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campus

passau



S C I E N T I F I C
R E S P O N S I B I L I T Y



Dear reader,

We can count ourselves lucky that our constitution guarantees freedom of science, research and teaching in Article 5(3). This freedom is a precious good that we must defend, particularly at a time when there is an increasing tendency in the political arena to change the social discourse both in terms of content and tone, and when the right-wing fringe is stepping up its efforts to turn racism, exclusion and an anti-science stance into mainstream positions. Nevertheless, the freedom of science, research and teaching is not boundless; it is inextricably linked to allegiance to the constitution and a high level of responsibility. This is something we must once again emphasise very clearly in the current climate.

Freedom and responsibility are thus the coordinates that mark out the scientific terrain. Freedom necessitates an open discourse – academic debate and discussion involving the exchange of arguments grounded in scientific findings – between all those who wish to participate in this discourse. Not only experienced scientists and academics but early career researchers and students, too, are called upon to contribute to this. The responsibility that goes hand in hand with the freedom of science includes acting ethically and in accordance with human rights, and it involves consciously analysing the potential consequences of one's own academic activities for others and for our environment.

Scientific responsibility, the topic of the lead story of this Campus Magazine issue, is not only fundamental to what we do but also leads the way for the future, and this has never been truer than today. With this in mind, I am very pleased that this edition of the Campus Magazine showcases the work of our Ethics Committee and gives the scholars who deal with this topic from different vantage points at our university their say.

We all have a duty to ensure that our university continues to be a place of freedom, responsibility, diversity and mutual respect. In this spirit, I wish you an insightful read.

Ulrich Bartosch

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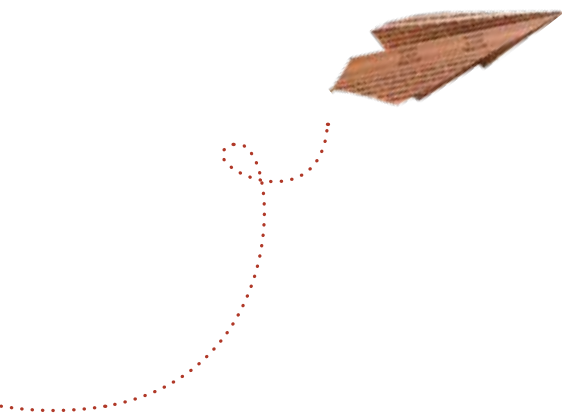
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Dr Manuela Fritz with her doctoral supervisor, development economist Professor Michael Grimm

BAVARIAN CULTURE PRIZE FOR DR MANUELA FRITZ

A researcher with a passion for Southeast Asia: Dr Manuela Fritz received the Bavarian Culture Prize for her doctoral thesis on the consequences of climate change on people suffering from chronic illnesses. Dr Fritz, who hails from Berlin, studied two degree programmes at Passau – M.A. International Cultural and Business Studies in Passau with a focus on Southeast Asia, and M.A. Development Studies. Her doctoral thesis gives an overview of the current situation and summarises measures that are currently being used in Southeast Asia to mitigate risk factors for diseases such as diabetes. In a separate study, she showed that climate change represents an additional burden for the chronically ill. Due to travel restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic, she analysed to what extent Facebook campaigns can help identify people who are at risk of developing diabetes. On 16 November, Bayernwerk AG and the Bavarian State Ministry of Science and the Arts awarded her the Bavarian Culture Prize for this work.

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL HAS NEW MEMBERS

At its constituent meeting in November in winter semester 2023–24, the University Council of the University of Passau welcomed three new external members: Professor Klaus B. Beckmann, President of Helmut Schmidt University/University of the Federal Armed Forces Hamburg, Dr Daniela Fischer, Head of Human Responsibility at AXA Switzerland, and Werner Grabl, former head of the state education authorities for the city and rural district of Passau. The Bavarian Higher Education Act requires that university councils be made up of ten personalities from academia, culture, business and professional practice. The other members are: Professor Ulrike Beisiegel, former president of the University of Göttingen; Dr Natascha Eckert, Siemens AG, Munich; Professor Sigmund Gottlieb, former editor-in-chief of Bayerischer Rundfunk; Professor Martin Selmayr, head of the European



Pictured (from right to left): University President, Professor Ulrich Bartosch, with the newly appointed Chair of the University Council, Professor Klaus B. Beckmann; Senate Chair, Professor Tomas Sauer; and Head of Administration, Dr Achim Dilling.

Commission Representation in Austria; Dr Alexander Wisspeintner, Mico-Epsilon Messtechnik GmbH & Co. KG; Siska Thiele, S&K Solutions GmbH; and Professor Ruth Breu, University of Innsbruck. The University Council is chaired by Professor Klaus B. Beckmann.



Stefan Klessinger
Photo credit: werbeFOTO HAASZ

INTERNATIONAL SUCCESSES FOR YOUNG RESEARCHERS FROM PASSAU

At the International Conference on Management of Data (SIGMOD) in Seattle, a key international conference in the field of databases, Passau computer scientist Stefan Klessinger secured first place in the Student Research Competition in June 2023, where doctoral candidates present their ongoing research work. Stefan Klessinger is a doctoral candidate at the Chair of Computer Science with a focus on Scalable Database Systems under Professor Stefanie Scherzinger. His research is concerned with recognising structures in data with a view to improving the quality of data in a given data set.



Kristin Fritsch
Photo credit: VDI

Honours also went to another young researcher from Professor Scherzinger's team: Kristin Fritsch received an award from the district association for Munich, Upper and Lower Bavaria of VDI – The Association of German Engineers for her master's thesis on databases and quantum computing. Ms Fritsch graduated from the University of Passau with an M.Sc. in computer science in autumn 2023. Her thesis was previously presented at the VLDB international database conference.



Dr Janina Garbas

Another of Passau's internationally successful researchers is Dr Janina Garbas. She took second place with her doctoral thesis in the EMAC-Enginius Doctoral Competition 2023 and received her prize at the European Marketing Academy (EMAC) conference in Odense, Denmark. A former doctoral candidate at the University of Passau's Chair of Marketing and Innovation and now postdoctoral researcher at RWTH Aachen University, Dr Garbas investigated how customers react when they cannot use components of a purchased product until it has been upgraded.

Video introducing Dr Janina Garbas's research:
<https://www.digital.uni-passau.de/beitraege/2023/dissertation-von-janina-garbas>



PROFESSOR BARTOSCH APPOINTED HRK VICE PRESIDENT



The newly elected HRK Executive Board: Back row (from left to right): Professor Angela Ittel, Professor Georg Krausch, Dr Arne Zerbst, Professor Jörg Bagdahn. Front row (from left to right): Professor Susanne Menzel-Riedl, Professor Ulrike Tippe, Professor Dorit Schumann, HRK President Professor Dr Walter Rosenthal, Professor Naja Steinbeck, Professor Ulrich Bartosch.

Photo credit: David Ausserhofer

In December 2023, University President Professor Ulrich Bartosch was appointed to the Executive Committee of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) as Vice President for Teaching, Studies and Teacher Training. "I am very honoured to have been nominated by HRK President Professor Rosenthal and I would like to thank the General Assembly for their confidence in me", said Professor Bartosch.

"Key topics in this portfolio include the challenges of digitalisation and support for teacher training programmes. I also wish to work towards greater recognition and appreciation of the existential importance of higher education degree programmes for the development of our democratic society.

Higher education institutions educate tomorrow's responsible movers and shakers. They deserve the best conditions for their studies."

USING DIGITAL TWINS TO ELECTRIFY UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS



A team led by Professor Herrmann de Meer, who holds the Chair of Computer Networks and Computer Communications, is participating in the EU Horizon project "META BUILD". Using buildings on Passau's university campus as an initial example, computer scientists are testing ways of reducing CO₂ emissions from academic institutions and electrifying the existing building stock. Electrification means replacing fossil fuels with green electricity in order to minimise CO₂

emissions from buildings. "The energy transition requires one thing above all else: flexibility", underscores Professor de Meer. This applies to both energy supply and consumption: "Electrical and thermal storage systems can be employed to ensure a flexible power supply while consumption can be controlled by introducing variable tariffs – for charging electric cars, for example – and by fostering awareness among users." Given that the University of Passau has set itself the goal of spearheading the transition as a sustainable academic institution, Professor de Meer believes that the university is particularly suited for the project.



Project no. 101138373

EXCELLENT FOUNDING TEAM



Thea Kakavand (centre) and Florian Niederhuber (left) at the award ceremony. On the right: Presenter Anna Christmann.

Photo credit: BMWK/Philipp Kirschner

In November 2023, Passau founders Thea Kakavand, Florian Niederhuber, Klara Gorisch and Tristan Schneider were honoured with a prize from the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Protection in the “Start-up Competition for Digital Innovations”, which recognises the best digital start-up ideas. The team has developed an analogue and electronic combination tool, the “Lesson Organizer”, to make it easier for teachers to plan and manage teaching units. As a former teacher education student in Passau, Thea Kakavand recognised a problem with long-term structured lesson planning during her traineeship, which gave rise to the idea for the Lesson Organizer. Klara Gorisch contributes her expertise in finance, customer acquisition and marketing to the project, while the computer scientists Florian Niederhuber and Tristan Schneider develop the software. The team was supported by the University of Passau as part of the EXIST-funded project “Passau – The Entrepreneurial Campus” (PATEC). In the meantime, a pilot project has been launched at a secondary school in Passau, putting the Lesson Organizer through its paces for the first time.

Find out more about the Lesson Organizer at <https://lesson-organizer.de/>

GREEN SUCCESS

When the University of Passau took part in the GreenMetric Ranking for the first time in 2021, there was much reason to celebrate: we were voted best newcomer worldwide. Two years on, in the current 2023 ranking, the University of Passau still performs excellently and is still among the top 15 percent of international higher education institutions, occupying 134th place out of a total of 1,183. The University of Passau has managed to increase its overall score by 200 points year-on-year, with 8,180 out of a possible 10,000 points. The GreenMetric Ranking, which has been carried out annually since 2010 as a non-profit initiative of the University of Indonesia, is led by Wageningen University & Research in the Netherlands. It assesses the following six categories: infrastructure, energy/climate protection/climate change, waste management, water, mobility/transport and education/teaching/research.

