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Creativity and Diversity – Challenges for quality assurance beyond 2010

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Best practice in equality – Gender diversity as a major factor in Quality Management at the Leibniz Universität Hannover

Abstract
This paper presents a specific institutional quality assurance approach concerning gender equality at the Leibniz Universität Hannover, and its implications and possible generalizations to comparable institutions of research and higher education. As gender is a central aspect of diversity which still leads to dysfunctional underrepresentation of women in higher academic positions and in excellent research clusters particularly in the fields of science and engineering, gender equality is seen as a major factor of quality assurance in research and teaching. Though the Leibniz Universität Hannover has implemented a broad range of successful measures for gender equality in the past two decades, a major challenge lies in the task of integrating gender equality as quality assurance on all levels of the university (administration, faculties, institutes, working environment) and of continually evaluating the results of relevant programmes and activities. The paper presents new approaches of the Leibniz Universität Hannover towards the integration of gender as a quality factor, whereby institutional creativity in the light of marked internal diversity among the various stake-holders is a basic prerequisite. Possible transfer of individual measures and possible conceptual generalizations will be discussed.
1. Introduction: Gender awareness as a quality feature

Excellence develops where women and men together address scientific challenges and create visions, and simultaneously have the possibility of reconciling family life with their scientific work. It is important and forward-looking to ingrain gender equality and diversity managing in the quality management of the University. The objective must be to break down rigid traditional power structures and organisational policy, and make use of institutional creativity, which is typically mobilised to a high level in the research context, for the cultural change associated with gender equality tasks.

Equal opportunities for women and men is a central concern of the gender equality policy of the Leibniz Universität Hannover. This has also been accordingly honoured in its outward perception, for example by the distinction of the European Commission in the year 2007.¹ The gender equality policy of the Leibniz Universität is therefore in accordance with the persisting political and social efforts towards the just participation of all, which have resulted amongst other things in numerous national and international laws, instruments and measures. Through its claim and its scientific criticism of integrating the “gender” into science by means of gender research and gender studies, this research brought about far-reaching experience and changes to teaching and research at universities in the 1980’s on an international level.²

Thanks to these findings, the gender equality work of recent years has been able to bring about structural changes and more gender-neutral decision-making criteria in the university or-

ganisation. This has lead to a greater awareness of integration, understanding and equal treatment.

Diversity emphasises the variety and dissimilarity of people, who bring this creative factor into their work due to their socialisation from different cultures, both nationally and internationally. In this respect, gender, age, religious background, education and many other attributes also have a role to play. Gender and diversity play a prominent role in personnel development, and are also urgently needed in research and teaching.

"Gender and diversity managing" is firmly entrenched in the guiding principles of the Leibniz Universität Hannover, and is an essential component of the university-wide quality management, which finds its expression above all in the following aspects:

- Content-related involvement with gender in study and teaching,
- Gender-aware advancement of the next generation of young scientists, and in particular the promotion of women in MINT faculties\(^3\) and
- Increase in the proportion of women in top scientific positions (e.g. increase in the number of female professors particularly in the MINT faculties).

Personnel development at the Leibniz Universität Hannover is working, on different levels and in different areas, towards taking into account the factors of gender and diversity in an institutionalised way, and thereby creating greater awareness of quality approaches orientated towards gender equality and corresponding quality development. Existing creative approaches for conveying gender-related knowledge in teaching, study and in other key areas of the University (research, ad-

\(^3\) MINT is an abbreviation for the faculties of Mathematics, Information technology, Natural sciences and Technology.
administration, further education) must therefore be fostered and developed further. This applies for example to gender-related teaching contents, gender-aware research and development, gender aspects in personnel and organisation development and to further education.

The creative handling of gender-related questions is leading to new decision-making criteria, amongst others in questions of the distribution of resources. This is expressed for example in that the control instrument of formal distribution of funds now includes gender equality as one of its criteria. The implementation of this aim is providing the Leibniz Universität with an additional location and competitive advantage over other universities.

