Revolution via Twitter

Tracking volcanic eruptions
Student contact in many parts of the world
“A patent is just a start”

Full blast with the Wijkman Brass
WE’RE LIVING IN CHANGING TIMES. In Northern Africa and the Middle East, several heads of state have had to relinquish their power in the last year as a result of popular uprisings. Protests have spread from country to country, and the whole world is watching with interest – including political scientists and peace and conflict researchers at Uppsala University.

The Arab Spring is also of interest to media scholars, as new social media have played a key role. Tools like Twitter and blogs have made it easier to avoid censorship and reach others with information. Hats off to technology – but without the commitment of a group of people, no change would have been possible. To advance democracy takes time.

Uppsala University is deeply committed to global development. One example is the International Science Programme, which for 50 years has helped research groups in developing countries bolster their research. Knowledge of basic sciences like mathematics, chemistry, and physics are key when a country is being developed. A project in Senegal has to do with water supplies. Read more on page 10.

New Horizons opens the door to Uppsala University to provide a picture of what is going on here. A record number of students were admitted in autumn 2011. Exciting collaborations were launched, such as U-Fold, a concerted effort to curb addiction to drugs and pharmaceuticals, in collaboration with researchers, police, and authorities. Some research takes place outside the borders of Uppsala: we followed a sidetrack to Iceland, where field work is underway regarding how best to extract heat from the earth.

Winds of change are also affecting the University. In December Anders Hallberg is retiring after some six years as Vice-Chancellor. We interview him about his time at the helm.
Dramatic start sparked will to struggle

A Tunisian vegetable vendor immolates himself in protest against the country’s government. The event launches an uprising that brings down the president, who flees the country. Less than a year later the uprising has spread to several countries in the region and many heads of state have had to step down. Social media are seen as having played a key role in these developments.

TEXT: ANNETTE ULEVENHOLM WALLQVIST
PHOTO: HASSENE DRIIDI, SCANPIX

How protests spread from December 2010 to November 2011:

- Tunisia – 17 December 2010: An unrest spreads protests across the country.
- Egypt – 25 January 2011: Protests all over the country.
- Jordan – January: Demonstrations and demands for economic and political reform.
- Yemen – 22 January: Populace demands resignation of president.
- Saudi Arabia – February: The king promises economic benefits and new jobs to quiet protests.
- Algeria – 12 February: Security forces break up demonstrations. In April, the president promises reform.
- Bahrain – 14 February: Protests spread via Facebook and Twitter.
THERE ARE many reasons why people are revolting in countries on the Arabian Peninsula and in North Africa. But it’s clear that social media have been key tools in their struggle for freedom, according to Samuel Taub, a research assistant at the Department of Peace and Conflict Research.

Samuel Taub is busy these days. He’s working to keep tabs on what conflicts there are in North Africa and on the Arabian Peninsula. Both Tunisian president Zine El Abedine Ben Ali and Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak have resigned following violent protests. Libyan leader Muammar al-Qaddafi has been killed, and in several countries on the Arabian Peninsula violent protests are underway.

– Ultimately these protests are about the conditions under which people live in the region. But the spark that set off the Arab Spring was the Tunisian vegetable vendor who immolated himself, says Samuel Taub.

**Triggering factor**

On the other hand, it’s impossible to determine whether it was the event in itself or how the subsequent protests were met by the Tunisian regime that was the triggering factor for the revolts, which are referred to as the Arab Spring.

When Tunisians began to gather in massive protests, the country’s leaders chose to react to the uprising in the usual way. With violence.

– But that was one time too many. People were so desperate that they refused to be suppressed, and the president was forced to step down, says Samuel Taub.

With the aid of social media, the word spread rapidly about the successful protests, which spark hope among people in several other countries, including Libya and Egypt.

– People’s successes in Tunisia were unexpected and showed that it is possible to rebel against this type of oppressor. It awoke a will to struggle in many people. Information spread rapidly via social media, as they represent a media flow that the powers that be have a hard time controlling, says Samuel Taub.

**Not a Twitter revolution**

At the same time he objects to these developments being called a Twitter revolution. It’s not that simple, as he sees it. The foundation and what these countries have in common is undemocratic government, widespread unemployment, and corruption in combination with a lack of hope for the future among young people.

– Young people are a large group in these countries, and many of them have lost their faith in the future. Add to this the fact that they want a change, and they are suddenly dangerous to the government, says Samuel Taub.

Now there will be a time of uncertainty in the countries that have rid themselves of their despotic leaders. It can be a complex process to switch to functioning democracies in a short period of time.

– We have every reason to be optimistic about the future. At the same time it’s not enough to get rid of key individuals and believe everything will be fine. The road to democracy is not easy, and we need to realize it may take time, says Samuel Taub.
Have social media changed the conditions for uprisings and protest movements around the world? New concepts like “Twitter revolution” are widely used, not least about events in North Africa and the Middle East. But according to Christian Christensen, professor of media and communication studies, there’s good reason to be critical of the role of social media.

TO UNCRITICALLY ADVOCATE and promote the use of social media as driving forces for democratic development and freedom of speech is problematic for multiple reasons, says Christian Christensen.

– Simply consider who owns these so-called social media. Both Facebook and Twitter are private corporations whose primary concern is to make money for their shareholders. In Facebook, for example, Goldman Sachs and JP Morgan have major investments.

During the first three months of the uprisings in North Africa, the value of shares in Facebook rose from 50 billion to 75 billion dollars.

– This generates power. But who oversees Facebook as a power factor? Today we are witnessing the largest accumulation of information about people in history. And it’s being done by private companies whose primary interest is making money from what they know about us. Why don’t we think this is OK? wonders Christian Christensen.

Too much faith in technology
As Christian Christensen sees it, another reason for us to be sceptical towards social media is our exaggerated trust in technology as such.

– Uprisings and protest movements are social phenomena, not matters of information technology.

But wasn’t “the Arab Spring” accelerated by access to social media?

– Yes, there’s no doubt that it was much easier to spread information and coordinate protests using social media, but the key question remains: did they make it possible to bring down Egypt’s Mubarek, for instance? You can tweet all you want, but if people hadn’t gathered on Tahrir Square, Mubarek would not have been forced to step down.

Christian Christensen has studied the development of social media in general and recently the Swedish government’s support for this new form of technology in particular.

Assistance for Net activism
It’s now possible to apply for grants for so-called Net activism. At present there’s a list of some 100 applicants for total allocations of EUR 5 million for this purpose.

– This is a policy that is well suited for the branding of Sweden as a pioneering country in the use of new technology in general and social media in particular. Whether it’s the right way to support democratic movements, on the other hand, is something we need to discuss further. After all, the information gathered in social media can be used against citizens. Have they already forgotten our own debate about the National Defence Radio Establishment?

How, then, should ordinary citizens view social media?

– Don’t forget that everything you write there, each picture you upload, what you like or dislike – all the information you put on the Net – is owned by someone else and can be used for any purpose whatsoever without your consent.

AFTER ALL, THE INFORMATION GATHERED IN SOCIAL MEDIA CAN BE USED AGAINST CITIZENS.

Facebook started in 2004.
Privately owned by Facebook Inc, headed by Mark Zuckerberg, and partly owned by the investment company Goldman Sachs. Based in Menlo Park (previously Palo Alto), California. Valued at USD 4.27 billion in 2011. 800 million users (September 2011).

Twitter started in 2006.
Privately owned by Twitter Inc, with its founder Jack Dorsey and a number of venture capitalists. Based in San Francisco, California. Valued at USD 1.0 billion in 2010. 200 million users (March 2011).
Symbols of the old regime live on

Revolutions are no longer things of the past but rather something happening right now. Even though many people in general share the political goals of the revolutionaries, they are often not so ready to give up customs and traditions associated with the old regime. In a new book, historian Henrik Ågren describes how various governments have had to face this problem and how they have tried to deal with it.

Text: Linda Koffmar, Photo: Nikolai Moshkov, Scanpix

HOW DOES a revolution affect a country’s traditions and history writing? Revolutions are drastic transformations in society where an established system is replaced by another – often with the help of violence, always involving severe forms and through conflicts that make it hard for revolutionaries who have taken power to take a step or even look back.

The symbols and notions of the old regime have no place in the new society, but they are nevertheless found everywhere as impediments when the revolution wants to create its own heroic history. At the same time, the new regime needs the approval of the people, otherwise it will have a hard time maintaining control. And even though people in general share the political goals of the revolution, they are often not so ready to give up customs and traditions. To avoid becoming isolated from them, the leaders need to adopt parts of the old society’s cultural legacy, even though it represents the very system they want to turn away from.

Between ideals and traditions

In his book The Emperor’s New Clothes: The use of History and Cultural Heritage during Early Modern Reformation and Modern Revolution (in Swedish) historian Henrik Ågren describes how various governments have faced this problem and how they have tried to deal with it. Examples like the French and Russian revolutions and the protestant reformation in early 16th-century Europe show that it isn’t easy to balance ideals with traditions.

How much worshipping of saints can a good protestant tolerate? Can a communist celebrate Christmas? Can we retain popular monuments if they celebrate tyrants from the old regime?

– Even the most orthodox revolutionaries have to compromise and retain phenomena they would really like to get rid of. It’s hard to build a society on ideals, no matter how good they are. Those wishing to win over the people must also pay attention to people’s need for the security of the past, says Henrik Ågren. ■

Cleaning of a statue of Lenin in Nizhny Novgorod, Russia.
Law – about life or death

Law is most interesting when it involves human rights, as law student Mona Strindberg sees it. She took the initiative for a public lecture by the Nobel peace laureate and jurist Shirin Ebadi, who attracted more than 1,000 people to the University’s Grand Auditorium.

Mona Strindberg with her role model Shirin Ebadi (left).

Mona Strindberg is in her third year as a law student. As chair of the Student Council at the Faculty of Law she is constantly looking for interesting lecturers. She got the idea to invite Shirin Ebadi at the Law Ball, following a conversation with the jurist and UN expert Peter Nobel.

– Among law students there’s a huge focus on commercial law, but not so much on human law. It really hit me: whatever happened to people’s passion for law that is a matter of life and death? The idea of administering justice, the most ancient part of the law, says Mona Strindberg.

