

New biomedical centre in Linköping

Linköping University and Östergötland County Council are to invest in a new campus for additional research and teaching facilities at Linköping University Hospital.

As a result of the university's major new life science initiative, which includes no fewer than 16 new professorships, and the projected rapid growth in student numbers at the Faculty of Health Sciences from 2,000 today to 3,000 in a few years' time, there is an urgent need for new premises for research and teaching. Six of the new professorships (functional genomics, clinical genomics, medical molecular biology, molecular virology, pharmacological genetics and vascular biology) and their research teams will be housed in brand new buildings complete with ultra-modern laboratories.

The new campus will also include more space for the university's medical library, new teaching and conference facilities, a café and meeting places for students and researchers. Here too will be the new "incubator" for spin-offs, start-ups and development companies in life science technology and biomedicine.

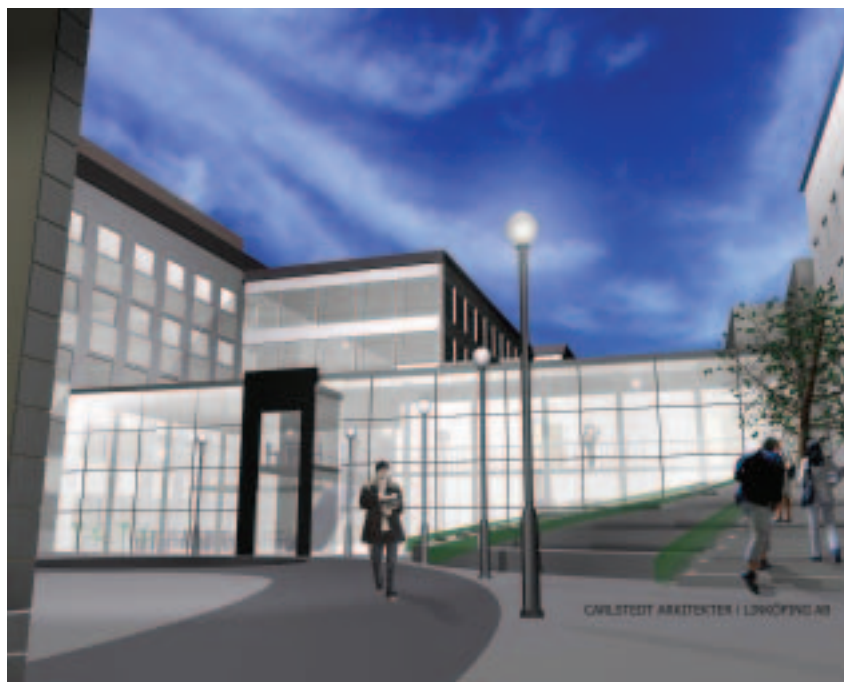
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ITEKSA Venture AB – a new regional venture capital fund

Saab AB, the Foundation for Technology Transfer in Linköping and the Swedish Industrial Development Fund are setting up a regional, industry-orientated VC fund to focus on early-phase investment in hi-tech spin-offs from Linköping University and businesses in the region.

The new VC fund will strengthen Saab's existing Venture Capital



The new Biomedical Center in Linköping with state of the art facilities for research and education will be completed in 2004. The Center for the Faculty of Health Sciences at Linköping University will be an important part of the new initiative on Life Science Technologies and Biomedicine, and be the base for 6 of the 16 new professorships.

Council initiative, which aims to focus Saab's core business by realising the value of technical innovations outside the company's principal hi-tech market.

The Industrial Development Fund's strategy is to participate in regional VC funds in order to move closer to new development projects and potential investments. With 20 years' experience and assets of more than SEK 4 billion under management, it is one of the largest and most experienced names in the Swedish VC market.

Since its formation in 1994 the Foundation for Technology Transfer has helped to build a strong regional innovation system for knowledge-intensive spin-offs.

The new VC fund is due to become operational in November 2002, when more information will be available.

