the programme, namely the lack of economical resources for radical developments of undergraduate education in Sweden. Although the STINT Foundation has emphasized that the purpose of *Programme for Excellence in Teaching* is not to induce straight implementations of liberal education in Sweden, many former STINT fellows reason as if this would be the ideal end. Consequently, they conclude that such enterprises are impossible. One unfortunate outcome of *Programme for Excellence in Teaching* is that this attitude sometimes seems to inhibit the efforts to accomplish any creative developments. Against the background of this tendency, it must be regarded as essential for future STINT fellows to enter the programme with an interest for all the aspects of liberal education more or less independent of economical resources. Among these aspects are the views and understandings of knowledge, the attitude of teachers towards students, the structure of the curriculum, the shape and content of syllabi, the relationship between teaching and research, and the endeavors to make knowledge accessible. Liberal education implies much more than small classes, the use of expensive technology, and low teaching loads for educators. It implies a generous attitude and an effort to create environments where learning appears as attractive.

## Summary

The main purpose of this follow-up report has been to give an account of the accomplishments and outcomes of *STINT Programme for Excellence in Teaching* during the period 2000 – 2006. The report focuses on the experiences of former participating Swedish teachers and institutions within the programme, as well as on the motives among these participants for attending the programme. It also describes how previous STINT fellows have conducted their visits at the American liberal arts institutions, and what they have accomplished after their return to Sweden. Furthermore, the report approaches some of the difficulties of the programme, and suggests a few measures for improvement. An overall aim has been to discuss the future potential of *Programme for Excellence in Teaching*, and one important ambition has been to provide STINT fellows and participating Swedish and American institutions with valuable information as to how the programme can best be utilized.

During the period 2000 – 2006, *STINT Programme for Excellence in Teaching* has been fully oriented towards the funding of full term stays, for Swedish teachers, at American liberal arts colleges. The fundamental mission of the programme has been to contribute to the internationalization of Swedish undergraduate education, i.e. to provide impulses from abroad to the content and form of Swedish education. The choice of liberal art colleges as hosts is due to the ambition of the STINT Foundation to provide Swedish teachers with experiences from institutions where high-quality undergraduate education is maintained in the absence of research-based environments.

Another reason has been the supreme quality and high esteem of these American institutions. It is important to notice, that the purpose of the programme has never been to induce straight implementations of liberal arts education at Swedish institutions, but rather to inspire participating institutions and individuals to develop undergraduate education with respect to domestic traditions.

During 2000 – 2006, the STINT Foundation has sent forty-four Swedish teachers from twenty-one Swedish universities and university colleges to altogether seventeen liberal arts institutions in the U.S. Most of the participants have been from Swedish university colleges, mainly because *Excellence in Teaching* was initiated as an answer to the expansion of the Swedish system of higher education during the 1990s, and consequently to the growing importance of high quality education at these institutions. During the development of the programme, an increasing amount of research universities have become involved in the programme. As is maintained in this report, the experiences and knowledge gained within the programme has been just as relevant for research universities as for institutions wholly dedicated to undergraduate education.

What motives have Swedish institutions had for participating in *Programme for Excellence in Teaching*? In the beginning of the programme, formal policies of internationalization appear as essential motives for participation. In most cases, internationalization is here understood as teacher exchanges. This motive, however, becomes less ordinary during the later years. Some early participants in the programme also refer to their own profile as institutions inspired by liberal arts education, e.g. Södertörn

University College and University West, who have participated several times in the programme. Some of these institutions also express a rather deep knowledge of and interest for liberal arts education, a tendency which grows stronger during the development of the programme. As the motive of internationalization becomes less significant, other, and more detailed motives appear as increasingly important. Among these are: personal development for the teacher, the significance of high-quality undergraduate education, and the development of interdisciplinary work, cross-cultural perspectives and civic education. Other motives worth mentioning are competence development, an interest for alternative education, the ambition to develop an international educational environment, and the importance of encouragement for teachers. One essential motive, notably among research universities involved in the programme, is an interest for the relationship between teaching and research. Since liberal arts institutions in the U.S. are capable of upholding excellence in undergraduate education without the direct support of research and development, they stand out as institutions with the potential to shed new light on the alleged interdependence between research and education in Sweden. Large research universities, like Uppsala, also display an interest for challenging the deeply rooted specialization of undergraduate education, and for the possibilities to integrate educational breadth in its curriculum. This issue in fact becomes more outspoken during the development of the programme, just as the wish to renew Swedish undergraduate education completely, and to develop alternative methods of teaching. It is worth noting that educational breadth stands out as an essential interest among participants from the field of Science and Technology.

