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HUMBOLDT-UNIVERSITÄT ZU BERLIN



5th European Conference on Gender Equality in Higher Education

August 28 – 31, 2007, at Humboldt Universität zu Berlin



Results and Recommendations

Planning Committee

Berlin:

Dr. Marianne Kriszio

Gender Equality Officer
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
Unter den Linden 6
D-10099 Berlin
Germany
Phone: + 49 (0) 30-2093-2840
Fax: + 49 (0) 30-2093-2860
E-Mail: marianne.kriszio@uv.hu-berlin.de
<http://www2.hu-berlin.de/frb/mkriszio.html>

Dr. Gabriele Jähnert

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
Zentrum für transdisziplinäre Geschlechterstudien
Hausvogteiplatz 5-7
D-10117 Berlin
Germany
Phone: + 49 (0) 30 2093 8204/8201
Fax: + 49 (0) 30 2093 8216
E-mail: gabi.jaehnert@gender.hu-berlin.de
<http://www.gender.hu-berlin.de>

Heidi Degethoff de Campos

Gender Equality Officer
Technische Universität Berlin
Straße des 17. Juni 135
D-10623 Berlin
Germany
Phone: + 49 (0) 30-314-21439
Fax: + 49 (0) 30-314-21622
E-mail: heidi.degethoff@tu-berlin.de
http://www.tu-berlin.de/zentrale_frauenbeauftragte/menu/home/

National:

Isabel Beuter

GESIS-IZ
Center of Excellence Women and Science (CEWS)
Dreizehnmorgenweg 40-42
D-53175 Bonn
Germany
Phone: + 49 (0) 228-2281-523
Fax: + 49 (0) 228-2281-550
E-mail: isabel.beuter@cews.org
<http://www.cews.org>

Prof. Dr. Birgit Blätzel-Mink

Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main
FB Gesellschaftswissenschaften
Robert-Mayer-Str. 5
D-60054 Frankfurt am Main
Germany
Phone: + 49 (0) 69-798-22055 / 22542
Fax: + 49 (0) 69-798-28009
E-mail: b.blaettel-mink@soz.uni-frankfurt.de
<http://www.gesellschaftswissenschaften.uni-frankfurt.de/bblaettel-mink>

Prof. Dr. Andrea Bührmann

Institut für Politikwissenschaft
Neues Institutsgebäude
Universitätsstraße 7
1010 Wien
Phone: + 43 (1) 4277-47731
Fax: + 43 (1) 4277-9477
E-mail: andrea.buehrmann@univie.ac.at
<http://public.univie.ac.at/index.php?id=24790>

Dr. Dagmar Höppel

LaKoG
Universität Stuttgart
Kronenstraße 36
D-70174 Stuttgart
Germany
Phone: + 49 (0) 711-685-82003
Fax: + 49 (0) 711-685-82001
E-mail: hoepfel@lakog.uni-stuttgart.de
<http://www.lakog.uni-mannheim.de>

Dr. Beate Kortendiek

Netzwerk Frauenforschung NRW
Universität Dortmund/FWR
D-44221 Dortmund
Germany
Phone: + 49 (0)231-755-5142
Fax: + 49 (0)231-755-2447
E-mail: kortendiek@netzwerk-frauenforschung.de
<http://www.netzwerk-frauenforschung.nrw.de>

PD Dr. Caroline Kramer

Universität Karlsruhe (TH)
Institut für Geographie und Geoökologie II
Kaiserstraße12
D-76131 Karlsruhe
Germany
Phone: + 49 (0) 721-608-3728
E-mail: caroline.kramer@ifgg2.uni-karlsruhe.de
<http://www.rz.uni-karlsruhe.de/~humangeographie/ckramer.html>

Dr. Andrea Löther

GESIS-IZ
Center of Excellence Women and Science (CEWS)
Dreizehnmorgenweg 40-42
D-53175 Bonn
Germany
Phone: + 49 (0) 228 2281-522
Fax: + 49 (0) 228 2281-550
E-mail: andrea.loether@cews.org
<http://www.cews.org>

Dr. Anina Mischau

Interdisziplinäres Zentrum für Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung (IFF)
Universität Bielefeld
Universitätsstraße 25
D-33615 Bielefeld
Germany
Phone: + 49 (0) 521-106-4573
E-mail: anina.mischau@uni-bielefeld.de
<http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/IFF/iff-m.html>

International:

D.Soc.Sc. Liisa Husu

Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies
P.O. Box 4
FIN-00014 University of Helsinki
Finland
Phone: + 358 (0) 9-191-23457
Fax: + 358 (0) 9-191-24509
E-mail: liisa.husu@helsinki.fi
<http://www.helsinki.fi/collegium/english/staff/Husu/husu.htm>

Dr. Simonetta Manfredi, one of the organizers of the conference in Oxford, as well as Kristina Lundgren and Inga-Lena Tofte from Stockholm, where the next conference will take place in 2009, were associate members of the preparation team.

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Imprint

Funding: This publication was funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), funding ID 01FP0626. The editor is responsible for the content of this publication.

