

NHH 2023

Platform

Candidate team proposed by the NHH Nominating Committee

Candidate for Rector:

Frøystein Gjesdal, Professor (PhD, Stanford Univ.)

Candidate for Deputy Rector:

Sunniva Whittaker, Professor (dr. art, University of Bergen)

Vice Rector for Research/Dean for Doctoral Programme:

Helge Thorbjørnsen, Professor (dr. oecon., NHH)

Vice Rector for Faculty Management:

Gunnar E. Christensen, Associate Professor (PhD, UCLA)

Introduction – Where are we?

NHH Norwegian School of Economics has made considerable progress in the past ten years with respect to both education and research. In 2011 the School was reaccredited by EQUIS for the full 5 year period for the third time.

With regard to education, NHH has shown a great capacity for change. Moving from an integrated four year programme to the 3+2 model has led to a large increase in the number of students and required significant innovation in course development. The quality of the new programmes has been consistently high. The Bachelor Programme in Economics and Business Administration has maintained its position as one of the most popular bachelor programmes in the nation. The new Master of Science Programme in Economics and Business Administration, which has gradually grown to its current capacity, provides ample opportunities for specialization. NHH has currently a 50 % market share, the rest of the

market being shared by 10 other institutions. The Master Programme in Accounting and Auditing has been more or less continuously updated in response to shifting demands from the profession and public authorities. These are strong indications that NHH attracts the best and brightest students within the fields of economics and business administration.

At the same time NHH has made considerable headway in terms of research output. The departments that have been subject to external evaluations have all received top marks. The number of publications in top journals has increased significantly. In the period 2002 – 2011, 40 papers were published in journals on the NHH “bonus list”. The corresponding figure in the previous decade was 12. In 2012 NHH was ranked for the first time in the prestigious Shanghai ranking of research. NHH has during this ten year period worked steadily and successfully to attract faculty in the international market. Participation in international research networks are also on the increase.

Further progress is, however, necessary to meet the School’s high ambitions. To reach new goals, it is necessary to reflect on the reasons for past successes. These are, as we see it, an efficient organization, highly innovative academic departments, smooth cooperation between academic and administrative units, and a board that has provided effective governance.

With respect to the quality of education, an efficient matrix organization has been crucial. At the beginning of the period, academic deans were appointed. They have been in charge of study programmes (matrix rows) along with programme boards and others (profile coordinators). The reform was costly in terms of manpower, but has proven very effective in placing the responsibility for the management of study programmes on specific individuals.

Another key to success in teaching and research has been the close cooperation between academic and administrative units. Academic innovation relies upon high-quality administrative support. During this period cooperation has, for the most part, been close and harmonious.

Finally, the academic departments have worked well together. A consensus-based budgeting model has provided a stable financial framework, and conflict over resource allocation has been largely avoided. This has not always been the case in the past.

The road ahead

In our opinion NHH is currently a leading European business school. Our ambitions are even higher. We know we can do better. Some people would prefer to have more specific goals, e.g. “Best in the Nordic region” or “Top-5 in Europe”. We consider such statements unproductive as long as the criteria for rankings are ambiguous. Moreover, the strict

adoption of criteria used in popular rankings may carry untoward costs. We have therefore chosen to focus on what we may actually improve, and how to make it happen.

Education

Education is a unique activity in which teachers and students create learning together. Teaching quality is a shared responsibility. Students who invest their precious time in education have the right to demand that teachers develop courses of high academic quality and provide teaching with a sound pedagogical approach and make optimal use of new technology. The better the students are, the more crucial it is to provide good teaching. Likewise teachers have the right to demand more activity and more focus on the part of the students. The more competitive admission requirements are, the higher the demands that can be made on the students.

General comments

In an educational institution with high research ambitions, there will always be a risk of teaching being given lower priority. This is particularly the case if the institution seeks to maximize the number of publications in the most prestigious international journals in order to achieve high scores on international rankings. We do not wish to go in that direction. We must strike a good balance between research and teaching at all levels. The best researchers must engage in teaching activities. The best teachers must undertake research. The incentive systems must be geared towards this balance.

External evaluations have highlighted the fact that NHH students do not receive enough training in oral and written presentation and team work (often referred to as the development of generic skills). This may partly be due to the fact that many courses have a high number of students. This is a problem we wish to address.

There is an ongoing discussion in the media concerning free online courses on the internet. We will follow the development in this area closely to see what the consequences will be for NHH and how we should respond to this challenge.

