

READY TO
COLLABORATE

Umeå School of Business,
Economics and Statistics
2023



UMEÅ SCHOOL OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS
UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

FROM THE DEAN

As I write these words it's a beautiful winter's day in Umeå. The campus is covered in a pristine layer of snow, and the first ice skater has been seen on the pond. We have the privilege of being part of a close-knit and vibrant campus, where students, staff and external guests have ample opportunities to meet across different fields of study and queries.

Throughout the preceding year, we have discussed the balance between on-campus and online courses and study programmes. Determining the optimal environment for student learning has been a focal point of our strategic considerations. Similarly, we have deliberated on the most conducive settings for fostering research, engaging with our broader community, and enhancing our work environment. This annual report encapsulates a selection of activities,

initiatives and notable achievements that have characterised our journey over the past year.

2023 marked a year of significant progress and achievement. Our ongoing efforts to refine teaching, research, and collaborative practices continued to evolve. In autumn we welcomed the inaugural cohort of students to the International Business and Economics Programme. Additionally, we successfully launched our second bachelor's programme in business and economics. It was a great joy to witness several of our new online courses emerge as top contenders in the list of the most sought-after courses at Umeå University. A list that our course in project management has held the top position at for many years, and still do. Our range of courses and study programmes includes programmes on campus and online courses for lifelong learning to complement one another.



“I’ve had the profound privilege of steering an extraordinary organisation alongside incredibly talented colleagues, students, board members, and collaborators both within and beyond Umeå University. We’ve risen to the occasion and demonstrated our unity and power of collaboration, when it comes down to it, we really can do it – together!”



Crafting a comprehensive summary of the impactful research conducted within our seven disciplines is not easily done. Much of it owes its existence to the dedication invested in writing and submitting research applications to various funding bodies. The past year has been successful and funding for projects approved this year has come from bodies including the Swedish Research Council, Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, and Formas. In terms of research, Umeå School of Business, Economics and Statistics (USBE) continues to excel and make scholarly as well as practical impact. Several researchers can be found within TAIGA, the environment at Umeå University that brings together researchers in the field of AI. Over the course of the year Umeå University has presented three prioritised research areas, and we are actively engaged in two of them. Moreover, our capacity to fund doctoral student positions has been strengthened with successful funding applications and among them from different graduate schools.

The board's annual strategy day together with our external council addressed two parts, geopolitics in the Nordic context and generative AI. At the strategy day we also presented our new platform for value-creation dialogues with the surrounding society, Handelshögskolan tillsammans [USBE Together]. This was also the year when we broke a record, with 350 students graduating at the annual ceremony in Aula Nordica. This was my last ceremony as Dean of USBE.

As I reflect on this mandate period, which has stretched just over eight years, initially slated for six, the time has simply flown by, much like it does when you're thoroughly engaged.

It's been a journey filled with moments of joy, challenges, and yes, even difficulty. Yet, amidst it all, I've had the profound privilege of steering an extraordinary organisation alongside incredibly talented colleagues, students, board members, and collaborators both within and beyond Umeå University. Together we've cultivated this organisation, achieved international accreditation, been re-accredited (yes that's another milestone that was achieved in 2023) and the generated knowledge will undoubtedly shape the landscape of future research endeavours, individual pursuits, and society at large. We have gone through a pandemic with everything that entails in terms of not being able to see each other on campus, reconfiguring teaching, examinations, outreach activities, and research. In the face of these challenges, we've risen to the occasion and demonstrated our unity and power of collaboration, when it comes down to it, we really can do it - together!

There is a time for everything, and it's now time for me to hand over to the next Dean. I strongly believe in our system of fixed-term and rotating academic leadership contracts. One reason being that it creates good opportunities for continuous improvement with new thoughts and ideas about the future of USBE. It's with joy and pride that I hand over leadership of USBE to Mats Bergman.

My most heartfelt thanks to all of those I have had the pleasure of working with over these years, and to Mats I offer a warm welcome!

Sofia Lundberg,
Dean of USBE



“It’s fantastic to be entrusted with this position. I will continue Sofia’s excellent work, helping to attract new students and providing them with a good education, bringing in research funding and creating the prerequisites for good research.”

NEW DEAN

At the end of the year Sofia Lundberg, who has had the role since 2015, hands over the baton to Mats Bergman who has been appointed dean and head of department as of 1 January 2024.

Mats Bergman is Professor of Economics at Södertörn University. His field of research is industrial organisation, in particular competition policy, mergers, regulation and deregulation, network industries and public procurement, as well as competitive provision of welfare services. Bergman is also an economic expert at the Patent and Market Court, chair of the Swedish Retailers’ and Wholesalers’ Economic Council and a member (substitute) of the Board for Pharmaceutical Benefits at the Dental and Pharmaceutical Benefits Agency.



CONTINUED QUALITY ACCREDITATION!

We had reason to celebrate in January in conjunction with the gratifying news that USBE received continued quality accreditation from the AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business).

The decision means that we can continue to count ourselves among the ten percent of business schools in the world that have an AACSB accreditation, and which thereby demonstrate a continuous commitment to be at the cutting edge in education, research and curriculum development, as well as having a functioning system for safeguarding the learning processes of students. The economics programme at USBE was initially accredited in 2018. The accreditation is re-evaluated every five years.



The AACSB Peer Review team and USBE Management team.

AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business). A quality system which aims to encourage business schools to pursue systematic and continuous development work based on their missions, improving organisational quality.





STATISTICS 60 YEARS!

In 2023 it was the 60th anniversary of both statistics and economics being subjects at Umeå University. The Department of Statistics chose to acknowledge this in conjunction with World Statistics Day on 20 October.

The subject of statistics was established at Umeå University in 1963, the same year as the Swedish Riksdag decided to award the higher education institution in Umeå the right to call itself a university. In conjunction with that decision a number of new subjects were introduced within the natural and social sciences - among them statistics - which was soon followed by the establishment of four new faculties and the official inauguration of the university in 1965. The subject has, in different organisational forms, been a part of the activities of USBE since it was founded in 1989.

The department chose to celebrate the 60th anniversary on 20 October - the date designated World Statistics Day by the UN. In 2023 the UN acknowledged the significance of data and statistics in their work with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, goals that USBE has also previously used to draw attention to its work and make this more visible. The government agency Statistics Sweden held an event in Stockholm on this date regarding the statistics and statisticians of the future - the live broadcast of the event was shown in the statistics department staff room and the celebration ended as it should with a birthday cake.



CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Continuous improvement is not a buzzword for us at USBE. We work actively with both major and minor factors to develop our programmes and courses, as well as to make aspects such as sustainable development, responsible leadership and corporate responsibility integral to our courses and study programmes.

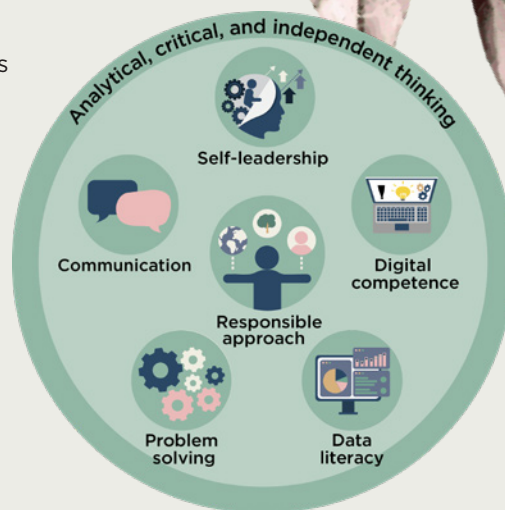
A new programme has been started in 2023, and another one has been developed for students to be admitted in the autumn semester of 2024. The work on continuous improvement is also expressed through the activities that the Committee of Teaching and Learning (CTL) has initiated and implemented in 2023, some examples of which are provided below.

SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS AND THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

One aspect of the quality system for education involves creating various forms of support for teachers. Over the past year CTL has both worked to create support in the form of a systematic approach to course evaluations, and on support for educational development. A project group under CTL has developed a course evaluation system that includes a template for questionnaires and a bank of questions from which teachers can gain inspiration for questions to use. Over the past year CTL has been responsible for three educational seminars, one of which focused on how equality can be integrated and made visible in education and two seminars with the shared theme of summative assessment. In addition to this, integration of the competency “self-leadership” has been discussed in workplace meetings.

ROLES AND FUNCTIONS IN THE QUALITY SYSTEM FOR EDUCATION

USBE’s quality system for education encompasses several committees, boards and roles, and these work independently and together on quality issues in the programmes and courses at USBE. Over the course of the year, descriptions of these functions and roles have been produced, which contributes to



enabling us to ensure that the educational processes work smoothly and that we are able to work together on continuous improvement within the scope of the quality system.

COMPETENCIES OF USBE

In 2022 USBE decided, within the framework of the quality system for education and AoL (assurance of learning), to specifically focus on six competencies. Measurements are being conducted in order to ensure that students are given the opportunities to develop these competencies. Direct measurements involve students’ actual performance, something that can indicate how well a goal has been achieved. Performance is measured in, for example, written work, summative assessment assignments or oral presentations, and these thus constitute physical evidence of learning. Indirect measurements can be conducted as a complement to these measurements. These involve students’ or other interested parties’ views on goal attainment. Indirect measurements can be conducted in, for example, alumni or employer surveys and programme evaluations. In 2023 CTL has continued its work to implement indirect measurements of competencies.

LIFELONG LEARNING

USBE has several courses with high numbers of applicants, and they frequently appear at the top of the list of the most applied for courses at Umeå University. Several of the courses are online courses with a reduced rate of study. They are suitable to be studied in parallel with, for example, programme studies or work, and form a part of our range within lifelong learning. The course in leading and running projects (Att leda och driva projekt) that is taught by Business Administration is the course that, with 2,050 applicants, has the highest number of applicants of all courses at Umeå University. With 202 applicants, it is at number three in terms of the number of first-choice applicants. Two new courses are also high up on the list of courses with the most applicants. These are Public Procurement, Theory, Practice and Economics, which is taught by Economics, and Introduction to R, which is taught by Statistics. The total number of applicants for these courses was 616 (place 12) and 522 (place 18), respectively. Public Procurement, Theory, Practice and Economics also attracted many first-choice applicants and comes in fourth place with 198 applicants. There were a total of 1,513 courses available to apply for at Umeå University alone in autumn 2023.

PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

In autumn, the International Business and Economics Programme, which was developed in 2022, welcomed its first students. In 2023 an additional bachelor's programme has been developed at USBE.

NEW BACHELOR'S PROGRAMME 2024

The Bachelor's Programme in Business and Economics will offer students the opportunity to achieve a bachelor's degree within any of the main fields of study (business administration or economics) with a focus on change and innovation. This focus is consistent with our overall mission with the goal of promoting our students' understanding, ability and sense of responsibility towards the challenges faced by society. Through a well-balanced combination of courses within the



Rickard Lindberg was part of the project group responsible for coordinating the programme development.

scope of the programme, we equip students for the challenges linked to factors including digitalisation, sustainability and innovation that are faced by the companies and organisations of the future. Data-driven decision-making will also be a clearly integrated aspect of the programme.

WHAT MAKES THE PROGRAMME NEW AND RELEVANT TO STUDENTS AND EMPLOYERS?

- Both companies and public-sector organisations now face new expectations in terms of their work with sustainability and have new technology (AI) to take into account, which entails a need for renewal. This can be done through, for example, reviewing the business model, developing competencies, finding methods to enable rapid testing and evaluation of new initiatives, creating insights from unstructured data and revising which key ratios are to direct operations and in what way. To do so also requires an understanding how the modern economy functions at a systemic level.

WHAT IS DIFFERENT COMPARED TO OTHER PROGRAMMES AT USBE?

- The programme places greater focus on the need for and ability to transition and innovate how operations are run when conditions and expectations are altered.



COOPERATION WITHIN EDUCATION

Through, for example, guest lectures, degree projects, placements and initiatives such as Innovation Camp, we create the prerequisites for reciprocal exchanges between stakeholders within industry, the public sector and students that are beneficial to all parties. This gives students opportunities to familiarise themselves with and prepare for the labour market.

GUEST LECTURES

Guest lectures are a frequent and valued feature of study programmes and take place in both the classroom and online. The guest lecturer normally illustrates how a specific field is handled in their own organisation.



USBE's Career Centre arranges lectures outside of the normal course activities, with the invited speakers often being former students, as well as people with no previous connection to USBE. The Career Centre works to support and prepare students for the labour market and the focus of the lectures is therefore on different career paths and professions.

