

“New racehorses in the HSG research stable”

Two new main research emphases at the University – signing of the “Berlin Declaration” during the University’s Research Day

The University of St Gallen wants to position itself internationally as the leading university in selected research fields of great social importance. Consequently, there are two new main research emphases at the University: Work, Ageing and Welfare as well as Wealth and Risk. The University announced this in the course of a media interview during the University Research Day. In this regard, University President Ernst Mohr signed the “Berlin Declaration” whose purpose is to guarantee open and gratis access to researchers’ scientific publications.

Professor Ernst Mohr Ph.D., President of the University of St Gallen, said that the professional and practical worlds are equal stakeholders in the University’s research. The University wanted to be the topic leader in areas of great social relevance. Topic leadership in a social discussion presupposes a close link between research, science and practice. In order to achieve this goal, the HSG had introduced two main research emphases: Work, Ageing and Welfare and Wealth and Risk. According to Prof. Dr Bernhard Ehrenzeller, vice-president and the responsible for research in the rectorate, these are the “racehorses in the University’s research stable“. These will enhance the University’s position and influence in the area of top-level research. According to Ehrenzeller, these main research emphases will foster the University’s research culture as well as up-and-coming young researchers, which will also increase the University’s appeal.

According to Prof. Dr. Gebhard Kirchgässner, the first main research emphasis, Work, Ageing and Welfare, investigates various issues such as: Can an active labour market policy improve the old and the very young’s situation? How can welfare be measured and recorded, and how does it adapt itself to an ageing society? Six University professors are jointly working on this emphasis.

The research team of the second emphasis, Wealth and Risk, consists of eight professors. According to Prof. Dr. Hato Schmeiser, they want to group the research activities at the University into the areas: financing, bank economics, risk management and insurance economics. Related themes are among others: risk in welfare institutions, credit risk and derivatives, venture capital, and financial market regulations. Schmeiser said that mathematical, statistical as well as legal issues would be integrated into this research emphasis. This distinguishes this research emphasis from other universities’ competing research projects.

In the journalists’ presence, the President Ernst Mohr signed the “Berlin Declaration” at the University Research Day. Professor Dr. Beat Schmid explained that this declaration in respect of the Open Access Initiative (OAI) - an international movement of researchers and research institutions - wants to ensure simple and gratis access to research contributions by means of digital

media. The declaration therefore had two lines of attack: Scientists should have the right to present their publications online. And those scientific magazines that provide free electronic access should be supported. Schmid said that research results and contributions' range could consequently be increased. This would only be proper, as research results are usually financed with public funds. For a university Open Access means that it provides its researchers with the possibility of self-archiving. The University had already done this: The research platform Alexandria had been activated more than a year ago, and had in the mean time been gradually filled with content (www.alexandria.unisg.ch). Consequently, the University is rather advanced as far as the implementation of OAI was concerned.

The emphasis topic of this year's Research Day was the EU's 7th Research Framework programme. In a panel discussion, the benefits and costs of participating in EU projects were highlighted. Participants in the panel discussion were undersecretary of state Charles Kleiber, Dr Olivier Küttel, director of Euresearch, and those University professors who had experience of European projects as co-ordinators, participants and/or evaluators. This was the University's second Research Day.

St Gallen, 20 June 06, Communication HSG