Editor: Dr. Marianne Kriszto, Gender Equality Officer at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
Editing: Beatrice Michaelis
Translation: Millay Hyatt
Layout/Graphic Design/Production and Printing: Unicom

Berlin, 2008

Editorial

One of the outcomes of the first European Conference on Gender Equality in Higher Education hosted by the University of Helsinki in the summer of 1998 was the foundation of a European network of academics, experts and practitioners interested in European and international co-operation around gender equality in higher education. Since then, European conferences of this kind have been organised in different countries every two to three years, and with increasing attendance. German academics and experts on gender equality have been part of the network from the beginning. The University of Helsinki and one of the organizers of the first conference in Finland, Dr. Liisa Husu, have since been maintaining EQ-UNI, an electronic platform providing information on gender equality issues in higher education, relevant new research, and conferences throughout Europe and beyond. In April 2008, EQ-UNI had 450 members from over 30 countries. Anyone interested can join the network by sending an e-mail with the word SUBSCRIBE EQ-UNI to majordomo@helsinki.fi.

In 2007, the Fifth European Conference on Gender Equality in Higher Education took place in Germany for the first time, at the Humboldt University in Berlin. The preparation team was made up of Dr. Marianne Kriszio, the University's gender equality officer and Dr. Gabriele Jähnert of the University's Center for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies (ZtG), as well as numerous women from other universities, women's research institutions, and institutes across Germany (see Planning Committee on page 2). Organizers of the preceding conferences in Helsinki and Oxford and of the following conference in Stockholm were associate members of the preparation team.

Thanks to funding from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), a project coordinator could be hired to put together the programme and organize the event, which took place in the European Year of Equal Opportunities. Dr. Cornelia Raue filled this post until February 2007, when Dr. Sabine Grenz took over the responsibilities. Ilona Domke from the gender equality office at the Humboldt University was also involved in the organisation of the conference.

As in previous Conferences on Gender Equality in Higher Education, the overarching focus was an investigation into the causes for the under-representation of women in the (Western) European university setting and the presentation and comparative analysis of gender equality measures in various national higher education contexts. At the 2007 Berlin conference, these issues were broken down into four thematic sections:

Track A: "Excellence, Research Policy, and Gender Bias"

Track B: "Disciplinary Perspectives"

Track C: "Gender Equality Programmes"

Track D: "The Bologna Process"

There were also two separate panels on special topics:

- “Work-Life Balance”
- “Gender Studies and Beyond”

Two hundred and sixty-nine participants from over fifty countries took part in the conference; most – but not all – were women. A number of men from Scandinavian countries in particular attended and gave presentations.

With the permission of the authors, the most important presentations will appear in separate publications for each track:

- Track A in a special publication by the Center of Excellence Women and Science CEWS in Bonn, Germany
- Track B in a special issue of the British journal “Equal Opportunities International” as well as in the IFF research series of the Interdisciplinary Centre for Women’s and Gender Studies in Bielefeld, Germany
- Track C in a book published by the German VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften
- Track D in the series “Bulletin – Texte” No. 34 of the Center for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies at the Humboldt University, Berlin

This brochure brings together the most important results and recommendations from the four thematic sections as well as from the “Work-Life Balance” panel.

My thanks goes to Beatrice Michaelis for editing this overview.

MARIANNE KRISZIO

Past Conferences:

Helsinki in 1998
Zurich in 2000
Genoa in 2003
Oxford in 2005
Berlin in 2007

Next conference:

Stockholm, August 5-8, 2009
www.konf.su.se/gender2009

Links

majordomo@helsinki.fi
(SUBSCRIBE EQ-UNI)

At a Glance: Results and Recommendations

Track A: Excellence, Research Policy, and Gender Bias

- We need more knowledge about the SUBJECT-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR “EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH”.
- CAREER ADVISEMENT AND PLANNING must be tailored to the specific conditions of the different disciplines.
- Clear guidelines on the function and significance of INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH are essential.
- We need scientifically sound information ON RESEARCHERS WHO GIVE UP OR ARE FORCED TO GIVE UP because of OBSTACLES to their careers (based on a longitudinal study with an exit sample).
- The findings of gender studies must be used to SENSITISE DECISION MAKERS.
- The attainment of gender-equality objectives should be taken into consideration when evaluating LEADERSHIP QUALITIES AND SUCCESSES.

Track B: Higher Education and Academic Professionalisation in the Disciplines

- DISCIPLINARY STRUCTURES that lead to specific exclusionary mechanisms require CONCRETE COUNTERACTIVE STRATEGIES.
- On the job market, UNCERTAIN STRUCTURES AND CAREER PERSPECTIVES make up the greatest obstacle for women.
- Degree programmes should emphasize APPLICABILITY from the beginning, since young women tend to be scared off by highly maths-oriented and technical introductory courses.
- TEACHING AND RESEARCH OUGHT NOT TO BE SEPARATED, as this leads to a feminization of “inferior” teaching and the masculinization of “superior” research.

Track C: Gender Equality Programmes

- Crucial for the success of gender equality policies is the STRONG COMMITMENT OF UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP.
- The university administration is responsible for TRANSFORMING THE INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE AND CULTURE so that gender equality measures can become effective.
- ADEQUATE INSTRUMENTS must be developed for this purpose.
- NATIONAL RESEARCH-FUNDING BODIES must demonstrate that gender equality is important to them.
- WELL-FUNDED PROGRAMMES aimed at the INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION OF UNIVERSITIES AS A WHOLE have a positive effect on the gender-equality climate.
- The successful implementation of GENDER-EQUALITY PROGRAMMES in universities depends upon the serious support of the administration, a definition of common goals, the necessary infrastructure, and sufficient resources.
- PROGRAMMES EXPLICITLY DESIGNED TO PREPARE WOMEN FOR LEADERSHIP POSITIONS have had positive results.
- The acceptance and success of MENTORING PROGRAMMES depends on institutional integration, the necessary infrastructure, and of course sufficient funding.

