



GABRIELLA LILLSUNDE LARSSON

- *Currently serving as IFBLS President-Elect 2022-2024*
- *Nominated for the position of IFBLS Board Director 2024-2026*
- *Interested in the position of IFBLS President*

ASSOCIATION MEMBER

SWEDEN - The Swedish Institute of Biomedical Laboratory Science (IBL)

SPECIAL PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS:

- Research, Education, and Professional Development

SUGGESTION(S) FOR FUTURE IFBLS ACTIVITIES AND HOW YOU PLAN TO DEVELOP EACH:

I have been fortunate to be a part of the IFBLS Board of Directors when I was first elected as a Board member in 2020-2022, and President-Elect in 2022-2024. As President-Elect, I was also Chair of the Scientific Committee between 2022 and 2023. In the Scientific Committee we arranged four Britta Karlsson Educational Webinars during that time, and we also proposed a relaunch of the Britta Karlsson Advancement Program during the AltGAD meeting in Dublin 2023. The Scientific Committee also initiated a new formation of the Scientific Network of Experts which will need to be further developed.

As President-Elect, I have been member of the Management Committee where I have been introduced to the internal organizational work of IFBLS. This includes economy related tasks, strategic planning, preparing for AltGAD in Dublin 2023, planning for GAD 2024 in Vancouver, as well as writing a new IFBLS-WHO Collaboration Plan for 2025-2027.

I have also been part of restarting a social media presence with contracting a social media administrator.

During this year (April 15) I have also submitted and published in our International Journal of Biomedical Laboratory Science (IJBLS). The paper "Action Plan for the Future - the Situation for Biomedical Laboratory Scientists (BLS) in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden", presents the situation for Biomedical Laboratory Scientists (BLS) in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden.

My term as President-Elect has been very educational and inspirational and I am now seeking to explore a future role as President for the organization. These four years on the Board, in different roles, have been rewarding in both a professional and personal way. I believe and hope I have gained the qualifications needed to lead and develop this organization further. It would be a great honor to continue this work and below are my thoughts on challenges, opportunities, and suggested activities for the coming period.

2024-2026

Many recent activities of IFBLS have been aiming to support and promote education and advancement of science and technology in the professional development of Biomedical Laboratory Scientists, as stipulated as one of the objectives of IFBLS. Through the Britta Karlsson Educational Webinar Series and the upcoming relaunch of the Britta Karlsson Advancement Program, this will be one way to secure member-value. We all need continuous professional development and for this I think digital solutions are eminent.

I am personally very much invested in research and education. In my daily work, I am fortunate to be able to divide my time between education, clinical practice and research. As Program Director for a Master's program for Biomedical Scientists, I am passionate about continuous professional development for the profession. I strongly believe that to attract young people to this exciting profession, we need to provide opportunities for advanced studies and to career development.

This is also true in other Nordic countries, as presented in the article above. Another large part of my work is within research. It is a privilege to supervise PhD students as well as other students in projects related to my research interest in human papillomavirus (HPV)-related cancer. I also have projects in cost-effectiveness, epigenetics and cervical screening; https://www.oru.se/english/employee/gabriella_lillsunde-larsson.

To further enhance the impact of new research and professional impact in education, I teach the BLS program at Örebro University in subjects such as genetics, molecular diagnostic methods, professional roles, and leadership. I am also a faculty board member at the Faculty of Medicine and Health (MH) at Örebro University where I provide input on Biomedical Laboratory Science, professional impact and challenges in workforce etc. It is rewarding to meet the future professionals and learn from their expectations and to also be able to be part of academia to enhance the education further.

To be the global voice of Biomedical Laboratory Scientists, I believe we need to collaborate with others such as the WHO. In order to promote the profession, we can provide expert opinions relating to Biomedical Laboratory Science where one example is to provide input to the Essential List of In Vitro Diagnostics. With the help of experts within our association members, the knowledge of the workforce can be implemented in future policies. For a smaller profession such as ours, we need to be even more engaged in collaborations, such as with the WHO to secure that the professional voice is represented where needed.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have had to adapt to several changes. We have learned to use digital tools for meetings, seminars and conferences but at the cost of less face-to-face meetings. Travelling has become more expensive, and some may also be hesitant toward travelling, both from a personal perspective but also in a sustainability context.

As an international organization this provides challenges. Historically we have been able to meet member delegates at least once a year at our AltGAD meetings, and every other year at our GAD meetings in conjunction with that year's World Congress. Costs for travelling as well as costs for congress organizers are increasing and may be a concrete obstacle for member organizations today. As an international federation I think we need to thoroughly discuss the future forms of member meetings. Virtual meetings are easier to attend and good for information purposes but may not provide equal discussion forums. It will rely on the meeting organizer to be observant and inclusive, and the language barrier can be even stronger in a digital format. But we, as an organization, must work hard to ensure member value despite these challenges and I think this is one of the major challenges we have ahead of us. In relation to this new normal, I believe we need to also investigate the economic impact for IFBLS.

To summarize, these are my suggested future activities for the coming period:

- To investigate how we can meet in the future to secure member participation, member input and member value for each organization.
- To explore the impact on IFBLS economy in relation to fewer IFBLS conferences, member fees and member-value.
- To increase the Britta Karlsson Educational Webinar Series and to relaunch the Britta Karlsson Advancement Program.
- To increase collaboration with the WHO and seek regional attendance in WHO meetings when possible.

I look forward to continuing our work together on topics important to the profession. The pandemic showed our importance in health care, and we must continue to add value, quality, and science to health care and to the community in the future.

Our expertise is needed in many different settings and if elected as President I will strive for advocating this to groups within and outside of the laboratory.