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New method for biological analyses over the Internet developed at Linköping University

Three professors at Linköping University, the physicists Bo Liedberg and Ingemar Lundström and the chemist Lars Baltzer, are launching a method for bioanalysis based on synthetic proteins, plastic chips, a computer screen as light source and a webcam as detector. Once the method has been fully developed, test results will be available immediately over the Internet.

Analysing biological samples is a large and expanding business in the healthcare sector. Frequently, how-

ever, it is also a relatively protracted, time-consuming process: taking the sample at the health centre, testing it in the laboratory and informing the doctor, who then passes on the results to the patient. The new analytical method involves no traditional lab work: no liquids, test tubes or expensive pieces of apparatus are required. Instead, the new method is based on proteins that recognise each other on a "biochip".

Producing synthetic proteins is a speciality of the organic chemists in Linköping led by Lars Baltzer. Bo Liedberg and his research group are contributing expertise in how molecules attach themselves to surfaces, while Ingemar Lundström is an ex-

pert at detection. It is the combination of this trio of technologies that makes the method revolutionary.

The Linköping researchers hope that their innovation will mean that many common diagnostic tests, such as those for diabetes and heart attacks, can be carried out directly at the healthcare centre or even in patients' own homes. Reliable pregnancy tests and drug dose optimisation are other potential applications.

(Source: Östgöta Correspondenten)

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Berzelius Clinical Research Centre increase their Proof of Concept Clinic by opening up new facilities

The Berzelius Clinical Research Centre in Linköping is Sweden's second complete unit for clinical trials in the early stages. The other one is in Uppsala and run by the multinational company Quintiles AB.

The finishing touches are currently being put to the conversion of Level 14 at Berzelius Science Park. The 500

square metre centre now includes two six-bed wards fitted out to hospital standards. The first series of trials has already begun – Parkinson's disease and pain. The clinic's own research nurses and consultants from the hospital will look after the patients.

"By international standards the clinic is fairly large with its 12 beds and ten full-time staff," explains its director, Stig Blom, "but the real ace up our sleeve is our proximity to leading experts at the hospital, Sweden's top students and the multidisciplinary approach."

The centre in Linköping is competing successfully with other players around the world and its order books for Q1 and Q2, 2003, are already full. Customers include multinational pharmaceutical giants and small biotech companies. The centre is currently a production unit within Östergötland County Council, but it will be incorporated at the end of this year.

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Linköping puts a firm focus on bioinformatics

Thanks to four new professorships Linköping is well on the way to establishing itself as the bioinformatics capital of Sweden.

Jesper Tegnér is the new professor of Computational Biology at Linköping University. He has previously worked at the Stockholm Bioinformatics Centre and Sweden's Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), and has the ideal breadth of experience – spanning

medicine, mathematics, physics and philosophy – for the university's multidisciplinary environment.

"In the overlaps between these subjects I find not only problems that need solving, but also inspiration for new technological and scientific applications," he says. "One of the objectives of my research is to develop dynamic network systems that provide a detailed description of how our genetic codes interact and affect our cells. I want to develop new courses at the university: computer science

with the emphasis on bioinformatics and mathematics with biological applications."

He also adds, "I feel that the Linköping initiative is well integrated with existing research teams. It fits into the multidisciplinary tradition here at the same time as there's something of the pioneering spirit about it."

The other professors in bioinformatics – Bengt Persson, Timo Koski and Svante Linusson – will be profiled in future issues of the newsletter.

Successful participation in Biotech Forum 2002

This year Linköping was again able to present promising life science start-ups and successful university research on a shared stand at Biotech Forum in Malmö.

Under the slogan "Linköping – where ideas come to life" eight local companies (mostly start-ups) teamed up with Linköping University to share a stand earlier in the autumn at Biotech Forum in Malmö in the south of Sweden. The fair is by far the largest and most important biotech meeting place for the industry in the Nordic region, and this year it attracted ar-

ound 5,000 visitors from Scandinavia and beyond.

The event proved extremely valuable for our exhibitors in terms of new contacts, but just as important was the internal networking between exhibitors.

The Linköping stand was organised by the BioMedley network.