For further information visit <https://greenmetric.ui.ac.id/>

news

GOOD GRADES FOR PASSAU'S LAW PROGRAMMES

The Faculty of Law is delighted to have scored top positions in various nationwide rankings. The University of Passau is in the leading group in Germany in all 16 categories of the Centre for Higher Education Development's (CHE) ranking. The "Exam preparation" section in particular received an outstanding rating with a top score of 4.7 (out of a possible 5) stars. Overall, Passau's Faculty of Law was ranked second in Germany. The University of Passau achieved the same excellent position in the law ranking of Legal Tribune Online (LTO). "I am delighted that the high level of commitment and innovative spirit of my colleagues at the chairs, at the Institute for the Didactics of Law, of the administration and the student representatives' council is reflected in these excellent results", said the Dean of the Faculty of Law, Professor Jörg Fedtke. "A good 40 years ago, the University of Passau was the youngest university in Bavaria to set out on the path to becoming a state and national leader in research and teaching. We will defend this position with new ideas and great enthusiasm."

The students themselves also give the programme high marks. In the current 5th Law student survey conducted by the *Bundesverband rechtswissenschaftlicher Fachschaften e.V.* (the federal association of undergraduate law student committees, BRF), the Faculty of Law achieved by far the highest recommendation rate of all universities with almost 91 percent; the national average is around 30 percent. Moreover, the faculty received the following top scores: best exam preparation programme, best teaching materials, best subject coverage and excellent international relations/partner universities, highest satisfaction with regard to key qualifications offered and most motivated and competent lecturers. "We are proud that Passau's unique concept of university exam preparation has been so well received and rated by our students", said Professor Thomas Riehm, Dean of Studies of the Faculty of Law.

BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS MASTER'S PROGRAMMES IN THE CHE TOP GROUP

Gratifying results also for Passau's business, economics and information systems: The latest CHE Master's Ranking places all three subject areas – business administration, economics and information systems – in the top group nationwide in the ten categories surveyed among students. More than 11,000 master's students across Germany were asked to assess the study conditions at their higher education institution and provide feedback on the student experience, research and teaching. "The new results for our faculty's master's degree programmes underscore the high quality of the business, economics and information systems education provided by the University of Passau", said Professor Stefan Bauernschuster, Dean of the School of Business, Economics and Information Systems.

In addition to the general study situation and support during studies, the survey evaluated the range of modules offered, digital teaching elements, study organisation, transition from bachelor's to master's study, supervision by lecturers as well as research and practical orientation. The three degree programmes assessed in Passau, M.Sc. Business Administration, M.Sc. International Economics and Business and M.Sc. Information Systems, are all taught in a research-oriented manner and mostly in English.

"Our faculty is characterised by a combination of excellent teaching in a wide range of subjects and its proximity to students", said Dean of Studies Professor Sebastian Krautheim. "These results are a wonderful acknowledgment of our work over the years, but also an incentive for our faculty to continue offering our students an excellent, scientifically sound and practical education in the future."



PYREC EXCELLENCE PROGRAMME STARTS

This spring, the Graduate Centre will launch the Passau Young Researchers Excellence Centre (PYREC) programme. This will support outstanding doctoral, postdoctoral and habilitation candidates at the University of Passau through activities that are organised around an annual theme set by the PYREC fellows. In addition to providing discussion platforms for current societal challenges, PYREC opens up collaborative spaces in which researchers can introduce interdisciplinary approaches as they develop and work on contemporary research questions. It also provides transferable skills training to its fellows. The programme follows the guiding principle of “more graduate responsibility – taking responsibility, proactively shaping science”.

VIelfalt Gestalten (“SHAPING DIVERSITY”) CERTIFICATE FROM THE STIFTERVERBAND

In March 2024, the University of Passau will complete the Stifterverband's *Vielfalt Gestalten* diversity audit. Over the past two years, university members of all faculties – students, early career researchers and professors – as well as various administrative divisions have overhauled the university's diversity strategy under the leadership of Vice President for International Affairs and Diversity, Professor Christina Hansen. Focal points of this work were the mission statement and communication, advice and services, study and teaching, research and knowledge transfer, as well as accessible infrastructure. The University of Passau will be awarded the certificate for three years and will continue its commitment to diversity.

news



Making way for something new

Things are afoot on the construction site for the soon-to-be-erected International Centre for Scholarship and Science (IWZ). Following various demolition phases in which the row of houses on the Spitzberg site were stripped of pollutants one by one, both inside and out (the pollutants were recycled wherever possible), the excavators finally got serious and tore down the first houses in mid-November.

The IWZ, to be built using funds made available under the Bavarian High-Tech Agenda innovation drive, will be a new centre for science and culture in the heart of Passau.



Newly equipped

Originally conceived as a creative and technical home for the Chair of Communication Studies, the studio rooms of the Centre for Media and Communication (ZMK) have become the central point of contact for all types of audio-visual communication and production. Now the technical media equipment has been upgraded and is once again state-of-the-art, including Ultra-HD standard in video productions, IP-based audio/video network, virtual, augmented and extended reality as well as e-learning labs with remote and hybrid technologies.



Off to a good start

At the beginning of the winter semester, the University held its traditional Leberkäs reception to welcome its students to a new academic year. The final tally: Some 700 students attended the welcoming event and consumed roughly 100 kilogrammes of Leberkäs (a meat-based food specialty in southern Germany), about 2,500 bread rolls, more than 300 litres of beer, 10 kilogrammes of cheese and – a first this year – around 100 portions of tofu.



Discovering the universe

Isabella Graßl could simply walk into the Veste Oberhaus observatory in the castle overlooking Passau and peer through a telescope, but this is not what her “Codeversum” project is about; she wants to discover the universe together with children and youngsters in a completely different way, namely by using a programming language. “In our project, we ask children and youngsters to let their creativity run wild and create entire vistas with planets”, says Ms Graßl. With this project, she was one of the winning teams in the 2023 Wissenschaft im Dialog (“Science in Dialogue”) higher education competition competition. Since then, over 260 children and youngsters from school years 3 to 10 (age group roughly 9 to 17) have taken part. In workshops, the school pupils develop their ideas together, do all the programming themselves and learn a lot about the universe in the process.

"FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY ARE OUR ETHICAL COORDINATES"

How we act, and the decisions we make, often depend on our basic ethical values. But what are the values to which the University of Passau is committed? What coordinates can be used to mark out the scientific terrain? What is needed for responsible research and teaching? Campus Magazine spoke to University President, Professor Ulrich Bartosch, and Vice President for Studies, Teaching and Ethics, Professor Bettina Noltenius.

President Bartosch, what do you consider ethical behaviour?

Professor Ulrich Bartosch: I follow Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative, which states: 'Act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law.' The concept of ethics is often illustrated with a picture of a compass needle – just like the one adorning the cover of this magazine – and for good reason: Ethical standards give us orientation when marking out the scientific terrain in which we can move freely. These standards, such as the moral principle of human dignity, are non-negotiable – even if, unfortunately, they aren't fully enforceable. Other ethical standards can change with time, but they're no less important in their respective times.

You mentioned the metaphorical compass. What coordinates can we find on the university's compass?

Professor Bettina Noltenius: I would like to add that the concept of ethics is somewhat fuzzy, and that it must be distinguished from the concept of law. The members of a university are of course bound by the law, but also by ethical coordinates, which in my opinion are freedom and responsibility. When I say freedom, I don't just mean the freedom to choose my research topic; what I mean is autonomy, which takes on a much wider meaning, namely the ability to act in a self-determined manner according to good and honest principles. This means researchers have a great deal of responsibility vis-à-vis their students and society at large. I'm thinking, for example, of how certain experiments are set up, or the way teaching is organised.



University President, Professor Ulrich Bartosch

Professor Bettina Noltenius is Vice President for Studies, Teaching, Ethics and Quality Assurance and holds the Chair of Criminal Law and Procedure, Criminology and Philosophy of Law.



Ethics in science is an often-discussed topic. Since you mentioned teaching – how important are ethical standards in this area?

Professor Ulrich Bartosch: We can count ourselves lucky that we are able to live our university and academic lives within the framework of the Basic Law. This constitutional framework of non-negotiable and fixed legal premises gives us a solid fundament on which we can develop our ethical roadmap. As a university, we have a special responsibility in this regard, especially in light of the current situation. The mode of conflict at the university is the academic discussion, the debate. The ethical consequence of this is that indoctrination must not be practised here; the principle of free exchange of arguments applies. The role of scholars must not be used to turn one's own position into a universally valid position.

Professor Bettina Nolténus: Once again, we should draw a clear line between law and ethics. The Basic Law states that art, science, research and teaching are free, but Article 5(3) also provides in sentence 2 that freedom of teaching does not equate to a release from the duty of allegiance to the constitution. That means teaching is free within the set legal boundaries, but each individual should also endeavour to engage in good teaching. Universities can't enforce this, of course, but they can create opportunities, as we do with the Lehre+ programme, for example. Also, as a university lecturer, it's important to me to hold students accountable to a certain extent. My area is criminal law, where penalties are custodial sentences or fines, both of which heavily impact on the freedom of the individual. I try to build awareness of this fact among my students. To me, it's an ethical issue to encourage students to think for themselves and not to blindly accept everything they are told as fact.

Professor Ulrich Bartosch: This point forms the core and the basic mission of higher education: involving young people in the production of scientific knowledge using scientific methods, the development of such knowledge and the ability to assess its scope. For me, this is also where universities differ from universities of applied sciences: At a university, students are seen as part of this scientific knowledge-producing community from the very first semester. This means we're not merely lecturing to them, but introducing them to the critical search for truth in the respective methodological spectra of the disciplines.

President Bartosch, you have spoken elsewhere about the "regional responsibility of the University of Passau". What do you mean by that?

Professor Ulrich Bartosch: I see a regional and local dimension of responsibility for the University of Passau in particular, owing primarily to the type of university it is and the high level of interconnectedness with its environment. I would certainly put it differently if I were responsible for one of the big universities in Munich. It's essential that we include the educational demands, expectations and needs prevalent in the region in our focus, such as in teacher training. Also, engaging with the regional economy by exploring opportunities for cooperation or the question of education and training of regionally sought-after specialists are important. However, this doesn't change the core understanding of universities as science-led institutions. A university must be committed to science – and only to science. But let me go back to the universities of applied sciences: There is a difference in this clear, core focus on basic research as the defining core of a university, because this mission requires us to make certain efforts in the development of research and research opportunities that emanate from us alone and not from some other, external demand. This is a particularly great challenge, as it requires generating support from within the academic system. But that isn't to say that we don't have a very fruitful exchange with the universities of applied sciences, especially in applied research.