Gender and diversity managing form part of the quality development at the Leibniz Universität, and through long-term and sustainable increased awareness of the corresponding problems should create a quality structure which takes account of these aspects. For despite the progress in the gender equality objectives, Germany occupies one of the lowest places in international comparison in terms of the representation of women in the world of science. Although the Leibniz Universität enjoys one of the top rankings nationwide with reference to gender equality questions, this still cannot be considered satisfactory in view of the low overall national level. This applies to an even greater extent to the situation in the MINT faculties.

4 “In increasingly fewer cases can we still assume today that women are being deliberately and consciously obstructed. But tacit marginalisation and structural devalorisation are still conspicuous in many places. Strohschneider, Chairman of the Science Council, quoted from http://cdl.niedersachsen.de/blob/images/C48547874_L20.pdf, Page 6.

5 See CEWS, Centre of Excellence for Women in Science (pub.), University ranking according to gender mainstreaming aspects 2009, 3rd issue (cews. publication no. 13), Page 26.
Three central questions or problems can therefore be derived from this initial situation for the objectives of the Leibniz Universität Hannover:

- What concrete analysis steps must still be taken in order to define the current situation accurately (requirement analysis)?
- What strategies are needed to initiate a thorough change in awareness and thereby enable a cultural change to an organisation comprehensively aware of gender equality?
- What means must be applied in order to achieve this objective at one’s own university?

2. National and social context

Despite the fact that the professional and academic qualifications of women in Germany now correspond to those of men, women are still significantly under-represented in senior positions in all areas of society.6

In order to correct this deficiency, all German federal states have included in their statutes legal regulations for the creation of equal opportunities. In the same vein, universities have for over 20 years had a gender equality mandate and gender equality representatives, since the achievement of equal opportunities for women is one of the quality criteria for development planning at German universities.

Numerous institutions and associations have devoted themselves to tackling this problem:

1. In support of this task, the CEWS - Centre of Excellence for Women in Science - was founded. “The Centre of Excellence for Women in Science is the national focal point for the realisation of equal opportunities for women and men in science and research in Germany. For this area of policy, the

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CEWS proposes matters for consideration and initiates change processes, which it follows up scientifically, and takes an active part in the design of the necessary transfer processes between science and politics”. The CEWS produces a regular university ranking based on gender equality aspects. This ranking was continued for the third time in the year 2009.

2. In addition, national scientific organisations are appealing to German universities to integrate gender equality aspects into research and teaching. For example, the DFG⁸ in 2009 developed “Research-promotion gender equality standards”, the Science Council in 2007 started an “Offensive for equal opportunities for women and men in science” and the Excellence Initiative now requires the specification of gender measures in applications for new tenders.

3. The National Conference of University Women’s Representatives was the first organisation to require the integration of gender into the modules of the Bachelor’s and Master’s courses since the beginning of the Bologna Process.

In the area of universities, all these efforts are devoted to three major objectives:

- Increasing the proportion of women in the relevant qualification group
- Integration of gender equality contents in research and teaching
- Women in senior positions

The largest backlog consists of increasing the proportion of female professors. In 2007, only 6,173 of the total of 38,020 professorships in Germany were held by women, corresponding to a proportion of only 16.2%. Although Lower Saxony encouragingly occupies one

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⁸ DFG is an abbreviation for Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Foundation).
of the leading positions in the national comparison, this still needs improvement in view of the low overall level. The Leibniz Universität Hannover, despite its comparatively high proportion of 18% female professors, has also recognised the great need for action.

In the light of this situation, the Lower Saxony Ministry of Science, together with the Presidia and gender equality representatives of the Lower Saxony universities, in the year 2008 started a “Dialogue initiative”, with the objective of intensifying the dialogue on gender equality policy and a common strategic procedure. This focuses on quality management and personnel management, appointment procedures (benchmarking), integration of gender aspects into teaching and research, and the compatibility of study, profession and family.”

