**Task force topics**

**Task force topic – Alumni**

There are clear advantages for the Department to keep former students from Bachelors to PhDs in our network. Beneficial for the Department would, for example, be if former students was invited to speak at events and seminars. Creating networking activities to bring together students of various levels of education, could form a sense of closeness to the Department and between former SLU students.

On the Department web page a form has been created for prior students to register in order to be a part of our ever growing network. We have also gathered information from Ladok concerning department graduates, which will serve as a base in the continuous work of making the network known.

**How this would be favorable to the students, the structural build of the network is still under discussion and the suggestion is to bring this question to Skåvsjöholm.**

**Task force topic –**[**“Ideas**](https://www.slu.se/globalassets/ew/org/inst/ekon/internt/motesanteckningar-inst.mote/working-group-5--scuring-larger-and-stable-funding.pdf) **and suggestions for recruitment and strengthened cooperation with academic partners”**

The need for development regarding seminars is essential and to help form habit of attendance, consolidated seminars across groups could prove successful. As well inviting more external speakers for seminars and to ask visitors like PhD committee members to speak and have seminars. A way to advertise this and make sure information circulates is to notify the dates to other universities and make us of kitchen boards to engage with urban and rural development. Ask colleagues to join in on encourage participation in seminars elsewhere.

Another important section is hosting international events like smaller thematic workshops varied with larger workshops and conferences from time to time. As well as consortium meetings in large collaborative projects.

There is various ways to engage in international research projects and international exchange. Such as seed funds and incentives to engage in collaborative research proposals and exchange of PhD students and Postdocs with key strategic partners. As well as having joint mentoring and supervision of PhD students with key strategic partners and also strategically target key partners for recruitment.

**Questions on how to improve seminars will be brought to Skåvsjöholm for further progress.**

**Task force topic - How to manage the ‘support of vibrant research culture’ – *organizational perspectives***

To shape or support a more vibrant research culture we identified that explicit support is needed for engaging research projects where funding from external sources has not yet been established. For example, establishing relationships with people to form an interdisciplinary project.

On project process support we discussed management culture, e.g. do we want goals and objectives that are assessed and revised on, let say, quarterly basis, e.g. proposal progress, paper progress, outreach. This management process could help us track progress and revise project direction as necessary but, importantly, it is not an approach for everyone.

We identified The Rural Entrepreneurship group as a good example of a group with a vibrant research culture. Perhaps we can make it more explicit, what characterize a vibrant research group, how can it develop further, and what support it might need. Also some discussions around Doctoral research school.

**Task force topic - Academic Identity**

Internal identity: This is connected to the need for people to feel that they belong; to the department and to the research group (or other similar group). When people have the sense of belonging it facilitates cooperation and provides great social value. “The sense of belonging” provides an identity as a co-worker of the department and as a co-worker within the research group. These identities are strongly connected to how others perceive us (the identity is who we are, what we do, our brand).

Some suggestion on how to achieve this - PhD course given within the research groups (for all PhD’s within the group). Seniors give lectures/seminars. This could be a way do unit the group and an arena to find common grounds within the group, but also bring up different perspectives. Also Superfika is an important forum to share knowledge on what other groups are doing. And to take care of new employees, give them a sense of belonging. For example, within a research group we could give seminar where everyone presented what they are working on.
**Exercise for research groups at Skåvsjöholm could be to “talk about how we are similar and how we are different”, “Why we are a group and who are we” also “How do we want our group to be? What do we want our group to do?”**

External identity/brand: Individuals communicate! We present at conferences, symposiums and go to different kinds of forums as employees. Here we are carriers of different corporate identities; different brands. For example the research group’s identity, the department’s identity and SLU’s identity. In order to be able to communicate all these identities, the individual needs to feel belonging (that these identities are part of who we are - how we identify ourselves). One important example is the identity of the “Department of Economics”, which is a brand that several members cannot use to identify themselves with, since the name excludes for example business and management. We see this as a problem when we meet external colleagues who have the impression that we are exclusively focused on economics.

A suggestion is to do more active work on the Departments web page. It’s needed to allocate more time for that. **More ideas to discuss on Skåvsjöholm would be to discuss the name of the Department. It’s time to develop the brand of the department into becoming more inclusive and true to what we do and who we are. It would have a positive effect on how the Department is communicated externally. Also to discuss what external events that the research group could/should attend. This is a chance to be seen (branding) and have impact, as well as a chance to develop ideas for research – strategically define what events to attend and could these events be divided between members in the group? Who wants to go and who have the possibility? Furthermore how to allocate time. Individuals need to feel this is important. Why not compensate individuals for spent time? And to share your experiences with your group members.**

**Task force topic - “Ideas and suggestions for how to strengthen the/a PhD focus”**

Job market paper would demonstrate PhD skills, training and aptitude as economist with a website together with PhD student projects. Where the student’s projects would be presented and links to job market paper and CV available. To involve Postdocs in PhD students projects as co-supervisors would bring merits fort Postdocs for future career development. To further increase the cooperation in the department, a network for PhD students and Postdocs should be created.

Inviting top (ranked) researchers and circulate information about the ones visiting. Having short introductory presentation during Superfika and a common Outlook invitation for invitations to seminars. To increase the cooperation with society and industries we should invite authorities and industries to see where we have common grounds.

 To ensure that there are new PhDs coming in, funding is very much needed. Including PhD students when writing applications and holding sessions on how to write proposals could be a way to solve the funding issues. We could create a common folder with examples of successful applications vs. Non-successful ones.

**Task force topic -**[**“Ideas and suggestions for the pursuit to secure larger and more stable funding”**](https://www.slu.se/globalassets/ew/org/inst/ekon/internt/motesanteckningar-inst.mote/working-group-5--scuring-larger-and-stable-funding.pdf)

Some of the challenges at the Department of Economics due to rapidly changing landscape for research funding includes that research becomes more and more interdisciplinary and internationalized. Also that it’s expected to be socially relevant and contribute to solving problems in society. Furthermore the competition for external research funding is increasingly intensified.

We have to view the department as a professional business committed to maintain a sound financial balance. Priority should be given to large public and private funds from Swedish, European and international agencies. Strong research collaboration internally and externally is one of the main paths forward, not only increasing the quality of research, but also in creating the foundation for future funding.

We seek to better utilizing international networks of professors and senior staff to increase the number of international applications. A funding advisory platform could be created to bring together experienced senior researchers and grant applications. If senior researchers should collaborate with more junior researchers on drafting applications it would provide a natural setting for transferring important skills and know-how regarding how to make successful applications.

Securing research funding is important to our Department, however managing the research funds is equally important in order to produce interesting results of high quality. The Department could improve the support to holders of research grants and develop more incentives for applying for external funding.