In conclusion, what does 'scientific responsibility' mean to you?

Professor Bettina Nolténus: In terms of teaching, I would say that the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of teaching is inextricably linked to responsibility for our students. To my mind, preparing them well for life, confronting them with ethical questions and making sure, time and time again, that they understand what consequences the application of acquired knowledge and certain actions can have for the outside world means doing science responsibly.

Professor Ulrich Bartosch: I see two levels here. Professor Nolténus has already explained one of them: the responsibility of science towards the social environment. The second level is an individual one: As scholars, we ourselves are responsible for ensuring that we conduct science in accordance with generally recognised standards and rules. Furthermore, we are all, without exception, responsible for the consequences of our scientific actions. And I say this in view of the experiences before 1945: As a scholar you mustn't be indifferent to what others do with your findings and research results. You have a shared responsibility and must take an unequivocal position.

The interview was conducted by Nicola Jacobi and Barbara Weinert.

Professor Karoline Reinhardt joined the University in winter semester 2022–23 as Tenure-Track Professor of Applied Ethics. Prior to this, she worked at the University of Tübingen and Tulane University, New Orleans (USA). Her research interests are ethics of digitalisation and AI as well as migration ethics. She is a member of the University Research Ethics Committee of the University of Passau and of the Young Academy of the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities. In October 2023, she was nominated for the Kant-Nachwuchspreis (Kant young talent award) of the Kant-Gesellschaft and Fondazione Silvestro Marcucci.



CREATING KNOWLEDGE AND ENGAGING WITH IT RESPONSIBLY

Wherever science is conducted, wherever teaching and learning take place, we must always ask ourselves these questions: What happens to the results? Where does this knowledge lead us? What are our responsibilities as scientists and scholars? What responsibilities do research organisations have? The topic of ethics in science is one that concerns all of academia, including the University of Passau.

“Research ethics and the ethics of science are always a balancing act between the freedom of science and the responsibility for the consequences of new discoveries”, says Karoline Reinhardt, Professor of Applied Ethics at the University of Passau. “To my mind, the two sides cannot be treated in isolation. Responsibility arises from freedom and it is only our ability to take responsibility that justifies our freedom.”

Addressing questions of ethics is now an established part of the research process, and institutions such as the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina have issued recommendations on this topic. The summary of the publication on Scientific Freedom and Scientific Responsibility, which was jointly issued by the DFG and Leopoldina and deals with security-relevant research, states: “Research plays a fundamental role in ensuring progress. Freedom of research, which is enshrined in the German Basic Law, is a fundamental

requirement in this respect. Yet free research is also associated with risks. These risks can only be covered to a limited extent by legal regulations and result primarily from the danger of useful research findings being misused (known as the dual-use dilemma).” This document was drawn up by the Working Group on Dual Use – Handling Security-Relevant Research and is based on the Max Planck Society’s code of conduct, issued on 19 March 2010, on the responsible engagement with scientific freedom and research risks (German title: “Hinweise und Regeln der Max-Planck-Gesellschaft zum verantwortlichen Umgang mit Forschungsfreiheit und Forschungsrisiken”).

The authors of the joint DFG and Leopoldina publication also make an appeal to researchers to look beyond mere compliance with the letter of the law, writing: “After all, researchers’ knowledge, experience and freedom give them a special ethical responsibility that goes beyond legal obligations. Furthermore, research institutions should create framework conditions for ethically responsible research.”

This is a continuous learning process, says Reinhardt. “Consider, for example, that human test subjects now have to give their consent to a study and that scientific progress has no claim to absolute supremacy. As research processes become ever more complex, it is increasingly important to look at how these processes are designed from multiple angles. This is a key aspect of responsible research.”

Growing number of enquiries to the Ethics Committee

The growing number of enquiries to the University Research Ethics Committee shows that the topic is extremely relevant and increasingly urgent at the University of Passau, too. The range of issues on which the committee has been consulted since 1 October 2019 goes beyond the security-relevant aspects of research. “The Ethics Committee has two areas of activity”, explains its chairwoman, Professor Susanne Mayr. One is advising on security-relevant aspects of research, which is particularly pertinent if the research project relates to subjects and technologies that are connected to the development of weapons or if there is an immediate risk of abuse with regard to the research subject. However, so far this area has played a minor role. “At the University of Passau, we have not yet received any such enquiries”, says Mayr. “Much more frequently, we advise academics at our university on the ethical aspects of research, which come into play when a research project is potentially associated with risks to human dignity, life, health, freedom, property, animals, the environment or peaceful coexistence.” (Turn to p. 26 for more about the work of the Ethics Committee of the University of Passau)

One recurring topic is digitalisation and artificial intelligence. Professor Karoline Reinhardt, who is also a member of the University’s Ethics Committee, expresses her concern: “Digital technologies and how they are used have the potential to cause significant societal transformation processes. A lot of the time these processes aren’t grounded in democratic principles – and that, to me, is a big problem.” She sees the role of her area of expertise as, firstly, identifying the normative values on which decisions and technologies are implicitly based. Secondly, to examine whether these are in

conflict with other fundamental principles that are important to us, such as democracy, human dignity and freedom. And thirdly, to derive what we should do from this diagnosis. “People are generally keen to do right”, she notes. “Especially when it comes to new technologies, they are aware there may be a problem.”

A university is many things

Universities have a duty to generate knowledge and engage with it responsibly. Another is to make knowledge available to society – to explain it, assess it and disseminate findings in a way that interested laypersons can understand. The university must become more “porous”, Reinhardt believes, more permeable in both directions and responsive to topical issues, in addition to disseminating scientific knowledge. However, it is important not to be driven by this alone and not to lose sight of basic research. “Not everything has to be done with usability and feasibility in mind,” says Reinhardt, “I think that the resource for creative solutions can lie precisely in a broader perspective on the role of research in society.”

Although universities are also teaching institutions, according to Professor Reinhardt, their task is not only to impart knowledge but also to give young people room to develop, try things out, exchange ideas, educate themselves and grow; there’s more to universities than exams, grades and credit points. Reinhardt believes that this freedom is currently underused – especially in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. “There is sometimes a bit of confusion among students about what a university really is. I would like to see them once again making greater use of the freedom that studying offers, because that prepares them for many things, such as multi-perspectivity, interdisciplinarity and intercultural sensitivity.” According to Reinhardt, this primarily relates to the way in which students are introduced to problems, how young researchers are enabled to engage in critical reflection processes and develop a sensitivity for ethical issues.

This is the only way to fulfil the genuine educational mission of turning students into critical thinkers and responsible people who are open to other people’s opinions and perspectives. (NJ)

"WE NEED TO RETHINK WHAT IT ACTUALLY MEANS TO DO RIGHT AND ACT JUSTLY"

Professor Karoline Reinhardt on the field
of applied ethics and her research

What is applied ethics concerned with?

The aim of my research is to bring together historical and systematic perspectives. I'm interested in finding out how historical philosophical resources can be made fruitful for the numerous problems of our time in order to develop robust solutions. Applied ethics mediates between fundamental ethics and specific case types.

What are your main research interests?

I have three main research interests: First, migration ethics, which deals with questions such as what ethical and moral issues are raised by cross-border mass migration and how we can deal with them. People have always travelled and crossed borders, and the topic has always been examined from a philosophical standpoint. We can make use of this knowledge. Second, digitalisation and AI: Right now, I am particularly interested in questions of trust and trustworthiness. Is trust a good term to describe our relationship with these technologies? When should we trust? Should we trust at all? Third, I'm looking at the topic of heroism. What does that mean in today's context? Do we still need it? We are confronted with many situations today that pose such great challenges to us that it is extraordinary when someone manages to do the right thing – precisely because moral behaviour is difficult.

These are all very topical issues...

The particular relevance of ethics often becomes especially apparent when we find ourselves in a situation of crisis, when some new phenomenon emerges, when traditions fade and authorities experience a loss of trust. Then we reconsider what is right and what is wrong, what is just and what unjust. The emerging field of artificial intelligence is a good example for this.

Does science have a responsibility to explain and inform more?

Science communication is very important to me personally. But I'd also say communication is a two-way process. Ethics must also address issues that are currently present in society. For example, there's a great deal of interest from the general population in AI: How and to what extent should we use the possibilities AI offers? Is it always reasonable to use AI, or are there situations where it would be better to avoid it? These questions are about justification – not only for people's actions, but also for the technologies themselves.

Nicola Jacobi conducted the interview.

DOUGHNUTS FOR A BETTER WORLD

What economic measures can we put in place to improve the quality of life for everyone on Earth while keeping resource use within the planetary boundaries? Are there local projects we can realise that will help us live in harmony with our natural environment? And what answers does the Doughnut Economy provide? Researchers at the University's Institute for Applied Ethics in Business and Education have been searching for answers to these questions.



Dr Annekathrin Meißner,
General Manager of the Institute for
Applied Ethics in Business and Education

When the local branch of a doughnut chain opened its doors in Passau's pedestrian zone in summer 2021, people got excited. At times, the queue was so long that it stretched all the way from Ludwigstrasse to Große Klingergasse, a good 100 yards. This also happened to be the place where the new event series "Uni Live – Campus meets Town" started in summer 2023, and the deep-fried dough ring took centre stage as Dr Annekatrin Meißner, Managing Director of the Institute for Applied Ethics in Business and Education (Ethik WAW), presented the essential ingredients of Kate Raworth's Doughnut Economy to the interested public. Following this, two of the institute's staff members, Nelly Rahimy and Sina Kehrwieler, organised a workshop in which they applied the concept to the town of Passau.

Turning the economy on its head

Kate Raworth, an English economist, is pursuing an ambitious plan: she wants to turn the economy on its head. As she writes, the starting point for her concept boils down to a simple idea: What if, instead of placing the established, traditional theories of economics front and centre, we focused instead on the long-term goals of humanity and tried to develop an economic way of thinking that enables us to achieve these goals?