For example, in 2023 we have been visited by Marcela Klang, Deputy Head of Equity Research at Handelsbanken Capital Markets, who, in addition to guest lectures, has contributed with insights into the competition CFA Research Challenge, which for the first time has participants from Umeå, as well

as insights into Handelsbanken's trainee programme. We were also visited by our alumna Sara Öhrvall, who has held leading positions in major Swedish companies such as Bonnier, SEB and Axel Johnson with a connection to innovation, change and digitalisation.



CAREERS DAY FOR STUDENTS

A careers day was organised at the beginning of the year by Statistikfrämjandet for students of statistics and data science. Representatives from industry, the enterprise sector and civil society participated, and it was a perfect opportunity for students to gain inspiration and make contacts for both degree projects and future employment.

PERFECT MATCH BETWEEN EDUCATION AND WORK

In an opinion poll aimed at students in the Business Administration and Economics Programme who graduated in 2022, 92 percent stated a good-to-perfect match between education and work. A recurring piece of advice from the same opinion poll was to do an internship, and several people reflected on the importance of the internship for the first job after graduation.

In 2023 students at USBE have elected to conduct their placements at the Stockholm Chamber of Commerce, the Ministry of Finance, Esam, Whirlpool and Ålö.



Sofia Lundberg (USBE), Tove Näsman (SHIFT Education), Erica Hansen (Esam).

SOLOMIA COACHING

In autumn 2023 the new initiative Solomia coaching was started in collaboration with certified coaches from SHIFT Education and Esam. The aim of the programme is to improve the participant's opportunities to develop and maximise their personal and professional potential in a thought-provoking creative process together with a coach. At an individual level, the goal of the programme is to highlight young women within academia and their dreams about the future in order to enhance their potential to get there. A long-term and societal ambition is to contribute to a more even balance between sexes in senior positions in the enterprise sector and public sector.

Solomia coaching takes place once per academic year and is a voluntary activity outside of the regular course activities. Ten students are offered places and the first event attracted 23 applicants.



Mikael Damberg with students from HHUS.

VISIT FROM THE FORMER MINISTER FOR FINANCE

At the end of the year USBE received a visit from Mikael Damberg, deputy chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Finance, who held a lecture for students in macroeconomics about the state of the Swedish economy. The lecture was followed by a meeting with USBE' student association, HHUS, at which representatives were given the opportunity to pose questions to the former minister for finance.



STUDENT RECRUITMENT

USBE' strategic educational goals encompass boosting recruitment of domestic and international students. The below activities were among those implemented over the course of the year.

CAMPAIGNS

In the autumn of 2022 social media campaigns were conducted that focussed primarily on marketing our three-year International Business and Economics Programme that began in autumn 2023. The campaign was very successful and generated many visits to the programme website. In the end it also resulted in many actual applicants for the new programme.



OPEN HOUSE

The open house is a recurring information day organised by Umeå University for upper secondary school pupils. This year it attracted a record number of visitors; more than 3,700 people from all over northern Sweden visited the campus in November in order to see and experience what it is like to study and live as a student in Umeå. USBE participated with two stands and five well-attended information sessions where we talked about our activities.



USBE staff and student representatives.

SACO STUDENT FAIR IN STOCKHOLM

The Saco fair, which has just over 20,000 visitors each year, was held in Stockholm at the end of November. USBE was represented by study coordinators, our career center and two of our students. Both the fair and the stand were well-attended and USBE also held two information sessions titled "Study at a Business School - An interactive journey towards the future as an economist and data scientist".

AWARDS AND HONOURS WITHIN EDUCATION

USBE' EDUCATIONAL PRIZE

The educational prize for 2023 was awarded to Associate Professor Jan Bodin and Professor Stefan Sundgren. Both have a great commitment to students' learning and, in their respective teaching roles, they motivate students through good knowledge of the subject and excellent teaching ability.



THE FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES' EDUCATIONAL PRIZE

The 2023 educational prize at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Umeå University, was awarded to the Education and Learning Committee (CTL) at USBE, consisting of Malin Näsholm, Maria Karlsson, Magnus Wikström, Tomas Raattamaa, Jessica Fahlén, Sofia Isberg (not pictured) and Ulrica Nylén (not pictured). They were awarded the prize for their systematic work evaluating and developing the quality of the courses and study programmes at USBE.



NORDEA'S ESSAY PRIZE WITHIN DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

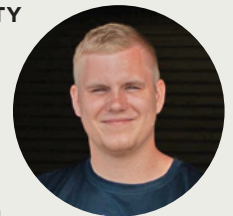
This year's prize within diversity and inclusion, worth SEK 15,000, was awarded to Maike Strube for the thesis "Unemployment of Foreign-Born People in Europe: A study of the Beveridge Curve between 2012 and 2021". Maike is a master's student in economics and has also worked as a teaching assistant at USBE. The jury write in their justification that the thesis was a clear winner this year as it highlights target groups, gender differences and integration policy in the labour market. The essay deals with the important issue of labour market conditions for migrants in Europe.



"I feel very grateful to accept this award. Diversity and inclusion deserves more acknowledgement within economics. I hope more students will be inspired to incorporate new perspectives in their studies."

DISSERTATION PRIZE IN SUSTAINABILITY AND BUSINESS ETHICS

The prize is awarded annually by the Research Institute for Organization and Business in Sustainable Transitions (ROBUST) at USBE and Umeå Energi. In 2023 Simon Sandahl, a student at Halmstad University, was chosen as the recipient of the prize. Simon was awarded a grant of SEK 25,000 for his master's dissertation "Electrification choices of heavy road transporters - An exploratory study of the connections between the technology choices and the transporters' business models".



TEACHER OF THE YEAR 2023

PLUM (association of HR management students) awarded the prize “Teacher of the year” to a teacher voted by the students from each year. Year two awarded the prize to Anna Thorsell for her teaching contribution during a course in business administration.



NATIONALEKONOMISKA FÖRENINGEN'S DISSERTATION PRIZE

Each year the association awards a grant of SEK 10,000 to the best master's dissertation in the subject of economics written by a student at Umeå University. The recipient of the prize for 2023 was Jessica Lidberg for her dissertation entitled “WILL THE MUNICIPALITIES BENEFIT?: The impact of wind power deployment on the local economy - Evidence from Sweden”.



