

Mr County Governor, your excellency, fellow presidents, promoters, honorary doctors, jubilee doctors and new doctors, professors, medallists and award winners, students, honourable guests! It is my great pleasure to welcome you all today to Stockholm University's 2018 inauguration and conferment ceremony.

A couple of weeks ago, I was in Salamanca, where the university celebrated its 800th anniversary with a conference on the Magna Charta Universitatum and academic core values. The Magna Charta document from 1988, which has now turned 30 and has been signed by more than 900 universities around the world, was drafted in Bologna in conjunction with the 900th anniversary of the city's university. Stockholm University was one of the first signatories. The Magna Charta is a global custodian of academic core values, for which institutional autonomy and academic freedom provide the foundation, and to which *equity* – which includes both justice and equality – and integrity – that is, ethics, scholarly integrity and transparency – have been added. Ever since the universities were founded in the 13th century, the fundamental core values have been present in some form, albeit with significant historical variations and a strong development from the enlightenment onwards.

This year, Stockholm University, which with its relatively modest age of 140 years was founded in the spirit of enlightenment, has participated as one of ten universities from around the world in a pilot project, *Living Values*, which was about integrating the academic core values into the universities' strategies and daily operations. The results of the pilot were just presented in Salamanca. Many higher education institutions also have their own institutional core values, and here we have come a long way from a time when they were mainly seen as commercial slogans to now being taken seriously; today, truth-seeking, knowledge and enlightenment are some of the suggestions from Stockholm University's staff. The core values manifest our core duties as well as our social duties as a university. In an increasingly divided society, and in a world where the liberal democratic system is under threat, the development of global, universally applicable and socially relevant knowledge is a strong unifying force and a prerequisite for the survival and development of the democratic society. For this very reason, we also need to have a continuous discussion about our core values.

However, even though the academic core values have a long history, they are far from uncontroversial and generally accepted. They are based on a type of social contract, a trust that is given to the universities. Today, they are being questioned and threatened in many places. It largely has to do with external factors outside the control of academia – in a world where democracy is under threat, democratic institutions, freedom of expression and freedom of research are also under threat. It concerns individual universities as well as controversial disciplines or scientific questions, where special political audits, for example of climate and environmental research, without scientific competence, have been appointed. A distrust of science is spreading in a way that many of us probably never thought we would have to experience. In a post-truth society where populism is gaining ground, the universities must stand up for the fundamental academic values with renewed force.

In her essay *Truth and Politics* from 1967, philosopher Hannah Arendt writes thought-provokingly about academia's role in society and how politicians have realised the necessity of having an institution besides the courts that can stand unaffected by political power struggles, namely the universities, which, by virtue of their autonomy, must be prepared to deliver even the most uncomfortable truths to politicians and society. This is well worth considering in the aftermath of the election here in Sweden. It is also worth considering that international comparisons show that Sweden is one of the worst countries in Europe when it comes to the universities' autonomy. The government has far-reaching influence over both research and education – but the latter currently lacks constitutional protection. What we expect from the new government is a research and education policy that focuses on what is important, is based on solid facts, and is prepared for the need for change, while also taking into account the enormous strengths that Sweden has as a knowledge nation.

In the same essay, Arendt also writes a few rather prophetic lines: “The result of a consistent and total substitution of lies for factual truth is not that the lies will now be accepted as truth, and the truth be defamed as lies, but that the sense by which we take our bearings in the real world [...] is being destroyed. We disregard the distinguishing line between truth and falsehood.”

In times of fake news and alternative facts, we as a university will need to reflect even more deeply on our role in society and how it changes as society changes. In the future development of knowledge, the UN's goals for global sustainable development are key. A diversity of subjects and scientific depth are required in order to guarantee sustainability, and Stockholm University has both across our two scientific areas: human science and science. However, we also need to consider the diversity that characterises our communities today. How will it be handled, and how might it alter the range and content of our education in the future? Going forward, the Magna Charta Universitatum must not only be based on the European university tradition but truly become global. Autonomy is necessary, as is freedom, but today it refers not only to academic freedom, but also to freedom of expression and opinion. Openness is a core value in itself. Open access to research publications and open research data is now a democratic key issue. On this issue, Stockholm University is a driving force in Sweden, and there are many challenges to deal with in the future.

As a university, we are in many ways in a period of transition, where investigations are devoted to central issues such as governance, resources and internationalisation. International collaboration is an integral part of a research university through all the collaborations between researchers and their colleagues around the world – few human activities are more globally international than research. Stockholm University complements this with organisational collaboration with a refined selection of partner universities, where we also develop student exchanges and educational collaboration in various forms. One of these is the University of Tokyo, where we form “the Stockholm Trio” together with Karolinska Institutet and KTH Royal Institute of Technology – a reminder of the importance that the three of us, who constitute a complete academic environment in the capital, one of the strongest in Europe, have a close partnership. This autumn, we will hold our second joint conference, where a large number of researchers from our three universities will travel to Tokyo to attend workshops with colleagues within carefully selected subject areas.

Another core issue that has been more neglected by politicians in recent years has to do with research infrastructure, an issue to which Stockholm University has a strong commitment in collaboration with other universities nationally – but also regionally in the

Stockholm-Uppsala region, which accounts for about 50% of Sweden's total research capacity. The major national financial investments in MAX IV and ESS have not been followed up properly, neither in terms of governance, funding or research potential. At the same time, the broader general need for research infrastructure in Sweden needs to be met. In this area, the new government, once it is in place, needs to take firm steps to ensure that we continue to be internationally competitive in the future.

The importance of research infrastructure is currently increasing in all scientific areas, not least in human science – everything from the classic infrastructure of the university library to large databases, where we most recently received funding for REWHARD, four complementary, highly qualitative, longitudinal databases of crucial importance for research on living conditions, health and welfare. In addition, Stockholm University has invested heavily in infrastructure in human science, both through the Stockholm University Brain Imaging Centre, which launches its operations this autumn, and with a new Centre for Paleogenetics, which is under construction as a collaboration between archaeology at Stockholm University and the Swedish Museum of Natural History. Generally speaking, collaboration between universities – regionally, nationally and internationally – as well as with other actors, is becoming increasingly important, and this is a development we need to embrace.

This year, Stockholm University also received a grant from the Knut and Alice Wallenberg Foundation for a second cryo-electron microscope for SciLifeLab, an indication of the immensely successful research operation that the University has developed there in a short period of time. SciLifeLab stands on two legs: health and environment, and Stockholm University is now making a specific effort to develop the environmental research. SciLifeLab is both a national infrastructure and a regionally attractive research centre, once again in collaboration between the four host universities, Karolinska Institutet, KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Uppsala and Stockholm University, which attracts young, excellent, international researchers as SciLifeLab Fellows. One measure of quality is that four out of Stockholm University's five Fellows currently have ERC grants. The symbiosis between infrastructure and research is fundamental and general, and it is crucial to the development of both.

Science is not primarily about institutions, however, but about the individuals who comprise the institutions. Through your collective efforts, all of you, the objects of today's celebrations, have contributed to the development of science and human knowledge: as new doctors or honorary doctors, or jubilee doctors celebrating a fifty-year bond with science; or as new professors entering a new stage of your research lives, with new scientific leadership responsibilities; or as prominent pedagogues who have facilitated the transfer of scientific knowledge; or as medallists who have made special contributions to Stockholm University.

In the new strategies for Stockholm University that are currently in development, we point once again to the very core of academic activities: research and education of the highest quality. All of you who are here tonight have contributed significantly to achieving this. Thank you for your important work, and my warmest congratulations to all of you!

Dixi.