The Leibniz Universität Hannover, which has been dealing with these subjects intensively for years, and has a competence in this field which has been recognised several times, has participated actively in the dialogue initiative from the very beginning.

3. Outline of the Leibniz Universität Hannover
3.1 Gender equality objectives and their contribution to profiling

With its current gender equality concept, the Leibniz Universität Hannover is aiming to achieve four new objectives for the creation of equal opportunities for women and men:

- It aims to increase the proportion of W3 female professors to 20% in five years,
- Its aim is to increase the proportion of women to 20% in all qualifications stages where it is still below this figure.

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9 Quoted from:
http://www.mwk.niedersachsen.de/master/C48516644_N48364530_L20_D0_I731.html
(engineering, electronics technology, information technology), in five years,

- It aims to provide active support young female scientists on the way to professorships by new approaches in personnel development,

- It aims to continually extend, further develop and promote its compatibility with the family.

Our values are framed in the guiding principles: “Using the potential of all - we create opportunities. We are a leader in terms on gender equality policy, and will continue consistently along this path. We promote the competences of women and men in all areas. By creating the right study and working conditions, we promote the compatibility of study, profession and family.”

3.2 Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of gender equality at Leibniz Universität Hannover

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<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
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<td>- Structural establishment of the gender and diversity approach at the University</td>
<td>- Low proportion of women in the MINT faculties</td>
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<td>- Continual further development of inter-related qualification programmes</td>
<td>- Family-compatible structures are being integrated very slowly</td>
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<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
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<td>- Improvement of quality management in appointment procedures</td>
<td>- Too few applications by women in the MINT faculties</td>
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<td>- Cultural change and quality assurance</td>
<td>- National and international competition for outstanding female professors</td>
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3.3 Measures and objectives for the creation of equal opportunities

Gender equality of men and women has been firmly established in the university structures of the Leibniz Universität for over 20 years. From the very beginning, the emphasis has been placed on the advancement of young female scientists. The concrete measures in the area of career advancement also cater largely to young female scientists. This is justified by the low proportion of female scientists in the University and in research projects. Notable successes have been achieved in this respect.\footnote{The Leibniz Universität Hannover occupies a place in the leading group nationwide in terms of post-doctoral qualifications. See CEWS, Centre of Excellence for Women in Science (pub.), University ranking according to gender mainstreaming aspects 2009, 3rd issue (cews. publication no. 13), Page 26.}

The measures for young scientists are largely orientated to their roles and responsibilities in the family. Specific gender equality projects and programmes of the Leibniz Universität include:

- Young scientists advancement programme with 12 places exclusively for female scientists,
- Participation in qualification with 11 female scientists in the Dorothea Erxleben Programme (1994-2006) of the state of Lower Saxony for qualification for a university professorship (financed 50% by the Leibniz Universität),
- Doctorate support for family reasons for women and men (approx. € 80,000 p.a.),
- Participation in the Maria Goepert-Mayer Programme of the state of Lower Saxony for international female and gender research (partly financed by the LUH),
- Mentoring in science and business since 2000 (career programme of the Leibniz Universität for female alumnae and doctorate students),
- The programme “Women in the MINT faculties – FIMINT” (cooperation programme between the Leibniz Universität Hannover and the Technical Universities of Braunschweig and Clausthal),
- Service for families (child care, facilities for fathers, alternating telework, etc.).

3.4 Structural establishment in the University / sustainability

The gender equality policy of the Leibniz Universität presents an interdisciplinary task, which is carried out by the gender equality representatives, the Presidium and the administrations of the faculties and other university bodies. The success of the creative gender equality concepts makes a decisive contribution to the compatibility of study, profession and family. For people in employment and students, a family crèche is available, together with emergency child care and children’s leisure activities during the school holidays. The opening of a further child day-care facility with flexible care services is planned for 2010. In addition, the Personnel Development Department of the Leibniz Universität has integrated creative ideas of gender equality into the further training programme, the “Welcome Workshops” for newly-appointed male and female professors and the training and supervision of management personnel, thereby contributing to the sustainability of gender competence.

