

Statement about leadership and career awareness



A career can be many things. For me, it is about purpose and companionship.

My name is Stefanie Meyer, and I have been the Head of the Research Section at the Department of Informatics since summer 2021. It is a small but, in my eyes, very important section as we combine expertise in an array of research administrative areas. We offer pre- and post-award support, contribute to the coordination of career training for younger researchers, and help with center management.

As a leader, I think it is important to help your team members to reflect on their career options and show them different ways for both personal and professional growth. At an organization focused on research and education, it can however be challenging in some administrative areas to find your own career path. To better support my administrative colleagues, leadership, and scientific staff - while at the same time trying to gain more clarity about my own career direction - I adopted a **two-lane career approach**: strengthening my expertise in research administration (lane 1) and actively developing my career awareness to figure out what kind of position I could really set my heart on (lane 2).

For the first lane, I raised my hand whenever there was an exciting offer available that I felt could expand my horizon and improve my skills. As such, I took part in UiB's Service Innovation Program (2019), where my team won the final competition, I attended and loved both the training programs for administrative (team) and group leaders (2021-2023), and I gained much experience from doing internships at two units located at the central administration of UiB (Division of Research and Innovation/spring 2021 and UiB Ferd Career Center for Early Stage Researchers/spring 2024). In addition, I have been and are taking part in various courses of UiB's competence program UiB Opp.

The second lane required a little more creativity. Having been a PhD candidate and Postdoc and then working as project manager and research advisor tightly connected to the world of external funding, I was aware of the strategic thinking behind promoting academic careers. And I wondered if not some of those approaches could be valid for administrative employees as well. So, in 2017 I asked my superiors if they would be Ok if I had a mentor. They said yes, and for about 2 years I had the chance to talk to a more experienced research advisor about how the university works and how one could actively promote one's career as an administrative employee. It turned out that this was (and still is) not as straightforward as it might be for a researcher. The best option still seems to be to gather experience by working in different units at different levels within the organization. Taking on institutional roles helps not only your workplace but can give you some more insight into the university as well. In addition, I began reading job offers for positions that might interest me in the future. To see what competencies they are looking for and find ways to improve my own profile. This may sound very self-centered, but if you are doing this while keeping in mind how this can benefit your current work environment, then this can be a win-win for both sides. A real game changer in the process were, however, the personality tests I took during the leadership programs (JTI, Diversity Icebreaker) and during a Career Competence Skills workshop when I did my internship at UiB Ferd (Career Anchors by Edgar Schein). Not only did I have time to reflect on what resources I have and bring to the table but also understand how my values influence my choices (life and career) and define what I truly enjoy.

This journey is still ongoing, but I feel that I am now at a point where I have gathered some insight that can be useful to others as well – and I am happy to share it with colleagues and my team members.

Bergen, 28 October 2025