Mirjam Lundin and Victor Paridon.

THE HAKON SWENSON FOUNDATION'S ESSAY PRIZE

Each year the Hakon Swenson Foundation awards a student essay prize. The recipients for 2023 were Mirjam Lundin and Victor Paridon from the Master's Programme in Business Development and Internationalisation with the essay “Unmanned convenience stores: The future of retail or just glorified vending machines?”. The justification states that “The design of essay's investigation, its thorough literature review and results constitute great value and a strong basis for further research into the role of unmanned convenience stores in terms of solving product supply problems in rural areas or as a part of retailers' strategies for expanding their store networks in areas that currently have no manned stores”.

USBE ALUMNI FOUNDATION AND SWEDBANK'S PRIZE

The recipient of this year's grant of SEK 10,000, awarded in partnership with Swedbank, was Douglas Drake, a student from the Study Programme in Business Administration and Economics, for his contributions within the field of finance and the association Unga Aktiesparare [young shareholders] with the goal of increasing the proportion of women in the association. While he has been studying, Douglas has got involved in various ways including by representing USBE at the Swedish Championships in Economics. However, Douglas has been awarded the grant thanks to his work as chair of Unga Aktiesparare Umeå. Douglas has demonstrated through his efforts the importance of collaboration between different associations by working towards a closer collaboration between Unga Aktiesparare and the finance committee at HHUS. A more active dialogue between the associations creates the conditions for increasing knowledge of and interest in finance among students at USBE.



SIEMENS FINANCIAL SERVICES ESSAY PRIZE IN FINANCE

The recipients of the prize for 2023 and SEK 20,000 were Kristina Björling and Fredrika Norberg, students at the Umeå School of Business, Economics and Statistics for the essay “Female Directors and Companies' Financial Profitability: A panel data analysis of the effect of women on boards of Swedish large cap companies”.



INTERNATIONAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND STUDENT MOBILITY

USBE has around 70 carefully chosen exchange agreements with different partner universities around the world, which means we are able to offer our students a both varied and high quality selection of opportunities for student mobility, and we encourage as many people as possible to take the opportunity to experience what studying abroad has to offer.

Internationalisation is an important issue and a continual ongoing process at USBE that encompasses our students' opportunities to study at one of our partner universities as well as teachers' opportunities for mobility.



109 *incoming students*

9 *students with internship abroad*

162 *applications for studies abroad*

Our students are to be given international perspectives on the subjects they are studying and offered an international study environment. We continuously review our agreement portfolio in order to be able to offer additional countries for mobility. We now offer students the opportunity to choose from around 70 partner universities, and our students can also choose among Umeå University's agreements. In 2023 we welcomed 109 international students and 101 of our students chose to travel on an exchange.

POPULAR DESTINATIONS 2023

In 2023 France has been a popular country for exchange studies and is also a country from which we have received many inbound exchange students. In addition to France, other popular destinations for our students have been Italy and Spain.

NETWORKING

Part of the internationalisation work is participation in conferences and networking meetings in order to develop and strengthen the relationships with our partner universities. In 2023 our international coordinators represented USBE at the EAIE conference in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, with the theme "Connecting Currents", and visited our partner university KU Leuven during their partnership week with the theme "Truly International(L): creating an inclusive campus" in Leuven, Belgium.

PRESENT AND AVAILABLE TEACHERS

Students from France who have come to USBE on an exchange have said they are very happy with their stay. The fact that the students are trained in analytical and critical thinking and that the teachers from USBE are described as present and available are just some examples that are frequently highlighted in the students' reports after

an exchange with us. Umeå's proximity to nature and a vibrant student life are other examples that stand out.

Other interesting observations from both incoming and outgoing students are the differences in study systems. In Sweden students study one course at a time that ends with an exam before starting a new course. In France, the students study the majority of courses in parallel and the students then have exams for all the courses at the end of the semester. A central difference is also the attendance at lectures. In France there is an attendance requirement, whereas students in Umeå spend more time on independent study. The students say that it is valuable to get to try both approaches that requires entirely different study techniques.

THE FOUNDATION OF PER AND EIVOR WIKSTRÖM

The purpose of the foundation is to support scientific teaching, research and study. Our incoming and outgoing exchange students and staff can apply for funding through our collaboration with the Foundation of Per and Eivor Wikström, which contributes to scholarships for student and teacher mobility with a link to French-speaking countries.

SCHOLARSHIPS

In 2023 a total of 52 scholarships were approved by the Foundation of Per and Eivor Wikström. Twenty-eight of which were outgoing students and sixteen were incoming. There were also eight grants for staff from USBE.

NEW CHAIR OF THE BOARD

At the meeting of the board of the Foundation of Per and Eivor Wikström on 18 September, Carl-Johan Gestrup was elected chair. Carl-Johan succeeds Eivor Wikström who has held the position since the mid-2000s.

101 *outgoing students*

72 *exchange agreements*

52 *scholarships awarded by the Foundation of Per & Eivor Wikström, 28 outgoing students and 16 incoming*



“University life in Umeå was very rewarding. The courses were of high quality, offering a balanced combination of theory and practice. The teachers were competent and actively encouraged discussion and exchange of ideas”

- Baptiste Dubois du Bellay, incoming student from Grenoble Ecole de Management, France.



