

Service for education and science

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Speech for the dies academicus 2022 of Leuphana University Lüneburg

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Dear guests of the dies academicus,

Universities are wonderful places. They are places of academic curiosity, scientific courage, intellectual adventure, individual freedom, social responsibility, personal development, in short: academic knowledge. And I may say - at least I am convinced of this myself: Leuphana is also such a wonderful place - and it is developing quickly and with great dynamism.

But for universities to become and be such a place - and I'm using a big word now, and quite deliberately: they need a lot of love. They need a lot of attention. A lot of love from their members for science - from the people who are the focus here today. The people who are at the center of attention here are the scientists who do not allow themselves to be held back in their thirst for research, their curiosity, their courage to try something new, their impatience. People who are the focus here are the students who pursue their studies with energy, with a desire for development, with the joy of knowledge, in freedom and responsibility for themselves and others.

But universities don't just need love from their scientists and students. They also need love from people who provide services for research, teaching and studies: I am talking about people in the so-called university administration. These are people who are not academics themselves, but who work out of a fundamental academic understanding of the needs, concerns and issues of science and who help to shape the university with great commitment. It is thus a matter of reconciling the requirements of science for good conditions for research, teaching and study with the conditions from outside - resources, laws, regulations, social and political requirements.

This is a very difficult task, and it is primarily a matter of mutual understanding: understanding for the legal, political and social requirements from outside on the side of science - just as much as understanding for the requirements of science on the side of science administration and science management. And - this seems important to me - it is above all a matter of not giving up in the face of the inevitable difficulties, of not allowing oneself to be deterred despite perhaps bureaucratic requirements from the outside, of finding solutions anyway. And it's about doing this in a culture of enabling, in which it's natural to make a special effort precisely when hurdles have to be overcome, when even the proverbial extra mile still has to be gone.

This culture is a prerequisite for excellence in science, and this culture is also a prerequisite for the best possible support of science by science management.

We have been through a particularly difficult time since the pandemic began, and we continue to be in difficult times, as we all know. These are times when it takes a particularly great deal of love for science, a particularly great deal of understanding, and a particularly great deal of care for the university to ensure it functions. Times in which we have converted university processes to digital formats, in which we have had to find new formats and processes for carrying out teaching, examinations, research, joint collaboration.

That is why, on this day, we are honoring not only the academic achievements of the university and the top achievements of individual members of the university. We also want to honor the achievements of those who contribute indirectly to the academic achievements and whose performance is also essential.

I would like to do this today - especially against the background of the particularly great efforts due to the pandemic also for those members of the university who provide service and services for science in science management. On behalf of all members of this university, I would like to thank all members in science management and in science administration - especially:

- for the support of our scientists in all projects and developments in research, teaching and transfer,
- for supporting our students in their studies, learning and exams,
- for support in the appointment, hiring and development of our scientific and non-scientific staff,
- for support in the digitization of teaching, research and administration,
- for the provision of media,
- for the structural, spatial and sustainable development of our campus,
- for the provision and accounting of our financial resources,
- for information and communication about developments in the university's content,
- for all the other many services and service that we see and experience every day.

But I would also like to pay special tribute to the cooperation. The work in a team. The common ground, the things we work on together, in science and in science management. Because if this understanding of each other, of the different needs and requirements of science on the one hand and the legal and organizational framework conditions for science on the other, is successful, then it is possible to create a basis for successful science and also for successful top performance, which we are honoring today at this academicus.

If we succeed in this, we are successful. Then we create the basis for courage, curiosity, intellectual adventure, special commitment. Then we create a culture that is not satisfied with what exists, but

which, as a contribution to the development of the university and also as a contribution to the development of society, encourages new knowledge - new knowledge of which we need so much so urgently - and in doing so not to be deterred by existing boundaries and always to work for the better: for the personal education and development of students, for the individual and collaborative research of scientists*, and above all for a better society.

Thank you!