- The EVALUATION of gender equality programmes and gender equality offices must be improved. STANDARDS for this must be developed.
- A SUCCESSFUL GENDER EQUALITY POLICY requires that ALL LEVELS AND PARTS OF AN INSTITUTION WORK TOGETHER to achieve real change.
- DIVERSITY AND INTERSECTIONALITY issues must play a greater role in the higher education gender equality agenda.

Track D: More or Less Gender? The Challenges of the Bologna Process

- An active gearing of the Bologna process toward gender mainstreaming can contribute to gender equality in studying and teaching and thus to a MODERNIZATION of higher education and research. The universities should make use of this opportunity and ACTIVELY IMPLEMENT THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DECLARATIONS ON EQUALITY MADE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS.
- Institutions of higher education require a plan for how they will structure the Bologna process in a gender-equitable way. This includes especially a) a description of the CRITERIA with which “gender equality” will be measured; b) an ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN for how these criteria will be enforced in the development of degree programmes in the departments and faculties; c) a plan to inform, advise, and further educate everyone involved in the development, accreditation, and implementation of degree programmes (FOSTERING GENDER-COMPETENCE); d) a plan for securing the necessary SPECIALIST COMPETENCIES (gender studies); and e) a plan for effective QUALITY CONTROL (evaluation, monitoring, controlling).
- In order to ensure gender equality throughout the Bologna process, adequate measures must be taken on all levels: COURSE ORGANISATION and CONTENT as well as ADVISEMENT.
- Gender equality in a degree programme applies to a number of different levels, ranging from ACCESS to the course of study to ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION to the TRANSITION from BA to MA and into a profession.

Work-Life Balance in Higher Education

- The MARGINALIZATION OF WOMEN in academia and the problems of WORK-LIFE BALANCE are distinct issues and should be TREATED SEPARATELY.
- A BROAD UNDERSTANDING of WORK-LIFE BALANCE is necessary.
- A core problem in academia is the career requirement of “MOBILITY” and the resulting difficulties for couples.

Track A: Excellence, Research Policy, and Gender Bias

Discussions about and assessments of excellence should place a greater emphasis on gender equality, subject specificity, and interdisciplinarity.

Track A centred on questions of excellence and its definitions in national, European, and international research policy as well as on the possible gender bias in the academic, research, and higher education system. The presenters highlighted the various factors at work here and asked in what way the definition of excellence has an effect on who rises to the top in the national and European research landscapes, and under what conditions.

We also asked:

- What gender bias is hidden in the prevailing DEFINITION OF EXCELLENCE?
- What effects does this have on the European research landscape?

Finally, and most significantly:

- What is the relationship between a wide variety of mechanisms and the – still slow – rate of progress in attaining GENDER EQUALITY in the European higher education system?

Questions of substance

Let us begin with the definition of excellence. Is excellence even defined clearly and unambiguously enough to be measurable? Our talks and discussions revealed that there is only a hazy understanding of what excellence is. Many academics of both sexes answered evasively, evoking “the usual criteria” like publications and track record. Others claimed that “you know excellence when you see it.” One of the respondents in the research conducted by [Marieke van den Brink](#) (University Nijmegen, Netherlands) put it even more bluntly: “If I don’t know who you are, you’re not excellent.”

Although these rather vague statements about the definition of excellence were not new to many of the participants in Track A, everyone tried, in a variety of ways, to make the concept of excellence more precise, transparent, and conforming to standards of gender equality. This requires more than simply coming up with a new definition. Instead, prevailing opinions must be refuted with facts or at least called into question. One of these prevailing opinions is the view that a serious research career is incompatible with motherhood; that academics must live their profession one hundred percent in order to stay constantly mobile and flexible. (Paternity, incidentally, was for a long time not seen as incompatible with a research career). [Liisa Husu](#) from the University of Helsinki, Finland, presented the results of an international research project on women in technical disciplines who have already made it to the top – with children. A clear indication that motherhood and excellence can go together.

Another approach to changing the system from within is being pursued by the European Platform of Women Scientists EPWS, which was represented at the conference by its Secretary General, [Maren Jochimsen](#). One of the objectives of the EPWS is to involve women in research policy decisions; another is to establish gender as a category in research designs. The groundbreaking findings and developments

pertaining to gender equality in medicine in the last two decades have shown that a differentiated approach can lead to new and life-saving discoveries.

One of the most evocative and memorable quotes in this track was the statement “If I was to be born again I would choose another country, not another sex” made by *Marina Blagojevic*, University of Belgrade, Serbia, in her keynote address. She extended the discussion on excellence to include the issue of the exclusionary mechanisms affecting academics outside of the leading Western regions of the academic system. She spoke of the “arrogance of the centre” and of those who have made it into this centre and in turn become the new gatekeepers. As the diagram on the right shows, gender is only one criterion among many that can lead to unequal opportunities and discrimination.

The lectures and discussions in Track A also focused on career paths, the representation of women in committees and leadership positions, as well as leadership responsibilities in academia – all of which are influenced by the underlying understanding of excellence.

