

## **Rektor's Quarterly Narrative Report – last quarter 2017**

### **UWC Day**

The last Board Meeting took place the day after UWC Day.

“Education is the most valuable thing we can give to you young people”. This was the message Her Majesty Queen Sonja gave in front of a packed auditorium at the end of the Cultural Show which marked the end of UWC Day (‘The Power of Diversity’).

“Coming here to UWC RCN is always so invigorating, experiencing so much talent and willingness to share”.

This was the tenth time Her Majesty has visited our College in her role as patron. She joined in with our conference on the theme of inclusion, attended by our students, staff and more than 100 visitors (with many drawn from vg schools in our region) – a day for sharing ideas and good practice in and outside of the classroom. Her programme started with a visit to the exhibition made on inclusion, introduced by student Rodrigo Freitas (Portugal) and art teacher Hana LeCam (France). The grand finale on Thursday evening was the Cultural Show, put together by Dan Silfwerin (Sweden) and his team. Supper was made by our own students, supported by staff, in the form of an international matbord – a varied menu, beautifully presented in the Høegh Centre.

An uplifting experience for us all.

The event was covered by the Royal House of Norway and NRK but, surprisingly, not by our local paper Firda.

### **Student Matters**

Usually, every year there are some students who arrive late in the school year due to visa complications. However, this year our Admissions Team managed to succeed in supporting all students to arrive by the end of August – a significant achievement.

The RCN extra-academic programme continues to offer exciting and enriching opportunities both on and off campus. Highlights of this period since the last Board Meeting include: the US university fair; an international climate change conference (‘Climate Voices’) held at Sogn Folkmuseum; a trip to Åsane Folk High School; the Rafto Prize; Sexuality Week; and the European Bazaar and Cultural Show; and much more.

The Director of Extra-Academics put together a superb programme of challenging and imaginative educational opportunities in PBL week in early October which included an introduction to Norwegian field sports, wilderness walking, kayaking trips, retreats to different locations, martial arts, an A21 campaign – and many other activities on and off campus. The Flekke weather gods certainly tested us with some

challenging weather. This was probably the most diverse programme of activities the Rektor could remember in his time at the College.

In early October, Ashoka Scandinavia announced the selection of three Norwegian schools to be part of Ashoka's global network of innovative schools. Nordahl Grieg Videregående Skole, Ung Invest Arbeidsinstituttet Buskerud and UWC Red Cross Nordic have officially become Ashoka Changemaker Schools after a thorough evaluation. UWC RCN joins UWC Maastricht, UWC Atlantic College and UWC Costa Rica as an Ashoka Changemaker School. Two members of staff will be attending an Ashoka conference in mid-November in Denmark to begin to explore how to build Ashoka into our extra academic programme for the benefit of students and staff.

From Friday 20<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> October, our College joined in with the national campaign to support UNICEF, through TV Aksjonen. On the Friday we had a special day focused on education and the work of UNICEF. Guest speakers Arne Olsen and Milad Dean set the tone in the auditorium with perspectives on how education is being affected when conflict escalates to crisis. Milad gave a personal story about his journey from Aleppo to Førde, whereas Arne focused on challenges and solutions when education comes in the form of aid. After this, there were 15 parallel workshops led by our own student organisers, some of which were on education in Colombia, Mali, Syria, Pakistan and South Sudan (the focus countries of this year's TV Aksjon).

On the Saturday there was an auction in the Høegh Centre, where services were bought and sold – like a meal or a trip to the local mountains. We collected more than 15.000 kroner for UNICEF. On Sunday our students joined in with the local collectors – going from door to door in Fjaler. In total 223 million NOK was collected on the day – we are happy to have joined in with this “dugnad”.

In late October, UWC Connect hosted a special Leirskule group of videregående age students (drawn from refugee backgrounds) from our local region. This was an initiative forged by UWC Connect and the local education administrators, off the back of our work together for the conference on inclusion on UWC Day. We hope that we can build this into our annual calendar as it very much represents our mission-related outreach.

The Leirskule 2017 season came to a close after this special week. We hosted over 500 visitors this year. Joakim Janninge, Head of Leirskule, wrote to all student and staff instructors: ‘You have done a wonderful job in making this programme work really well, both for yourselves and the visitors’.

