

Documentation of the U15 Dialogue “Future of University Teaching” on 9 December in Berlin

Forum: Campus of the Future

Marion Schmidt from *Die Zeit* moderated the forum in which

Professor Dr. Georg Krausch, *President of the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz and Chairman of U15*

Professor Dr. Ada Pellert, *Founding President of the German University for Continuing Education*

Anja Schellhaneck, *Vice President of the Berlin House of Representatives (German Green Party)*

discussed the great challenges in university education.

The pivotal focus during the debate on university teaching will increasingly be its quality and value, which are attributed from within the university as well as from the political sphere. At this point, the major development guidelines for education established at the start were identified in the topics “**Individualisation of Knowledge Transfer**” and “**Skills Orientation of Teaching Content.**” The next herculean task would be—directly joining in on the Bologna Reform—to relate these topics to the further development of teaching; a task that will surely be taken up by the universities. After all, the universities had already implemented the Bologna Reform while it was still taking effect.

What makes university teaching unique is its combination of research and teaching under one roof. The connection to research-oriented teaching in the context of the full disciplinary spectrum found within a university is a primary factor in creating an environment that enables students to think and question critically, ultimately leading to social progress. Different aspects such as interculturality, critical skills, and intellectual discourse were acknowledged by the discussion members as more relevant than ever before.

The biggest question will be, how a “Humboldt reloaded” in the 21st century could succeed. The sole implementation of MOOCs would not be enough—further tools must be applied. These would include the establishment of new forms of learning by teachers and the creation or extension of appropriate learning spaces. Examples given of such tools already put in place were mentoring programs and digital learning spaces.

The forum emphasized that the necessary resources, time and most of all, a significant reputation, would be equally indispensable for good teaching. The value of university teaching must become visible—from the university campus to governmental politics, which has the ability to create incentives for this cause.

New Working Worlds

Marion Schmidt from *Die Zeit* moderated the forum in which

Professor Dr. Peter-André Alt, *President of the Free University Berlin and Chairman of German U15*

Professor Dr. Martin Gersch, *Free University Berlin, Department of Business Administration* (Specializations: General Occupational Preparation, Competence Center E-Commerce)

Nicolas Zimmer, *Chairman of the Technological Foundation Berlin*

discussed the challenges that university education faces in light of new working worlds, and how professionally qualify university studies can be.

According to the speakers, the most important features of university education for later work life were the ability to question oneself, and critical thinking and discussion. These are the prerequisites for **innovative ability and increase graduates' professional capability**. Aside from this, the speakers rested the arguments made in their talks on the idea of being **aware of the consequences of one's own actions**.

The universities should live up to their full social duty by educating students not only in a functional or subject-specific sense, but also in a way that evokes ethical responsibility.

In this way, universities not only have an obligation to provide; in order to experience skills-oriented teaching at universities, students must deliver on their obligation to perform for society. They could take advantage of the offers provided to them by their faculties, but they do not need to. Not every student should be forced to take on work offers related to their field of study. It is also important that universities not only rely on their stores of expert knowledge. They must fulfill their full social responsibility by sharing the knowledge acquired through research with society. The universities must adjust to new situations and reform the teaching curriculums accordingly. These should include enough room for self-reflection and profitably apply students' character development. A vertical differentiation scheme within the university system could support such processes.

The additional value of university education for students, for society and for employers is the production of qualified, responsible and critically reflective people. Full universities especially have comprehensive educational offers—as the forum discussion members emphasized—that go far beyond the transmission of subject-specific content purely for expert knowledge.

Documentation: Denise Feldner