The bachelor programme

An evaluation of NHH's bachelor programme will take place in the near future. This evaluation must have both an internal and an external focus. The students should be invited to voice their opinions regarding teaching methods and quality and encouraged to make recommendations for improvement. It is equally important to ensure that the programme meets high academic standards both from an international perspective and in relation to the requirements of the business community and the public sector. The newly established

pedagogy committee will be instrumental in the development of new pedagogical approaches and the use of new technology. We will not propose any concrete academic or pedagogical measures until the evaluation has been carried out.

The master programmes

The master programmes (MØA and MRR) are continuously being improved. The new MRR programme will be launched in the fall 2013 after an extensive process involving both the profession and the students. Having attained our ambitious goals regarding the number of students in the programmes, we are currently experiencing some challenges when it comes to balancing the supply and demand of courses. In our view, it is important that the master's students are able to specialize in the fields of their choice. Admission to specific courses should therefore not be limited unless there are specific pedagogical reasons for doing so. Supervision capacity is stretched in many research areas. We will work to ensure that all master's students receive high quality supervision. We will have to find innovative solutions for the MØA master's as we already have succeeded in doing in the MRR programme. It is also crucial that the master's students are able to work independently and find relevant topics for their master's thesis. It is also an aim to encourage more students to write their thesis in English in order to gain practice in using English as a working language.

We support the initiative of creating a research master's programme which will not only facilitate the recruitment of NHH students into the doctoral programme but also enable us to educate highly qualified experts for the business community and public sector.

Executive education

NHH has many executive education programmes. Several of these are master's degree programmes (e.g. MASTRA and MØST). The volume is moderate and generates income to NHH. As this activity requires high resource input, a choice was made to offer exclusive programmes. This has been a sensible strategy, but it should be possible to increase the offer by drawing on highly qualified external resources in addition to cooperating with other leading international institutions.

Research

NHH has the explicit aim of being an internationally recognised research institution with expertise at the highest academic level. Over the past ten years we have made significant progress in terms of research output. This provides a good basis for fostering research environments of high international standard. NHH must have high ambitions with regard to both the quantity and the quality of the research conducted at the School. NHH already has researchers and research groups with publications in the most prestigious journals in their fields. It is worth noting that a large share of NHH's top publications are the result of

research conducted by individual researchers or research groups that have grown from below. In our view it will be even more important in the future to support all the departments at NHH in their endeavour to develop new strong research groups or strengthen already existing ones. NHH has excellent researchers who all share an internal motivation to develop, disseminate and refine innovative research topics. NHH, together with SNF, will contribute to fostering the development of new and established researchers and research groups through adequate financial and administrative support, infrastructure, international networks, PhD students and recruitment positions.

All faculty members at NHH shall be active researchers. The School has a comprehensive academic environment and provides research-based teaching in a variety of fields. The NHH environment, including SNF shall be the leading and most comprehensive academic environment in the field of economics and business administration in Norway.

Relevant and innovative research will be a cornerstone of NHH's academic development and enable us to attain our ambitions also with respect to research-based teaching. The research programmes KOV, FOCUS and CSI in particular contribute both to increasing the relevance of both research and teaching and to building important relations with external partners and authorities. We will encourage the development of new programmes of this kind.

The PhD programme

The PhD programme must be seen as an integral part of the NHH research environment. PhD students must be integrated in the academic environment and in research groups and should be considered as an important research resource for NHH. We face challenges with regard to the completion rate and pace in the PhD programme. These challenges must be met with a particular focus on the quality of the programme and of the intake. Enhanced programme quality can be achieved through a broad offering of courses of high academic standard, a closer individual follow up of students, explicit milestones and a better integration of PhD students in the academic environments and research groups. The intake quality can be enhanced through the establishment of a research master's across the different profiles in the Master's programme (MØA) as well as a better marketing of the PhD programme geared towards both NHH master students and international students.

Internationalisation

Internationalisation is of key importance in NHH's present strategy and we plan to continue this endeavour.

With regard to our study programmes it is essential to distinguish between the bachelor and the master's level. Our bachelor programme is taught in Norwegian and should continue to be so. It is however important that our students already at this level acquire knowledge and skills that will enable them to pursue an international career upon completion of their studies. It is therefore sensible to maintain a wide array of elective courses that provide students with the opportunity to acquire language skills and cultural understanding. This is also a prerequisite for students who wish to choose the CEMS master or one of NHH's double degree programmes. We also wish to promote the development of new elective courses given in English where Norwegian students can interact with incoming bachelor students. One avenue we wish to explore is the possibility of creating a visiting professor scheme which could attract international lecturers to NHH for shorter periods. These lecturers could contribute to giving bachelor students more international exposure.