RCN Life Skills continues to develop as a holistic approach to the RCN pillars and as a values-based programme which helps first year students with the transition to UWC RCN, introduces them to key components before they step into the second year and beyond, and supports and develops our commitment to the UWC educational model. This term the Safety Net team members have taken a leading role in guiding students on health and wellness issues.

This year we have revised the calendar and split the academic year into three distinct terms. This has removed November Break from our calendar – a time when many colleagues felt that the divide between ‘have’ and ‘have nots’ in socio-economic terms was at its most distinct and visible with many groups

travelling to cities etc during this break. The term is compressed with our finish planned for November 28<sup>th</sup> but we hope that it has helped with the challenges of November, historically a difficult month to navigate.

The period between the beginning of November and the end of term Christmas events has been designed to include: the biennial European Cultural Bazaar and Show, special contact time with advisors, a bonfire and Christmas lights afternoon, and a Thanksgiving Dinner (run our North American students). It is important to continue to lift flagging spirits throughout this period.

As a special addition to the programme, we hosted Bergen National Opera on campus. UWC Red Cross Nordic and Bergen National Opera combined to deliver a community-based opera on Robert Munsch's story of a kidnapped prince, a brave princess and a fierce dragon ('The Paperbag Princess'). Twenty students and one member of staff rehearsed with the professional opera singers to deliver this opera in Norwegian to our local community.

One special new extra academic initiative is that a group of students have the opportunity in weeks 46 and 47 to support at RKHR the rehabilitation of children who have been treated for brain cancer.

The College's Facebook page, website and monthly newsletter continues to provide a comprehensive insight into student-related activities.

The Student Council continues to make a significant contribution to life on campus – and the EMT is grateful for its thoughtful and collaborative contributions to making RCN what it is. Committee work has been productive and, following some of the recommendations from the CIS membership accreditation process, we have put a special focus on drafting new residential policies (including incident protocols, respectful campus, sexual violence and others). We have appreciated the input from Libby Mason (former Dean of Students at UWC Pearson) who has been on the staff this term.

Our systems to support students are certainly improving – we spoke at length to the Nordic National Committees in mid-November at their AGM on campus about residential developments at the College. Ashok, our Director of Residential Life, gave his perspective on these developments and explained that we continue to work with the Student Council and staff to improve (and make consistent) our delivery of pastoral care at RCN.

The Acting Deputy Rektor reported in the October Binary Feedback Meeting that class attendance continues to improve in comparison to past years. Students continue to respond in a positive way to encouragement to maintain a high attendance record – for personal learning and for their university applications. The Acting Deputy Rektor has also encouraged advisors to play a leading role in monitoring and encouraging attendance.

Our University Office has also focused in this academic year to promote different pathways for students beyond US Davis universities. We hosted a representative from the African Leadership University for the first time and are set to receive a representative from NTNU in January.

This year, we have set aside funds so that all those on Travel Support can go home – or travel to relatives elsewhere. We firmly believe that this will reap rewards in terms of cultural connection, rest and recuperation. Therefore there will be no Winter Programme in December 2017 – we believe that, with careful flight booking well in advance, this decision should not represent a financial loss to the College.

With an extended break, we are very much promoting the Winter Break to students as a combination of Winter Break and study leave.

Five students have been selected (plus one member of staff) to attend the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony on December 10<sup>th</sup> in Oslo – given that the award has been given to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), we have invited a Japanese first year to represent her country and this College at this event. There will also be an opportunity to participate in a discussion forum hosted by Al-Jazeera and, later, in the candle-lit parade.

### **Management and Staffing**

Last summer saw the retirement of Vidar Jensen (Head of Maintenance) from UWC Red Cross Nordic. Vidar has worked at Haugland for the past 30 years, from the times before the College and the Rehabilitation Centre were opened – and, more recently, he has served the College for 22 years since it was opened back in 1995. He has made an extraordinary contribution to the development of this place. In his retirement, he has taken on the role of project manager for the construction of the new Baking House on our campus.

On the afternoon of Thursday 21st September 2017, Vidar introduced Her Majesty Queen Sonja, the patron of the College, to the Baking House project. At the opening of the Cultural Show – and in the presence of Her Majesty – he was presented with the thirty years long service medal by the mayor of Fjaler, Gunhild Berge Stang.