Nitza Berkovitch, Ben Gurion University, Israel, gave a very vivid presentation on how the (re-) presentation of women in official university documents reflects the prevailing masculine culture in sometimes open but often very subtle ways and contributes to the system’s (re-) construction of itself. Context is decisive here, and quality is more telling than quantity. Conventionally, pictures of women were used to illustrate texts with those depicted remaining anonymous, while pictures of men were accompanied by an explanatory caption along with their name. In some cases, the differences only become evident upon closer scrutiny, as in one article where a male cancer researcher is shown in front of a bookshelf with a technical heading describing his work. A female health researcher, on the other hand, is shown with older people under a heading emphasizing the emotional and caring aspect of her work.

We can conclude from this that images and (stereotyped) representations are powerful and are continually reproduced – not only in official documents but also in the selection and exclusion mechanisms that lead from a Europe-wide percentage of 50 per cent female students to a Europe-wide percentage of just 15 per cent female professors.

The following recommendations emerged from the eighteen lectures and the keynote address in Track A:

- We still know too little about the SUBJECT-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR “EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH” and about differences between the definitions of excellence in the various disciplines. Career advisement and planning that does not take subject-specific differences into consideration is insufficient.
- The role and significance of INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH turned out to be quite controversial. While a clear commitment to interdisciplinarity was expressed by some, others were sceptical about the chances of funding for interdisciplinary research projects since they do not satisfy the established standards of excellence. Moreover, the important subject-specific journals tend to prefer publishing non-interdisciplinary articles. Clear guidelines are needed, which should be brought into accordance with the subject-specific definitions of excellence.



Diagram: Excerpt from Marina Blagojevic’s talk at the Fifth European Conference on Gender Equality in Higher Education in Berlin, August 29th, 2007.

Links

<http://www.epws.org>
<http://www.cews.org>

- Conclusions about female researchers who gave up, or were forced to give up, due to OBSTACLES, who leave academia, who choose other career paths, or who resign themselves to less than they are capable of attaining, are for the most part based on assumptions or hearsay: “I know this woman who ...”. Scientifically sound information, however, can only be derived from a COMPREHENSIVE LONGITUDINAL STUDY that would include A SUBSTANTIAL EXIT SAMPLE of those with higher degrees who did not go on to become professors. There is also a particular need for a comparative study of women and men, as there are also men who do not make it to the top despite having the best qualifications.
- Several participants reiterated the long-standing demand to give gender training to EXPERT REFEREES deciding on research proposals. The sensitisation of decision makers should lead to more economically sensible decisions in line with gender equality, better policies, and ultimately a transformation of the system from within.
- The business world provides us with an example of an interesting approach: some companies connect leadership qualities and successes with the attainment of gender-equality objectives. One possibility would be to introduce monetary incentives that award numerically measurable successes with special payments. A “PER CAPITA BONUS,” for instance, would mean that additional funding would be given when a woman is hired instead of a man for a particular position.

A rather provocative question remained at the end: why are we as female academics continuing to try to prove that the prevailing definitions of excellence and the established academic systems contain a gender bias with negative consequences for women? Is the burden of proof not rather on the research funding organizations and the system itself to show that it does not disadvantage certain groups? Would such an approach not demonstrate that we have come one step closer to equal opportunities for everyone in European higher education and research?

RESPONSIBLE FOR TRACK A:
ISABEL BEUTER, DAGMAR HÖPPEL

Track B: Higher Education and Academic Professionalisation in the Disciplines

Gender-specific inclusionary/exclusionary mechanisms at work in professionalisation processes must be examined from the perspective of disciplinary differences and the various job market situations and translated into concrete strategies.

Practices of “doing” – or rather “undoing” – gender vary greatly across academic disciplines. This means that women are disadvantaged, excluded, or simply “overlooked” at different points of their academic careers. For instance, while certain fields have seen an increase in the percentage of women, it is often these very fields that suffer a drop in prestige or significance. These processes can be described as segmentation – that is, the unequal development of different segments of the labour market in which a particular group is particularly well represented (such as teaching) – or as segregation – that is, the voluntary or involuntary separation of a group from the rest of the field. Furthermore, these processes differ across countries depending on their specific structural, institutional, and cultural contexts. There are different starting conditions in different countries, national academic cultures are in some cases fundamentally different from each other, and both the status of higher education as well as access to it vary greatly across Europe.

The current restructuring of the European higher education landscape in the Bologna process also has effects on the gender ratio. In some cases, transformed structures allow for increased access, while in others they give rise to new inequalities. The competitions all across Europe for the labels of “excellence,” “elite,” and other ratings create a gulf between the various universities but also between the disciplines deemed the new “prestige” subjects of excellence and what is in some cases the marginalized rest. This particular competition seems in fact to be causing new inequalities in the gender ratio at universities and in the academic landscape as a whole. If, as has already been suggested at some German universities, a greater separation between research and teaching is to be introduced, there is cause for concern that this dividing line will lead to a new separation between the gender groups: the male research professor who is relieved of his teaching duties and the female professor who has up to twenty contact hours per week (the high percentage of female professors with a large teaching load should give us cause for concern indeed).

The gender ratio will also be changed in the fields whose professionals were trained in the academic environments, as the thinking and working cultures bred there continue to have an effect far beyond the university. The current developments thus affect both the structures between the gender groups as well as those between and within the disciplines. These processes were the focus of Track B.