Among individual teachers, even more detailed motives for participation appear. One important interest is the wish to develop the relationship and dialogue between teachers and students. This aspect is connected to an interest for the unique learning environments established at liberal arts institutions in the U.S., environments characterized by an individualized education foreign to the collective approaches in Sweden. It is worth noticing that individual participants also put forward their interest in the relationship between practical and theoretical knowledge as an important motive for participating in the programme.

As has been shown in this report, the nomination of candidates for the programme, tend to follow a recurrent pattern. Candidates are almost exclusively handpicked in collaboration between the vice-chancellors staff and department chairs, alternatively centers for pedagogical development. It is evident that the ambition among most of the participating Swedish institutions has been to choose candidates with a strong dedication to teaching. Consequently, most of the participating institutions have no application procedures. Although this routine appears as highly satisfactory, one conclusion drawn in this report is that it might be worth for Swedish institutions to consider a system where a larger numbers of teachers were given the opportunity to apply for the programme in open competition. Such procedures would, possibly, facilitate for institutions to discover areas within undergraduate education in special need of development. Institutions invited to nominate candidates for the programme should also consider the possibility to improve information procedures, in order to increase the knowledge of the programme, and in the end to attract a larger number of

interested candidates. At the same time, it is important to emphasize that participating institutions even in the future should have the liberty to develop nomination procedures suitable for their own purposes, and that nominations should be made with respect to institutional interests. Open application procedures might be suitable for some institutions, whereas others clearly benefit from more closed proceedings.

From the beginning of the programme, the STINT Foundation has adopted a rather moderate approach as regards guiding principles for participating teachers. An important feature of the programme has been the possibility for teachers to frame their visits according to their own needs and ambitions. However, the STINT Foundation has recommended participating teachers to get involved as much as possible in educational activities at their host institutions. Activities put forward as especially important have been classroom exposure, attendance at faculty meetings, and discussions and interviews with faculty and students. One conclusion drawn in this report is that the moderate approach of the STINT Foundation has been successful. Although some teachers involved in the programme have asked for more detailed guiding lines, it is evident that the liberty of action has made it possible for participants to adjust their activities in correspondence with their specific needs. It is also clear that most of the participating teachers have followed the recommendations provided by the STINT Foundation. Nearly 60 % of former STINT fellows have been involved in various forms of co-teaching or team-teaching. Approximately 20 % have conducted a course of their own, 15 % have based their work on observation, including interviews, discussions and research. As for the rest, there is no information on what

kinds of activities have been performed. Another important observation is that participating teachers have become increasingly aware of the benefits of taking an active part in teaching during their visits.

As has been shown in this report, previous STINT fellows regularly express strong satisfaction with both co-teaching, team-teaching, and a full course commitment. One of the advantages with co-teaching is that it is easier to obtain than responsibility for a full course. Co-teaching has also facilitated a larger scope of activities during the visits. A full course commitment draws the teacher very close to the daily work at the college, and since it entails very close contacts with students, and with the every day conditions under which American teachers work, it has been considered as highly instructive. At the same time, it tends to diminish the opportunities for broader experiences. Teachers involved in co-teaching or team-teaching have, to a larger extent, been able to attend several courses and classes, and the consequently higher degree of observation has facilitated the experience of various educational environments. Co-teaching has also offered more time for reflection and for productive discussions with and immediate feedback from colleagues.

Some participants, although especially in the beginning of the programme, have complained that there has been a certain degree of confusion as to what kind of activity has been expected from them. It is evident that the STINT Foundation, throughout the years, has improved information with respect to these matters, and that participants have developed an increased understanding of both the benefits of participating in educational activities, and of their own responsibility in obtaining the possibility to teach at American institutions. However, it is important that the

STINT Foundation continues to inform their fellows of the advantages of teaching, and that they support the vital communication between new and already experienced participants in the programme.