To illustrate her concept, Ms Raworth uses a doughnut. The hole at the centre contains "the great scourges and hardships of mankind, such as hunger and illiteracy". The edge of the donut represents the ecological ceiling, the planetary boundaries within which we must remain so as not to over-exploit our planetary resources, for example with regard to air pollution or the destruction of the ozone layer. Between these planetary boundaries and the needs of humanity (the social foundation) lies a safe and just space for humanity – the doughnut itself, where everyone has access to all necessities of life, whether this is food and housing, health care or political participation. Ms Raworth says the economy should be organised in such a way that all people can live within this safe and just space.

Amsterdam shows how it's done

The city of Amsterdam is a pioneer when it comes to implementing the Doughnut Economy. As Annekatrin Meißner explains, the Amsterdam Donut Coalition, established in 2019, is large network of people who are enthusiastic about Kate Raworth's ideas and are working together to bring her concept to life through local projects. Amsterdam's city council firmly supports the network's goal of transforming the Dutch capital into an urban space with a fair, social basis for all – and within safe ecological boundaries. This network idea has already inspired other metropolitan centres such as Brussels and Barcelona, but also small towns such as Bad Nauheim.

No shortage of ideas in Passau

How can companies and organisations transform themselves so that their business activities comply with the principles of the Doughnut Economy? This is precisely what Annekatrin Meißner is investigating jointly with Professor Suleika Bort, who holds the Chair of Corporate

Governance at the University of Passau. Since 2022, the two have been analysing promising practices of companies and organisations in the field of sustainability transformation as part of a three-year cooperation project funded by the Dr-Hans-Karl-Fischer Foundation. The aim of the project is to transfer this knowledge to all interested companies, organisations and municipal administrations in the wider Passau area. "There is no shortage of ideas on how to approach the goals of the Doughnut Economy in Passau", says Annekatrin Meißner. If the opening event of the new "Uni Live – Campus meets Town" series is anything to go by, she could be right. (BK)



**ethik
WAW**
Institut für Angewandte Ethik
in Wirtschaft, Aus- und Weiterbildung



The Ethik WAW institute at the University of Passau sees itself as a scientific centre of competence for questions of economics and business ethics as well as for an ethically sound approach to sustainability and education. The institute focuses on the ethical principles of sustainable business and entrepreneurship, as well as the transformation of organisations and society, to bring about greater sustainability. Its central aim is to promote and deepen discourses between business and ethics in interdisciplinary and cross-faculty formats.

UNI live
Campus trifft Stadt



Uni Live – Campus meets Town is an event series launched in summer 2023, which invites Passau's citizens to become better acquainted with the University of Passau and its researchers. Uni Live provides a platform for a diverse programme of events where academics present their research findings and how these will benefit society. This provides fascinating insights into current topics and activities in the areas of sustainability, politics and culture. The venue is a wheelchair-accessible room at Ludwigstraße 8. The entrance is located in Große Klingergasse 2a.

PUTTING RESEARCH PROJECTS UNDER THE ETHICAL MICROSCOPE

The Ethics Committee of the University of Passau: remit, procedure, topics

The University Research Ethics Committee (Ethics Committee for short) assists the university's researchers in ensuring adherence to ethical standards in their research and advises on security-relevant aspects of research.

Professor Susanne Mayr, who holds the Chair of Psychology and Human-Machine Interaction, is the chairwoman of the Ethics Committee. As a psychologist, she takes an empirical approach to her research and has frequently submitted ethics applications in the past for studies involving human participants.

"I have benefited greatly from the dedication of other ethics committees and ethics committee members. So it's only natural and fair that I should also take on this job", she says about her motivation.

Remit of the Ethics Committee

The Ethics Committee has two areas of activity: The first is advising researchers at the University of Passau on ethical aspects of research, i.e. when a research project involves actual or potential risks to human dignity, life, health, freedom, property, animals, the environment or peaceful coexistence.

The second area is advice on security-relevant aspects of research. According to the guidelines of the University Research Ethics Committee of the University of Passau, research is deemed to be security-relevant particularly if it relates to objects and technologies that are connected to the development of weapons or if there is an immediate risk of misuse with regard to the object of research ("dual use research of concern"). "At the University of Passau, however, we have so far only received applications in the first field of activity, i.e. for advice and evaluation of ethical aspects", says Mayr.


Processing of applications

At the core of the application is an application guide provided by the Ethics Committee, in which information must be provided on the various ethically relevant aspects of the research project. Two ethical principles that should be taken into account in a research project are central to the assessment of research

projects in which people are involved, e.g. as study participants: participants' self-determination and the avoidance of harm or damage. Self-determination, explains Mayr, means "that the participants have a right to be fully informed about the purpose of the study and the conditions of participation, so that they can then decide freely and without coercion whether they wish to participate at all; in other words, informed consent." As for the second principle – avoidance of harm or damage – any study in which the participants are harmed, whether physically, mentally or in any other way, requires extremely close ethical scrutiny. "Even if these principles seem very obvious – after all, who would want to harm the study participants or force them to take part? – it's nevertheless often the case that the procedure can be improved from an ethical point of view."

Rising demand

In recent years, the Ethics Committee has seen a significant increase in the number of applications, although the overall number, according to Mayr, is not very high yet. One primary driver for this increase in ethics applications is the fact that ethical assessments are increasingly required by third-party funding providers and scientific journals. Many funding providers require researchers to obtain ethical approval when making research proposals. Similarly, before considering manuscripts,


 A portrait of Professor Susanne Mayr, a woman with long, wavy, light brown hair, smiling. She is wearing a bright blue t-shirt under a dark, ribbed cardigan. The background is a blurred indoor setting with large windows.

Professor Susanne Mayr

many journals request official confirmation that the underlying research projects were deemed ethically justified by an ethics committee before they were carried out.

Ethical standards in research projects

At the University of Passau, ethics applications have until now only been submitted for research projects involving human subjects, e.g. as study participants. “The ethics committee then assesses the extent to which the planned treatment of the participants adheres to ethical standards”, says Mayr.

Raising awareness for ethical considerations

The Ethics Committee also endeavours to make all members of the university more sensitive to ethical aspects of research, for instance through the lecture series *Forschung & Ethik*, in which experts are invited to give talks on research and ethics throughout the academic year. These events are advertised through the usual communication channels and are aimed at all members of the university who are actively engaged in research. (NJ)

Members of the Ethics Committee of the University of Passau

From the Faculty of Law:

Professor Sebastian Martens and Professor Tristan Barczak

From the Faculty of Business, Economics and Information Systems:

Professor Jin Gerlach and Professor Oliver Entrop

From the Faculty of Humanities and Cultural Studies:

Professor Karoline Reinhardt and Professor Natascha Adamowsky

From the Faculty of Social and Educational Sciences:

Professor Susanne Mayr (chair) and Professor Hannah Schmid-Petri

From the Faculty of Computer Science and Mathematics:

Professor Brigitte Forster-Heinlein (deputy chair) and Professor Martin Kreuzer

“SCIENTIFIC
RESPONSI-
BILITY
IS ONE OF
THE KEY
ISSUES
FOR THE
FUTURE”

Eleven higher education institutions from ten nations are pursuing a common goal: A European University Network (EUN) entitled REform: Responsible Innovation & Transformation for Europe – a new transformative European University Alliance aims to create a network for teaching, research and knowledge transfer that emphasises ethical aspects. Together with its project partners, the University of Passau has submitted a project proposal to the Erasmus+ programme in early 2024. Campus Magazine spoke to Professor Christina Hansen, Vice President for International Affairs and Diversity of the University to find out why we need this network and how it will be positioned.



What are the European University Networks (EUN) all about?

The EUNs are a large number of cross-border university networks that jointly develop teaching and learning formats and new forms of cooperation in education, research as well as technology and knowledge transfer. These joint structures and projects are intended to form the basis for ensuring that students, doctoral candidates, staff and researchers can transition smoothly between the higher education institutions that are part of their network. The higher education institutions in their networks usually specialise in certain themes or subject areas. The EUNs are the brainchild of French President Emmanuel Macron and form part of the EU's Erasmus+ programme. We're in the process of preparing, with eleven other universities and higher education institutions, a joint proposal in which we wish to focus our attention on responsible innovation and ethics in science. The University of Passau is already collaborating on this topic with a number of institutions. Our aim is to take this collaboration to the next level together through the EUN proposal and thereby to intensify our cooperation. Still, applying for an EUN is a highly competitive process, so I'd like to emphasise that our 2024 bid is designed in such a way that many of the projects in it can be carried out even without EUN funding.

Why do you consider it important to participate in an EUN?

I see the following four key points in particular: making Passau more prominent as a leading centre for science, engaging in a larger strategic network, strengthening the university's thematic profile and enhancing societal relevance. What do I mean by that? Being part of a thematic university network means gaining greater visibility throughout Europe with this research theme, which also serves to increase the University of Passau's renown as a centre of science. In the long run, such a European network has the potential to grow into a strong economic and research region while at the same time preserving the autonomy of the respective universities and higher education institutions.

This can also turn us into a magnet for the best early career academics and international students. By strategic network, I mean a functioning, Europe-wide network for the exchange of students and lecturers, especially with regard to interdisciplinary teaching as well as further research and knowledge transfer projects. Not only will this increase the mobility of our students and academics, but it will also result in even better performance and competitiveness of our university with a strong knowledge triangle of education, research and innovation.

The third point you mentioned was strengthening the thematic profile. The University of Passau wishes to focus on responsible innovation and ethics in science. What is the rationale behind this?

As I said earlier, each network has its own specific theme. There are technological alliances or research networks that focus, for example, on issues such as clean energy or mobility, labour and economic growth. What all these networks have in common is an understanding that you can't solve complex social challenges by going it alone. It's also clear that teaching, research and transformation must be dealt with simultaneously if we are to benefit not only the involved academics but future generations, too.

Through our planned network *REform: Responsible Innovation & Transformation for Europe – a new transformative European University Alliance*, we as scholars seek to promote science and technology that is not only excellent but also socially and ethically responsible. It's crucial that we adapt our research objectives and innovation processes to the needs and values of society. Our network strives for intensive cooperation between academia and society as well as industry and politics as a step towards greater mutual transparency and acceptance. The idea is that this will make it easier to develop solutions for complex challenges. The project aims to further develop academic culture, to create a space where responsible teaching, research and innovation are core guiding principles – which will serve as the nucleus for a socially responsible orientation of our university.