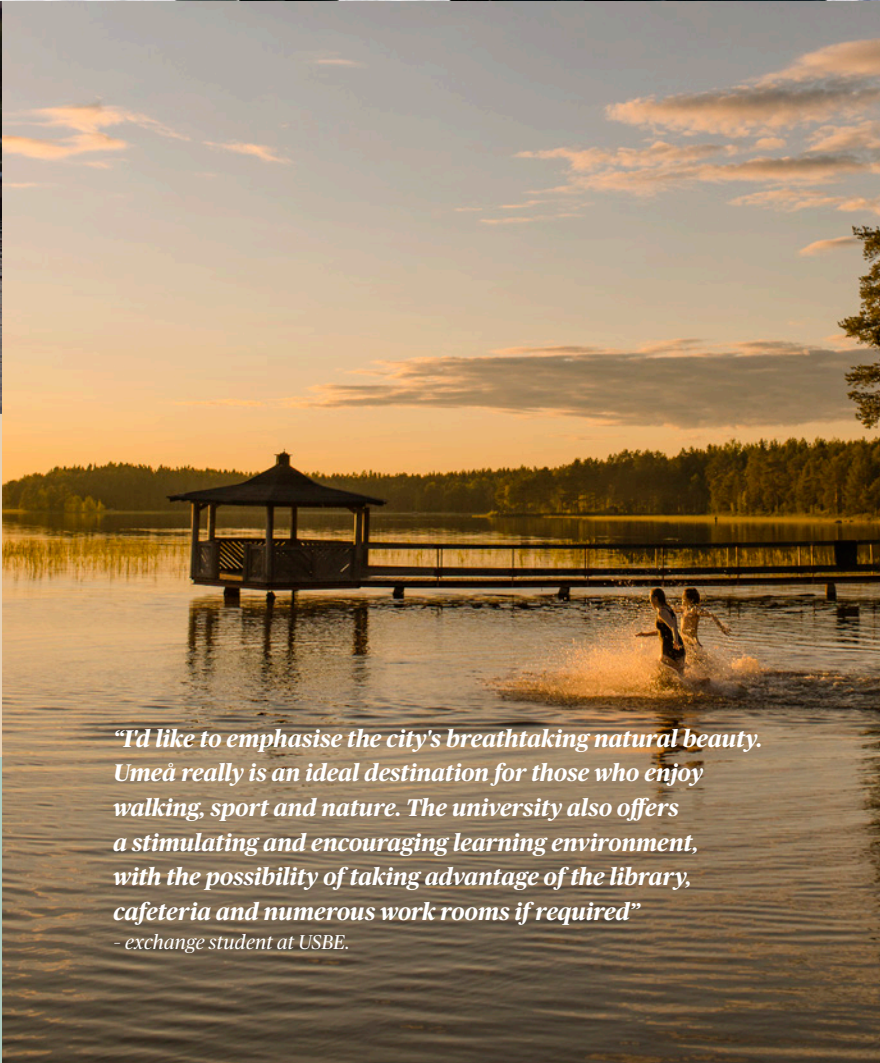
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

During the year, the following teachers entered Umeå University's system for the acquisition of educational qualifications.

Recognised university teachers: Alice Annelin, Business Administration, Henry Lopez-Vega, Business Administration, Lars Persson, Economics, Magdalena Markowska, Business Administration, Norbert Steigenberger, Business Administration, Siarhei Manzhynski, Business Administration

SCIENTIFIC QUALIFICATIONS

New docents: Anders Lundquist, Statistics, Elin Nilsson, Business Administration, Henry Lopez-Vega, Business Administration, Magdalena Markowska, Business Administration, Siarhei Manzhynski, Business Administration



“I'd like to emphasise the city's breathtaking natural beauty. Umeå really is an ideal destination for those who enjoy walking, sport and nature. The university also offers a stimulating and encouraging learning environment, with the possibility of taking advantage of the library, cafeteria and numerous work rooms if required”
- exchange student at USBE.

PROGRAMME PORTFOLIO AT USBE

FIRST CYCLE PROGRAMMES

Bachelor's Programme in Business and Economics 180 credits

International Business and Economics Programme 180 credits

Statistics and Data Science Programme 180 credits

PROFESSIONAL DEGREE PROGRAMMES

Business Administration and Economics Programme 240 credits

Retail and Supply Chain Management Programme 240 credits

Service Management Programme 240 credits

MASTER'S PROGRAMMES

Master's Programme in Accounting 120 credits

Master's Programme in Business Development and Internationalisation 120 credits

Master's Programme in Economics 120 credits

Master's Programme in Finance 120 credits

Master's Programme in Management 120 credits

Master's Programme in Marketing 120 credits

Master's Programme in Statistics and Data Science 60 credits

SINGLE SUBJECT COURSES

USBE offers numerous courses in business administration, economics and statistics. Course offerings include both on-campus and distance learning courses, and the language of instruction is Swedish or English.

PHD STUDIES

USBE offers doctoral education in business administration, economics and statistics. The education comprises four years of full-time study and consists of a course component and a thesis component. Admission to doctoral studies is based on the announcement of vacancies.

Read more: www.umu.se/en/usbe



ACADEMIC CELEBRATIONS



SPRING DOCTORAL AWARD CEREMONY

The spring doctoral award ceremony was arranged in the middle of May, one of Umeå University's annual events, which takes place over two days. On the first day the award recipients hold lectures and educational discussions. Day two is the ritual ceremony when doctoral insignia and prizes are awarded.

ANNUAL CELEBRATION

The Annual Celebration, Umeå University's other academic celebration, took place, as usual, in the middle of October. In the morning, prior to the ceremony, professors, honorary doctors and award recipients held brief lectures about their respective fields. Norbert Steigenberger from USBE was installed as Professor of Business Administration. The Department of Economics is the host of the Erik Kempe Award for best article within environmental and resource economics. The winners of the award for 2022, Thomas Douenne and Adrien Fabre for the article "Yellow Vests, Pessimistic Beliefs, and Carbon Tax Aversion", were also acknowledged during the ceremony.

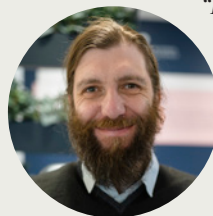
USBE GRADUATION CEREMONY

This year a record number of students graduated from USBE's study programmes, a total of 350 students participated in the ceremony. Aula Nordica was full, and as it was not possible to meet the high demand to attend, the ceremony was broadcast live for the first time. It is reported that the number of visitors participating online was about 1,600. Diplomas and various prizes were awarded according to tradition. The graduation ceremony was embellished with music and song and ended with a mingle.

HONOURS AND PRIZES WITHIN RESEARCH

NORDEA'S ACADEMIC PRIZE

Norbert Steigenberger, Professor of Business Administration, was awarded this year's academic prize from Nordea. In its justification, Nordea writes that Steigenberger's work is vital to those who search for resources, invest in ventures and develop regions, all of which is within the Nordea's sphere of interest. He has delivered strong international work in the past and will continue to do so in future.



"I feel very honoured to have received this prize - and I am grateful for the invaluable input I have received from my co-authors and colleagues in the various departments where I have worked. Research is very seldom an individual effort but a product of people working together in a creative and collaborative manner."