She has always been fascinated by people like Shirin Ebadi, who has struggled for democracy in Iran and was awarded the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize.

Ebadi was a judge in Teheran but was forced to quit after the 1975 revolution. Today she lives in exile and has continued to work for human rights, especially for women and children.

Open to all
An important role model and source of inspiration, thought Mona Strindberg, and decided to arrange a lecture for all law students.

She received funding from the University’s Committee for Diversity, on the condition that the lecture would be open to the public.

– The subject is relevant to everyone, so I thought “Why not?” But I had no idea how much work would be involved, says Mona Strindberg.

She made her first contact with Shirin Ebadi in the autumn. Since then she has logged many hours of preparation, alongside her full-time studies and her post as student council chair.

– It’s been incredible to feel the backing of the Department, especially the dean, Torbjörn Andersson, and the head of department, Olle Lundin, who have been truly supportive from the outset.

Connected to experience
The Uppsala Association of International Affairs also backed the lecture, which is best summarized as a success. More than 1,000 people gathered in the Grand Auditorium to listen to Shirin Ebadi’s talk about human rights, with ties to her own experience.

– It’s extra interesting when someone speaks about human rights who has personally experience of the struggle. It’s so impressive that she has continued to be committed after receiving the Nobel Prize. To her the award is not about money or prestige. I have great respect for people who are genuine and don’t sell their soul, says Mona Strindberg.

She has two years left in the Law Programme. She’s not sure what she wants to do later, but it seems as if international commitment and human rights are close to her heart.

– Issues of democracy also interest her at home in Sweden.

– Democracy is something that always needs to be renewed and cannot be taken for granted. The democracy we enjoy today is something the older generation struggled to achieve. It must always remain our focus, not only in the Arab world or in Iran, but also here in Sweden, says Mona Strindberg.

From Shirin Ebadi’s speech:
I think it is too early to be talking about the Arab Spring. Just because a dictatorship has been toppled, does not mean that all is well. Democracy must follow; the people must form their own fate.

I would like to congratulate the three women that have received this years Nobel Peace Prize. It sends out an important message – democracy is not possible without recognizing the rights of women.

We must move with the times, and handing down punishments that are compatible with the time. Justice is dynamic, and must change with the time.
Uppsala is mustering its forces to enhance our knowledge of infectious diseases, antibiotics resistance, and contagion under the motto “One Health.” For instance, joint classes were recently held for students of medicine and veterinary medicine, at Uppsala University and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU).

Concerted action to fight resistance to antibiotics

HUMANS AND ANIMALS are largely susceptible to the same pathogenic viruses and bacteria. This is why we need a concerted effort from multiple actors to fight infectious diseases. This is what lies behind the “One Health” initiative in Uppsala.

– We want to gather the leading researchers about antibiotics resistance and contagion and explore the possibilities of funding in collaboration with industry and international groups. Together we make Uppsala competitive, says Mats Larhed, professor at the Department of Medicinal Chemistry and Acting Vice-Rector.

Uppsala already hosts several established networks on infectious diseases. Intensive research is underway within IEEN, which unites ecology and epidemiology. The global REACT network, which disseminates knowledge about antibiotics resistance and contagion is headquartered in Uppsala. The RAPID network addresses drug development and is creating new antibiotics that also work on resistant bacteria.

Fighting infection
All of these networks are now being gathered under “One Health,” with the slogan “Fighting Infection for Society and Health.” SLU and the National Veterinary Institute (SVA) are also behind the initiative.

Preventing, fighting, and curing infectious diseases is a major challenge in today’s global society, where infections spread more rapidly than in the past.

– A new world is emerging, where we need more knowledge about how antibiotics resistance spreads. Today we know that a great deal of resistance is spread outside the human body, so we also need an ecological perspective, says Mats Larhed.

This autumn, for example, joint classes were introduced in the programmes for medicine and veterinary medicine in Uppsala. It’s a unique initiative that has attracted a great deal of attention from other universities. The background is that paths of contagion for many infectious diseases are the same for humans and animals and that their health should therefore be taken up in a shared context.

Low levels spell big problems

NEW RESEARCH from Uppsala University shows that antibiotics-resistant bacteria can be created at extremely low concentrations of antibiotics. Findings indicate that residual antibiotics that spread into the environment from humans and animals are aggravating the resistance problem.

Until now it was thought that resistant bacteria were mainly selected in the humans and animals that were being treated with antibiotics for infections.

The new findings now being published indicate, however, that the extremely low concentrations that occur in external environments, such as sewers, lakes, and streams, can also contribute to selection for resistance.

– Besides the fact that the findings underscore the importance of a general reduction in the use of antibiotics, they also raise the question of whether we should be actively cleansing sewage water from antibiotics, says Dan Andersson at the Department of Medical Biochemistry and Microbiology.

Nursing advice for premature babies

THE BENEFITS OF BREAST MILK for children both in low-income countries and in high-income countries have been repeatedly confirmed in research. It has been seen that breast-feeding children run a lower risk of disease and illness.

Research also shows that breast milk has many advantages for children born very early in pregnancy. Breast milk in the diet helps these children develop psychomotor skills.

In early September a conference was arranged at Uppsala University to discuss a revision of the WHO and Unicef programmes for breastfeeding support. Among other things, the discussion involved how the guidelines could be amended also to comprise premature babies. One of the conference organizers was the internationally acclaimed researcher on breastfeeding premature babies, Kerstin Hedberg Nyqvist at the Department of Women’s and Children’s Health.
Sometimes mathematics is closely related to real problems. Mouhamadou Samsidy Goudiabi has created a mathematical model of how the water of the Senegal River could be used more efficiently in agriculture so the country could reduce its importation of food. He is almost finished with his doctoral dissertation, which presents a possible solution to the problem.

MOUHAMADOU Samsidy Goudiabi is in his fourth year as a doctoral student and divides his time between Uppsala University and Gaston Berger University in St. Louis, Senegal. With support from the International Science Programme (ISP) he is working on his doctoral dissertation on two continents, with one supervisor at his home university and one at Uppsala University.

We meet in his office in Uppsala, four flights up at the Department of Information Technology. Several computers crowd the desk, because it’s on computers that he performs his calculations in numerical analysis. In Senegal he laid the theoretical foundation for the thesis with Professor Abdou Sene. Now he’s busy finding a good way to apply his theories to reality, with the support of his supervisor, Professor Gunilla Kreiss.

Freshwater going to waste

The starting point for his research is a real-life problem, namely, the water supply for agriculture in Senegal. From the eastern to the northern part of the country runs a long river, Senegal River, along the border with Mauritania and Mali.

– Today there are communities using the river’s water for their crops. Despite this, masses of freshwater run into the sea and are thus wasted, says Mouhamadou Samsidy Goudiabi.

– The question is whether it’s possible to build an artificial channel and at the same time control the amount of water that runs out to the fields. How can the river water be used more efficiently? We’re trying to find answers to these questions.

This is where mathematics comes in. He explains: If you have a problem, you first need to create a mathematical model and try to solve the problem. If it turns out it can be solved, you go back to the real-life problem and apply the mathematical solution to reality.

When he first started digging deeper into mathematics as a master’s student, he was initially sceptical about the subject.

– I thought mathematics was too theoretical, more theoretical than what we needed. But then I realized that all real problems can be translated into mathematical problems. If problems can be solved mathematically, there’s a good chance they can be solved in reality as well.

Besides Mouhamadou Samsidy Goudiabi, there are two other doctoral students in the project. They are studying the same problem from different angles at KTH (Royal Institute of Technology) in Stockholm. Their doctoral studies are also being funded by the International Science Programme (ISP).

– We meet often, both in Senegal and in Sweden, and our Swedish supervisors also stay in touch. We will be completing our dissertations at the same time, with a joint public defence in April.

ISP was established at Uppsala Uni-
versity 50 years ago and funds research in mathematics, physics, and chemistry. The aim is to build up competitive research in developing countries.

– Many groups are investing in applied research, in fields like environmental chemistry, crop genetics, and solar cells, says ISP director Peter Sundin.

Spread around the country
ISP’s activities are largely funded by Sida but also receive support from Uppsala University, which hosts the programme. Supervisors for students in the programme are found at several universities in the country, and one of them, Stockholm University, is also providing funding for ISP starting this year.

Support is for the long term and is given for several years, sometimes decades.

– We don’t go in with grants for three years ahead. Instead, our goal is to establish a stable foundation for research. This takes longer, usually a decade or more, says Peter Sundin.

One of the thoughts behind ISP is that researchers should get some of their education in Sweden and then return to their home country. This is what Mouhamadou Samsidy Goudiaby plans.

When he returns to Senegal to defend his dissertation, he hopes to be able to continue his research and see it realized. Using his research findings, he wants to design software for organizing the supply of water in a more efficient way.

– Today we import a lot of food in Senegal, including rice and grains. Since we have this natural river of freshwater we ought to be able to make better use of it and become self-sufficient in food.

– Now we have to convince the surrounding world that it’s possible, so they will be truly motivated to help us develop this research. If we have this opportunity, it would be a waste not to make use of it.

International Science Programme
During the years 2003–2010 the programme, with annual investments averaging EUR 2 million, each year produced an average of 24 doctoral dissertations, 100 master’s degrees, and 128 publications in international journals, and arranged 42 scientific meetings. On top of this, funding has been used for technological equipment in various countries. Support is given for many years, and is slowly phased out only when activities are able to stand on their own. The model has been acclaimed as exemplary when it comes to building up competence in developing countries.

The major financiers have been Sarec and Sida. Uppsala University contributes funding, and has been recently been joined in this by Stockholm University. Support targets research groups in developing countries around the world, as selected by the government, as well as to regional research networks. The programme is directed by Uppsala University but involves other institutions in Sweden, the Nordic countries, and the EU, based on the needs of programme countries.
The time has come for Anders Hallberg to sum up his time as Vice-Chancellor. The quest for enhanced quality and the need to improve the work environment are two issues he has primarily addressed.

TEXT: ANNICA HULTH
PHOTO: TOMMY WESTBERG
DURING ANDERS Hallberg’s time as Vice-Chancellor of Uppsala University, research has been evaluated by expert panels twice. A similar assessment has been initiated regarding education. There can be little doubt that he puts great emphasis on quality work.