Societal relevance, your fourth point, seems to be closely related to your comments on thematic profiling.

That's right. Building bridges between academia and society at large is a challenge for the coming decades. Responsible research and innovation has emerged as a keyword on the European stage. Transformative science is a term that is being used more and more frequently in Germany in the context of sustainability issues – and our network intends to play a prominent role in finding the answers. At the University of Passau, we currently have eight professors from all five faculties who are recognised experts on issues of ethical responsibility within their respective fields. But of course the question of responsibility in science affects all researchers at our university. That's a key issue that we'll have to deal with in the future, and not just within the framework of the EUN.

Thank you for the interview!

The interview was conducted by Barbara Weinert.



Professor Christina Hansen, Vice President for International Affairs and Diversity of the University of Passau.

TRANSPARENT AND OPEN

In a brief survey, we asked members of the student committees what motivates them for this job and what they expect from a university that, like the University of Passau, has a sustainable and international focus. Here are their answers.



Faculty of Computer Science and Mathematics (FIM)

Erik Breidenbach

(1st-semester student, Computer Science, with Business Administration as a secondary subject)

I was very impressed by how well the O-Week [Orientation Week] was organised. That motivated me to organise entertaining events for the next batch of new students too. The student committee is also a very special community.

I have high expectations of the University of Passau for sustainability and international student diversity. I am pleased to see that there are many events and organisations that make the university a sustainable and inclusive place, such as the sustainability student society or the DiversiTEA event organised by the Diversity and Gender Equality Unit. However, I would like to improve the involvement of international students in the international orientation weeks.



Paul Schwandt
(2nd-semester student,
B.A. Journalism and Strategic
Communication)

Working on the student committee gives me the feeling that I can get involved and pass on wishes and ideas directly to the very top, so to say. It's important to me that the university remains transparent and open towards students with its plans and decisions and actively involves them in the decision-making process. The more people from different backgrounds sit around a table, the more opinions are represented and the more inclusive our decisions become.

Faculty of Social and Educational Sciences (SOBI)

Faculty of Humanities and Cultural Studies (GEKU)



Helena Muß
(3rd-semester student, International
Cultural and Business Studies)

I wanted to do voluntary work right from the start. The student committee appealed to me in my first semester because it supports students, especially at the beginning of their studies, and improves their everyday life at university.

I expect the university to have an open and tolerant attitude and to prioritise the well-being and future prospects of its students. To be sustainable and environmentally conscious, you sometimes have to think outside the box and try out new things.



Faculty of Law

Fatma Gürel and Marie Brüne

(student representatives, speaking for the law student committee, FS Jura)

The student committees' job is to represent the interests of students. We are convinced that nobody can do this as well as we students ourselves. We aim to help make everyday university life easier and we want to make the student body's voice heard.

We hope that the University of Passau will provide us with an education that goes beyond the JAPO [law state examination regulation], if you like. The undergraduate law programme is a highly location-specific degree programme. But the various international offerings of this programme give us the opportunity to look beyond the boundaries of German law.



School of Business, Economics and Information Systems (WIWI)

Luis Bogensberger

(3rd-semester student, B.Sc. Business Administration and Economics)

The student committee makes it possible to represent students' interests, improve study conditions and develop valuable organisational and communication skills. And our team is nothing less than amazing! I expect a sustainable university with an international outlook to respond to the needs and concerns of its students in order to ensure a comprehensive education and intercultural exchange.



School of Business, Economics and Information Systems (WIWI)

Tobias Klostermaier

(B.Sc. Business Administration and Economics graduate, currently studying M.Sc. Business Administration in the 2nd semester).

I've always enjoyed organising events, and over the last few years in the student committee I've also found university politics more and more fun. Also, it's a good feeling when you can help fellow students.

I expect the University of Passau to be actively committed to environmental protection and sustainability, to promote a diverse and inclusive community and to integrate sustainable thinking and action into its curriculum. The most important thing is that it reports transparently on its activities and checks itself for accountability.

Hannah Schultheis (3rd-semester student, B.Sc. Digital Transformation in Business and Society)

I met a lot of nice people through the student committee and would like to make studying more enjoyable for other students by always being open to their problems, questions and, of course, suggestions.

The university should expand its range of exchange programmes and also offer more courses in English. On the subject of sustainability, I would like to see the university do even more to protect the climate and involve students when making the campus more eco-friendly.

School of Business, Economics and Information Systems (WIWI)



“EVEN WELL-CRAFTED SCIENCE COMMUNICATION IS NOT JOURNALISM”

How can science communicate effectively in times of crises and a rise in disinformation? An interview with Professor Hannah Schmid-Petri and Professor Ralf Hohlfeld about problematic role identifications among communicators and the question of whether science communication needs its own ethics.

Is what I do journalism?

Professor Ralf Hohlfeld: No, as I see it, that's research communication. It could take on aspects of journalist reportage once you start to ask us critical questions, also with the intention of challenging us in some way. But it doesn't actually have to be journalism when you interview people.

Professor Hannah Schmid-Petri: I agree. I'd say it's the university's strategic communication which has its own rationale and can inform.

But even well-crafted science communication is not journalism and must be clearly distinguished from it, both in terms of the sender and with regard to critical reporting or the uncovering of scandals.

But journalism isn't always critical; one of its functions is to inform. Doesn't that constitute an overlap between journalism and science communication?

Professor Schmid-Petri: One major difference is that quality journalism is independent. That's not true of the university's communication. It has very specific goals and objectives. And that's entirely legitimate; it can be very informative as well, it just isn't independent.



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“How can we, as a discipline or faculty community, communicate well on a higher level? This question could be part of the ethics of science communication.”

Professor Hannah Schmid-Petri, Chair of Science Communication at the University of Passau



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“It’s our responsibility as scholars to persistently communicate that our knowledge is more complex than what society needs.”

Professor Ralf Hohlfeld, Chair of Communication Science at the University of Passau



Professor Hohlfeld: So there can't actually be any overlap with journalism even if science communication serves lofty goals and also intends to inform. Obviously, science communication informs because someone in the background has an interest in providing information. In our degree programme "Journalism and Strategic Communication", we build an awareness for this among our students. In actual media production, it often makes no difference whether an exercise includes the public-service aspect of journalism or whether the media to be produced is for a company. We make sure to point out to our students that they need to be aware of the dual role they are juggling. On the one hand, you have that type of public-service communication and information. On the other, there's a client behind the scene.

Professor Schmid-Petri: What's important is that you disclose this fact and don't lead the recipients to believe that you are providing a journalistic product. Instead, it should be clear who the sender is so that the recipient has an opportunity to reflect on whether the communicator is pursuing specific goals with their communication.

Liliann Fischer, who is currently researching the roles of science communicators for her doctorate under your supervision, Professor Schmid-Petri, has noticed a change in the self-identification of science communicators as a result of which many of them now take a critical perspective, which is nearly consistent with a journalistic self-concept. But can communicators at universities and universities of applied science actually take a critical view?

Professor Schmid-Petri: I actually find it problematic that there is so little reflection among university communicators on these rules and the associated normativities. That sounds more negative than I intended. Science communication has its worth and has an important contribution to make to journalism. You can certainly try to report in a highly discerning manner about research at your own university. In so doing, however, you're not taking into account the state of research at other institutions.

Professor Hohlfeld: I totally get what communicators are thinking, in that science is in search of truth and so is journalism. As far as that goes, we're kindred spirits. And yet there is something that distinguishes us, the fundamental difference that a university's research communication is not independent. We've seen how wrong that can go during the Covid-19 pandemic when the University of Hamburg issued a press release describing the theories of a physics professor that clearly depart from the state of the art in science. The press office should have probed more deeply in that case.

Is that really the communicator's job? It's not really my place to challenge the researcher's expertise.

Professor Hohlfeld: What I'd definitely like to see is a maximum review of the case. Of course, communicators must be able to rely on us doing our research to the best of our knowledge and belief and in accordance with ethical standards, but, at the end of the day, it's the press office that decides whether something is published or not.

Professor Schmid-Petri: It's quite clear what happened at the University of Hamburg. However, there are other examples where matters aren't so obvious. I'd expect a communication department to be able to verify the state of play in any subject matter, especially at major universities. The case in Hamburg became a controversy even in the faculty community. Some see it as a failure on the part of the communication department. Others, and I'd count myself amongst them, see it as a failure on the part of the researcher. He had failed to adhere to the ethical standards of science. However, communication departments can define certain quality criteria. For instance, they could only issue press releases that have been peer reviewed.

Professor Hohlfeld: In times of calm, I'd agree. But what to do when we're in the midst of an acute crisis? These pre-print publications, like the thesis paper in Hamburg, played an important role during the pandemic. It was important to make the virologists' and microbiologists' newest research findings available in short order. Had we held off until the findings were peer-reviewed, we would have lost a great deal of time. So, the people in charge of communication may just have to play a more vigorous role in times of crisis.

Do we need ethical standards for science communication?


Professor Schmid-Petri: It's obvious that we need a set of guidelines, and in fact we already have some. Take the Guidelines for good science PR, for instance, which were brought out by the Siggen Circle based on journalistic criteria. As I see it, there is a question that has not yet been answered: Who, ideally, should do communication? Does it really make sense for every researcher to publicly communicate every single result they produce? To me that's rather crucial since it needs to be someone who can handle such a large volume of detailed information. Non-experts will hardly be able to tell what's what. To me it would make sense to communicate the state of research in aggregate form. That's what journalism does sometimes. Here's a question that could be part of such an ethical code: How can we, as a discipline or faculty community, communicate well on a higher level?

The interview was conducted by Kathrin Haimerl.

Professor Hannah Schmid-Petri and Professor Ralf Hohlfeld organised the annual conference of the Science Communication and Journalism Studies divisions of the German Communication Association (DGPK) at the University of Passau in September 2023. The focus was on opportunities and challenges of digitalisation for journalism and science communication.

Scan the QR codes for a follow-up report and video on the conference (German content)





Dr Terese Venus and her group seek to understand the societal changes brought about by the bioeconomy in tropical regions and how they will affect the structure of global value chains.