USBE SCIENTIFIC AWARD

The scientific award in economics is awarded to Assistant Professor Hanna Lindström. The equivalent prize in business administration is awarded to Associate Professor Ulrika Leijerholt.



SVENSKA REVISIONSAKADEMIN'S PRIZE

Stefan Sundgren, Business Administration, and Henrik Nilsson, Stockholm School of Economics, were awarded Svenska Revisionsakademins prize for significant contributions within research at FAR's 100th anniversary.





Thomas Biedenbach, Bekzat Musrepova and Mattias Jacobsson.

BEST THEORETICAL PAPER

Bekzat Musrepova, Thomas Biedenbach, and Mattias Jacobsson, Business Administration, have been awarded the Taylor and Francis Award for best theoretical paper at the 2023 ARCOM conference in Leeds. The title is: “Orchestrators, Ambassadors and Brokers: Understanding informal roles for the enabling of digital ambidexterity in construction firms”.



PRIZE FOR BEST CONFERENCE PAPER

Mattias Jacobsson, Business Administration, together with Henrik Linderoth (Jönköping University) received a prize at the 2023 ARCOM conference, the Rod Howes Award for Best Conference Paper for the paper: “The challenges of trying something new: On (in)congruence and (in)consistency of technological frames in a Swedish railway infrastructure case”.

BEST PAPER AWARD

Alice Annelin and Gert-Olof Boström, Business Administration, were awarded “Best Paper Award” for their working paper “Sustainability Competence Assessment Validation” at the European Symposium on Sustainability in Business Education, Research and Practices in Liverpool.



BEST REVIEWER AWARD

Sergio Alves, doctoral student in business administration, was awarded two prizes at the Academy of Management Conference: “Best Reviewer” from the “Organizations and the Natural Environment” division and “Outstanding Reviewer” from the “Strategic Management” division.



BEST REVIEWER AWARD

Wesley da Paixão de Oliveira, doctoral student in business administration, was awarded the “Best Reviewer Award of AOM 2023” from the Technology and Innovation Management (TIM) division in connection with the 83rd Academy of Management Conference.



USBE TOGETHER

October saw the premiere of the new discussion concept “USBE Together” which is being implemented with the aim of bringing together academia and practice in a value-creation dialogue concerning questions and research results of relevance to society. The conversations are filmed and published so that they can be used for educational purposes.

Dialogue is at the centre of the USBE Together concept. This is expressed, among other ways, in the conversations held between panel members concerning areas of relevance to society with a link to the fields of expertise within USBE. The dialogue is also held together with the audience that has listened to the panel and who, as soon as the camera is turned off, are invited to continue the discussion and share experiences and knowledge.

The need to continue to develop the forms of collaboration at USBE, to reach out and, at the same time, listen through dialogue, has been expressed for a long time. The initiative complements current forms of collaboration, and the opportunity to initiate USBE Together was opened when Annakarín Nyberg, Associate Professor at the Department of Informatics, became connected to USBE in autumn 2023. A further ambition for the conversation concept is for the films to be used as part of the teaching at USBE. Two meetings were arranged in the autumn, both of which were well-attended and praised. The first focussed on “Boards’ strategic work on sustainability” and the other had the theme of “An inclusive enterprise sector”. The diverse audience, which included researchers, teachers, doctoral students and representatives of the enterprise sector, contributed to interesting discussions and perspectives. Further events are planned for the spring semester of 2024.



From left: Martin Ärlestig (Mac AB), Kristina Säfsten (Övik Energi), Martin Gunhaga (Fort Knox), Sara Öhrvall (Axel Jonson) and moderator Annakarín Nyberg.



From left: Ulrica Nylén (USBE), Hampus Jonsson (Rototilt AB), Helene Hellmark Knutsson (Västerbotten County) and Johan Lundberg (USBE).



THIS ALSO HAPPENED!

MORE EXAMPLES FROM 2023

UMEÅ GALAN

USBE, together with Marknadsföreningen Umeå, jointly organised the award Brand of the Year and also participated in the work of the jury that decided on the awards Brand of the Year and Employer of the Year. At the gala event, USBE contributed with both a slideshow in a stand and with alumni as speakers.



Alumnas Kerstin Cooley and Sara Öhrvall along with our students Emma Gustafsson, Ida Melin and Lilly Andersson, all active in HHUS.

ALUMNI MEETING

This year's alumni meeting was arranged in conjunction with the event Västerbottensdagarna at Grand Hôtel in Stockholm. This is the ninth such meeting and had the theme: Societal change - from electricity market to the role of the leader in a broader sense for sustainable development. Speakers were researcher Mattias Vesterberg, Economics, Johan Lundberg, active at both CERUM and Economics, and Rickard Lindberg from USBE Career Centre. Dean Sofia Lundberg inaugurated the afternoon meeting. The event attracted around 40 participants.

RESEARCHERS IN THE MEDIA

In 2023 there has been media acknowledgement of experts from USBE in the form of teachers and professors in both debates and editorial texts. This has involved everything from sustainability in the fashion industry, questioning IKEA's sustainability efforts and the plastic bag tax, to deficiencies in how non-residential rents are set, the interest rate situation, household finances and female entrepreneurship.

RESEARCHERS WITHIN ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCE ECONOMY AT A WORKSHOP IN SKELLEFTEÅ

In the spring CERE and Luleå University of Technology organised a joint workshop in order to discuss everything from green crowdfunding to urban forests. The workshop brought together no less than 35 researchers within environmental and resource economy from the three northern universities, Luleå University of Technology, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences and Umeå University.

"Probably the largest gathering of environmental economists from higher education institutions in Norrland ever in one place"
- Göran Bostedt, CERE.



GENDER EQUALITY FORUM

Dean Sofia Lundberg was invited to speak at a seminar about public procurement with a gender equality perspective and described the opportunities of working with gender equality in public procurement and how suppliers have fulfilled the requirements in practice.

NETWORK FOR BRANDING-RELATED ISSUES

The network, which was initiated by Ulrika Leijerholt, Business Administration, is aimed at those who work to strengthen the organisational brand, internally and externally, in order to secure the values for which the organisation stands and wants to convey, in other words managers within the public sector, HR or communication officers.

