

Summary of FAS Mid-Term Evaluation of the Aging Research Center September 2011

ARC has made impressive progress in the last five years. The center stayed true to its mission of high-quality aging research and provided a high return on FAS's investment. ARC has a well-functioning governance structure, and investment of FAS money in senior researchers at ARC is a good decision. The Web site is in very good shape; the annual research reports are exemplary. ARC's existence as a physical center contributes to its success as does KI's commitment to aging research and to ARC.

Research at ARC is excellent. The center makes best use of Sweden's excellent data sets. ARC has many high-level publications and dissertations and is in the top quartile at KI with regard to citations. Authors' research competence is "impressive . . . resulting in work of high originality that is in the international frontline [of] research" and is of "crucial importance to the sustainability of the Western societies." Further evidence of ARC's research excellence is the rating of "outstanding" ARC received in an internal KI evaluation, the Distinguished Professor Award earned by the director, and the appointment of a senior ARC researcher as Af Jochnick Professor.

Many steps have been taken to achieve cross-fertilization among research groups, but psychology and sociology research should be more fully integrated regarding understanding the causes of aging and morbidity. ARC is extremely successful in obtaining third-party funding and has strong international networks and collaboration. Recruitment is "remarkable" and ARC is "making a major contribution internationally to training the next generation of highly qualified ageing researchers." ARC has strong links to practice and policy via Äldrecentrum, Svenskt Demens Centrum, and the participation of senior researchers in national agencies.

ARC's research school helps students obtain a broad, multidisciplinary education, although time to PhD is longer than average in Sweden. ARC's future has been strengthened by foresighted mentoring of the next generation of researchers.

Suggestions for improvement: 1) Replace the three current research areas with areas based on ARC's guiding questions to strengthen cross-disciplinary links. 2) Appoint a senior researcher in aging of personality and self-regulation. 3) Strengthen research on positive plasticity of aging. 4) Strengthen the social sciences. 5) Increase number of doctoral students.

ARC is the only Centre of Excellence for which evaluators recommended support at a higher level.