SOCIETAL CHANGE THROUGH THE BIOECONOMY

The bioeconomy has become a political catchword, describing a host of strategies at the European, national and regional levels to support the transition from an economy heavily reliant on fossil fuels to one that is bio-based. One of the initiatives this has brought about is the BMBF's "Bioeconomy as Societal Change" programme, through which Dr Venus secured the funding for her new junior research group on Bioeconomy Economics. The project started in early 2023 and will run for five years.

The term "bioeconomy" comes from biomass – materials from living organisms such as plants or trees. "One of the main challenges of basing the entire economy on biomass is that you need to have enough biomass in the first place", says Dr Venus. Biomass is usually used for

the production of food or animal feed. "So where can we find biomass that does not compete for arable land? One answer is agricultural residues." There already are existing technologies for utilising residues for energy and products, but will society accept these, and what socio-economic impact will they have?

"There are enormous opportunities in the valorisation of residues for both developed and developing countries", says Dr Venus. "For countries of the Global South characterised by agrarian economies, the bioeconomy offers a path to sustainable development without fossil-fuel-driven industrialisation, whereas for developed countries, biomass from abroad represents new products, markets and opportunities", she explains. Dr Venus's team is examining socioeconomic and cultural factors in the decision-making process of relevant actors, distributional issues and the evolving structure of global agricultural value chains. ReValueD – the project acronym stands for "Residue valorisation for bio-products in developing countries: bridging the gap between technical knowledge and socioeconomic realities" – focuses on a case study of tropical fruit value chains, which are grown predominantly in the Global South.

EQUALITY IN THE LABOUR MARKET

Having children poses serious financial challenges. Science has coined the term “child penalty” to describe the phenomenon of penalising parenthood. According to current scientific understanding, mothers bear the main burden of the child penalty while fathers come off more lightly. In Germany, this phenomenon is particularly pronounced. One reason for this is that many women return to the labour market part-time while continuing to provide unpaid care work at home.



Economists from the universities of Passau and Potsdam investigated whether increasing the number of childcare slots for children under three would mitigate these long-term consequences. The assumption would be that a faster return to the labour market should improve a mother's chances of professional advancement. However, the economists found no such effect. “Public childcare – in its current form in Germany – supports a quick return to work. But the system reaches its limits when it comes to mothers' careers”, Geske Rolvering of the University of Passau summarises the findings. Ms Rolvering is a doctoral candidate at the Chair of Public Economics and co-authored the study with Dr Kathrin Huber from the University of Potsdam.

In their study, the researchers emphasise: “Our findings should not be interpreted as suggesting that public childcare is pointless. [...] Rather, in the German context, there is a clear need for further efforts at various levels in order to promote gender equality in the labour market.”

The study conducted by Rolvering and Huber entitled “Public Child Care and Mothers' Career Trajectories” has appeared as a discussion paper in the series published by the IZA – Institute of Labour Economics. Papers in this series are preliminary publications that have yet to be peer-reviewed. (KH)

“VIRTUAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL”

The wave of respiratory syncytial virus infections in the winter months of 2022 and 2023 has made one thing clear: communication across clinics needs to improve. An effective exchange of data on available hospital beds will make for quicker patient care. Telemedicine – the remote provision of healthcare services using digital technologies – could make specialty expertise available across all clinics, particularly in rural regions.

The project *Telemedicine Network of Paediatric Clinics (TeleKiN)* seeks to address this need. One important partner in this project is FORWISS – Institute for Software Systems in Technical Applications of Computer Science at the University of Passau, which is directed by Professor Tomas Sauer (Chair of Digital Image Processing). As part of this project, computer scientists are developing a kind of “virtual children's hospital”, as former Bavarian Health Minister Klaus Holetschek put it at a medical summit. The aim is to create a sustainable communication platform for cross-clinic resource management where specialist expertise can be leveraged for telemedicine purposes. “First and foremost, the goal is to ensure speedy provision of acute medical care to children and adolescents through simplified and expedited active cross-clinic resource and occupancy management across Bavaria. The idea comes directly from clinical practice, that is from Professor Matthias Keller, medical director of the children's hospital in Passau”, says Professor Sauer. Physicians will be able to use the platform to find out where treatment capacities and beds are available. Another aim is to provide a user-friendly and consistent solution for telemedicine visits and advice. In addition, the team of computer scientists wants to ensure that the system can be implemented securely and affordably in Bavaria's paediatric clinics, which have been actively involved as partners in the project since the very beginning.

The Bavarian State Ministry of Health and Care has awarded a three-year grant for the creation, implementation and operation as well as the conceptual development of the telemedical network of paediatric clinics.



PERCEPTION OF DISABILITY IN FILM AND THEATRE

What prejudices do we bring with us when we see actors and actresses with disabilities perform on stage or in films? In order to reflect back to us our own image of people with disabilities, an interactive digital game is being developed as part of the DFG project Narration, Expectation, Experience of Possibilities (EEEM). This game, which will be made available on the “Images of Disability” project blog, is intended to provide food for thought on what has been seen.

“Our intention is to provide impulses, but not to moralise. It’s a balancing act between our intended learning outcome of breaking down prejudices and the goal of allowing viewers to experience things for themselves”, explains Professor Susanne Hartwig, Professor of Romance Literatures and Cultures at the University of Passau, who is the principal investigator for the project. The game consists of several stages, whereby the players have to solve set tasks, but also have to deal with basic concepts of disability studies, analyse film scenes and think about alternative storylines, for example. Finally, the participants reflect on their own experiences as spectators. The target group for this game are students, who will play it as a supplement to seminars at universities and other educational institutions, but it will also be available to anyone who would like to probe their ideas of learning disabilities.

The project is thus breaking new ground in science communication. It is an attempt to communicate research playfully on several channels, rather than through text. The content of the blog is based on the results of the predecessor project, also funded by the DFG, entitled Narration, Expectation, Experience: Disability in Contemporary European Theatre and Film (2020–23). That project involved analyses of theatre performances and films from various European countries with actors and actresses with learning disabilities. We analysed (1) which narratives feature people with disabilities, (2) what expectations we have of the actresses and actors and at what point they are deviated from, and finally (3) what experiences we have as recipients. The results of this research are now being used in the follow-up project EEEM. The game is intended as a training measure to suggest specific readings of theatre performances and films and thus generate new ways of thinking about disability. (JK)



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WHAT EVERYDAY RACISM FEELS LIKE

Experiences of discrimination, stigmatisation and racism have the potential to cause mental illness. Moreover, studies have shown that such experiences hinder integration, especially identification with one’s new home country. On the other hand, very little research has been done on the emotions and affects that everyday discrimination and racism triggers in those to whom it is directed.

This is what the DFG project “Experiencing Ethnoracial Exclusion” seeks to address. The project is run by Dr Eunike Piwoni, a lecturer at the Chair of Sociology of the University of Passau. Approaching the topic from the perspective of sociology of emotions, she investigates what feelings these experiences bring about in those affected. “Affects and emotions such as anxiety, fear, insecurity, discomfort and sadness form the core of these experiences”, says Dr Piwoni.

Her project is focused on subjective experiences of exclusion: “This can be anything on a spectrum ranging from ethnic jokes, being asked where one is really from, being denied educational opportunities all the way to physical assault.” She focuses on three groups with a history of immigration and whose experiences are likely to vary significantly from each other: Germans with Turkish roots, Germans with Polish roots and Black Germans. What they all have in common is that they grew up in the Federal Republic of Germany and that they came to Germany as children or were born to immigrants here. Individual in-depth interviews with 66 people are a core component of the project.

“I’m not the first person to work on this topic, but I am the first to consistently focus on the affects and emotions accompanying these experiences”, says Dr Piwoni, and adds that she was astonished that this aspect has received so little attention in migration sociology until now. After all, this has a direct bearing on one’s sense of belonging – and by extension, integration into society. (KH)

ON THE TRAIL OF ANTI-DEMOCRATIC MOBILISATION

As part of the Bavarian research cluster ForGeRex, eighteen researchers from eleven universities, universities of applied sciences and non-university research institutions have been brought together under the coordination of OTH Regensburg to throw light on the different aspects of the far-right activism of various players and their structures and ideologies. The acronym ForGeRex is short for *Forschungsverbund für Gegenwartsanalysen, Erinnerungspraxis und Gegenstrategien zum Rechtsextremismus in Bayern* (research alliance for contemporary analyses, remembrance practices and counter-strategies for right-wing extremism in Bavaria). In nine different subprojects, researchers have set out to study various aspects of right-wing extremism from multiple angles, for instance by gauging the magnitude of right-wing extremism in social media, studying anti-Semitic conspiracy myths, or scrutinising the Reichsbürger scene. Based on the findings made, the researchers will develop counterstrategies. The focus of the project is on Bavaria. However, the analysis also covers the connections that operate across national borders over to Austria and Northern Italy, for instance.

The University of Passau is in charge of two subprojects:

An interdisciplinary team headed by Professors Karin Stögner (sociology) and Lars Rensmann (political science with a focus on comparative government) is conducting a double project to study the role of anti-Semitic conspiracy myths in far-right extremist communication and mobilisation. The researchers have come together to study the strategies of right-wing extremists against the backdrop of four social crises: the refugee crisis, the Covid-19 crisis, the climate crisis, as well as the crisis following Russia's attack on Ukraine.

In another subproject at the University of Passau, Professors Thomas Knieper (digital and strategic communication) and Simon Hegelich from the Munich School of Public Policy (political data science) examine internet memes as a right-wing extremist communication strategy. Working together with the Munich-based JFF – Institute for Media Education, this project analyses, among other things, which topics and image types appear particularly frequently in social networks and which word-image combinations provoke a particularly large number of reactions. The Bavarian State Ministry of Science has awarded the research initiative a four-year grant worth EUR 4.5 million. (KH)

SOMATIC GENE THERAPY IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Somatic gene therapy has its origins in the 1990s, when researchers developed new methods to convey healthy genes into human cells using harmless viruses. This approach resulted in a number of severe setbacks, however, and research was greatly reduced as a result. Now, especially with the introduction of the CRISPR/Cas “genetic scissors”, new technological and, for that matter, safe options have become available. These, however, raise new legal and ethical concerns.

This is where the interdisciplinary BMBF cluster “NANoSoGT – Normative Assessment of Novel Somatic Genomic Therapies” comes in. It is coordinated by Professor Hans-Georg Dederer, Chair of Constitutional and Administrative, European Law, European and International Economic Law at the University of Passau.