– It’s always valuable to have “critical friends” who review the quality of activities and suggest ways to improve them. Research evaluations are important not least for the researchers themselves. We’ve managed to persuade prominent researchers from all over the world to set aside time to help us improve, says Anders Hallberg.

Strategic initiatives

The research assessments have laid a foundation for more strategic commitments and have enhanced the University’s capacity to compete for strategic grants. For instance, Uppsala University received funding to build up the Science for Life Laboratory in life science and the EU programme InnoEnergy in the field of energy.

When he started as Vice-Chancellor Anders Hallberg took part in establishing the University’s goals and strategy documents, which were adopted in 2008. Outstanding research and first-class education are two areas of focus. Another has to do with collaboration with the wider community, for example by reinforcing contacts with companies and building up the innovation system, which has also been accomplished with the founding of UU Innovation.

A fourth area of focus is to develop the University environment. As Vice-Chancellor, Anders Hallberg has consistently worked for good work environments, with satisfied associates and students.

– We simply cannot accept poor work environments, and systematic efforts are needed to create functioning workplaces. People should thrive at Uppsala University. People who feel good can work wonders.

Better workplaces and gender equality

Efforts to these ends include developing the University’s leadership training, and several initiatives have been taken to increase gender equality.

– These effects are hard to measure. On the other hand, we do know that awareness of the importance of the University offering a good work environment has grown, and the capacity to tackle problems when they occur has increased. The number of newly appointed women professors has also risen.

At the latest inauguration ceremony for new professors, women constituted 40 per cent. Anders Hallberg inaugurated 27 women and 41 men as professors.

What will you do next?

– I’m going back to the Faculty of Pharmacy to continue my research, which has been neglected during my time as Vice-Chancellor. I’m going to make use of the last of my research grant from the Swedish Research Council that I got in 2009 and then try to get new funding from various external sources. It’s a challenge, but a fun one! Two post-docs start in December.

Anders Hallberg has continuously pursued research and published a great deal during his time as Vice-Chancellor.

– I’ve always found research stimulating. It generates more energy than it consumes. I look forward to having more time for this, and 150 articles are waiting to be read over the Christmas holidays.

What is your research about?

– The overarching goal is to find new approaches and new types of drugs for infections. The rapid growth of antibiotics resistance concerns me greatly.

Good grades for research

Uppsala University research is of high quality, with more than ninety areas ranked among world leaders. This is shown in Uppsala University’s second comprehensive research evaluation, KoF11. The report will be used as a platform for strategic planning and development of the University in coming years.

– IT’S GRATIFYING to see that the University’s research is even better than at the last assessment. Commitments made then have begun to show results, says Vice-Chancellor Anders Hallberg.

KoF11 (“Kvalitet och Förnyelse” or “Quality and Renewal”) is a follow-up of the 2007 assessment, when Uppsala University, as the first in Sweden, took the initiative for a thorough review of all research, to be performed by independent international panels of experts.

In 2011 a total of 25 panels with nearly 200 experts evaluated more than 500 research groups and activities. What was to be reviewed was the quality of academic articles and ongoing research. The panels also identified strengths, weaknesses, and areas with potential to develop.

The new evaluation showed that nearly half of the research groups merited one of the top two grades on a five-grade scale, world leader or high international standard.

The University was even more successful in getting research findings published in prestigious international journals, and our researchers now have a 40 per cent greater “impact” than the world average, compared with 25 per cent in 2007.

In the Operational Plan for 2012 the University is earmarking a total of SEK 89 million for commitments based on KoF11.
Next Vice-Chancellor

TEXT: ANNICA HULTH
PHOTO: JIM ELFSTRÖM

Eva Åkesson, professor of chemical physics, will be the next Vice-Chancellor, as of January 1, 2012. She comes from Lund University, where she has been Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-Rector.

– WE’VE FOUND a person with a solid and thorough knowledge of academic leadership. She has energy and a sense of humour and can represent the University both internally and externally, says Hans Dalborg, chair of the University Board.

– I’m delighted, honoured, and full of anticipation. I look forward to getting to know Uppsala University, says Eva Åkesson.

She’s a professor of chemical physics and is currently Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Lund University. She was born and raised in Ängelholm but studied at Umeå University through her doctorate in physical chemistry.

She worked in sales at Weland Tecnics before joining Lund University in 1996, where she has held leadership posts like Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-Rector.

First-class education entails constantly developing new ways to teach, learn, and test. International experts will be helping Uppsala University to assess its teaching.

Teaching under review

TEXT: HELENA EDSTRÖM, PHOTO: MIKAEL WALLERSTEDT

DURING 2012 work for educational development is to be followed up. The review targets both teaching in general and the Vice-Chancellor’s initiative, Creative Educational Development at Uppsala University, KrUUt.

– It’s an effort designed to bring forward good ideas in teaching, so they spread and add value across the University. It’ll be exciting to see what the experts think about our work, says Thomas Bull, professor at the Department of Law and project director of KrUUt.

The University is getting help from a panel of international experts in this follow-up work. The panel consists of one representative from each university in the international university network Matariki and four other prominent European experts in teaching.

In the autumn of 2011 the panel visited Uppsala to learn more about the University’s teaching activities and to impart advice and inspiration. In May 2012 the panel will be back, this time wearing its follow-up eyeglasses.

– The expert panel’s input is extremely important for the University in both modes, says Lars Hagborg, project secretary for KrUUt.

Matariki University Network

Seven universities are included in the Matariki Network of Universities (MNU): Uppsala University, Dartmouth College in the US, Durham University in the UK, Queen’s University in Canada, University of Otago in New Zealand, University of Tübingen in Germany, and University of Western Australia.

Read more at: www.matarikinetwork.com

Eva Åkesson begins in January.

Thomas Bull and Lars Hagborg want to share the good ideas.
In the aftermath of volcanic eruptions:

In Iceland you can drill deep for heat.

In the search for alternative energy it’s important to know where and how far down in the ground it’s possible to drill to exploit geothermal heat. Iceland is the perfect place to better understand geothermics and seismic activities. That’s why Professor Olafur Gudmundsson spends long periods on the island.
WHERE ON THE EARTH’S CRUST is the best place to drill for heat, and how deep can you go? These are questions Uppsala University researchers are trying to answer.

Olafur Gudmundsson is a visiting professor at the Department of Earth Sciences in Uppsala, and he runs the project together with his Uppsala colleague Ari Tryggvason. Their work involves long stays in Iceland.

Today’s schedule includes a trip out to one of the island’s metering stations. A sensor has a part that needs to be replaced.

On the way out toward the Reykjanes Peninsula’s southern coast, mountains rise from the lava-covered plains. There’s hardly any soil or plants on the ground. Just a lovely silver grey moss that is slowly but surely enveloping the blackened lava-flow plains. In the distance smoke is rising from the earth, and Olafur points out some long and clearly visible fissures in the ground.

– The landscape in Iceland is interesting to me as a geologist, since you can so readily see the forces in front of you. There are very few plants in the way here, he says, and smiles.

**Background noise shows the way**

By studying seismic background noise and the velocity of the waves caused by small earthquakes, these researchers hope to find out where in the crust of the earth the warm fluid moves most readily and is thereby easiest to bring up. The capacity of the fluid to move is dependent on the pressure and temperature in the earth. Pressure affects temperature, and if it’s warmer than 370 degree the water turns into steam.

– The further down we can drill, the warmer it will be. This in turn yields more energy per unit of volume of steam. Since it’s expensive to drill, it’s worthwhile understanding what conditions are ideal, explains Olafur Gudmundsson.

In collaboration with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Reykjavik University, the Iceland Meteorological and Hydrological Institute, and the Geological Survey of Iceland, the researchers have placed some fifty seismographs to monitor the activity in the ground in Iceland.

After a bumpy ride on a road that can barely be discerned as tracks on the lava, we reach the monitoring station. An unassuming wind generator that provides the metering instruments with the necessary energy and a small plastic barrel where the actual instruments that register the ground movements are securely embedded. That’s all. There’s nothing to reveal that a highly sensitive sensor is registering the slightest movement in the ground, including our footsteps.

Olafur is happy to announce that the wind generator is spinning as it should, keeping the battery charged. Then he gets to work on replacing the processor.

– I’m very satisfied with this station. We hardly ever have any problems with it.

Olafur Gudmundsson says that the monitoring stations need service about...
The researchers are studying seismic background noise to see where in the earth’s crust it is best to drill for heat. periodically. To him it’s an absolute necessity to experience nature in Iceland.

Exactly how he schedules his time is largely determined by teaching. Sometimes it can be up to a couple of months in Iceland before he can return to his family in Uppsala.

– It’s not ideal to be away so much. But it’s necessary for our research.

**Left Iceland in their youth**

Olafur Gudmundsson and his wife left Iceland at an early age to have a chance to pursue their respective research careers. They studied in the US and then moved to Australia. But when they had children they wanted to return to the Nordic countries, and moved to Lund. For the last three years the family has lived in Uppsala.

As an Icelander, Olafur Gudmundsson feels the cultural differences between Sweden and Iceland are great. Icelanders are less bound by formalities and traditions, and they have more of a pioneering spirit.

– This fosters creativity and new thinking, which are important not least in research, he says.

At the same time he appreciates the collaboration with a large team of colleagues that he has in Sweden. There’s a long tradition of energy research, and seismological research has a strong position in Sweden.

– Here in Iceland it’s more a matter of sitting alone at your computer, he says.
OCTOBER 5 was the date that U-FOLD, the Forum for Research on Pharmaceutical and Drug Abuse, was inaugurated in the Grand Auditorium in the University Main Building. Nearly 300 of the region’s leading researchers and practitioners were on hand to listen to an up-to-date overview of our knowledge and the needs in the field, and above all to enter into new conversations and establish contacts ahead of coming work in this important matter.

– Sweden has extensive problems with drugs that lead to both suffering and social costs. If we’re to come grips with the situation we need to reduce the distances, both between our own researchers and to community actors. And that’s just what we’re doing here and now in Uppsala, says Professor Fred Nyberg, initiator and coordinator for U-FOLD.