UMEÅ RETAIL AWARDS

The former Handelsgalan has been reconfigured. The new format is the Umeå Retail Awards. Prizes are awarded at the gala event and inspirational presentations are held on the same day. In 2023 students from our study programmes had the opportunity to join in with the latter. Dean Sofia Lundberg participated on the jury that awarded the prize "Sustainable contribution of the year" and also awarded the prize at the gala. The prize was awarded to Ica Supermarket Teg.

RESEARCH

At USBE research of a high academic standard is conducted in three main fields of study: business administration, economics and statistics. Our researchers collaborate with their colleagues at USBE, with researchers at Umeå University and at other Swedish and international universities.

EXTERNAL FUNDING

Our research is funded via appropriations from the central government but also to a high degree from external grants and assignments. The external research funding comes from research councils, foundations and external partners within the enterprise sector and public sector and is a result of our researchers' successful research applications. Below is a brief presentation of some of the projects in which researchers from USBE are the main applicants and have been awarded external research grants in 2023.

LEADERSHIP, ENACTMENT & TRANSLATION IN AND ACROSS EXTRAORDINARY EVENTS

This project builds on a multi-year collaboration with the Swedish Police Authority and will focus on the hybrid leadership methods employed when the Police Authority in region north leads emergency events. The aim of the project is to understand how the mandate to enact hybrid leadership affects the leadership identities of the staff and how this mandate is successfully performed across different challenging situations. The project will contribute to cutting edge research on leadership and crisis management strategies.



Main applicant: Markus Hällgren, Business Administration (photo)

Co-applicant: Sophie Jané, Business Administration

Research Funder: Swedish Research Council

IMPACT MANAGEMENT: SUPPORT FOR ENTREPRENEURS WITH ENVIRONMENTAL AMBITIONS

This project focusses on the environmental and social impact of operations. Hence, impact is not reduced to economic terms but is given direct assessments. A consulting programme is developed to be included in the activities of partner organisation Coompanion. The programme supports the management, assessment and reporting of impact.



Main applicant: Karl Johan Bonnedahl, Business Administration (photo)

Co-applicant: Oscar Stålnacke, Business Administration

Partner: Coompanion Västerbotten

Research Funder: The Kamprad Family Foundation

ELECTRIFICATION OF PRIVATE TRANSPORT: PRICES, POLICY AND EQUITY

This project investigates how electrification of private transport and the demand for electric vehicles depends on the prices of cars and electricity and how price sensitivity varies between different customer groups (for example gender, income and where in the country they live). This information is necessary in order to enable the design of effective policy instruments so as to support the electrification of the transport sector, in order to understand the distributive effects of different policy instruments and to ensure a socially sustainable electrification of the transport sector.



Main applicant: Mattias Vesterberg, Economics

Research Funder: Formas



CREATING ATTRACTIVE PROCUREMENT PROCESSES - STRATEGIC TOOLS FOR MORE TENDERERS

At the same time as public procurement is supposed to make use of competition, there are political goals concerning, for example, the environment and climate, and the participation of small and medium-sized enterprises. This three-year project studies how the design of the procurement process affects the decision to submit a tender and the number of tenderers. An important contribution is that both actual and potential tenderers are included in the empirical analysis, which is based on a combination of questionnaire data, procurement data and company data.



Main applicant: Hanna Lindström,
Economics (photo)

Co-applicant: Johan Lundberg,
Economics, Sofia
Lundberg, Economics

Research Funder: Konkurrensverket

THE FORMATION AND COLLAPSE OF COLLUSION

Collusion can be arranged through companies taking turns to have the lowest price. When companies collude instead of competing, the prices become higher. In order to know what measures are worth implementing in order to reduce the risk of collusion, knowledge is required of how different variables affect the likelihood of them forming and collapsing. The purpose of the research project is to study how different variables affect the probabilities of collusion forming and collapsing using data from real markets, the Swedish markets for non-patented pharmaceuticals.



Main applicant: David Granlund,
Economics

Research Funder: Swedish Competition
Authority

NEW ROBUST ESTIMATES OF CAUSAL EFFECTS IN OBSERVATIONAL STUDIES

To evaluate effects in observational studies, consideration must be given to the fact that treatment and control groups differ in terms of certain confounding variables. A common method used to adjust for this is to reweigh the data so that imbalances between confounding variables are evened out. The purpose of the project is to develop new weighting methods based on “entropy balance” and thereby provide researchers with robust alternatives to model-based methods with better balance and stability properties.



Main applicant: David Källberg, Statistics
(photo)

Research Funder: IFAU

THE GREEN TRANSITION IN NORTHERN SWEDEN

The “green transition” in northern Sweden offers opportunities but also carries risks. One risk is that a lot of focus is placed on a few large actors, which can lead to risky economic monocultures. The aim of the project is to explore how entrepreneurs and small business-owners can obtain resources and acknowledgement in these circumstances.



Main applicant: Norbert Steigenberger,
Business Administration
(photo)

Co-applicant: Quang Evansluong,
Business Administration,
Zsuzsanna Vincze,
Business Administration

Partners: Skellefteå municipality
and Almi Nord

Research Funder: The Kamprad
Family Foundation

All USBE's publications are
available at [www.umu.se/en/usbe/
research/publications/](http://www.umu.se/en/usbe/research/publications/)



A SELECTION OF USBE EMPLOYEES' POSITIONS OF TRUST

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Professor Thomas Aronsson, director

Swedish Competition Authority

Professor Sofia Lundberg, director

Royal Skytten Society

Thomas Aronsson, director

Tomas Blomquist, director, auditor

Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences

Professor Thomas Aronsson, director

Riksstroket - a national quality register

Professor Marie Eriksson, member of the steering group

PBL Network

Associate Professor Annika Andersson, coordinator of the network nationally

Swedish Better Regulation Council Ministry of Finance/The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth

Professor Lars Silver, director

Swedish Tax Agency scientific council

Professor Thomas Aronsson, director

SNS Board of Trustees

Professor Sofia Lundberg, director

Professor Mats Bergman, director

Svenska stadskärnor's research council (Swedish City Centers' research council)

Docent Elin Nilsson, director

Swedish National Association of Purchasing & Logistic (SILF)

Professor Lars Silver, substitute

FUNDING OF NEW DOCTORAL STUDENTS WITH A GENDER FOCUS

FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS IN THE ARCTIC ENVIRONMENT

This doctoral student project aims to analyse how groups who traditionally find it more difficult as entrepreneurs can be activated in order to counter risks in conjunction with the green transition in northern Sweden. The project has a special focus on women as entrepreneurs in rural areas.



