

Initiation of Collaboration between Women's Studies and Gender Research Environments



by Helena Pettersson

During the last week of April, Professor Britta Lundgren from Umeå University, Sweden visited UCLA's Department of Women's Studies and met with several women's studies researchers. The visit's aim was to initiate an exchange program between Umeå Center for Gender Studies (UCGS) and the UCLA Department of Women's Studies. Professor Lundgren is an ethnologist and the current dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at Umeå University and the intellectual leader for UCGS. She is also the founding director of the Swedish National Graduate School of Gender Studies (a post she resigned from in spring 2007) and the chair for the Gender Research Committee in the Swedish Research Council.

The Swedish National Graduate School of Gender Studies works through interdisciplinary collaboration with participants from various scientific environments with diverse traditions. This diversity affects the structure of the graduate research training, methodology, theory, reflexivity, and research ethics. The graduate school is a part of the umbrella organization UCGS, a research platform for gender studies shared by all faculties at Umeå University. UCGS has the responsibility of organizing an



Britta Lundgren, Professor of Ethnology, Department of Culture and the Media, Umeå University, Sweden, recently visited UCLA to initiate an exchange program between Umeå Center for Gender Studies and the UCLA Department of Women's Studies

interdisciplinary, boundary crossing co-operation within gender studies, both on the national and international level. The center hosts the research program “Challenging Gender,” a research program lauded by the Swedish Research Council for its outstanding quality.

Besides presenting the National Graduate School of Gender Studies and Umeå Center for Gender Studies for the Women Studies Program, Professor Lundgren also met with both the UCLA Vice Chancellor for Research and the UCLA Vice Provost for the International Institute. She also gave a talk at the Scandinavian Section about mourning and grief in Sweden as cultural expressions. The

talk was based on her latest book *Unexpected Death—Expected Mourning* (2006). Professor Lundgren's research is generally within gender theory. The point of departure for her research is to analyze gender as a social and cultural construction. Her impact on the development of Swedish gender theory has been profound. She has written several books, for example *Public Servants. Femininity and Occupational culture in the Swedish Post Office* (1990), *The Imperfect Friendship* (1994), *To Distinguish and to Unite. Ethnological studies in meanings of gender* (1996), *Determining, Naming, Doubting. Cultural perspectives on gender, sexuality and politics* (2001), *Academic Culture* (2002) and *Family*

and *Gender* (2002).

We look forward to a future exchange program between UCLA and Umeå university!

The trip was jointly sponsored by the UCLA Center for the Study of Women, the UCLA Department of Women Studies, the UCLA Scandinavian Section, the UCLA Vice Chancellor for Research, and the Umeå Center for Gender Studies.

Helena Pettersson holds Ph.D. in ethnology and gender studies from Umeå University. She is conducting fieldwork for a study of dual-science careers among plasma-physicists in the United States, Japan, and Sweden.