

Björkliden Idéforum 2016

For eight years, young researchers have come together at Björkliden to discuss the challenges of establishing interdisciplinary research. In addition to reflecting on our experiences, we have been reflecting on the common themes from previous years in order to assess what has previously been proposed in past Björkliden forums, as well as what ideas have been put into practice. Although some suggestions seem to return every year, which can install a sense of frustration over that some things seem very difficult to change, it is evident that some things do improve, which is a source of hope for us as early stage researchers to accomplish this difficult task of interdisciplinary research.

We have conducted a close reading of the previous manifestos and identified recurring themes and suggestions, which we then discussed extensively. Many of the suggestions have been coupled to very creative efforts from the members of previous years' forums, but in assessing these we see that it has been difficult to find the time and energy to develop and implement sustainable interdisciplinary initiatives. It is in our opinion that the power lies in the network of the members who have attended the Björkliden Idéforum over the years, and to be the change that we want to see we must let that network organize organically.

We have identified two main themes in previous manifests concerning improved conditions for interdisciplinary research. The first is improving the ***flow of information*** required to foster and initiate interdisciplinary projects. For example, several groups emphasize the importance of a database collecting information on the expertise of individual researchers, ongoing seminars, and research equipment and resources available. We see a huge potential in Lund University's new research information system LUCRIS to fulfill these needs.

The second theme was creating opportunities to ***meet across disciplines*** in order to come up with ideas for interdisciplinary projects. It is clear the Pufendorf Institute has evolved into an excellent platform for such meetings. We believe that earlier suggestions from Björkliden Idéforum have contributed to the existing structure of advanced study groups and themes. Other suggestions have ranged between inviting external researchers to present successful interdisciplinary projects to organizing a summer school for interdisciplinary research. Another suggestion involved providing the opportunity for researchers to take a sabbatical leave from their home department to visit another department at Lund University. We think that these final ideas could receive further attention at the university level.

Further Suggestions:

In previous manifests and documents a number of strong initiatives have been identified. A reoccurring problem seems to be that ambitious and potentially very useful initiatives are often not sustainable over time. Researchers are unfortunately forced to prioritize their own main projects, in combination with large amounts of teaching and administrative duties. If there is no "demand" or concrete example of a research idea to be pursued, e.g. events to

discuss interdisciplinary research at a general level, maintenance of created websites, etc., are not easily prioritized. We would therefore like to emphasize that new interdisciplinary initiatives should be structured to be sustainable over time.

LMK Alumni Network:

In the spirit of Björkliden Idéforum, we would like to see ourselves and former LMK participants as ambassadors to support and nurture interdisciplinary idea generation and discussions on how to further improve and develop Lund University. We believe that in order for initiatives to be of lasting impact, they need to develop organically – to fill a need. To be specific, LMK-ambassadors could fulfil the following activities:

- 1) During winter 2016/2017 we would like to arrange a social get-together where we will invite previous attendees from the eight years of Björkliden forums under the framework of ALUMNI to foster further discussions and realizations of interdisciplinary research projects.
- 2) Because we represent a large number of faculties and research groups, we will disseminate the ideas and discussions that we had in Björkliden at regular lab/group meetings; promoting interdisciplinary research at a smaller local scale.
- 3) We will strive for the possibility to invite external and internal speakers for e.g., Departmental seminar series to present successful research from interdisciplinary projects.

Expanding the role of Pufendorf Institute:

Promoting interdisciplinary research depends on existing and new infrastructure to be in place. We tried to think about concrete action items that would be compatible with our current load and be realistic about the time frame and financial resources necessary to realize our proposals.

The Pufendorf Institute is an already existing platform that could be used to a greater extent to promote communication and serve as a meeting point for people from different disciplines. We propose three new types of activities that the Pufendorf Institute could embrace. We briefly summarize these proposed activities before laying out what additional support would be needed.

- Round-table meetings (1-2 per year)
 - Format: Register online, get lunch, round table discussion on specific topic with a moderator.
 - Possible Topics: Sustainable Development Goals, Societal Collapse – Better understanding of how human cooperation has been achieved in the past, and under what conditions groups of people are willing to cooperate for the common good, etc.

- Candidates: An experienced moderator is needed, potentially someone trained in Design Thinking.
- Events inviting people who have participated actively in interdisciplinary projects (1-2 per year)
 - Format: Morning popular science talks describing the project (1h, 1h30m), description of the coordination effort (1h, 30m); afternoon with more specific in-depth talks about research in specific areas.
 - Suggested candidates: RoboBees coordinators (<http://wyss.harvard.edu/viewpage/457>), Rosetta coordinators (<http://sci.esa.int/rosetta/>), climate change and political science projects (ecology and political science).
- Communicating interdisciplinary science series of seminars (1 per year)
 - Format: Invitation of relevant experts to speak on communicating interdisciplinary and transacademic research.
 - Suggested candidates: An experienced communicator, e.g., Jean-Luc Dumont, author of the briefing published in Nature on the topic: <http://www.nature.com/scitable/ebooks/english-communication-for-scientists-14053993/contents>.

Each of these activities requires (1) coordinating a speaker or moderator, (2) disseminating information and ensuring sufficient participation, and (3) arranging logistics (space, food, coffee, etc). While LMK Alumni could serve as a scientific contact point, we anticipate that further resources are necessary. For that reason, we recommend that LMK provides funds to hire a Pufendorf employee for a limited percentage of time to take over the main logistical tasks.

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