The inter-related principle of the measures is particularly sustainable: Starting with readings for children, to mentoring for schoolgirls, mentoring in science and business and on to benchmarking for appointment procedures, gender equality measures are carried out for all qualification stages.

3.5 Quality management

The Leibniz Universität has positioned its gender equality policy as part of its quality management. The gender equality
concept is firmly established in the guiding principles, the basic statutes and the Senate guidelines in order to create equal opportunities for women and men. With the introduction of performance-related allocation of funds, the Leibniz Universität has also introduced the parameter of gender equality for the faculties, with a weighting of 5%. Various instruments of quality management have also been in use since the 1990’s:

**Rules and values**
- The guiding principles, the development planning and the basic statutes of the Leibniz Universität Hannover,
- Gender equality representatives, gender equality office,
- Reports on the gender equality plan,
- Family-friendly university,
- Awards.

**Information and communication**
- Reports of the President and the gender equality representatives,
- Guidelines for management personnel in administration,
- Welcome Workshop for newly-appointed male and female professors,
- Internal and external publicity work,
- Evaluations and project reports.

The objectives in the gender equality plans are reviewed and updated every two years. In order to realise these objectives, new measures are developed and implemented for every reporting period, according to the analysis of the figures. Equal opportunities and the advancement of women have become an integral part of the university policy and the development planning of the Leibniz Universität. The continual development and im-
provement of quality management in this area is a continual challenge, which at the Leibniz Universität Hannover, the second-largest university in Lower Saxony, is approached with passion and determination.

3.6 Previous successes / status quo

Quality management at the Leibniz Universität Hannover includes the regular and successful participation in competitive programmes aimed at gender equality. Notable previous successes include:

- Distinction with the “Total E-Quality Science Award” (2002, 2005, 2009),
- Female professorship programme of the central government and the states 2008 (giving the Leibniz Universität the opportunity of obtaining additional funds to the tune of €1,500,000 over a period of five years),
- Certificate “Family-compatible university audit” (2008),
- Assessment of the Leibniz Universität by the European Commission as “internationally outstanding in its gender mainstreaming policy” (2007),

3.7 Lessons Learned

On the basis of the discussions and analyses of the gender equality concept in the continuation of the gender equality plan, the Leibniz Universität Hannover, building on its gender equality concept, has set itself the above objectives. As a result of its participation in competitive programmes directed at equal opportunities for women and men, the Leibniz Universität received the quality seal “Outstanding in gender mainstreaming for women and men” (see Ch. 3.6). It has therefore attracted a very high level of awareness, earning accolades
such as “Best gender mainstreaming policy”\textsuperscript{12}. However, as mentioned at the beginning, there still exist serious discrepancies in numbers in the area of senior positions when it comes to the representation of women and men. The low proportion of women in the MINT faculties is particularly obvious. These faculties are still a male-dominated occupational field, which is later reflected in the corresponding professions.

3.8 Outlook

Although the proportion of W3/C4 female professors at the Leibniz Universität of 13\% is above the national average (11\% - 2006)\textsuperscript{13}, it is still insufficient for the challenges of the coming years, and must be improved. In particular, as one of the more technically-orientated universities, we urgently need a higher proportion of female scientists in these faculties in order for women and men together to produce peak performances. The strengths-and-weaknesses analysis of the LUH in the 2008 gender equality plan has clearly shown that the increase in the representation of female scientists in senior positions is proceeding much too slowly. In the long term, it is well-staffed professorships, and internationally acclaimed scientific work by the Leibniz Universität Hannover, which will enable stronger profiling and sustainably guarantee the representation of women.