In mid to late September, Ed Love (a doctoral candidate in Egyptology at St. John's College, Oxford, UK) took up a teaching internship at RCN. He visited classes, contributed to our extra academic programme and helped students with advice on how to craft personal statements for university applications – and, on one of the last evenings, he gave an outstanding presentation on the wonderful world of Egyptology to a group of over 40 students and staff.

Ed wrote to staff and students on returning to Oxford: 'I was astounded and humbled by the diversity of experience, enthused by the intelligence of discussion, and excited by the variety of aspirations exhibited by the student body, and I thank you all for letting me into your own worlds during my visit.'

We were also happy to welcome Mikkel Hoejgaard to UWC Red Cross Nordic as a teaching intern in October. Mikkel is currently completing his MA in Social Sciences and History at the University of Aarhus (in Denmark). Whilst he was with us, Mikkel observed, and then led lessons. For Global Politics he taught modernization theory and let the students gain first-hand research experience by adapting his own thesis research. Outside the classroom he enthusiastically participated in a wide range of extra-academic activities.

Here at RCN, we continue to observe the mutual benefit of our ongoing commitment to supporting teacher training.

We also had a Talking about Teaching afternoon in mid-October for all Education Staff focused on a) communicating with students in the classroom and b) how we can develop and strengthen communication within (and across where appropriate) House Staff Teams in support of student welfare.

The new members of the Education Staff have made excellent starts and we are delighted to have them here. The Rektor is currently meeting them all between now and the end of term to discuss their experiences and impressions over the course of the term. So far, the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

Anette Traa (Operations Team Leader - Norway), Mona Hatlebrekke (chef - Norway) and Sanja (psychologist – Bosnia and Herzegovina) took up their new positions at the start of October and have already made important contributions in their roles. The residential team has been working as to how best to support Sanja in her role as a part-time psychologist (two days a week for RCN students).

In tandem with some US Universities, the Education Management Team nominated Mark Chalkley, our Senior University Counsellor, for a CIS award for university counselling.

In January, we need to think carefully about the staffing for the next academic year taking into consideration new projects, leave of absence requests and resignations. We continue to have some high calibre individuals who have expressed an interest in working at the College, which is very encouraging and signals that RCN is seen as a stimulating and challenging place to work at.

We have heard very little from Alistair Robertson, away on a leave of absence. We have done our very best to keep communication to an absolute minimum in order to give him a thoroughly well-deserved break from RCN.

We continue to work on policy development at RCN to underpin good practice in this Norwegian workplace with some focus given in this period to IT, email guidelines, etc

Pete Wilson, the acting Deputy Rektor, was invited to participate in a mock CIS accreditation visit at UWC Maastricht. This was extremely helpful, as Pete has brought back his learning to help the team at RCN prepare for the next stage of accreditation.

We continue to run our system of medarbeidersamtale, in the spirit of collaboration, for members of both our Education and Support Staff – and this provides us with a helpful platform to share and to support each other.

Norsk lessons have continued this term for staff interested in learning the language – and the weekly class run by Hilde Genberg has now been split into two sessions (one for beginners and the other for those of intermediate level).

We continue to focus on team building and look for new ways to support staff: a presentation on marine biology was given by Jelena Belamaric (Croatia) in Sperrestova for staff; House Mentors and spouses were invited to a buffet dinner at the Rektor's House to thank them for their contributions to the residential side of the College; Nordic teaching staff were invited to a drinks reception to meet the Nordic NCs; a cast party was held after the production of 'The Paperbag Princess' for the BNO team and staff involved; a staff quiz is planned for the last Friday of term; and we are all looking forward to the Christmas dinner in the kantine and then the Staff Julebord.

In preparation for the UWC Council meeting in Freiburg, Germany, the Rektor submitted a three page College Annual Report (2016-7) to the International Office – see [Appendix V](#)

The UWC strategy was approved by the UWC International Board with a couple of minor revisions – once it has been formally released, we shall share internally and also place it as an item for discussion for the RCN Board

## **Developments**

UWC Red Cross Nordic was invited to send two representatives – Larry Lamont as Rektor and Arne Osland as Director of Development – to the Norwegian Red Cross' Landsmøtet (annual general assembly) 2017 in Haugesund (the 40th anniversary of this event). Alongside representation from all the Red Cross districts in Norway, the Norwegian Red Cross had also extended an invitation to the Presidents and other representatives of their partner Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies including: Burundi, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, Macedonia, Mali, South-Sudan, Sweden, Syria. Prime Minister, Erna Solberg, gave a powerful address on the value of volunteering.

