



Professor Keel's farewell lecture



Alex Keel, Professor of statistics

Outstanding didactician

On 4 July, Professor Dr Alex Keel delivered his farewell lecture. Alex Keel, professor of statistics and renowned expert in the theory of probability, is retiring at the end of the 2006 summer semester. Alex Keel was associated with the University and the Department of Economics for 41 years: as a student, a "Habilitation", as professor and scientist, as departmental director, as Vice-President and, especially, as a highly respected and valued colleague. His University career started with his studies in 1965, in 1972 he was officially appointed lecturer of the mathematical fundamentals of economic science and statistics. In 1979, he qualified as a tenured university lecturer in this field and has been a professor of statistics since 1982. He represented the University as a board member of the national department of economics during 1989-91 and as Vice-President during 1996-99. This left a permanent impression on the University.

Probability observed scientifically

Probability has shaped Alex Keel's academic career! His scientific aspirations were focussed on this direction from the start. His dissertation on "Mathematische und heuristische Stundenplanmodelle" (Mathematical and heuristic timetable models) should therefore have been of practical use to the University (or perhaps not?)

As a result of his scientific work he was, at an early stage, appointed research fellow at Harvard University's Department of Statistics in 1974. In the interim, his statistical research has not been limited to the confined boundaries of economic sciences. In his extensive list of publications there are also contributions to legal and medical biological journals. Some of the topics were sometimes quite specific as in, e.g., "Impaired Somatosensory Discrimination of Shape in Parkinson's Disease: Association With Caudate Nucleus Dopaminergic Function," in: *Human Brain Mapping* 8, 1999, p.1-12. Or, "Prediction of Angiographic Carotid Artery Stenosis Indexes by Colour Doppler Assisted Duplex Imaging: A Critical Appraisal of the Parameters Used," in: *European Journal of Neurology* 7, 2000, p. 183-190. Understand? In the realm of research management, his activities are focussed on the field of statistical research. He has been a member of the research commission of the laboratory

research department of the St Gallen cantonal hospital since 2001 and editorial staff member of the international orthopaedic journal "Archives of Orthopaedic and Trauma Surgery, including Arthroscopy and Sports Medicine" since 2002.

Probability and our old-age provisions.

Since 1988, Alex Keel has been a qualified Swiss pension insurance expert and scientific advisor for insurance companies and pension funds regarding public and private law. Besides scientific contributions on the topics of pension schemes and financial institutions' portfolio strategies, there is also a series of scientific appraisals, e.g. for the federal office for social security, for the Swiss federal court and various banks and insurance companies. Amongst others, these contributions are devoted to the topic of pension funds' asset liability management. We can therefore be confident that our pension capital has been invested with the right compromise between earnings and risk.

Probability, a source of profit

Alex Keel is not only a professor and scientist, but also a successful entrepreneur! In 1999 he founded Providus AG financial security consultancy. This was followed in 2005 by the founding of c-alm AG whose core competency lies in asset liability management for pension funds and institutional investors. This is the way Alex Keel makes the transfer from science to the practical world. These enterprises should occupy a good part of his energy and attention in his imminent state of restless.

A last chance

With the departure of Alex Keel, the University not only loses an active scientist and teacher, but especially an informal and charming colleague. On behalf of the football team of professors, one can only wish that, as vital midfield strategist, he will still be active for some time. But we can still look forward to his July 4 farewell lecture on the subject "Wie es der Zufall halt so will!" "(How probability works!) It certainly is a remarkable coincidence that this date coincides with the football World Cup semi-final. Nonetheless, Alex, we will all be present!

Prof. Dr. Christian Keuschnigg

Board of directors

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