The particular challenges facing the Leibniz Universität over the next five years are therefore:

- Increasing the proportion of women in senior positions and in the MINT faculties,
- Integration of gender research into the teaching and

\textsuperscript{12} Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung, 13.11.2004.
- Conveying of gender competences as an essential requirement for effective implementation of the equal treatment of women and men in the sense of “gender mainstreaming”.

3.8.1 Women in senior positions

The Leibniz Universität intends to increase the proportion of W3 female professors from the current 13.9% to 20% by the year 2013. In order to achieve concrete successes also in this area, a “5-point package” has been developed:

1. Talent scouting: Before publicising vacant professorships, the current situation regarding potential female applicants will be reviewed, in order to proactively encourage nationally and internationally recognised female scientists to apply for vacant W3 professorships.

2. Invitations to apply: The vacancy notices of the Leibniz Universität contain the following text: “The Leibniz Universität Hannover has set itself the strategic objective of significantly increasing the proportion of women. Female scientists are therefore specifically requested to apply. Please contact the central gender equality representative for further information.”

3. Evaluation of appointment procedures: Leibniz Universität Hannover will in future undertake measures to evaluate completed appointment procedures under the application of gender competence.

4. Benchmarking: The Leibniz Universität Hannover participates in the benchmarking process on appointment procedures at Lower Saxony universities. Under the moderation of the Hochschul-Informations-System (HIS) GmbH Hannover, standards will be developed by 2010 for good appointment procedures under the aspects of gender equality.

5. Gender competence in appointment procedures: Persons assuming a leading role in appointment procedures need gender com-
petence. They should also be capable of recognising gender aspects in their tasks, and dealing with them in accordance with gender equality.

3.8.2 Increase in the proportion of women in the MINT faculties to 20%

The Leibniz Universität intends to increase the proportion of women in the MINT faculties to 20% at every qualification stage within five years. In the area of the MINT faculties, these measures begin as early as the recruitment and motivation of female students. This area has proven to be particularly difficult in gender equality. Numerous investigations and studies have for years been examining the question of how young women can be motivated to study technical subjects. What motivates young women to enter male-dominated fields? Both centrally and decentrally, offers are being designed and implemented by various institutions of the Leibniz Universität in order to give girls the opportunity of getting to know MINT faculties and the corresponding career possibilities, such as

- FEET – Women discover and experience technology,
- Mentoring for schoolgirls,
- Autumn university for schoolgirls,
- Ada Lovelace Great Grand-daughters’ Initiative and
- Special young scientists’ advancement programmes (places for doctoral and post-doctoral studies).

With the FIMINT project, a programme for the advancement of scientific careers of women in the engineering and natural science disciplines, the Leibniz Universität, together with three other universities, has instituted a new project. Together with the Technical Universities of Braunschweig and Clausthal, an inter-faculty and supra-regional form of consultation, coaching and networking will be offered for women. In addition, the Leibniz Universität Hannover with its MINT faculties belongs to the Lower Saxony Technical University (NTH),
and is also a member of the national MINT Pact and the association of the TU9 universities.

3.9 Outlook: Transferability and generalisability

The results of the efforts described here towards a gender-orientated quality approach and corresponding activities in all key areas of the University can be readily transferred to other universities. This is also reflected in the various distinctions already received (see Ch. 3.6: “Previous successes”).

Highlighted, already implemented projects as examples of “best practice” at the Leibniz Universität include:

- Advancements of young female scientists
- FIMINT programme of the NTH
- Itinerant professorship in gender
- Forum for gender competence in architecture and landscape planning etc.

The integration of gender aspects into teaching and the concept of a trans-disciplinary itinerant professorship in gender in particular contain theoretical aspects which can also be generalised for conceptual further development. In the long term, it should be possible to create an awareness culture which centrally, actively, positively and as a matter of course integrates the subjects of “Quality” and “Gender” into the day-to-day life of the University.

Questions to the public:
1. How is the situation in your university?
2. Gender is not usually an obvious element of quality assurance – are there other novel/innovative ideas to improve quality at your university?
3. How do you deal with bad practice – creative solutions?
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