The presentations in this track concentrated on the role of disciplinary cultures, particularly in terms of their effect on “doing” or “undoing” gender. The focus was on the natural sciences, engineering, the technical sciences, and medicine. What are the gender ratios in the different disciplines and how do they affect the issue of equal opportunities? International comparisons and interdisciplinary approaches were also of particular interest. Second, the (slight) increase of the number of women in the natural sciences, engineering, and in the technical sciences raises the question as to whether this has led to a transformation of the specific disciplinary cultures. Does the greater percentage of female students have an effect on the disciplinary culture or on its accessibility for other women? Does it reduce obstacles or intensify exclusionary processes?

Li-Ling Tsai (National Kaohsiung Normal University, Taiwan) in her presentation pointed to the fact that female physicists, despite their increase in a discipline until now dominated by men, still deviate from the “norm” by virtue of their “otherness.” In her abstract she writes: “This paper demonstrates that the persistent question of gender and science is never a simple question of sheer numbers. It is about representations, discourses, meanings, identity struggles and power struggles.” The main characteristics according to which women in physics are defined as “other” are femininity, motherhood, sexuality, and attractiveness – traits that are used to stabilize otherness in a process of gendering. In order to define starting points for change, indicators must be identified that increase the transparency of those processes by which “otherness” is reproduced and that describe the ways scientists establish their identities. In many cases, according to *Jenny Vainio* (University of Helsinki, Finland), both female and male scientists are so unfamiliar with gender issues that they are convinced their discipline is “gender neutral,” that male/female is not part of its vocabulary, and that discrimination does not take place.

Different studies using explorative methods have shown that many female engineering students are scared off in their first semesters by highly technical and maths-focused introductory courses because they – evidently in distinction to men – expect their education to be application-oriented from the beginning (*Pat Morton*, Sheffield Hallam University, UK; *Jennifer Dahmen*, University of Wuppertal, Germany; *Andrea Wolfram*, Hamburg University of Technology, Germany). Furthermore, the technical disciplines – as do most of the engineering degree programmes – put great emphasis on working groups during the courses and in preparation for exams, and women are frequently excluded from these groups (*Barbara Bagilhole*, Loughborough University, UK; *Anne-Françoise Gilbert*, University of Bern, Switzerland).

Women use a wide variety of coping strategies, with the most common being “greatest possible adaptation” in order to come across as inconspicuous and as “normal” as possible. The disciplinary cultures of these subjects seem to scare off young women in particular, with higher drop out rates than in other subjects, where they belong to the more successful groups of students. The teaching and learning cultures in the natural and technical sciences also exhibit structures that evidently encourage far more young men to participate in class – a phenomenon widespread in primary and secondary education and an issue in the discussion on co-education (*Katharina Willems*, University of Hamburg and *Helga Jungwirth*, Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, Frankfurt/Main, Germany; *Helga Stadler*, University of Vienna, Austria; *Leena Isosomppi*, University of Jyväskylä, Finland).

There was an overall sense that qualitative methods are frequently superior to standardized, quantitative ones when it comes to analysing representation and the formation of identity. Thus participant observation of working practices and break-time behaviour brought about interesting results about disciplinary cultures. With the refinement of its methodology, this approach could be even more productive. Quantitative methods were found to be effective in large studies of entire groups (such as all first-year students in a particular degree programme).

The third focus of the track was on the professions, i.e. the working conditions in those professions emerging from the above subjects. How do women’s careers develop, what obstacles do they encounter, what role does self-employment play in

such fields as medicine and engineering, how are career and family reconciled? It appears for instance that men with an engineering degree are much more likely to start their own business than are women, since men confidently see themselves as active players in the field (*Laura Swischowski*, UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology, Bradford, UK). Women, on the other hand, tend to view professional independence as an attractive model since it seems to offer a greater degree of flexibility than other forms of employment, but are less likely to perceive themselves as capable of taking this step. Stereotypical practices and working styles are evident in both the life sciences (i.e. biotechnology and genetic engineering) (*Kendra Briken*, Johann Wolfgang Goethe University Frankfurt/Main, Germany) as well as in male-dominated fields such as the automobile industry: endless working hours, for instance, and a cult of availability that is primarily practiced by men, leaving to women, at best, the role of “social lubricant” (*Christine Wächter*, IFZ, Graz, Austria). The differences in the percentage of women and levels of gender equality are greater between university and industry than they are between the different European countries, so that it is the working cultures in these two fields that are evidently the decisive factor (*Anne-Sophie Godfroy-Genin*, École Normale Supérieure de Cachan, France). This also implies that working conditions are becoming more and more similar in the European context. On the other hand, recent crises on the labour market have often been accompanied by a decrease in equal opportunities, since decision makers like to fall back on “proven” strategies in situations of crisis, i.e. a man in the managerial position. The only significant international differences are to be found between Western European and Eastern European, formerly communist or socialist, countries, in which far more women were employed in technical fields. Whereas in Western countries it was more likely to be gender stereotypes that hindered women’s careers, in Eastern Europe it was structural factors (*Clem Herman*, Open University Milton Keynes, UK).