The researchers involved in the BMBF cluster have adopted a cross-disciplinary approach to explore the following aspects:

- Classification issues: Modern somatic gene therapies do not necessarily modify a gene but in some cases only alter gene expression. How do these developments fit into the current rules and regulations and how should they be assessed from an ethical and biomedical perspective?
- Questions regarding the competitiveness of the EU and Germany as research and industry hubs: The researchers are exploring how the new procedures are regulated in other countries, including the US, Canada, the UK and Japan. What rules are needed and at which points could the German and European legal framework prove to be too narrow? Moreover, what role do trust and acceptance play in the global competition for the best research and business locations?
- Fairness concerns: The cost of treating a patient can quickly rise to several million euros. Who should be given access to this type of therapy? Which genetic diseases should actually be treated using this therapy? To what extent is the research too narrowly focused on Europeans and to what degree does it fail to take into account other parts of the global population?
- Safety concerns: The new genomic procedures are considered to be much safer than previous ones. Nevertheless, genetic modification techniques may sometimes fail. What happens then? How should such cases be regulated, particularly in the event of unsuccessful prenatal somatic gene therapies, which involve the foetus in the uterus? (KH)

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN SCIENCE AND PRACTICE

The *Neuburger Gesprächskreis e.V.*, a network of 200 decision-makers, is a key link between the university and the world of business and society. Since its inception in 1983, it has acted as a forum for the discussion of topical issues and provided in-depth expertise through a continually shifting country focus.



Symposium to mark the 40th anniversary of Neuburger Gesprächskreis at Neuburg Castle.



At the "Female Power in and out of the University of Passau" event. Pictured (from right to left):

Dr Fritz Audebert (Chairman of Neuburger Gesprächskreis),
Katrina Jordan (Moderator and Head of the Communication and Marketing Division, University of Passau),
Anke Buttler (Group CFO, Schwan Stabilo),
Dr Sandra Dembeck (CFO, Zalando),
Prof. Jan H. Schumann (Vice President for Research, University of Passau),
Prof. Annette Hautli-Janisz (Professor of Computational Rhetoric and Natural Language Processing, University of Passau),
Isabel Schmitt-Falckenberg (Head of Department, Federal Ministry of the Interior and Home Affairs),
Karin Burger (Founder and Managing Director, team karin burger GmbH),
Prof. Bettina Noltenius (Vice President for Studies, Teaching, Ethics and Quality Assurance, University of Passau),
Anja Rauschardt (Managing Director, RAUSCHARDT PR),
Maria Stoy (Head of Department for Youth Engagement, German Committee for UNICEF).

In 2023, Neuburger Gesprächskreis welcomed 28 new members, raising its membership figure to 200. On 5th May 2023, the network held a symposium celebrating its 40th anniversary in the stately surroundings of Neuburg Castle. The highlight of this event was a debate titled "Democracy in danger?" with high-profile speakers such as Elmar Theveßen, director of German state broadcasting corporation ZDF's North and Central America studio, who was speaking live from the USA, and the German ambassador to Australia, Dr Markus Ederer. As a business forum, the network offers distinguished alumni of the university who are now working as ambassadors or in leading positions of the foreign service a platform and a piece of home at the same time. The symposium programme also included the first Female Power in and out of University of Passau event in 2023, at which alumnae and female professors offered fascinating insights into their careers. This event was so well-received that the format was continued and a second event was held with further outstanding speakers on 1 February 2024.

Neuburger Gesprächskreis also holds regular webinars, in which academic and professional experts discuss "the new normal" in various subject areas in relation to a wide variety of topics, such as the energy sector, China, the platform economy, and justice. These have proven very popular in the past.

This year's annual symposium, scheduled for 7 June 2024 at Neuburg Castle, will take *Incredible India | Partner of the future* as its theme. To find out more about the events organised by Neuburger Gesprächskreis visit www.uni-passau.de/neuburger-gespraechskreis.

ALUMNICLUB BRINGS TOGETHER CURRENT AND FORMER STUDENTS

With almost 3,000 members, the Alumni Association of the University of Passau, known simply as AlumniClub, is an important link between the university and its students and alumni. Helped by its 33 chapters throughout the world, it seeks to bring former and current students into contact with each other through regular meetings and events, where they can exchange their experiences and knowledge and build their personal networks.

In addition, many alumni contribute to the network by serving as mentors, giving lectures or providing financial support, thereby keeping the link alive between the university's past and future. This enables the AlumniClub to support initiatives such as the construction of the university's "forest kindergarten" in the Ingling area of Passau, which is due to open in autumn 2024 and will be operated by the Caritas Association for the Diocese of Passau. A donation of 20,000 euros was handed over in December 2023 and will be used to fund construction of the tepee.



A donation totalling 20,000 euros was handed over in December 2023 and will be used to fund construction of the tepee.

"The AlumniClub is delighted to support this sustainable project to expand the family-friendly infrastructure of the University of Passau", said Managing Director, Doreen Müller-Murr. Marie-Helene Wunsch, Head of Family Services within the Diversity and Gender Equality Unit, added: "This is promoting young talent in the best sense of the word – from students and alumni for the generation currently growing up."

KUWI NETWORK: ROOTED IN PASSAU – AT HOME IN THE WORLD

Whether in the Chamber of Commerce Abroad in Santiago de Chile, at UNICEF in Nairobi or the European Parliament in Strasbourg – graduates from our International Cultural and Business Studies (ICBS, or "kuwi" in German) and European Studies (ES) degree programmes can be found working all over the world. For more than 25 years the kuwi network (kuwi netzwerk international e.V.) has been bringing together graduates and students of the ICBS, ES and other culture-related degree programmes at the University of Passau.



With currently almost 3,000 members, it is one of the biggest student and alumni networks of interdisciplinary and internationally oriented degree programmes in Germany.

"Being a kuwi builds identity, opens doors and creates shared memories. In this strong community, we pass on knowledge and create worldwide connections across generations", says Martina Brossmann, Managing Director of the kuwi office.

For details about the network and its wide range of services visit www.kuwi.de

Kuwi webinar programme in the first half of 2024: (Please note that the webinars will be held in German unless stated otherwise)

- **Workshop Moderation for Good Dialogue, Ideas & Co-creation**
18 March 2024 (18:30-19:30)
Kuwi alumna Martina von Mayerhofen, Freelance consultant and coach for organisational development and business transformation
- **Inclusive Leadership**
23 April 2024 (18:30-19:30)
Kuwi alumna Doris Kish, Diversity & Inclusion Manager Fujitsu Central Europe (D-A-CH region)
- **Learning Relaxation Techniques**
13. Mai 2024 (18:30-20:00 Uhr)
Kuwi alumna Nicole Schweizer, Coach for wellbeing, mindfulness, relaxation and resilience at Sinnvoll München

BUSINESS AND ETHICS ARE NOT SEPARABLE

Management Professor Donald Lange from Arizona State University is currently conducting research as a Mercator fellow at the University of Passau's DFG Research Training Group 2720 "Digital Platform Ecosystems", where he discusses ethical and cultural issues concerning digital platforms with doctoral candidates.

Are platform companies ethically obliged to protect their customers' data? "The simple and straightforward answer to that question is a resounding yes," says Donald Lange, who researches ethical issues in management at Arizona State University. "But," he adds, "things get a little more complicated when you consider that these expectations that we have for these companies are rooted in public values." For companies, it can be a real challenge to live up to these values, which tend to vary from region to region and are at times contradictory. A prime example of this is the issue of data privacy in the USA compared to Europe.

Professor Lange, who hails from the United States, is exploring these and other questions with doctoral candidates at the DFG Research Training Group 2720 "Digital Platform Ecosystems" as part of a one-year Mercator fellowship at the University of Passau. These fellowships are awarded to scholars from Germany and abroad by the German Research Foundation (DFG). Mercator fellows are more intensively involved in a project than other visiting researchers.

This is certainly the case with Professor Lange, as Professor Andreas König, spokesperson for the DFG Research Training Group, explains: "Professor Lange is one of the world's most outstanding researchers in the field of management and ethics research. Digital platforms raise a lot of ethical questions. In this respect, we benefit enormously from his stay."

When Professor Lange is not in Passau, he researches and teaches at the W. P. Carey School of Business at Arizona State University, where he is Lincoln Professor of Management Ethics. "A longstanding interest of mine is in challenging the notion that business and ethics are two separate things", he says. For example, he addresses how moral considerations are implicated in even the most instrumental and economic concerns of business.

Global companies and their cultural interactions

The field of digital platforms offers numerous avenues and opportunities for research exploration: “It is important to study these ecosystems because they have such tremendous impact. They help shape public opinion, they affect our behaviour, they have an impact on how resources and opportunities are allocated in our society”, says Lange. Digital platforms operate globally, but in different cultural contexts, making it important to analyse how they react to these different environments. He notes that it is interesting that the digital platforms themselves have an influence on how social values are changing and evolving.

Along these lines, Professor Lange has observed that public values in the US seem to be growing more sensitive to European-influenced concerns about individual customer privacy, while European public values might be gradually embracing an American-influenced enthusiasm for data-driven innovation.

In Passau, the management ethicist participates in the regular meetings of interdisciplinary doctoral candidates, giving them tips and advice on their research work, and holds his own workshops, for example on the interplay between public values and digital platforms. In turn, he benefits from the exchanges with young talent from different cultural contexts in his research work: “It’s my pleasure and good fortune to be working with the fantastic doctoral students here at the University of Passau. They can help to provide insight into cultural nuances and the public values that are specific to Germany and to the broader European context.”

The doctoral candidates in the DFG Research Training Group 2720 “Digital Platform Ecosystems” come from various disciplines, such as information systems, business administration, economics and communication science. Despite having very diverse cultural backgrounds, for example from Germany, Egypt and Kenya, they are all united in their research topic: the global impact of the digital platform economy. (KH)



Professor Donald Lange (centre) in conversation with Professors Andreas König (left) and Jan Krämer (right).



The award-winners of the 2023 Dies academicus

DIES ACADEMICUS 2023

Every November, the University of Passau celebrates its anniversary, the *Dies academicus*, in the university's largest lecture theatre, the Audimax. This year's keynote speech, on the topic of "Cyber-security: a challenge for science and society", was delivered by Professor Claudia Eckert, director of the Fraunhofer Institute for Applied and Integrated Security (AISEC) and holder of the Chair of Security in Computer Science at the Technical University of Munich. A regular fixture of the Dies academicus is the presentation of awards and honours to those who have rendered outstanding services to the university.