Multiple possibilities seen
Several Uppsala University researchers are already playing active roles in the new network. One of them is Mia Ramklint, senior lecturer in psychiatry, who gave a brief lecture on the theme of “Co-pathology - ADHD and Aspects of Addiction.”
– Abuse can’t be explained by simple linear associations and theories. It’s in the encounter between researchers from various disciplines and practitioners that we find new ways of asking questions and methods that we can address jointly. U-FOLD’s interdisciplinary composition and short distances to practical implementation will no doubt enhance our chances of advancing care for abusers.

Pål Andersson, superintendent of police in Uppsala County, shares this optimism regarding U-FOLD and already sees many practical possibilities.

– A major share of police work involves alcohol, narcotics, and doping. Thanks to this Uppsala University initiative we hope to make use of research to achieve better evaluations of our methods and in the long run to make police work more effective.

**“Will create a school”**

U-FOLD’s first meeting also attracted some visitors from afar. Spotted in the crowd were the government’s former narcotics coordinator, Björn Fries, Karolinska Institutet’s Johan Franck, and, specially flown in from New York and Rockefeller University, Mary Jeanne Kreek, a pioneer in methadone treatment of heroin addicts.

– Uppsala has long had first-class research and treatment in the field of addiction. With U-FOLD we now also have a superb model for all of these competencies to be integrated, and I’m convinced that your initiative will create a school for the future.

**Enormous potential**

During the autumn U-FOLD has arranged a number of well-attended meeting places and more are coming up. Between events Fred Nyberg and his steering committee are continuing to develop the guidelines for growing the network and for its future work.

– U-FOLD arouses enthusiasm both in Sweden and abroad. Several actors outside Uppsala want our collaboration to include them as well. This has enormous potential and our inspiration and will to move forward is greater than ever, says Fred Nyberg.

**Speaking of U-FOLD:**

Anna Haid, ANDT coordinator, Uppsala County Council:

– If we’re to realize the ANDT strategy and achieve the national goals, we must have access to the latest knowledge. In U-FOLD we gain multiple channels to the University’s research, which will clearly be of huge importance in our future work.

**Christina Åkerman, director general of the Medical Products Agency:**

– For the Medical Products Agency, U-FOLD is both a source of knowledge to tap into and a self-evident forum for networking. We regard this initiative as extremely important and believe it will be of great help to us in our work to safeguard Swedish public health.

**Erik Weiman, chairman of the board, Uppsala County Council:**

– U-FOLD represents an entirely new opportunity for Uppsala County Council to both contribute our own competence and gain from the knowledge of others to provide even better healthcare to patients in our county.

**Effect of cancer drug studied**

SEVERAL PROMINENT research groups are now collaborating in an advanced new study. The goal is to understand what tumours will respond to treatment and find out why certain cancer drugs lose their effect after a period of use. The study is directed by Tobias Sjöblom, a tumour biologist at Uppsala University. The study comprises some one hundred cancer patients suffering from either cancer of the large intestine or chronic lymphatic leukaemia. The study is made possible by funding from SciLifeLab, a national resource centre for research in medicine and bioscience.

**Swedes stable in tolerating diversity**

THE SHARE OF SWEDES with extremely negative attitudes towards diversity has declined since last year. Across the board the Swedish people have stable tolerant attitudes to diversity but generally do not socialize very much with non-European immigrants. This is shown in the 2011 Diversity Barometer from the Department of Sociology at Uppsala University. The Diversity Barometer is an annual countrywide questionnaire at Uppsala University that surveys attitudes towards ethnic diversity among the Swedish population.

**Role of omega-3 fats unclear**

BEING OVERWEIGHT often involves a low-grade inflammation that can play a role in developing both diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Previously dietary omega-3 fats were seen as increasing inflammation while omega-3 fats from fish were ascribed anti-inflammatory properties. In a new dissertation, by Helena Bjermo, at the Department of Public Health and Caring Sciences, there is no evidence that omega-3 supplements can reduce inflammation in people with elevated risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease. On the other hand, the findings show that vegetable omega-6 fats reduce inflammation.
Forestry workers in the inland north of Sweden, the games of children in Stockholm suburbs, and women’s conversations at public swimming facilities. Ella Johansson, who was inaugurated as professor of ethnology this autumn, has studied the lives of Swedes from many perspectives and found that we are more alike than we might think.
The same differences that existed between the resident-owned houses and the blocks of flats in the 1970s remain. And children’s activities are the same. In the Million Programme area the children have more freedom: they move around in large mixed-age groups within the area and play more games than children in the villa areas. They build tree houses and play traditional Swedish games more often than the villa children do.

– They know more games in different variants with their own, always Swedish, names. They’re largely the same games as in the past, often games with rules, says Ella Johansson.

In the villa neighbourhoods role-playing games are more common, just as in the past, and children play indoors more often, with more planning. What has happened since the 1970s is primarily that it’s more common to have divorced parents and working mothers.

– It was interesting to see that most things are the same even though most people have a different background in the Million Programme. But it’s still a place where people have started to build up their lives to be part of a welfare-based society.

Conversations at swimming facilities
And she has seen this continuity in “Swedishness” in several other contexts. When her German students in Scandinavian studies interviewed immigrant girls in Småland, they remarked how incredibly “Swedish” they were in their manner. And women’s conversations at suburban swimming facilities, where Ella has done fieldwork, were about children’s parties and buying a terraced house. There are many myths about how society has changed. She can dispel the myth that fewer and fewer Swedes can swim.

– False. The numbers are record high.

Ella Johansson studies how people change when society changes.

– IN DEBATES WE OFTEN HEAR a concern about a lack of integration, but I’ve actually found strong continuity and a transmission of traditions from “new” and “old” Swedes. We talk about the same things and do the same things regardless of era and ethnic background, she says.

Ella Johansson is interested in people and of cultural legacies and history. How do people change when society changes? She has been attracted to many different environments undergoing change and has therefore moved around quite a bit between universities in Sweden and abroad.

She wrote a dissertation about forestry workers in northern Sweden from the 19th century to the 1950s, and forestry districts also served as the base for a large and exciting interdisciplinary research project on cultural constancy and transformation involving both plant ecologists and cultural anthropologists.

– Now that I’ve moved to Uppsala from Scania in the south I’ve got a bit closer to northern Sweden and the forestry regions again, and that feels good, she says.

Roots in Hälsingland
Her roots are further north in Hälsingland, though she has lived elsewhere most of the time, most recently down south in Lund. But Uppsala is not entirely new: as a 16-year-old she had a summer job renovating the murals in Uppsala Cathedral and had plans to become a restorer. She climbed high up in the arched ceilings, fixing and touching things up, and listened to P1 on the radio.

– I climbed all the way to the top of the outside of the little spire, that’s something I tell everybody, she says with a laugh.

But she went to university instead and has never regretted it. There’s an endless supply of interesting things for an ethnologist to study.

With some colleagues she did a follow-up to a comparative 1970s study of villa suburbs and suburbs made up of blocks of flats, from the ‘Million Programme.’ Since the previous study, virtually the entire population had been replaced in the neighbourhoods, and today the Million Programme area is populated by new Swedes. Somewhat surprisingly, they found that most things hadn’t changed.

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Ella Johansson

Name: Ella Johansson.
Why in the news? New professor of ethnology
Lives: In Svarthäcksgatan. “I have a lovely view of the Fyris River and a picturesque walk to work.”
In spare time: Hangs out with friends, reads fiction. “In the summer I like to potter about in the garden at my summer place in Scania.”
Quasicrystals are actually poorly named, according to Cesar Pay Gómez, a postdoctoral fellow at the Department of Materials Chemistry. It suggests quasi-science or crystals that are somehow not genuine.

– A quasicrystal is by definition a crystal. But even today articles and reference works describe a quasicrystal as something between a crystal and a material with an unordered structure. Completely wrong. A quasicrystals is not part something else – it’s a crystal, says Cesar Pay Gómez.

Thus far not many people have done research on quasicrystals. At Uppsala University it’s Cesar Pay Gómez and his doctoral candidate Girma Gebresenbut. In the rest of Sweden there are another 6–7 scientists, including doctoral students. The field is so small that most people know each other, also internationally.

Research in Japan
Pay Gómez did research in Japan before coming to Uppsala. He wound up there because a research team there found quasicrystals in the system of rare earth metals and cadmium that he was then studying. Cesar Pay Gómez also got involved in studying quasicrystals even though he had previously avoided the field because he thought it was too difficult.

The great challenge is to figure out where the atoms in quasicrystals are located. Cesar Pay Gómez grows his own crystals in the lab, irradiates them with x-rays, and analyses the diffraction patterns that arise.

But since the quasicrystal’s atoms do not recur periodically, it’s impossible to use traditional crystallography. Instead, high-dimensional crystallography is used, which makes the quasicrystals periodic. Then traditional methods can be used again – if they are adapted to more dimensions.

– All properties of all materials have to do with their structure. A goal is to devise new materials with new structures and properties that can be tailored to our needs, says Cesar Pay Gómez.

Prominent battery researchers
There are many prominent battery scientists at Uppsala University. In collaboration with some of them, Cesar Pay Gómez is trying to determine if it’s possible to store hydrogen in quasicrystals. The idea is to use the technology for hybrid batteries and fuel cells.

According to Cesar Pay Gómez there’s good reason to believe that quasicrystals could function as thermoelectric materials. Such materials can convert waste heat to electric current. For instance, the heat from a car engine could be used to generate electricity.

What are quasicrystals?
Researchers long thought that atoms were packed inside crystals in symmetrical patterns that occurred periodically. It was thought that this repetition was a necessary property of a crystal. In 1982 Dan Shechtman turned this accepted knowledge upside down. He found regular atom patterns in a crystal that could absolutely not be repeated. His scientific article on the discovery was delayed for two years because the findings were so controversial.

The 2011 Nobel Prize for Chemistry went to the discoverer of quasicrystals, Dan Shechtman. At Uppsala University the crystallographer Cesar Pay Gómez collaborates with researchers from other fields to explore if it’s possible to store hydrogen in quasicrystals.
Last winter’s chaos in train traffic is something traffic leaders hope not to see again. They can’t do much about the poor maintenance of the railroads, but now Uppsala University scientists are helping them plan and control traffic with an electronic timetable graph.