The field of medicine is similar to that of engineering in this regard: while men, including those from the post-Soviet countries, are more likely to aspire to their own practice, women avoid taking risks and lower their sights for the sake of secure working conditions (*Aurelija Novelskaite*, Institute for Social Research, Vilnius, Lithuania). In some countries, such as Taiwan, gender mainstreaming activities have proven successful (*Ling-Fang Cheng*, Kaohsiung Medical University, Taiwan), while in other countries, such as Austria, such measures have not brought about the intended results, making further strategizing necessary (*Claudia Beyer*, Innsbruck Medical University, Austria).

It can be assumed that every discipline shows its own culture of knowledge and that this has effects far beyond the university and plays a significant role as “hidden organiser” in the labour market (*Ellen Kuhlmann*, University of Bremen, Germany). This aspect was further developed by Track B’s keynote speaker, *Nicky Le Feuvre* (University of Toulouse, France). Since all European universities exhibit an undiminished inequality between the gender groups, regardless of the gender equality measures taken, Le Feuvre argued that effective strategies and measurable results depend on paying greater attention to the mechanisms underlying this phenomenon in their distinct national and professional contexts. The development of a more precise model of feminisation and its introduction into the academic world is also indispensable. The current ideal-typical models and processes such as patriarchy, femininity, virility, etc. vary widely in the degree to which they reproduce, reconfigure, or change the present system.

Links

http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/pdf/she_figures_2006_en.pdf

http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/02-ESIB/0505_ESIB_blackbook.pdf

http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/women/enwise/pdf/enwise-report_3.pdf

<http://www.prometea.info>

<http://www.genus-hamburg.de/>

The results of Track B on Higher Education and Academic Professionalisation in the Disciplines can be summarized as follows:

- Certain **DISCIPLINARY STRUCTURES** cause specific exclusionary mechanisms that require their own particular measures, which can thus vary greatly between the natural sciences, engineering, and medicine. These processes depend on paradigms inherent in the particular disciplines, such as the (asserted) objectivity of the natural sciences or the reflexivity of the social sciences. Differences in the treatment of gender issues are furthermore linked to the degree of formalization in the discipline, which is also reflected in its social environment.
- There are **CURRICULAR OBSTACLES** that have a particularly detrimental effect on female students. A highly theoretical and maths-focused curriculum scares off female students far more than their male counterparts, since the former are drawn more toward practical and application-oriented material.
- On the labour market, **INSECURE STRUCTURES** make up the greatest obstacle, since women tend to aspire to more secure, but less ambitious employment situations than men and are far less likely to establish their own companies. Furthermore, in an unstable labour market, male applicants are preferred to female ones because the former are seen as “safer.” Thus women are more likely to be found in administration and the civil service than in research or freelancing.

There are several reasons to be hopeful: for one, it may be that, ultimately, numbers do matter – that at some point “critical mass” will be reached and the system will begin to change. For another, an increasing number of female role models may slowly but surely change the stereotypes and lead to a transformation of consciousness among the various academic cultures. In general, however, what is required are strategies towards gender equality specific to the various disciplines that also take into consideration the socio-cultural differences between countries.

RESPONSIBLE FOR TRACK B:
BIRGIT BLÄTTEL-MINK, CAROLINE KRAMER, ANINA MISCHAU

In addition to overall quality, adequate financing, and competent staff, the success of gender equality programmes essentially depends on institutional support and administrative commitment.

This track was concerned with the entire spectrum of gender equality programmes in higher education. Topics ranged from individual projects focusing on specific issues such as mentoring or preparing women for leadership positions to programmes that apply to universities as a whole. Comparative studies on the national and international level as well as evaluations of gender equality programmes were also included.

Keynote speaker *Wanda Ward* from the National Science Foundation (NSF) in the United States introduced the Foundation's ADVANCE programme for the improvement of the status of women in the sciences, with a particular focus on the natural sciences and engineering. While the NSF also funds women as individuals, the ADVANCE programme subsidizes new programmes aimed at the institutional transformation of universities as a whole. Ward conveyed the NSF's interest in an international exchange with institutions in other countries. The conference provided the opportunity for making contact with representatives of organizations like the German Research Foundation (DFG).

The presentations in this track were divided into the following thematic blocks:

- Mentoring programmes
- Gender mainstreaming in higher education
- Evaluation of gender equality programmes
- Gender equality in the context of organizational change
- Programmes aimed at preparing women for leadership positions

The panel on mentoring was prepared by a group of German and Swiss academics with a long history of cooperation. There were a number of papers on the components and implementation conditions necessary for mentoring programmes to be successful. *Ursula Meyerhofer* (University of Zurich, Switzerland) and *Astrid Franzke* (Hildesheim University, Germany) gave complimentary presentations on Swiss programmes and projects in Lower Saxony that were funded by national equal opportunity programmes. The same was true for *Carmen Leicht-Scholten* (RWTH Aachen, Germany), who gave a presentation on programmes at different universities and in different speciality fields in North-Rhine Westphalia. *Helene Fügler* (University of Fribourg, Switzerland), representing the EU-funded project EUMENT-net, a cooperation between university mentoring projects in a number of European countries (Austria, Germany, Switzerland, and Bulgaria), compared the conditions for successful implementation of these projects in the participating institutions. Fügler argued that the acceptance and success of these programmes depends on their institutional integration, on a support culture sympathetic to the significance of such forms of assistance – which cannot be taken for granted in all countries the way it can for those with a longer history of mentoring programmes –, on the necessary infrastructure, and of course on sufficient funding.

