



NORDISK FÖRETAGSEKONOMISK FÖRENING • NORDIC ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT



**The 26th Nordic Academy of Management Conference**  
Bringing Research Together  
**24-26 August 2022**  
Örebro University School of Business, Sweden

**Call for Papers**

We invite you to submit your research to explore the theme of “*Bringing Research Together*” for the 26<sup>th</sup> biennial NFF Conference in Örebro. We are looking forward to receiving your submissions.

**Track 6.1 – Academic Leadership**

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**Description:**

For a long time, the collegial principle has been the rule in academic institutions. Collegiality is manifested in activities like peer-review processes, seminar work as well as how institutions are managed. In its traditional form, the latter means that faculty members elect a colleague as their primus inter pares and have a considerable influence on vital decisions. Under the influence of managerial principles, there have been increasing pressures on academic institutions to act more like traditional corporations with strong line command. At the same time, governments have tended increasingly to stress the need for academic institutions to fulfill particular political goals and to report performance. On top of that, bibliometrics, accreditations and rankings have put further demands on academic leaders. This is the case not only at the top, but also on all levels of academic institutions. Against this backdrop, the track is open for contributions on a number of significant questions.

First, it will be of interest to shed light on the development over time and space for the selection of university leaders on all levels. An earlier study (Goodall, 2009) here showed that prominent universities tended to select distinguished scholars as their leaders. However, as already mentioned above, there have been tendencies for change in this respect over time (see e.g. Engwall, 2014). Here the scope of the changes differs between different institutions in the same country as well as been different countries. At the same time, there are considerable mimetic forces operating in terms of management. Academic institutions tend to copy corporations as well as they tend to follow leading institutions within their population in their recruitment behavior.

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Second, the track should address autonomy, impact and power relations between different bodies in academic institutions. It is urgent to display and investigate the extent to which faculty members really have an influence on management, leadership and results on different levels (cf. Sahlin & Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2016). In this context, there has been a tendency that academic institutions mimic traditional corporations by adding layers in their hierarchies. At the same time, corporations are moving in the other direction towards flat decentralized organizations (Carlzon, 1987). The effect of these changes is important to map. It is also of interest to analyze the relations between boards, university leaders and collegial bodies, for instance, senates (Engwall, 2018).

Third, there are reasons to deal with the actual work of academic leaders. Here, there are classical studies of corporate executives showing that they to a considerable extent are disturbed with limited control of their work (Carlson, 1951). Studies of academic leaders show similar results (Engwall & Lindvall Eriksson, 2012). While such leaders would like to work strategically and long-term in their actual work, for example, they mainly deal with short-term problems and representative duties, caught in a complex structure of performance, norms and values (Alajoutsijärvi & Kettunen, 2016). The extent to which academic leaders' practices and work patterns vary between different levels and different institutions as well as over time is a significant issue for research. More generally, this issue concerns the particular problems and challenge of leadership in professional organizations (Risling & Edenius, 2019).

Fourth, it is of interest to illuminate and investigate the tendency of increasing administrative overload (cf. e.g. Ramirez, 2000) and its results. An important reason for this development is the increasing external pressures on academic institutions in general and academic leaders in particular. Politicians are putting increasing demands on performance. At the same time, there has been a propensity – due to accreditations and rankings – to look upon academic institutions as players in a global competition. This in turn, has led to the creation of various administrative units to handle external actors at the same time as the leaders have to respond to and act on increased red tape.

In addition, of course, a number of other issues would fit into this track on academic leadership. The topic is broad as well as significant for our understanding of the governance of academic institutions. This in turn, is important for their future performance.

**Keywords:**

Business Education, Management Education, Academic Leadership, Universities

**References:**

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**Author guidelines:**

Go to [www.oru.se/NFF2022](http://www.oru.se/NFF2022) for more information about how to submit a paper. The deadline for abstract submission is 31 January 2022. Full paper due: 20 June 2022.

***We very much look forward to welcoming you in Örebro!***

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