TODAY’S TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS have a certain amount of computer support in monitoring traffic and controlling technology along the railways. A timetable in the form of a paper graph is still used to see how trains are to run according to the original plan, and using pen and paper, traffic controllers figure out new train meetings and routes when there are disturbances or delays. They need to keep a lot of the information in their heads.

Bengt Sandblad, professor of human-computer interaction at Uppsala University, has followed train traffic controllers’ work situation for many years, in a research project funded by the Swedish Transport Administration, with earlier support from Vinnova.

– We’ve long collaborated with the Transport Authority, which has enabled us to test various applications. You need a long-term perspective when it comes to improving such a complex system as train traffic in the country, says Bengt Sandblad.

The pilot project they’ve been running for a few years will be launched in full scale at two traffic control centres in the country: Norrköping, which handles parts of the southern trunk line, and Boden, where, among other things, the country’s iron ore is transported on the Ore Line, contributing to the prosperity of the country.

– What’s unique is that we have built a system that both plans and controls train traffic, says Bengt Sandblad.

The electronic timetable graph that the Uppsala researchers have devised consists of a display image where the traffic controller can successively revise the traffic plan and then spread the information to everyone who needs it, such as engine drivers and travellers who are logged in to the Swedish Railway app for smart phones. The actual control is effected entirely automatically.

The project is also part of a larger EU-funded project.

– All countries want their own solutions. The goal is to create greater uniformity in order to better control and coordinate traffic all over Europe.

Fossils from primeval seas

NEW FINDS OF UNIQUELY well-preserved fossil calcium shells from Gotland, Canada, Australia, and Kazakhstan give entirely new insight into the seas that covered the earth’s surface more than 400 million years ago. New analytical methods make it possible to examine fossil shells in detail and gain insights into the oceanic chemistry of prehistoric seas. In the detailed new studies of 400 million-year-old calcium shells from Gotland and elsewhere, scientists found the first evidence of well-preserved aragonite, a common form of calcium (calcium carbonate) in our day. But 400 million years ago it was the other form of calcium – calcite – that totally dominated the seas of the world, and no preserved aragonite calcium shells had ever been found.

National science tests under review

NATIONAL TESTS in physics, chemistry, and biology have been given since 2009/2010. Now a group of Uppsala researchers are to find out what impact the tests have had on teaching. Some 800 teachers around Sweden have received a questionnaire as part of the study. A selection of teachers will also be interviewed and monitored in the classroom.

– The study will provide key information for the discussion about the impact and development of these tests, but it will also serve as a support for teachers in their profession, says Eva Lundqvist at the Department of Education.

Well-preserved Gotlandian fossil.
IT’S JUST BEFORE LUNCHTIME on an August day at Arlanda Airport. A steady stream of travellers pass through the arrival hall at Terminal 5. But it’s not just a regular day at the international terminal. It’s the day of arrival for many of Uppsala University’s new foreign students.

– They’re pretty tired after flying for maybe 10 hours. But they all seem to be happy to see us, says Lina Solander, a study information officer at the Student Affairs and Academic Division who is manning the welcome counter for new students that Uppsala University has set up to mark the day.

She and Joachim Ekström, a communication officer at the Division for Communication and External Relations, have been on the job since six in the morning. The first student came with a plane from Kenya at 6:30, followed by students from China, Taiwan, and Australia. Soon planes will be landing from several parts of Europe and the US.

A total of more than 2,500 foreign students from all over the world are pursuing international master programmes, exchange programmes, other programmes or single-subject courses at Uppsala University in autumn 2011.

Uppsala – the choice is easy
One of the new foreign students for the autumn is Görkem Gömeç from Turkey. He’s beaming as he lets his backpack fall with a thud.

– Why did I choose Uppsala? The University’s academic level and ranking on world lists speaks for itself! And when I saw your forests and rivers from the air, I was even more convinced, says Görkem Gömeç, who is taking the international master programme in sustainable development.

Creating contact with foreign students has come to be more and more important for Swedish universities. Starting with the autumn term 2011, there are tuition fees for studying in Sweden for so-called third-country students, that is, students from countries outside the EEA and Switzerland.

Exchange students are not affected by the new law, but the drop in third-country students in the international master programmes at Swedish universities has been dramatic this autumn. At the national level, it’s a matter of several thousand students.

– At Uppsala University 125 students have paid their tuition fees this autumn. We count on doubling this figure next year by working more with scholarship funds and with our contact-generating network, says Joachim Ekström.

For instance, for the first time Uppsala University is placing ads on the search engine Google in South Asia, Southeast Asia, South America, North America, Europe, and Russia. The aim is to catch the attention of foreign students the moment they start searching for a master programme and to lead them to the Uppsala University Website.

– On our Website we encourage them to leave their e-mail address, so we can stay in touch with them and provide tips about the possibility of talking to other students on the University’s pages in Facebook and other social networks. We want make them feel right away that it’s fun to study at Uppsala University, says Joachim Ekström.

A genuine student town
Thus far this strategy for generating contacts has been a success. Preliminary figures show that among the third-country students who were admitted to Uppsala University for autumn 2011, just under half chose to pay the tuition fee of some SEK
Tuition fees for studies

As of autumn term 2011 so-called third-country students outside the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland must pay a fee for higher education in Sweden.

100 000 and started their programme. This is much higher than the national average of 30 per cent.

At Arlanda it’s now afternoon, a plane from Belgium has just landed. Three exchange students who got to know each other during the flight are having a lively conversation. One of them is Rens Van Haute, who’s going to pursue business studies.

– To be honest, I had chosen Gothenburg first, but then I heard that Uppsala is a genuine and lively student town, and I changed my mind immediately, he says with a laugh.

At Uppsala University an education costs between SEK 90 000 and SEK 135 000 per year for third-country students. A strategy to reach students who have to pay for their education is to set up scholarship funds that pay all or part of the tuition fees. One such scholarship fund, which the University started together with the Kjell and Märta Beijer Foundation, was opened during the autumn of 2011 for applications from Chinese students wishing to study at Uppsala University in the autumn of 2012. The fund can cover tuition fees for at least 100 Chinese students. This commitment to reach more students from China has also resulted in a Web page about the University in Chinese, with all the information produced by Uppsala University.

More scholarship funds are expected. For one thing, the University is investigating the possibility of starting a fund together with Lund University for students from India.

Visit the University’s Web page in Chinese: www.cn.uu.se

Read more about scholarships: www.uu.se/scholarships
How do you find your inner researcher? Eighteen Uppsala students do it by competing in synthetic biology. They went to MIT in Boston to defend not only Uppsala’s colours but also Sweden’s and the Nordic countries’.

TEXT: HELENA EDSTRÖM
PHOTO: MIKAEL WALLERSTEDT

MORE THAN 2 000 STUDENTS, in 160 teams from 30 countries participated from the start in the 2011 iGEM, International Genetically Engineered Machine Competition. It’s a world championship in synthetic biology arranged by Massachusetts Institute of Technology, MIT, outside Boston. Team Uppsala was the only Nordic team to qualify for the final.

– It feels incredible that we made the cut, especially considering the time and energy the entire team has put in as well as the keen European competition, says engineering student Antonio Ascue Avalos.

The team comprises eighteen students from the engineering programme in molecular biotechnology and from the master programmes in bioinformatics and molecular biotechnology. A good team make-up since synthetic biology is about combining engineering with chemistry and biology to build up new functions in living cells. Team Uppsala’s entry targets gene regulation, or more precisely: governing the activity of genes with the help of light. The students have introduced a certain kind of genes in bacteria. When you illuminate the bacteria with light of different wave lengths, the genes are put to work and start to produce pigments in various colours. You can clearly see the results in the cultivation dishes. Depending on which gene has been activated, the bacteria turn red, blue, or yellow.

THE IDEA IS TO FIND THE RESEARCHER INSIDE US.

Provides motivation for the future
But more is needed than a good idea and good lab results in the iGEM competition. Teams need to find their own sponsors, find supervisory help at their university, and be able to show a good capacity to collaborate.

– The idea is to find the researcher inside us. The situation is a lot like what it will look like for us in a few years, when we’re working as researchers in various projects and collaborations, says Sibel Ciftci, who is taking the master program in molecular biotechnology.

Among other things, the University gave them access to a lab, equipment, and materials. In the lab they were also coached by Erik Gullberg, a doctoral candidate at the Department of Medical Biochemistry and Microbiology. He’s impressed with the enthusiasm the students showed in the competition.
— ONE MIGHT THINK that teaching via the Net would be superficial, but we’re finding it’s just the opposite. The teacher can carefully monitor how active each student is and if someone needs support and help. We sometimes get to know the students better than in campus education, says Cecilia Hamfelt, a teacher at the Department of Business Studies.

She has just been awarded the Uppsala University Prize for Distinguished Teaching in the free category, which focuses on IT in teaching this year. She was honoured for her teaching team’s IT solutions for distance teaching in Business Studies A and B, i.e. the first two full-time terms. Net-based home examinations and Web seminars, where students help each other with assignments anonymously in small groups.

Normally a distance course is considered a success if 30 per cent of students complete it. With the distance versions of Business Studies A and B, 70 per cent of students succeed.

More flexible teaching
Since these forms of instruction are so greatly appreciated and successful, they are now often used in campus-based courses in business studies.

— Many students feel that they can more freely be active and make comments in a discussion when it’s in an IT setting. In the lecture hall or in a regular seminar, they might have remained silent, says Cecilia Hamfelt who hopes more teams of teachers will dare to try out IT solutions in their teaching.

In full agreement is MedfarmDoIT, one of the entities at the University working full-time to help teachers to devise Web lectures and videos in instruction, for example.

– Access to Web lectures might make students’ daily lives more workable, and a video might have an educational value that books or lectures can’t attain. Teachers need to have a flexible approach to communicating with their students, says Simon Ydhag, a multimedia technician at MedfarmDoIT.

IT gaining ground in teaching

The image of students who dutifully attend lectures and pile up their textbooks at home is passé. Lectures, seminars, and videos on the Web are becoming more and more common, and students are welcoming the trend.

TEXT: HELENA EDSTROM
PHOTO: MIKAEL WALLERSTEDT

— On the one hand, they learn to collaborate in a group and, on the other, they learn to design, plan, and execute on their own. That’s a little different from course labs where you often get a plan for what to do.

