



Centrum för statistik
Centre for Statistics

Minutes of the Steering Committee Meeting of Statistics@SLU

27.10.2017, 09.30–15.30 hrs, Utsikten, 5th floor, Mark-Vatten-Miljö building, Lennart Hjelms väg 9, Ultuna.

Members of the Steering Committee

Kristina Blennow¹ (LTV), Claudia von Brömssen (NJ, deputy director), Richard Johnson (NJ), Johannes Pohl (SLUSS), Arne Pommerening (S, director), Göran Ståhl (S, chairman).

Invited guests

Johan Fransson, Forest Resource Management Department, S Faculty,
Per-Anders Hansson, Department of Energy and Technology, NJ Faculty,
Linda Tufvesson, Department of Biosystems and Technology, LTV Faculty.

Absent

Erik Bongcam Rudloff (VH).

1 Discussion between the Steering Committee and the Heads of Departments involved in employing staff engaged in Statistics@SLU

Purpose: To discuss how departmental policies and restrictions towards hiring statisticians can be married with the requirements of Statistics@SLU. This discussion also includes aiming at staff with a variety of skills and qualifications to fulfil the diverse obligations of the Centre and needs to consider the specific funding model of the Centre as well. See also Appendices 1 and 4.

The discussion attempted to clarify the responsibilities and expectations related to Statistics@SLU. The department heads explained the situation in their institutions and also emphasised the financial restrictions. Arne and Claudia pointed out the difficulties that statisticians face when working in the Centre, explained

¹Kristina Blennow participated via Skype/telephone and the connection was often poor so that she could not follow everything that was said. We apologise for that.

the rules for promotion and issues of job satisfaction, which played an important role in the recent situation at Ultuna. The discussion highlighted that there are differences in viewpoints and that the dialogue needs to be continued to secure the sustainability of the services offered by Statistics@SLU. The dialogue should also include the question of statistical consultations for MSc students that currently is not handled in the same way at all faculties. The department heads did not see a need for a formal agreement. No concrete decisions were made, another joint meeting was proposed for spring 2018 (see also Appendix 3 and 4 representing (amended) slides that were used for prompting the discussion in this session).

2 Internal meeting of the Steering Committee of Statistics@SLU

2.1 Opening of the meeting, approval of the minutes of the last meeting and of the agenda

The minutes and the agenda were approved.

2.2 Recent recruitments at Statistics@SLU

Adam Flöhr (MSc in statistics) was recently recruited to the Alnarp unit and now holds a full-time permanent post. At Ultuna, Linnea Kjeldgård (MSc in statistics) was recruited to a half-time, temporary post for six months at the Statistics@SLU unit. The Umeå unit has no new recruitments, but will most likely lose its R consultant and Research School coordinator Jaime Uria-Diez by 31 December 2017. There is a high demand for R consultations at the interface with statistics at the S Faculty. Appendix 5 illustrates the current staffing situation.

2.3 Review of the situation at Ultuna

The situation at Ultuna is still fragile, but a new permanent senior-statistician post (with 50% funded research time) will be advertised in due course. Linnea and external lecturers are currently helping out with the teaching load. Some research and teaching activities had to be cancelled or reduced, but the situation will hopefully relax next year. Even with the eventual replacement of Mikael Andersson Franko as senior lecturer there will still be an additional requirement for staff to allow the unit to participate in applied projects and to carry out active research as well as to be in a position to develop and improve courses and consultation (as opposed to only maintaining a *status quo*). The units at Alnarp and Umeå have offered their help in terms of statistical consultation.

2.4 Research School report

Arne reported the Research School activities in 2017 and 2018. Claudia added that one combined MSc/PhD course had to be cancelled at Ultuna. Arne men-

tioned that options for a further union of the three graduate schools will be discussed in 2018 after the staffing situation at Ultuna has improved. Göran stressed that a full union of the three graduate schools will probably never be possible and that the funding will always come from a range of sources. The discussion yielded that for the time being it remains unclear what the exact objectives of the proposed collaboration between the three units of Statistics@SLU in terms of research education in statistics are.

2.5 Secretarial post for Statistics@SLU, replacement of Research School coordinator

Arne and Claudia pointed out that the recent efforts to make Statistics@SLU more meaningful for all SLU (through increased collaboration across campuses) and to resolve the situation at Ultuna have come with an increase of admin work. To relax this burden and to free up quality time for achieving more for Statistics@SLU they suggested using some of the unspent annual Statistics@SLU budget to fund 15% of an SLU employee to fulfil secretarial duties. The Steering Committee agreed and recommended that these duties are pooled in one person together with the duties of the Research School coordinator to result in a total of 35%. In the event that Jaime Uria-Diez will leave SRH/SLU, these 35% should then (perhaps together with the 10-15% funded by R consultation) be internally advertised and a suitable person should be selected by Arne from the list of applicants. The responsibilities of both secretary and Research School coordinator are detailed in Appendix 6.

2.6 Statistics@SLU and KoN

We discussed that the publications of the members of Statistics@SLU will be submitted to different, quite broad review panels that are determined centrally. Whilst it is too late to suggest any changes for the upcoming KoN assessment, the question was raised whether this could/should be changed in the future. We concluded that this is perhaps not necessary but that Statistics@SLU should consider another internal review by 2020 following on from the 2014 review. This will be initiated by the Steering Committee.

2.7 AOB

Pär Aronsson, scientific advisor to the NJ Faculty, has recently requested several documents related to Statistics@SLU with the objective to prepare the discussion about a new senior-statistician position at the Ultuna unit. This work is now concluded.

A whole-day meeting of the members of Statistics@SLU is planned at Umeå in February/March 2018 to discuss the current affairs of the Centre and the Research School. Members of the Steering Committee are welcome to join.

Arne reported the recent opening of the Matérn consultation room at the S Faculty at Umeå. This took place on 25 October 2017 and was an official activity of Statistics@SLU.

Kristina Blennow mentioned that she is involved in a new MSc course that requires a lecturer in Bayesian statistics. Arne suggested that Anders Muszta in his group can potentially help, as he has offered a PhD course on this subject at Umeå in 2017.

The next meeting will be a telephone meeting on 29 November 2017, 14.00–15.00 hrs.



Arne Pommerening
Director



Göran Ståhl
Chairman

Appendices

1. Generic job description,
2. Minutes of the meeting on 23.05.2017.
3. Statistics@SLU in the SLU context.
4. Funding model of a senior consultant within Statistics@SLU.
5. Staffing situation of Statistics@SLU by end of December 2017.
6. Secretary and Research School coordinator responsibilities.