

Youth and drive

The academic potential at CMM can clearly be illustrated by the number of academically credited researchers active in the building, almost 50 % of the workforce holds a PhD, and out of these around 100 are associate professors or full professors. In comparison with KI, CMM has a strong competence within the group of younger senior scientists. This makes it all the more apparent that it is hard for junior faculty to attract adequate financial support for their research. The CMM Foundation has therefore taken the initiative to advertise positions which are financed by the Foundation directly through private donors – a valuable resource for the future.

ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP – GOING BEYOND SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE

Academic researchers are under constant pressure to deliver scientific results and get grants approved for funding. While most academic centers have extensive training with regard to the scientific process such as PhD programs, postgraduate courses and lectures in place, one tends to ignore formal training of scientists regarding academic leadership. At the Center for Molecular Medicine (CMM), we have decided to change this situation.

Since four years we offer a formalized one-year on-site leadership program geared specifically towards scientists in the biomedical field. The aim of this program is to go beyond scientific excellence. The background is the observation that the research conducted in the area of molecular medicine is increasingly global and translational, involving large teams of scientists from different fields and levels. The goals of our program are to facilitate interaction between different disciplines and cultures, to create new networks within CMM and to develop collaborative as well as individual leadership skills. It is our long-term ambition that this program will strengthen the role of CMM as an incubator for tomorrow's leaders in biomedicine.

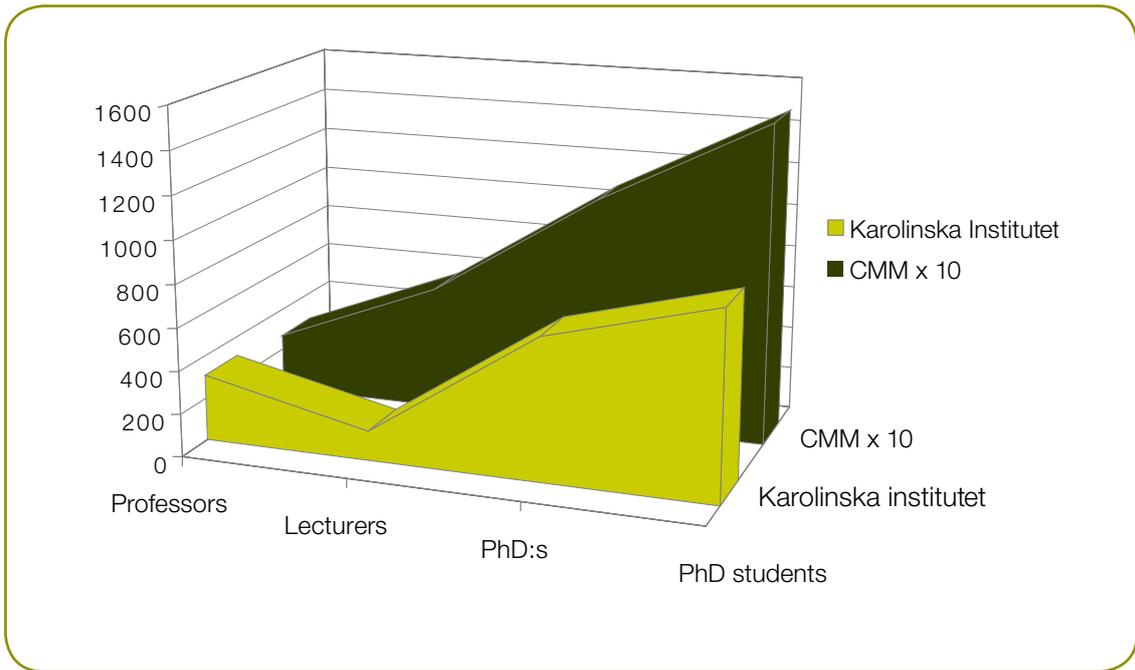
To achieve these goals we have created a novel program. Participants (10-12 per year) are selected following an application procedure. The selection is based not only on scientific merit. We also look at the motivation to participate, and try to achieve a range of academic levels (from post doctoral to full professor) and experience among participants. We also aim to include individuals that are located on different floors of the foundation building and encourage clinical scientists that often have their primary appointment outside the CMM.

The program starts yearly in early September and extends over approximately 9 months. It encompasses individual training sessions with a coach as well as group sessions every three weeks, with homework in-between. At the outset, participants are challenged with defining their yearly goals at the personal level, be they social, educational or obviously scientific. They are also presented with tasks assigned by the management and the Board of CMM. These tasks are designed to improve the quality of CMM as a research structure and the participants are also invited to propose new ideas in this area. Group sessions every three weeks consist of work-shops and follow-up of the CMM-tasks. In addition, group work-shops are boosted by discussion seminars held with high-ranking speakers from academia, industry and philanthropic organizations. These seminars provide models of success in leadership, and inspire to use those models for training of relevant personal leadership skills. In all, participants are expected to spend around 100 hours during nine months on the program.

The individual component of the CMM Leadership Program derives from a management development program from Leadership Management International (LMI), called Effective Personal Leadership. Individual and group coaching is delivered by an LMI licensed management coach.*

CMM is continuously evolving the program by adding new components. For 2008, an internal mentorship component will be added and we expect to perform one or two study visits to research councils or philanthropic organizations.

*Aleksander Marlevi, owner, Next Peak



Will a program of this nature lead to better science? Will improved effectiveness of scientists lead to better science? We look for the answer by regular evaluations, both individually and group-wise. The results so far are clearly positive. For instance during feedback sessions a year after completion of the first program, we noticed a number of positive remarks regarding how the program facilitated interaction and scientific collaboration. There was also consensus regarding the positive role the program has at the individual level, improving the focus on science and setting personal goals more clearly. As leaders and creators of this program we would like to share our experience with other centers to evolve the program and ultimately be part of a process that goes beyond a single program.

INVITED SPEAKERS

Carin D Caldwell: prof. em., at University of Utah, Director of Surface Biotechnology Center at Uppsala University, scientific evaluator at the Swedish Research Council.

Anna-Carin Månsson, entrepreneur and business angel, founder and partner of Theia Investments AB.

Gunnar Hult, Head of research, Swedish Defence Materiel Administration

Gunilla Ahrén, founder of the leadership- and mentor program, Ruter Dam

Mary Crow, prof Cornell University

Maris Hartmanis, prof, Head of research and vice CEO, Gambro AB

Peter Ek, founder and CEO, OBH Nordica

Börje Ekholm, CEO, Investor