Besides training in being researchers, taking part in this competition has given team members many other key insights.

— I feel highly motivated both in my studies and for the future. By taking part in this team, I’ve noticed what potential I have inside myself, what potential I have following graduation, says engineering student Anna Gustafsson.

Teaching support at the University

Uppsala Learning Lab (ULL) disseminates knowledge about how IT can be used in teaching and research projects and explores the use of new technology in higher education.

MedfarmDoIT develops teachers’ skills and enhances student learning with the help of IT solutions in teaching, like Web lectures and videos.

Division for Development of Teaching and Learning (PU) provides training and competence development and initiates and executes educational development projects.
“A patent is just a start”

Albert Mihranyan is the kind of researcher that is constantly making discoveries and does not shy away from applying for patents for them. His hope is to see one of the materials he has invented result in real products.

TEXT: ANNETTE ULVENHOLM WALLQVIST, PHOTO: MIKAEL WALLERSTEDT

– TO ME AS A RESEARCHER it’s a great privilege to pursue research and moreover be able to test my products. Applying for a patent is a good way to mark a milestone in research, says Albert Mihranyan, an associate professor of nanotechnology and functional materials who has applied for patents for a thickening agent, paper batteries, and cellulose in drug preparation.

Albert Mihranyan thinks it’s becoming more and more common for researchers to think commercially. Applying for a patent and maybe starting your own company can be a way to advance your research. Above all in applied materials science, where it’s easy to see the potential and to work closely with physicians and companies.

– To many researchers it’s not enough simply to get published. Many want to help translate their research into a product as well. A patent provides the protection needed to be part of the game, he says.

But anyone wanting to apply for a patent has a lot to think about. It has to be possible to register the invention and the product can’t be too complex or expensive to produce. You also have to be able to manufacture the product on a large scale.

– A patent is just a start. You need a holistic approach, something we researchers aren’t always so used to, says Albert Mihranyan.

**PRIZES ARE IMPORTANT FOR YOUR SELF-CONFIDENCE.**

– I’m a pharmacist who has gone from pharmacy to working with materials and nanotechnology in a broader perspective, including electrochemistry, he explains.

His research career has been garnished with multiple prizes. For instance, he received an award from the king for his research. Most recently he was named one of two recipients of the Oscar Prize, which is awarded to promising young researchers at Uppsala University.

– Prizes are important for your self-confidence. They give you confirmation that you’re heading in the right direction, which provides energy to go on, says Albert Mihranyan.

**Alga with good properties**

The basis of the bulk of his research is a special kind of cellulose found in algae. It’s called *Cladophora glomerata*, which causes algal blooms, for instance. The cellulose in this alga has special properties that Albert Mihranyan is interested in. His dissertation was devoted to studying how the structure of this cellulose affected drug preparations.

This resulted in him applying for his first patent. It turned out that algal cellulose in nicotine preparations help make the nicotine more stable, so it lasts longer. This is

Albert Mihranyan has gone from pharmacy to materials.

grant from the Swedish Institute. The idea was for him to be a visiting researcher for nine months at the Department of Pharmacy. Twelve years later, Albert Mihranyan is still here. He’s a doctoral candidate in galenical pharmacy and now works at the Department of Engineering Sciences.
useful in drugs for those wishing to give up smoking.

– That got the ball rolling, and one discovery has led to another, says Albert Mihranyan.

During the twelve years he’s been working with algal cellulose material he has constantly found new areas of application.

For instance, he has found that algal cellulose constructs gels even at very low concentrations. This is knowledge that can be used in the production of medicine, food, and paint. Most recently he has used his knowledge of the structure of algal cellulose to create environmentally friendly paper batteries, free from any metals. The advantage is that the battery does not need to be recycled, merely incinerated when it’s spent.

– Motorola is testing a prototype of the paper battery in its remote controls.

Not easy to pursue patents

Presently Albert Mihranyan has five or six active patents. But it’s not easy to pursue them. It’s a long process that costs a lot of money and requires considerable marketing efforts to attract funding.

– It’s hard to develop a patent. I’ve received a great deal of help from UU Innovation. Otherwise, I wouldn’t have had the energy to work with my patents, says Albert Mihranyan.

Many business concepts

UU Innovation helps researchers at the University to apply for patents for inventions that are the basis for a good business concept.

Every year between 80 and 100 research groups contact the division about an idea. Between 20 and 40 of them lead to a patent application. It’s important for the application to be commercially justified.

A patent is often necessary for a company to dare to invest in an invention. If a research finding is released too early instead, it’s not as commercially interesting for companies to invest in, since there will be more competitors.

It’s the researcher that owns the invention and can make money from it. At the same time, the researcher’s success enhances the name of the University, which in the long run can generate resources from industry and other external financiers.

Source: Patent specialist Gerald Petterson, UU Innovation

Resourceful students saw chance

How can you use information technology to make the world a better place? Four young students had an idea that they’re now busy making reality. It’s called Lifemap and is about creating closer contact between donors and recipients of developmental assistance funds.

IT ALL STARTED in early 2011 when they heard about a competition arranged by Microsoft called Imagine Cup. Students from all over the world are invited to come up with ideas to help solve one of the global problems that the UN is focusing on in its eight Millennium Development Goals.

– We heard about the competition via the IT company Avanade in February. They liked our idea and sponsored us in developing our entry, says one of those behind the effort, Gustav Spross.

The idea is called Lifemap and is a Web platform for closer contact between donors and recipients of assistance funds. You can go in and get an overview of various assistance projects around the world and get direct reports on how they’re going from people on site.

At first there were two people with the idea, Gustav and his fellow student Christopher Okhravi. It was very well received and everyone was ecstatic when they won the Swedish competition. The two students were chosen to represent Sweden in the finals that took place in New York last summer. From 300 000 entries, they were now one of 300 finalists.

– Besides developing the system, we were supposed to produce a 20-minute promotional video to show the judges. That’s when we realized we needed more people on our team, says Gustav Spross.

Trying and educational

They selected fellow student Joanna Murphy and a recent graduate, Markus Änöstam.

What followed was an intensive spring, with all four of them devoting every spare second to preparations and developmental work. Trying, but also educational. It’s not important that their idea did not place high up in the final field.

– It’s really important to put together the right team. Among you, you have to have the skills needed but also the courage to give your all in realizing the idea, says Gustav Spross.

The Lifemap team is now moving on with the creation of a company, assisted by Drivhuset (The Hothouse), a not-for-profit organisation financed by the business community and state and regional funding. The Website is slated to be launched in early 2012, just one year after the idea was born.
WHEN UPPSALA UNIVERSITY, for the fourth year in a row, arranged Researchers’ Friday, the audience set a new record. Some 1600 people took part in the activities. A total of about 60 individuals – researchers, students, and others – helped spread the word about research.

– It was a matter of bringing out the joy of discovery in children and young people. In every child there’s a potential researcher, and that’s what we’re trying to elicit, says Gunilla Sthyr, project leader for Researchers’ Friday.

In the middle of the Main Square there was a large tent full of research stations. Curious onlookers were enticed in to guess about skeleton parts, mix perfumes, and test their health. At the City Library book and newspaper readers had to jostle with school classes that came and went all day long. In the children’s and young people’s department in the basement, preschool classes could run experiments with apples, water, and paper. One flight up, at Café Cardamom, a science café was arranged for lower-secondary pupils. Researcher and biochemist Helena Danielson mingled with snacking pupils and answered questions about diet and exercise.

Some 60 researchers and students went into town to spread the word about research on Researchers’ Friday. The Main Square was full of activity in the research tent, and at the City Library school classes took turns in experiment workshops, science cafés, and debates.

– It’s quite frustrating that no one seems to be able to explain how great the risks really are in nature.

Chemicals prompt commitment

One more flight up the tone was somewhat more grave. In the Kerstin Ekman Room there was a debate about chemicals around us. 175 upper-secondary pupils had seen the film Submission in advance, about widespread chemicals that are hazardous to our health and environment and in many cases wind up in our blood. The upper-secondary pupils came to the debate bursting with questions for the panel, which consisted of researchers and representatives from the Swedish Chemicals Agency and the chemicals industry.

– It’s quite
frustrating that no one seems to be able to explain how great the risks really are in nature, said Alma Hugosson, in the last year of the international programme at Rosendal School, following the debate.

The aim of the debate was to give young people a chance to ask questions directly to experts. And according to one panellist, it was useful for the experts to encounter their questions.

− We should tap into young people’s commitment and thoughts more often. It’s a field that needs more discussion. I value these people’s reflexions and deliberations highly, said Christina Rudin-Snöbohm from the Swedish Chemicals Agency.

Lower-secondary pupils discussed diet and exercise with researcher Helena Danielsson.

Clinical support for 10 years

HOW CAN HEALTHCARE cope with today’s increased demands for evidence-based development and better quality? This was one of the issues discussed when UCR, Uppsala Clinical Research, celebrated its 10th anniversary. In the last decade UCR has grown into an interprofessional and knowledge-intensive collaborative partner to healthcare, authorities, and industry. Here you can get help with clinical testing and healthcare development with the aid of registries and biobanks. UCR was named a National Research Centre for Quality Registries by the Municipalities and County Councils of Sweden.

New insights into US

ERIK ÅSARD, professor of North American Studies at Uppsala University, won this year’s Disa Prize for popular writing about academic subjects. He was awarded the prize for providing new insights into American society and problematising conventional views. Erik Åsard is director of SI-NAS (Swedish Institute for North American Studies). He has written many articles and several books (in Swedish) for a broad audience, in recent years Fuzzy Thinking (2006), on conspiracy theories, Hillary Rodham Clinton: A Political Biography (2008), and The Fragile Superpower (2010).

Pär Holmgren honorary doctor

POPULAR METEOROLOGIST Pär Holmgren has been awarded an honorary doctorate from the Faculty of Science and Technology. He completed his licentiate degree at Uppsala University and since then has helped educate Sweden about the atmosphere, weather, and climate in his writing, work as a TV weatherman, and media commitments. Thanks to Pär Holmgren’s efforts, more scope has been created for easy-to-understand weather presentations on TV. He has also paved the way for more comprehensive factual programmes for both children and adults with a focus on weather and climate.
Let companies themselves ask the questions. Then have researchers from various fields try to answer them together. This is the formula for AIMday, a meeting form developed at Uppsala University that has become ever more popular in academia.