Judging from the executive reports by former STINT fellows, several aspects of liberal arts education stand out as especially valid for the development of Swedish undergraduate education. Among the most important aspects are: the educational breadth implied in liberal arts curricula, the progressive views on teaching and learning, the ability to create dynamic learning environments, and the relationship between education and society in the American context. Participants also appreciate the orientation at liberal arts colleges towards the combination of artistic, scientific and humanistic approaches. The freedom of education has also been of large interest, since American teachers, to a much larger extent than their Swedish colleagues, decide the content and performance of their own courses. Many Swedish teachers also express appreciation of the close relationship between teachers and students in the U.S. The importance given to each individual student, the system of advising, and the extensive use of help centers at liberal arts colleges, stand out as highly important features for a high-quality undergraduate education.

Several STINT fellows have put forward the importance of core courses or general education within liberal arts education, and the need to increase both ethical awareness and basic knowledge among students in Sweden. However, there is a large degree of disagreement among Swedish teachers as to whether general education requirements should be a part of higher education in Sweden. One positive outcome of the programme is that it has

reinforced the awareness among Swedish teachers of the high degree of specialization at Swedish institutions of higher education, and that it has caused productive reflections on the benefits of educational breadth. One important insight among several former STINT fellows regards the pragmatic nature of educational breadth: that the education of well-informed students at American colleges is not an end in itself, but instead answers to specific needs in society and working-life.

Several former STINT fellows testify to the advantages of a system where teaching skills and a dedicated interest for teaching carry promotional value. One important result of the programme has been an increased awareness of methods for measuring teaching skills, methods implied, for instance, in the American tenure system. It is furthermore evident that *Programme for Excellence in Teaching* has generated valuable reflections on the relationship between teaching and research, and consequently on the role and status of undergraduate education at Swedish universities and university colleges.

As for methods of teaching and learning, several dynamic approaches are mentioned by former participants in the programme: the use of short lectures, classes with less than 20 students, various forms of homework, frequent writing assignments, inter- and multidisciplinary approaches, the use of elaborate and detailed syllabi and so forth. Two common phenomena at liberal arts colleges are worthy of special notice: the method *Writing Across the Curriculum*, i.e. the extensive use of writing in every subject field, and *The Great Conversation*, a series of courses combining perspectives on art, history, literature, philosophy and music. The focus on communication skills, and the

ambition to pass on a cultural legacy, clearly testifies to the ambition, at liberal arts colleges, to foster well-informed and flexible students.

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One important issue in this report has been the accomplishments made by participating teachers and their respective institutions after the visits. One conclusion drawn is that *STINT Programme for Excellence in Teaching* has meant more for each individual teacher than it has for participating Swedish institutions. One of the drawbacks of the programme has been that Swedish institutions have made few efforts to systematically take advantage of the experiences gained by their teachers. Plans of action for returning teachers have been very scarce. However, some positive measures have been made at nearly every participating institution. Returning teachers have, for instance, been given the opportunity to lecture on and discuss their experiences in various forums. A common case is also that returning teachers have been appointed key positions with respect to issues of pedagogic development at their departments. Yet another proceeding has been to distribute reports written by returning teachers. Institutions who have participated several times in the programme show more elaborate plans of action for their candidates.

As for the responsibility of participating institutions, it is important to take into consideration the recent changes of economic terms for the visits. Since 2006, participating institutions in Sweden do not have to supply any additional funding for their candidates. As is concluded in this report, this

development is highly justified, since it will no doubt facilitate for universities and university colleges to nominate candidates for the programme. However, since it is still institutions, not individuals, that nominate teachers for the programme, it is important that these seats of learning maintain their responsibility for utilizing the experiences gained by their teachers. The release from economic responsibility should function as a further incitement for systematic and well-reflected adaptations of these experiences. Since the interest for utilizing the experiences of returning teachers has been fairly low among participating Swedish institutions, it is also important that they struggle to provide more extensive plans of action for their nominees, and that these plans are prepared in close collaboration with each individual teacher. One conclusion drawn in this report is that the commitment of participating Swedish institutions could be strengthened by mandatory follow-up visits to the American host institutions, visits where department chairs or other representatives from the home institution should accompany the individual teacher. Follow-up visits would furthermore facilitate for STINT fellows to deepen their understanding of liberal arts education, and to initiate teacher and student exchanges.

