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A Lewinian Approach to Managing Barriers to University–Industry Collaboration / Cecilia Bjursell ; Annika Engström

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Abstract

Calls are made by governments, university management and industry to increase university–industry (U–I) collaboration to find solutions for societal and economic problems that are too complex to be tackled within one sector alone. Researchers are often expected to realise these ideas, but when it comes to everyday research and knowledge development, individuals may encounter barriers to accomplishing this. The paper presents an empirical study of researchers' view on U–I collaboration. Our focus in the analysis, inspired by the Lewinian field theory, is on the hindering forces that might create barriers to collaboration from a researcher's perspective. Contrary to the previously used approaches taken in force field analysis, we perform a qualitative study, which might be better suited for this framework. In the literature on U–I collaboration, 'orientation-related' and 'transaction-related' barriers have been identified. In our analysis, we discuss hindering forces on the individual, intra- and interorganisational levels. In total, we find 18 key areas to identify possible hinders for collaboration and based on a Lewinian perspective, we suggest that removing hindering

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forces can benefit U–I collaboration. The paper recognises the need to regard universities as equal partners in U–I collaboration for sustainable knowledge production. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)