**Efficient meetings about companies’ questions**

**TEXT: ANNICA HULTH, PHOTO: TEDDY THÖRNLUND**

– IF YOU GATHER around a concrete question, you soon get to its core. Meetings are truly efficient when you focus on one problem, says Annika Olsson, project leader at UU Innovation.

She’s been involved from the outset, four years ago at Ångström Laboratory in Uppsala. Meetings were arranged there on the theme of Materials, and various companies were invited to ask concrete questions based on their operations. Companies like Vattenfall and Outokumpu were matched with materials scientists with varying specialisations. Together the researchers could help the companies move forward.

The form of meeting was such a success that it was branded under the name AIMday (Academia Industry Meetingday), a name now owned by Uppsala University.

– This is a tool we want to share with others. We’re eager to collaborate with others and have noticed there’s a great demand among other higher education institutions, says Sara Gredemark, who was recently employed by UU Innovation to strengthen and disseminate the AIMday concept.

The latest AIMday Materials at Ångström Laboratory attracted an unusually large number of visitors. Robert Arnell and Malin Ylvén Engman from Munters in Kista.

**What do you get out of AIMday Materials?**

**Jan-Åke Henning, from SenseAir:**
– We’ve discussed plastic materials. We have an optical construction where we need to improve the stability with new, more high-performance materials.
– When we sit at home, we only look at what’s on the market today, but here you look outside the box and have a broad perspective. We hope to forge contacts for the future.

**Jöns Hillborn, professor:**
– This is a great interface, where I feel I have something to offer regarding what can be done and what can’t. Even if this doesn’t lead to concrete commissions from companies, I believe they get a lot of help here.

**Claes-Göran Granqvist, professor:**
– This provides me with contacts from industry, and I find out what questions are relevant today. This is a fine initiative that arouses great interest from both parties. For this to work you need both commitment and knowledge. We have the right people working with this!
Record attendance at AIMday Materials

AIMday Materials in October 2011 attracted a record number of visitors:
- 200 participants
- 41 research teams
- 106 researchers
- 9 universities and institutes
- 24 companies, 50 industry representatives
- 55 workshops during 5 sessions
- 23 support organisations

**Personal contacts**

During AIMday there are meetings in small groups of no more than ten participants, with an eye to creating personal contacts and encouraging active participation.

- Meetings are what we’re all about. We want the meetings to be small so everyone will shake hands and dare to call each other up afterwards. If you’re attending, we want you to participate in the group, says Sara Gredemark.

The vision is for the AIMday concept to develop at the national level, and eventually internationally as well. And it’s not only in the academic community that there’s such great interest. The companies at AIMday Materials also tend to come back year after year. This is as good a sign as any that participating has been worth the effort, says Annika Olsson:

- Today companies are swamped with opportunities for courses and seminars. The difference here is that they determine the agenda themselves. We know that companies are really pressed for time, as are our researchers. But if they know it’s in their own best interest, they’ll find the time. Those who come here are motivated by their own interest, nothing else.

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**Time to talk ethics**

The Centre for Research Ethics and Bioethics (CRB) is launching an ethics blog in two versions: one in English that primarily targets researchers and one in Swedish that enables a broader audience to discuss what’s going on in Sweden.

TEXT: JOSEPINE FERNOW, PHOTO: MATTON

- WE NEED BOTH TO DISCUSS ethical issues arising from research and healthcare and to reflect upon how we talk about them. It’s about ethics in a changeable world, and it’s easy for us to get stuck in the past, says Pär Segerdahl, editor of the ethics blog.

Pär Segerdahl writes about both his own research and that of others. He’s a philosopher, and in recent years his research has been about the language of apes, animal welfare, and gender, but the research group from CRB brings together broad expertise.

- We have ethicists, philosophers, and legal scholars, but also physicians, nurses, a pharmacist, and a psychologist. Some of them will be appearing as writers in the blog and will be participating in the discussion, says Pär Segerdahl.

Mats G. Hansson is the director of CRB, and the blog was his initiative.

- Many of our research questions arise in dialogue with researchers and hospital staff, and we’ve been thinking for a long time about how to share our findings with others.

The blogs will serve as a complement to the meeting places we already have. Here we can convey some of the knowledge we have, but also the discussions we have in the research group and with other researchers, he says.

Visit the blog at www.etikbloggen.crb.uu.se or the English version at: www.ethicsblog.crb.uu.se
IT’S WEDNESDAY EVENING and, as usual, rehearsal in the banquet hall at Upland nation. A merry bunch have seated themselves with their instruments – saxophones, clarinets, and flutes, with banjo and drum accompaniment.

The band jumps into a 1920s classic, in their own rendition, and give it all they’ve got. There are lots of laughs.

The joy of making music has been central ever since the band was formed 30 years ago. Their characteristic uniforms, basically sailor outfits, have also been part of it all these years. Although they’re beginning to get a bit dingy.

– We’re not allowed to launder the uniforms. Those are the rules, though we are allowed to bathe or shower with them on, says Emelie Perland, a master student in biotechnology who has been playing here for nearly four years.

Showering with your uniform on was in fact a necessity last summer when the band toured Spain.

– Playing on the square in Seville in 44°-degree heat – that was an experience. I think it’s our heat record, says Markus Cederberg, a future teacher of history and music.

Anniversary recording

During the autumn the band has been celebrating its 30th anniversary. It’s basically a wind band, but other instruments turn up occasionally – such as bagpipes and fiddles. The repertoire is older swing and hit music, with occasional forays into odd pieces.

– We like to blast The Trooper – an extra fun hard rock piece. Once I played a harmonica solo in that song, Markus recalls with a smile.

The number of members has varied throughout the years, and is presently about 20. Most stick around for a few years because of they have so much fun.

What makes it fun?

– Actually everything about it is fun. The first time I hear the band, I wondered: “what kind of music is that?” but it really sounded great! Some of us have been playing for a long time, are talented, and knowledgeable, while others are beginners and can get help. There are no demands, but lots of ambition!

Beginner from Germany

One beginner is Benni Langlotz, an exchange student from Munich in Germany who is taking a 3-year programme in human-computer interaction.

– I wanted to play in a band and asked around at the nations. At Upland they said: “We have a band where we have fun all the time and you can join without being able to play an instrument.”

That sounded great to Benni Langlotz. He now accompanies the band on the banjo and loves the open and relaxed atmosphere.

– The main thing is to have fun when you play, because you play better if you’re having fun. When you’re having fun, you rehearse more – a virtuous circle!

To Emelie Perland the best thing about playing clarinet in Wijkman Brass is the encounter with the audience.

– Our coolest gig is on Walpurgis Eve when we play on the steps up to the University Library. The whole hillside is covered with students, and the feeling you get just from standing there when everyone’s so happy… it’s powerful. Or when we play at the castle and people dance to our music, applaud, and sing along with the songs.

In the student nation-based band Wijealmanska Blecket (Wijkman Brass) the main idea is to have fun together. – It’s seen as a bonus that it also sounds great, says the Brass’s “captain” Markus Cederberg.

The band has logged quite a few performances since it started 30 years ago. The nestor of the gang joined back in 1991, which can be seen from his soiled uniform.

TEXT: ANNICA HULTH, PHOTO: MIKAEL WALLERSTEDT
Stage director Wilhelm Carlsson has been awarded an honorary doctorate from Uppsala University. After two acclaimed opera productions – Tosca and Otello – at the University, he is well known in Uppsala’s cultural life.

You’re already professor of musical dramaturgy. How does it feel to receive an honorary doctorate?
– It’s incredibly exciting and gratifying. I feel honoured. I received word on a regular day when I was frying some sausages.

What’s it like to direct opera at a university?
– It’s exciting to make contact with an academic environment, with such ancient legacies and traditions. It’s been unbelievable to bring people into this, to open the gateways to the University and invite the audience in. I feel that I was extremely well received.

– Working together with the conductor Stefan Karpe and the Royal Academic Orchestra has also been rewarding, in the encounter between amateur and professional musicians. They have an openness in their way of being an orchestra. It infuses energy.

Have you encountered any special challenges?
– Yes, it’s been interesting to use University premises and to find correspondences between the work and the venue. We staged Otello in the University Main Building, which was built the same year the opera was written. Odd interfaces arise between the work, the venue, and traditions.

– At the same time we want to break with tradition and find new forms of address. Opera is not something that should be going on within the confines of fancy gilded frames but rather should touch all of us. Opera can be very direct in how it hits us, whether you’re 16 or 17 years old or a pensioner.

unique medieval coin found

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL research project “Riksväg Fjärdhundraland” (“Highway Fourth Hundred Land”) has found a unique coin during a dig in Biskopskulla outside Örsundsbro. This coin is the first that can be clearly tied to a settlement outside Sigtuna. It was minted in Sigtuna around 1180-1185.
– It’s an incredible find! Not just because the coin is so unusual, but it supports our hypotheses in the research project, says Annika Larsson, from the Department of Archaeology and Ancient History.

Medical student Student of the Year

THE UPPSALA STUDENT OF THE YEAR is medical student Johan Bengtsson. The award was conferred in connection with the Anders Wall Lecture in the Grand Auditorium. During his first years in Uppsala Johan Bengtsson studied linguistics. In autumn 2007 he embarked upon the medical programme. He’s the driving force behind student farce troupe Special Welfare Board and is very active in Småland Nation. He won the prize for being a driving force in the broad study and cultural environment at Uppsala University. “With his versatility and creativity he has managed to combine a commitment to education and student life with successful studies,” as the award is worded.

The Uppsala Student of the Year award is presented by the Anders Wall Foundation and consists of a scholarship that is worth SEK 100 000.
She keeps an eye on state finances

Ann Öberg is an economist who’s got it made. At the Ministry of Finance, she’s right in the thick of things. Her job – to provide a platform for Anders Borg’s finance policy.

TEXT: ANNETTE ULVENHOLM WALLQVIST
PHOTO: MIKAEL WALLERSTEDT
AS HEAD of the Office of Public Finances, Ann Öberg’s job is to keep tabs on how much money there is in Sweden’s public finances and thereby what scope there is for reforms.

