



Eva Åkesson: Tal vid Göran Gustafsson Lecture

Talare

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Kemist

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Omständigheter

Rektor Eva Åkessons tal vid Göran Gustafsson Lecture 2012.

Professor Lander, Members of the Board of the Göran Gustafsson Foundation, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, (Dear Students,) In 1986, Göran Gustafsson took the historic decision to create a foundation in support of basic scientific research in medicine at Uppsala University and research in engineering physics at the KTH Royal Institute of Technology. Three years after the first foundation was set up, Göran Gustafsson decided to further increase his support to research within the field of natural sciences by setting up a second Foundation – one that several distinguished scientists at this University has benefitted from after selection by the Royal Academy of Science. These generous and important donations are among the most important contributions to research within the natural sciences in Sweden and make it possible for researchers and students to significantly deepen our understanding and advancement in the field of medicine on an international scale. We are most pleased to note that support from the Göran Gustafsson Foundations also has increased significantly over the past three years. The field of medicine and medical research has always been one of the cornerstones of this University, and you may well say perhaps even the foundation on which it stands today – dating back to early scholars such as Olof Rudbeck (who discovered the lymphatic system etc. in the 17th Century); Nils Rosén von Rosenstein (author of one of the world's first educational books on pediatrics in the 1730s and translated into ten languages); Anders Celsius (who was a professor of astronomy at the university but as you well know invented something of certain importance for mankind; the thermometer); Carl Linnaeus (who was practicing physician before his ground-breaking work on binomial nomenclature (“Sexual organization of the species”) and taxonomy), to the more recent Nobel laureates Robert Bárány and Allvar Gullstrand. Today, Uppsala University offers 21 complete programs training future physicians, nurses, biomedical analysts, pharmacists and many other

vocational categories covering twelve institutions with a total of 6600 students, 1300 staff and more than 200 professors. Examples of areas of strength are drug development, neuroscience, infectious diseases, resistance to antibiotics, cancer, diabetes and genomics. The Uppsala University Hospital where we meet today also has no less than four European Centres of Excellence; Neurotrauma, Endocrine tumors, Type-1 diabetes and Inflammation. Let me also mention one of the newest initiatives of the University – fully inspired by Dr. Lander’s founding of the Broad Institute: the SciLifeLab in cooperation with Stockholm University, the Karolinska Institutet and The Royal Institute of Technology. The new center in Uppsala consists of three platforms – genomics, proteomics and comparative genomics – and two bridging science programs – evolutionary biology and medical biology. SciLifeLab in Uppsala will coordinate efforts with its SciLifeLab in Stockholm to provide a national infrastructure for molecular biosciences. This collaboration will increase overtime with the expectation of creating a fully joint, world-class research center in coming years. A special mention here of Professor Kerstin Lindblad-Toh is in order; Kerstin is the Director of the Science for Life Lab in Uppsala and the Scientific Director of Vertebrate Genome Biology at the Broad Institute. Kerstin has of course been an instrumental person in setting up this promising world-class centre in Sweden. It has been said by one of my predecessors, Dr. Martin H:son Holmdahl, himself a distinguished Professor in Anesthesiology, that there are three sorts of researchers in medicine at Uppsala; the ones who are on their way to a post-doc in the USA, the ones who are currently doing a post doc in the USA, and the ones who have just returned after a study or research tour in the USA. Our contacts in the medical field with the United States are thus extremely well developed, and we are of course thrilled to both have one of the world’s leading American biologists, Professor Eric Lander, as this year’s Göran Gustafsson speaker only a week away from the 3 lectures at Uppsala by this year’s two Nobel laureates in medicine, Professors Gurdon and Yamanaka. On behalf of Uppsala University, I am most grateful for all support by the Göran Gustafsson Foundation in the past, and look forward to continued world-class academic excellence made possible by the Göran Gustafsson Foundation at this educational institution! Thank you.

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