Main applicant:

Norbert Steigenberger, Business Administration (photo)

Co-applicants:

Quang Evansluong, Business Administration, Zsuzsanna Vincze, Business Administration

Research funders:

Arctic Centre at Umeå University

ENVIRONMENTAL ECONOMICS AND GENDER

This doctoral student project aims to analyse economic behaviours within the fields of the environment, climate and energy from a gender perspective. Furthermore, it aims to investigate distributive effects of these policies from a gender perspective, and whether policies can be designed in a more cost-effective and equitable way. The doctoral student will be affiliated to two research environments in addition to the department of Economics, namely Umeå Centre for Gender Studies (UCGS) and the Centre for Environmental and Resource Economics (CERE).



Main applicant:

Hanna Lindström, Economics (photo)

Co-applicants:

Göran Bostedt, Economics

Research funders:

Umeå Centre for Gender Studies, Umeå University

40 % of our activities consist of research

90 students engaged in internships for 10 weeks in companies in Sweden and abroad



NEW VISITING PROFESSORS



SALLY RUSSELL

Sally Russell is Professor of Sustainability and Organisational Behaviour at School of Earth and Environment, University of Leeds. Her research focuses on behaviour change and examines factors that affect individual, group, and organisational responses to environmental issues. She is particularly interested in the role of emotion in decision-making in relation to environmental issues. Her latest project focusses on interventions for reducing food waste. In all areas of her research, Sally works closely with industrial partners to ensure that her research contributes scientifically and practically to the development of more sustainable ways of doing business. During her time at USBE and ROBUST, Sally will participate in the development of new research partnerships and projects, share her expertise and support doctoral students and young researchers.



LINDA HOLLEBEEK

Linda Hollebek holds titles such as Professor of Marketing at Vilnius University, Tallinn University and is a visiting professor at the universities of Johannesburg and Umeå. She has a doctoral degree from the University of Auckland. Her research focusses on customer engagement with digital technology, including social media and AI. She has been published in many of the most prestigious journals and is frequently ranked among the best and most cited researchers. Linda also has extensive teaching experience within marketing and digital marketing at both the first and third cycle levels. She has also worked as a consultant for several large multinational companies. During her time at USBE Linda will be contributing through expertise in her fields and strengthening the research by developing new research partnerships and projects.



Peter Bäckström, doctoral student in economics, has studied how Swedish military veterans who have served abroad get on after returning home to Sweden. In September he defended his thesis in the subject “Empirical essays on military service and the labour market”.

“There are many veterans in Sweden who have served abroad, but never before has there been any Swedish research that has investigated their situation in the labour market. I have monitored veterans who completed their foreign service between 1993 and 2010 and have compared their income with a matched control group of conscripts who have not served abroad. There is nothing to suggest that the income of foreign veterans is falling behind.”

Peter Bäckström’s doctoral project was financed by the Industrial Doctoral School for Research and Innovation at Umeå University and the Swedish Armed Forces Veterans Centre.



22 professors including
6 women and 16 men

148 publications
of which 127
are articles

70 submitted
research
applications



EXPLORATION OF WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In 2023 Magdalena Markowska, docent in business administration, was awarded a grant from the “EU Marie Curie Fellowship” in order to, in collaboration with researchers from King’s College London, investigate the correlation between gender, identity and life course for the wellbeing of female entrepreneurs in Sweden and the UK. The project also aims to increase communication with decision makers about the political relevance of the project.



NEW COOPERATION ENABLES POST DOC POSITION

USBE has via Professor Giovanni Forchini, economics, signed a cooperation agreement with the Imperial College School of Public Health in London. The cooperation enables the funding of a post doc position in economics. The position is connected to ongoing research where the School of Public Health has obtained significant funds for research into socio-economic aspects of pandemic management (The Economics of Pandemic Preparedness). The research is funded by the Jameel Institute-Kenneth C. Griffin Initiative.

161 million SEK
turnover
in 2023

143 persons working at
USBE, of which 43% are
women and 57% men



A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

2023 has been an eventful year, and we can reflect back with pride over all the achievements and strategic initiatives that have shaped USBE's continued path towards excellence with research, education and collaboration with society.

In times of social turmoil, when the legitimacy of science is often questioned, the work, strategies and values of USBE

have special importance and gravity. Creating the conditions for a high-quality learning environment that stimulates analytical, critical and independent thinking becomes even more important. I therefore want to, with pride, thank the board of directors, the management team, staff and our students for their contributions and support towards achieving our shared goals, something that is key to the success and development of USBE.

In 2023 there was a thorough process in order to recruit a new dean and head of department, something that involved the board, recruitment group, consultative group and Vice-Chancellor from Umeå University. The board has thanked Sofia Lundberg and wishes her well in her future role and I warmly welcome Mats Bergman to his new position as leader of USBE.

I look forward to a new year in which together we create an environment where knowledge thrives.

Louise Ring,
Chair of the Board

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF USBE IN 2024

The Board of Directors of USBE is responsible for the long-term direction of its overall mission, vision, goals and strategies with respect to education, research and activities associated with business and administration.

EXTERNAL BOARD MEMBERS

Louise Ring, Chair person of the board, former HR Director Axfood

Maria Hedblom, CEO World Forest Forum Foundation and CEO Krabbögern konsult AB

Jonas Häggström, Vice President of Global Health, Cytel

Sören Kock, Dean of Education, Professor, Hanken School of Economics, Helsinki

Peter Juneblad, Corporate Relations, Umeå Municipality

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Ruth Mannelqvist, Dean, Umeå University, Faculty of Social Sciences

Ulrica Nylén, Senior Lecturer, USBE, Department of Business Administration, teacher representative

Per-Olof Ågren, Senior Lecturer, Department of Informatics, teacher representative

Magnus Wikström, Professor, USBE, Department of Economics, substitute

Gabrielle Söderberg, Doctoral student representative

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Chair, HHUS student association

Chair, Quality Committee, HHUS student association

ADJUNCTS

Deputy department heads, head of education and administrative manager

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Umeå School of Business, Economics and Statistics has a board which is made up of experts from the business community and the public sector, collaborating with the school in order to develop the school's activities.

Board members include:

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