For instance, Ann and her colleagues help to calculate what impact reforms have on income distribution, or if a tax is effective or not.

– Then it’s up to Finance Minister Anders Borg to turn our figures into politics, she says.

It’s virtually impossible to describe a typical workday. No two days are alike. But that’s part of the charm, according to the office head. It’s evident that to enjoy working at the Ministry of Finance you have to like to work and be ready to work hard. Long-term projects are mixed with sudden assignments where figures have to be dug up owing to some change in the outside world.

– Our work is largely determined by the agendas of politicians and the media. We’re often expected to submit calculations to politicians at extremely short notice, says Ann Öberg.

Ready to roll up their sleeves

She is assisted by seven associates who are all prepared to roll up their sleeves when work peaks occur.

– I believe everyone who applies for a job here knows what is expected. You have to be both flexible and very interested in the issues, says Ann Öberg.

When New Horizons meets her, she has only been working at the ministry for a half year. To Ann Öberg the start has been exciting and fun, which is largely due to the financial unrest in the world.

– To me as an economist, a financial crisis is an interesting large-scale experiment. What has happened in the world economy the last few years will go down in history. All the models we usually apply become useless, and we need to find new solutions and tools. This is extremely stimulating, of course, she says.

After upper-secondary school Ann Öberg chose to study economics, largely because she was good at mathematics. During her university studies she soon saw how the subject is tied to societal issues. That clinched it for her, and her interest in economics has grown ever stronger.

– The more I learn, the more interested and stimulated I become. At the same time, I understand there’s so much more to learn, says Ann Öberg.

Examinations – a torment

Ann Öberg grew up in Gävle and started her economic studies there. As there was no third term of studies available, she moved to Uppsala.

Since she enjoyed studying, it seemed natural to go on to research-level education. But that first year, with an exam every fourth week, was a torment, says Ann Öberg.

– But once I started writing, things were completely different. That was a really enjoyable time, she recalls.

Her dissertation dealt with tax regulations for close companies, among other things, and it was the first in a series of writings about the tax system.

– I had a stimulating relationship with my supervisor, Professor Jan Södersten, and it was a fun subject to write about.

Challenges provide a kick

Her first job following her graduation was with the National Institute of Economic Research. She then worked with distribution analyses at the Ministry of Finance, followed by a stint with the Swedish Financial Policy Council, before returning to the Ministry of Finance to work with macro-analyses. After that Ann Öberg she got another job at the National Institute of Economic Research, this time as its director, and now she’s back at the Ministry of Finance for the third time.

– What I like about working here is that there are no lulls. The challenges we face give us a kick.

Both Ann Öberg and her ultimate boss Anders Borg are Uppsala University alumni. But they don’t talk much about their university days.

– No, I meet with him for five, ten minutes at a time. So we have to stick to what’s going right now, says Ann Öberg.

She describes the Minister of Finance as an extremely competent person with a capacity she’s never seen before. Regardless of how large or small a question is to be presented, he’s always involved and knowledgeable.

– This is much appreciated. At the same time he demands just as much from us as from himself. I find that both inspiring and edifying, says Ann Öberg.

Ann Öberg

Age: 37.
Family: Husband and two girls, 2 and 5.
Education: PhD in economics.
Spare time: Time with family, exercise, tries to get outdoors.
Hidden talent: Sings well.
Favourite nation: Can’t choose. Didn’t hang out at the nations much.
“I wanted knowledge in depth”

Patrick Grimlund, host of Lyxfallan on TV3, has long experience of coaching and leadership. The theoretical foundation was laid in his doctoral programme in business studies at Uppsala. These studies provided him with his own niche.

PATRICK GRIMLUND was a doctoral candidate during the years 2007-2011, pursuing research on leadership development, executive coaching, and individual executive coaching.

– I work with these issues and wanted in-depth theoretical knowledge. Coaching is highly popular today, but what are its effects and what do you get out of it?

Today Patrick Grimlund is one of the advisors on the TV programme Lyxfallan (The Luxury Trap) and helps people in economic crisis. On the side he works as a leadership coach and lecturer.

When the time-consuming TV recordings started, he chose to interrupt his doctoral studies. Life went off in another direction.

– The production company contacted me, and I said yes, largely out of curiosity. I like to try out new things.

**Demanding meetings**

Though meetings with people in economic crisis are demanding, and there’s a lot of travelling, Patrick Grimlund nevertheless enjoys the job.

– It’s fun and challenging to see how people’s lives can change in a short period of time. In one month they’ve completely changed their lifestyle. It’s not just the economic side we fix. We straighten out a lot of other things as well.

Before embarking on his doctoral studies he worked as a coach for leaders, executives, and entrepreneurs. At the back of his mind he had the idea of continuing his studies, so he finally decided to apply for the doctoral programme.

– I had been out in the business world for ten years after my master’s degree in economics, so I had to change my lifestyle completely. I took it as a challenge. It wasn’t a career move but rather a matter of personal development.

**Have you found your Uppsala studies useful?**

– You don’t need a PhD to help people with their economy, but everyone benefits from a critical approach and thinking outside the box. For my work as a coach I’ve acquired in-depth knowledge that many people in the business lack. Thanks to my doctoral education, I’ve carved out my own niche.

Patrick Grimlund has found his own niche.

**Petter remembers Uppsala years**

PETTER ASKEGREN hosted the reception for new students in autumn 2011. Visiting Uppsala University brought back memories of his own studies at Uppsala.

– I love this venerable old environment and had the privilege of having lectures both in Uppsala Castle and the University Main Building, says Petter.

He belonged to Stockholm Nation, but was never active. On the other hand, he has become familiar with nation life afterwards as an artist and thinks students are a fantastic audience to play to. When he was asked to host the reception, he was highly flattered.

– It’s a remarkable assignment, and I jumped at the chance. I feel I may be part of a trend – that the University is becoming more modern, while nevertheless retaining its time-honoured traditions and festivities.

**China trip yielded many contacts**

UPPSALA UNIVERSITY is making major commitments to strengthening its contacts with China. In late October “Uppsala University Day” was held at Peking University and at Fudan University in Shanghai. In connection with this day, two well-attended banquets were held for alumns and friends. One banquet was at the Swedish embassy in Beijing in collaboration with the alumni association UU Beijing Alumni Chapter. The other banquet was at the Nordic Centre in Shanghai, with Vice-Chancellor Anders Hallberg as host. During the dinner, a foundation was laid for a new local alumni association for Uppsala University graduates in Shanghai.
A brand new textbook in North Saami has just come out. The book was written by Cecilia Hedlund and Lars-Gunnar Larsson, who for many years have been in charge of teaching the Saami language to beginners at Uppsala University. The book text has been recorded on an accompanying CD.

North Saami – not just in the mountains

THE POINT OF DEPARTURE is a bit different, as a major share of students of the Saami language at Uppsala University have no direct background in raising reindeer in the core area of the north. Instead, Sweden’s second largest Saami municipality, Stockholm, has provided Uppsala with a sizable number of its students.

This is mirrored in the contents. The words lávvu ‘cot, hut’ and boazu ‘reindeer (in general)’ play a very minor role in the book. On the other hand, there are texts about Indian restaurants and Arlanda Airport.

The very title of the book reveals its goal: Ii dušše duoddaris! means ‘Not just in the mountains!’ A minority language with enhanced status in today’s Sweden shouldn’t be confined to a narrow domain in a textbook but should rather be seen as a natural feature of life anywhere in Sweden, as the authors see it.

This is the second Saami textbook published in Uppsala. The first one came out in 1901.

Long-awaited Nobel Prize

THERE WAS GREAT JOY when the Swedish Academy announced that Tomas Tranströmer had been awarded the 2011 Nobel Prize for Literature.

Among the most joyous was the author Staffan Bergsten, formerly with Uppsala University. He has known Tomas Tranströmer for a long time. In the mid 1970s they jointly designed the course “Creative Swedish” at the Department of Literature in Uppsala.

Last spring Staffan Bergsten published a biography, just in time for the poet’s 80th birthday: Tomas Tranströmer – Portrait of a Poet (in Swedish).

What’s special about his poetry?
– What people usually point to is his imagery. He has a capacity to find images that are perfectly natural, unforced and simple, but yet containing something surprising and mysterious. He brings out the mystery of things, the innermost secrets of being. There are no simple answers.
THE STUBBORN RESISTANCE of the Arab world to the democratic aspirations that have more and more characterized the surrounding world since the 1970s has been surprising and perplexing. Through the dramatic events of the spring and autumn – Mubarak’s fall, Qadaffi’s death, elections in Tunisia, developments in Syria and Yemen – these countries have joined the ranks of democratic “wannabees.” These include, since the 1980s, several Latin American countries and, since the early 1990s, Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, as well as countries in Africa and Asia. Revolutions are shaking up, tearing down – at least temporarily – old power structures, bringing together people in the quest for something different, and creating historic opportunities for change. This makes them extremely important.

If popular mobilisation, through its energy and unity, can temporarily move mountains and destroy dictators, it is nevertheless well-prepared, relatively unified, and purposeful political leaders who will build a future democracy. We learned this from the transformations in Eastern Europe. Transformations there also teach us that such leaders must have had the opportunity to be formed outside the state apparatus of the dictatorship. What the authoritarian system looked like, the degree of suppression of pluralism, social networks, and cultural diversity becomes a key precondition for how well democratisation will succeed.

To achieve something sustainably new, what is required is a clearly positive vision of “who we are” and “where are we headed”; it’s not enough simply to want to overturn everything. Nor can such visions be postponed; when political structures are shaken, the window of opportunity is short. In Eastern Europe it was a matter of a couple of years following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Then new patterns had begun to form, limiting the leeway for radical change.

The two or three years following in the wake of the Arab Spring will thus be crucial. The scope for political actors – both old and new – to impact developments is now unusually broad. Let us hope that political parties with well-reasoned visions step forward and carry the revolution onward, while the future is still open.

LI BENNICH BJÖRKMAN, SKYTTE PROFESSOR OF ELOQUENCE AND POLITICAL SCIENCE:

Will there now be democracy in the Arab world?