During the course of the assembly, Robert Mood was elected to be the new President of the Norwegian Red Cross. He is the former head of the United Nations' Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS). He was previously Inspector General of the Norwegian Army and Chief of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO). We took the opportunity to invite him to visit UWC RCN during this academic year. The conference was a reminder of the importance and potential of our College's partnership with the Red Cross.

On the 1st November 2017, Orfeus Publishing launched 'Slottet – Familien – Kunsten' ('The Palace – The Family – The Art) – a biography of Marianne Andresen, written by Nanna Segelcke. In tandem with the book launch, an exhibition was held of Marianne's art work, '70 Years as an Artist', in central Oslo from the 1st until the 12th November. Over 320 guests attended the opening of the exhibition with the Director of Development presenting the College as part of the introductions. Marianne's wish is that all proceeds from the sales of her work at the exhibition will be directed to supporting our work towards education for peace at UWC.

There was considerable press coverage (Aftenposten, Dagens Næringsliv, and Firda articles) on Marianne and she took this opportunity to promote UWC and our College. Please see [appendix VI](#) for the feature in Dagens Næringsliv. Marianne dedicated the last two pages of the biography to describing her work towards and support of UWC – see [appendix VII](#).



HM Queen Sonja's Private Secretary has written to inform us that HM Queen Sonja placed the College and our conference on inclusion as an agenda item at a meeting at the palace for the acting Minister of Education, the acting Head of Utdanningsdirektorat, and the jury of the Queen Sonja School Prize. As result of this, Inga Bostad, the Director of the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (and the Chair of the Committee), has offered to come and visit the College in the spring.

It was a pleasure to host the Nordic National Committees on campus for their Annual General Meeting in mid-November. Their itinerary included connecting with students, meeting for their AGM and with the Education Management Team, and attending 'The Paperbag Princess'. We are continuing to work together to launch a Nordic Short Course (perhaps in tandem with Red Cross Youth with a view to promoting both UWC and Red Cross values) based on our campus - and to take advantage of our spectacular campus and facilities in the summer. We also started discussions with the Nordic NCs about developing a standard Memorandum of Understanding between the College and the Nordic NCs and selection contacts.

We have also been in touch with the UWC International Office to offer to host the European NC regional meeting in June.

In mid-February, the Acting Deputy Rektor along with colleagues Avis Rolfe (UK) and Cristina Pinazo (Spain) will visit LAMS school in Sultanabad near Faislabad. This feasibility study is a follow-up from a visit Pete made last year to initiate dialogue and a potential partnership between the two schools. LAMS educates children of local factory workers and specialises in promoting education for girls and young women beyond primary level.

The members of the Central and Education Management Teams continue to work extraordinarily hard to run their portfolios and to work as a team. Leonora Kleiven, Daily Leader of UWC Connect, continues to make a significant contribution to the CMT. It has been a real privilege to work alongside Pete Wilson as Acting Deputy Rektor – he has done a superb job during the course of this term.

And finally....

We received a letter from HM Queen Sonja after UWC Day which included this paragraph:

'It was truly a pleasure being at wonderful Fjaler again, despite the weather! I returned to Oslo full of impressions, inspiration and good memories'

We hope that all our visitors feel the same way after they have been hosted at RCN.

Marielle Van der Meer, representing the African Leadership University, wrote in her blog after visiting:

'You really have to want to come here in order actually to get here. You don't just accidentally find yourself strolling onto campus. [RCN] brings together a unique, bright and global community of students from every part of the world....sharing and building experiences and stories that will shape their lives.'

We continue to do our best to deliver a UWC education to our students, to contribute to shaping the lives of students, to develop our commitment to the mission of UWC through local impact in our region, and to raise awareness of our work across the Nordic region.

Richard D A Lamont  
Rektor  
15<sup>th</sup> November 2017