When it comes to student exchange NHH has an excellent track record both at the bachelor and master's level. The revised Master in Accounting and Auditing will also allow for student exchange in the future. NHH also has an increasing number of incoming students. We wish to continue to enhance the exchange programme in cooperation with leading schools worldwide. The CEMS and PIM network will continue to play a key role in this respect.

At master's level there is room for improvement with regard to the recruitment of international students. Given the high quality of our programmes and the high number of courses taught in English, we should be able to attract more international students by marketing our programmes in a more effective way internationally. Our objective should be to have the same share of international students as the schools we benchmark ourselves against. A higher percentage of international students will contribute to fostering a more diverse student environment and provide students with the opportunity of establishing international contacts.

We also wish to increase the number of double degree programmes and to promote these programmes as well as the CEMS programme both among prospective students and the business community with an aim of increasing the number of students who chose these programmes and to raise awareness regarding the value of these international degrees for Norwegian society at large. In this context, we will explore the possibility of establishing internship agreements with international corporate partners enabling students to expose themselves to an international working environment during their studies. This in return may motivate them to pursue an international career upon completion of their studies. The newly established international career centre and International Advisory Board will play a key role in this endeavour.

NHH's PhD programme must be international and comply with the same quality standards as similar programmes at leading international institutions. It is highly important that PhD students have the possibility of presenting papers at international conferences and preferably also have periods of study at renowned international institutions.

NHH's Executive programmes should also seek to become more international. We will look into the possibility of creating international EMBA programs in topic areas where NHH has a competitive edge.

Several of NHH's academic departments have established routines for international faculty recruitment and have succeeded in attracting faculty members in both permanent and temporary positions. In addition to this NHH provides funding for sabbatical stays abroad. We plan to maintain this practice. We also wish to encourage faculty members to partake in international research networks and project applications. The newly established research administrative unit will allow for a centralization of administrative tasks in relation to applications and project reporting. Currently these tasks are spread out in the departments. Building competencies in this unit regarding administrative routines in connection with EU projects will lower the threshold for participating in such projects.

There is also room for improvement as regards international dissemination of research conducted at NHH. Relevant administrative units must play an active part in establishing international contacts with competence in this area.

Organization

Academic organization

NHH's academic structure (the matrix) is flat! In the past, the establishment of a "super" department, whose head might be able to represent the views of the various academic departments in a more coordinated and forceful way, has been considered. We believe in the flat structure. However, this structure requires tight and efficient communication between the academic departments and the Board. The rectors are responsible for making this relationship work. No high-level decisions should be made without consulting the heads of department. Issues that are of concern to departments should be brought to the attention of the Board. Likewise, the rectors should listen to the deans' views concerning the study programmes and convey those to the Board as well. Effective meeting places should be found. The Board should also be interested in meeting with the academic leadership on a regular basis.

The rectors should listen to heads of department and deans and assist them in obtaining the financial means to improve and expand research as well as teaching. However, the lines of communications should be two-way. The rectors should also demand high levels of performance from the academic leadership. We believe that everyone agrees on high-level strategies and objectives. The departments, however, face varying challenges and may have somewhat different goals and priorities. In that case standards may differ and performance will be measured in different ways. The rectors should therefore initiate a dialogue with each department in order to identify potential for improvement and to reach agreement on relevant operational goals.

Administrative organization

NHH has recently undergone an administrative reorganization. This process has had benefits as well as costs. In contrast to its academic counterpart, the administrative structure has become less flat and more hierarchical. The current challenge is to make the new structure work. A particular challenge is related to the interactions between the academic and the administrative structure. Experience has shown that NHH works best when the academic and administrative leaderships work closely together. An urgent task is to develop effective nexuses of interactions.

Of particular importance is the interaction of deans and vice rectors on the one hand and administrative offices on the other. Our team includes two vice rectors. The vice rector for research/dean for the doctoral program will have the main responsibility for integrating research and doctoral education, and will cooperate closely with the recently appointed head of the office of research administration. The second vice rector will be responsible for faculty management and will work closely with the HR office. The rector and the managing director will also have a close working relationship. The managing director should keep the rector informed about decisions that are made and processes that are initiated on a timely basis.

Leadership style

We will make sure that our leadership style is inclusive. All organizational changes shall be anchored in the organization. All communication shall be precise and based on integrity. All promises shall be kept. Every individual shall be heard and treated with respect.