Even if participating Swedish institutions have not, to any larger extent, made systematic use of the experiences of returning teachers, it is evident that the visits abroad have been of vital importance for almost every individual participant. In several cases, former STINT fellows refer to actual reforms made in their own education, as for example the introduction of alternative methods of learning, the use of frequent writing assignments and, not least, the adoption of a more individual approach to their students. In

some cases, STINT fellows have also initiated discussions on larger reforms of the curriculum at their home institutions. Above all, *STINT Programme for Excellence in Teaching* has contributed to the insight among many Swedish educators that teaching and learning can be done in various ways, and that excellence in teaching and learning is not only a matter of pedagogy, but depends on the entire learning environment established at an institution. It has also led to productive reflections on the fact that high-quality undergraduate education can be maintained in, and even prosper by, the absence of research environments.

Since several STINT fellows have introduced a foreign dimension into their education, it is clear that *STINT Programme for Excellence in Teaching* has contributed to the internationalization of Swedish undergraduate education. This criterion has also been met through the accomplishment of teacher exchanges as a result of the visits, although the number of regular exchanges has been fairly low. More common, however, are other forms of continuous co-operation, as for instance continued contacts, occasional visits, and the establishment of contacts with a third party. One observation made in this report is that internationalization is being understood in a variety of ways at different institutions of higher education in Sweden. Considering this, it is wishful, that participants in the programme develop a clear understanding of current definitions of the concept, and that they plan their visits with respect to policies of internationalization at their home institutions.

During later years, the STINT Foundation has encouraged participants to take into special consideration the developments within the Bologna Process. As is concluded in this report, only a few STINT fellows have

reported any substantial reflections on this matter. One reason is that a complete understanding of the Bologna Process has not been developed until recently. However, one conclusion drawn in discussions with former STINT fellows is that it is of vital importance that STINT continues to invite reflections on these matters. This is largely due to the fact that the Bologna Process implies changes where liberal arts education indeed stands out as exemplary. For instance, the distinction, within the Bologna Process, between a basic and an advanced level, implies that the element of scientific specialization will be increasingly emphasized within the new Master's degree, and that the basic character of undergraduate education will be strengthened. This new structure will, in principle, facilitate the development of educational breadth at basic levels of education. Furthermore, the commitment to life-long learning expressed in the Bologna documents, is closely connected to essential ideals within liberal arts education. The Bologna documents describe life-long learning as an essential feature in the continuously growing labor-market, and in the face of new technologies. This stands in close correlation to the ambition, within liberal education, to develop flexible and knowledge producing individuals. The orientation of *Programme for Excellence in Teaching* towards this specific educational model thus appears as more legitimate than ever before.

## Facts & Figures

Number of STINT fellows 2000 – 2006	44
Female	14
Male	30

### *Participants/Year*

2000	6
2001	5
2002	5
2003	8
2004	7
2005	5
2006	8
2007	9

### *Participating Universities and University colleges*

Göteborg University	1
Lund University	1
Jönköping University Foundation	2
University College of Kalmar	4
University College of Mälardalen	6
Karlstad University	4
KTH – The Royal Institute of Technology	1
Växjö University	3
Örebro University	1
Dalarna University College	3
Mid Sweden University	1
University College of Borås	2
Kristianstad University College	2
National Academy of Mime and Acting	1
University West	2
Luleå University of Technology	3
University College of Malmö	1
Stockholm University	1
Södertörn University College	3
Blekinge Institute of Technology	1
Uppsala University	1

*Faculties*

Humanities and Social Sciences	20
Medicine and Pharmacy	3
Science and Technology	19
Practical and Artistic Subjects	2

*Participating host institutions*

Amherst College  
Bard College  
Bryn Mawr College  
Carleton College  
Furman University  
Hartford University  
Mercer University  
Samford University  
Skidmore College  
Smith College  
St. Mary's College  
St. Olaf College  
University of Hartford  
University of Richmond  
Valparaiso University  
Vassar College  
Washington and Lee University  
Wellesley College

*Summary of grants*

2000	1 032 302 SEK
2001	1 740 564 SEK
2002	1 473 655 SEK
2003	1 541 569 SEK
2004	1 523 933 SEK
2005	998 567 SEK
2006	2 727 013 SEK
2007	2 370 000 SEK
Sum:	11 037 603 SEK