University President, Professor Ulrich Bartosch and Vice President, Professor Harald Kosch, with keynote speaker, Professor Claudia Eckert

The award winners in 2023 were:

- Professor Marie Herberger
Karl-Heinz-Pollok Memorial Award
- Dr Mathias Sonnleitner, Dr Tobias Mini,
Dr Madeleine Bausch and Dr Benjamin Alexander Hahn
Best Doctoral Thesis Award
- The team of the DIGITour project
Award for Best Knowledge Transfer Performance
- Dr Carolin Maus (Faculty of Law),
Dr Katharina Werner (Faculty of Business, Economics and
Information Systems),
Patrick Urlbauer (Faculty of Social and Educational Sciences),
Eva-Maria Schreiner (Faculty of Humanities and Cultural Studies),
Isabella Graßl (Faculty of Computer Science and Mathematics)
and Dr José Onelio Blanco Delgado (Language Centre)
Good Teaching Award
- Dr Kathrin Evelyn Plank
Award for Services to Internationalisation
- The "Wi|WE FOR UKRAINE" aid initiative
Outstanding Commitment Award

NEW PROFESSORIAL APPOINTMENTS

- Professor Johann-Mattis List
Chair of Multilingual Computational Linguistics,
appointed 1 January 2023
- Professor Andreas Eberth
Professor of Geography with a focus on Education
for Sustainable Development, appointed 1 March 2023
- Professor Marc Andre Goerigk
Chair of Business Decisions and Data Science,
appointed 1 April 2023
- Professor Oliver Hidalgo
Chair of Political Science with a focus on Political Theory,
appointed 1 April 2023
- Professor Stephanie Zehnle
Professor of Environmental and Technical History,
appointed 1 October 2023
- Professor Thomas Kohl
Professor of European Medieval History and Cultures,
appointed 1 October 2023
- Professor Rafael Pawel Harnos
Chair of Civil Law, Commercial and Business Law,
appointed 1 October 2023

PROFESSORS WHO HAVE ENTERED RETIREMENT

- Professor Holger Altmeyen
Chair of Civil Law, Commercial and Business Law
retired 1 April 2023
- Professor Norbert Seibert
Chair of School Pedagogy
retired 1 April 2023

WELCOMING EVENT FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

In October, the University of Passau welcomed its international students from all over the world. Two hundred and sixty-eight international exchange students, free movers and double-degree students from 28 nations joined the University of Passau in 2023. Türkiye, France and Tunisia were particularly well-represented. The above figure does not include degree-seeking students and those who are here on a special annual, semester or doctoral scholarship awarded by the DAAD or other organisation. During the welcoming event, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) prize for outstanding performance of international students at German universities was awarded, which this year went to Oguzhan Genc from Türkiye.



ROOM FOR SCIENCE

The newly appointed scholars and a centre for scholarship and science will enhance the university's profile and offer space for creative ideas, innovative concepts and the quest for knowledge. The recently established professorships and chairs in the field of artificial intelligence as well as the new International Centre for Scholarship and Science (IWZ), both part of the Bavarian State Government's High-Tech Agenda (HTA) innovation drive, are significant milestones in achieving this goal. "Universities are places where new knowledge is created. They are places of freedom of thought, of open, free and controversial discourse and, of course, places of education", said University President, Professor Ulrich Bartosch. "The High-Tech Agenda helps us to offer even more space for the freedom of science than before." Located on the Spitzberg site, the IWZ will have novel architectural features, offer space for new things and will, at the same time, be a place that brings the university and the town – science and society – more closely together. It will provide office space to a number of administrative sections of the university, but above all it will be a place where students and researchers meet – and it will double as a new cultural venue for Passau's citizenry.



Groundbreaking ceremony for the IWZ. Pictured (from right to left): Head Mayor, Jürgen Dupper; University President, Professor Ulrich Bartosch; Science Minister, Markus Blume; Minister President, Dr Markus Söder; Construction Minister, Christian Bernreiter; Chief Building Director, Norbert Sterl; University Head of Administration, Dr Achim Dilling; and Architect, Peter Riepl



Minister President, Dr Markus Söder and Science Minister, Markus Blume welcome the new professors at the University of Passau.

Since the inception of the High-Tech Agenda in October 2019, the following HTA professors have joined the University of Passau and are carrying out valuable teaching and research in their respective disciplines.

FACULTY OF COMPUTER SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

Professor Alsayed Algergawy

(interim chairholder, Chair of Data and Knowledge Engineering)

Professor Annette Hautli-Janisz (assistant professor, Professorship of Computational Rhetoric)

Professor Elif Bilge Kavun (assistant professor, Professorship of Secure Intelligent Systems)

Professor Stefan Glock (Professorship of Discrete Mathematics)

Professor Tobias Harks (Chair of Mathematical Optimisation)

Professor Christoph Heinzl (Professorship of Cognitive Sensor Systems)

Professor Steffen Herbold (Chair of AI Engineering)

Professor Moritz Müller (Chair of Mathematical Logic)

Professor Joscha Prochno (Chair of Functional Analysis)

Professor Daniel Rudolf (Chair of Mathematical Data Science)

Dr.-Ing. Tolga Arul (interim chairholder, Chair of Reliable Distributed Systems)

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND CULTURAL STUDIES

Professor Johann-Mattis List (Chair of Multilingual Computational Linguistics)

Professor Gala Rebane (Chair of Comparative European Cultural Studies:

Theories and Methods)

Professor Markus Pissarek (Chair of German Literature and Language Education)

FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

Professor Ingo Rohlfing

(Chair of Methods of Empirical Social Research)

FACULTY OF LAW

Professor Urs Kramer (Chair of Public Law)

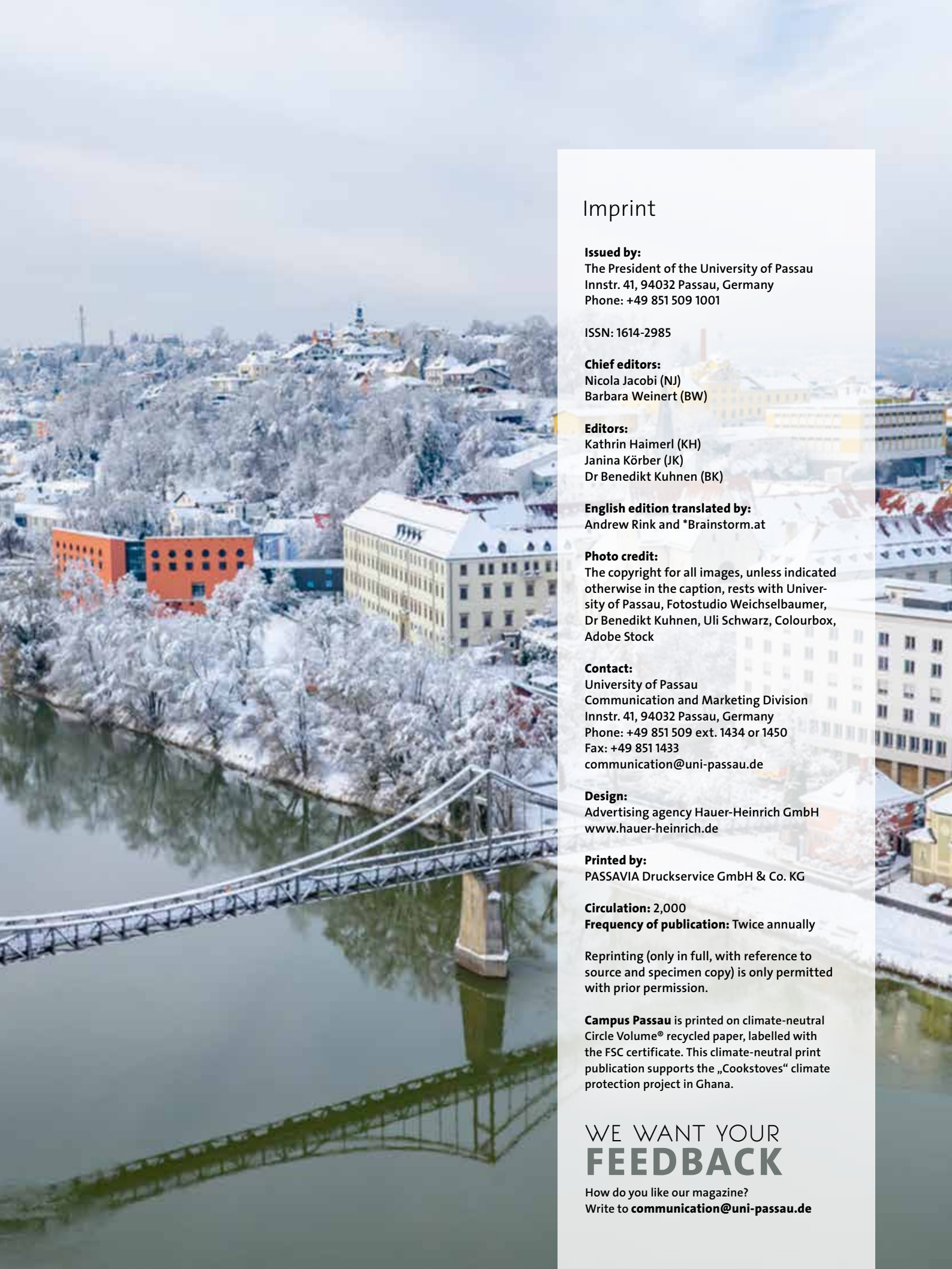
Professor Brian Valerius (Chair of Artificial Intelligence in Criminal Law)

FACULTY OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Professor Ulrich Gnewuch (interim chairholder, Chair of Information Systems with a focus on Explainable AI-based Business Information Systems)

Professor Marc Goerigk (Chair of Business Decisions and Data Science)

Professor Ralf Kellner (Chair of Financial Data Analytics)

An aerial photograph of a city in winter, covered in snow. A suspension bridge spans a river in the foreground. The city features a mix of traditional European architecture and modern buildings, including a prominent orange-colored structure. The background shows a hill with more buildings and a church spire under a cloudy sky.

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