An interesting finding was that women from different fields responded positively to different kinds of programmes: according to these reports, women in the hu-

manities prefer the most common kind of face-to-face mentoring, while engineers also respond positively to group-mentoring situations. Women in the medical field were particularly enthusiastic about seminars, while the networking aspect was very important to social scientists. The German programmes were aimed exclusively at women, while some of the Swiss programmes targeted both sexes under the guise of “human development” – even here, however, it was women in particular who profited.

The next panel addressed gender mainstreaming in higher education. [Hildegard Macha](#), [Susanne Gruber](#) and [Quirin Bauer](#) (Augsburg University, Germany) presented a study that was then still in progress on the implementation of gender mainstreaming, the resources made available for it, and the relationship to previous gender equality programmes at fifteen German universities.

[Angelika Paseka](#) (University of Education, Vienna, Austria) reported on a gender-mainstreaming project at all Austrian teacher-training institutes, demonstrating that gender mainstreaming cannot be successful without appropriate implementation conditions. The project in question failed because there was no serious support from the leadership, no clearly defined common goals, nor were the necessary structures and resources made available. [Louise Morley](#) (Sussex University, UK) presented a comparative international analysis. She addressed gender mainstreaming in the context of development aid and the role of the 1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing in integrating gender mainstreaming into national and international programmes. So far, more than one hundred countries have incorporated gender mainstreaming into their official policies, although it is sometimes a case of superficial adaptation more in the spirit of satisfying the requirements of international donors than a true commitment to the issue. Morley also analysed the relationship between the women’s movement and “state feminism” in this context.

In the next panel, [Andrea Löther](#) (CEWS, Bonn, Germany) and [Elisabeth Maurer](#) (University of Zurich, Switzerland) used their experiences as evaluator and evaluatee, respectively, to develop specific standards for the evaluation of gender equality programmes and institutions aimed at the advancement of women. This is all the more important in that, in the German-speaking countries at least, there are very few independent evaluations of gender equality programmes or of institutions for the advancement of women, and evaluations have tended to be conducted by the same institutions responsible for carrying out the programmes in question. In other parts of the world, such as Australia, evaluations of gender equality programmes are more common. In the same panel, [Tineke Willemsen](#) of the National Network of Female Professors in the Netherlands gave a survey of the instruments for achieving gender equality employed by Dutch universities, and [Angel Kwolek-Folland](#) (University of Florida, USA) and [Terry Morehead Dworkin](#) (Indiana University, USA) reported on successful programmes for the increase of the percentage of women in the natural and technical sciences in the United States (at the University of Florida, the University of Michigan, and Indiana University) and presented the recommendations made by the National Science Foundation (NSF).

In the panel on gender equality policies in the context of organizational change, [Mary Ann Danowitz Sagaria](#) (University of Denver, USA; currently in Vienna, Austria) presented a comparative study on gender equality programmes in the United States and

the EU, which she recently published as a book with contributions by researchers from Austria, Finland, Germany, and the UK. Half of the twelve case studies address national policies and contexts while the other six explore and analyse gender equality at individual universities in the same national contexts. A significant difference Sagaria found between the United States and the EU countries is that the latter in recent years have been focusing on gender mainstreaming, while in the United States gender equality programmes are more strongly integrated into an overarching approach to diversity. *Gladys Brown's* (University of Maryland, USA) presentation in the next panel confirmed this for the United States. *Jane Wilkinson* (Charles Sturt University, Australia) reported on a qualitative case study she conducted at four Australian "enterprise universities," whose structures are dictated largely by economic considerations. Wilkinson interviewed one woman in a leadership position at each university, and analysed how the different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds of these women (middle versus working class, European versus Aboriginal descent) enabled them to use their positions at these institutions for their own purposes. In Australia the percentage of female vice chancellors is, at 23 per cent, not only far greater than in Germany, but also significantly higher than the percentage of female professors in Australia (12-15 per cent). Finally, Silke Ernst (Göttingen, Germany) reported on the successful integration of gender considerations in the University of Göttingen's submission to the recently launched German "Excellence Competition" (Exzellenzinitiative) for a new allocation of state research funding at German universities. The fact that participant organisations in this competition were also asked to show evidence of gender-equality measures taken at their institutions and that the international referees were particularly concerned on this point had a positive effect on the importance given to gender equality issues by university administrators not only in Göttingen.

The last section focused on women in and being prepared for leadership positions. *Gladys Brown* (University of Maryland, USA) presented a comparative study of eight American institutions (ranging from top universities to a community college), whose aim it was to identify what role the administration plays in the success of these institutions in the areas of gender equality and diversity. She found that the decisive factors were the administrations' whole-hearted commitment to gender equality and diversity, their view that these issues are part of excellence, and their communication of this both within and outside of the institution. Good programmes, sufficient funding, and an overall transformation of the institutional cultural climate are also important. Other contributions in this track, such as the one by *Stefan Larsson* and *Maj-Brit Lindberg* (University of Umea, Sweden), presented programmes preparing women for leadership positions; *Rebecca Nestor* and *Judith Secker* (University of Oxford, UK) and *Lyn Browning* (University of South Australia) presented evaluations of such programmes. One of the goals of these programmes is to promote career advancement to higher positions in the respective country's personnel structure, making them comparable to German programmes aimed at helping women apply successfully for professorships. Another goal is to increase motivation for participation in important committees and to prepare women for taking on leadership functions, from chairing a department to presiding over a university.

The following recommendations for gender equality programmes can be made based on the findings of Track C:

- Crucial for the success of gender equality initiatives is **STRONG COMMITMENT AND SUPPORT FROM UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP**, that the administration understands gender equality and diversity as being part of excellence, and that it communicates and signals this view both within and outside of the institution. In the United States this is expressed in demands for “strong top-down leadership”, not only from top management but also from trustees, advisory board members, deans, and department chairs.
- The university management is responsible for **TRANSFORMING THE INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE AND CULTURE** so that targeted recruitment, retainment, and promotion of women are goals that are seriously pursued and have adequate instruments at their disposal.
- These **INSTRUMENTS** include:
 - the inclusion of gender equality issues and goals in key strategic documents, such as development plans,
 - the development of **INCENTIVE PROGRAMMES**,
 - the **TARGETED RECRUITMENT OF WOMEN** for particular positions,
 - the **AVOIDANCE OF TOO MUCH SPECIFICITY IN JOB DESCRIPTIONS** for professors,
 - the consideration of successes in the promotion of gender equality when distributing resources,
 - the monitoring of results,
 - **GENDER AND DIVERSITY AWARENESS TRAINING FOR GATE-KEEPERS**: the requirement for deans and department and search committee chairs to participate in leadership workshops that foster competence in gender and diversity issues and promote sensitivity to gender bias in the definition and application of qualitative evaluation criteria.
- **NATIONAL RESEARCH-FUNDING BODIES MUST DEMONSTRATE THAT GENDER EQUALITY IS IMPORTANT TO THEM**, as the National Science Foundation in the United States or the Swedish Research Council have done, for example. Convincing gender equality plans should be a criterion for awarding research funding. The fact that the “Excellence Competition” that took place among German universities between 2005 and 2007 required the participating institutions to give convincing evidence of gender equality measures and that the international referees were particularly concerned on this point had a positive effect on the importance given to gender equality by university administrators.
- **WELL-FUNDED PROGRAMMES** aimed at the **INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION OF UNIVERSITIES AS A WHOLE** have a positive effect on the gender-equality climate. The **ADVANCE** programme of the National Science Foundation (NSF) in the United States is an example of this.
- The **SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF GENDER-EQUALITY PROGRAMMES** in universities depends upon a) strong support from the administration up to the highest management levels, b) a definition of common goals, c) the necessary infrastructure, and d) sufficient resources.

- PROGRAMMES EXPLICITLY DESIGNED TO PREPARE WOMEN FOR LEADERSHIP POSITIONS have had positive results in different countries, such as the United States, Australia, the UK, and Sweden. These programmes focus on career advancement in systems that allow for promotion within the same university. They also focus on strengthening the participants' motivation and interest and preparing them for taking on real leadership responsibilities, from chairing a department to applying for positions in the university administration.
- Important factors for the acceptance and success of MENTORING PROGRAMMES are institutional integration, a support culture sympathetic to the significance of such forms of assistance, the necessary infrastructure, and of course sufficient funding.
- While there have been many positive experiences of bringing women from different disciplines together in the same mentoring programme, it is also important to take into consideration the different responses to the various elements of these programmes (face-to-face mentoring, peer mentoring, seminars, networking) from academics in different fields.
- When EVALUATING GENDER EQUALITY PROGRAMMES AND GENDER EQUITY OFFICES, the following should be taken into account:
 - knowledge of the methods of evaluation and the corresponding standards of quality,
 - transparency of the goals and purpose of the evaluation,
 - the criteria for the evaluation of the institutions and programmes corresponding to the goals of these programmes and institutions,
 - the inclusion of gender equity and equal opportunities officers at the institutions being evaluated ,
 - the familiarity of the evaluators with the responsibilities and objectives of the programmes they evaluate,
 - the involvement of the evaluated institutions in selecting the evaluators,
 - the clear identification beforehand of the addressees of the evaluation. This includes identifying who is responsible for implementing any recommendations.
 - case studies, which can play an important role in the analysis of hidden gender structures.
- A successful GENDER EQUALITY POLICY requires that ALL LEVELS AND PARTS OF AN INSTITUTION can be mobilized and motivated to work together to achieve real change. This calls for the support of the university leadership on all management levels, good gender equality programmes with action plans for the support and promotion of women, sufficient funding of these programmes, the adaptation of the programmes to the specific conditions of the institution, the adaptation of the institutional structures to the requirements of gender equality, as well as an overall transformation of the cultural climate of the institution.
- Finally, DIVERSITY AND INTERSECTIONALITY issues must play a greater role in the higher education gender equality agenda than has been the case thus far in many European countries.

Links

<http://www.nsf.gov/>

RESPONSIBLE FOR TRACK C:

MARIANNE KRISZIO, LIISA HUSU, AND HEIDI DEGETHOFF DE CAMPOS

Track D: More or Less Gender?

The Challenges of the Bologna Process

In order to ensure gender equality throughout the Bologna process, adequate measures must be taken on the levels of course organisation and content as well as advisement.

The restructuring of national education systems in the course of the creation of a European Higher Education Area, in which over forty countries are currently involved, poses one of the greatest challenges to the research and higher education system. The conference was an opportunity to take stock of the current situations in the various European countries. What consequences does the Bologna process have for gender equality in research and higher education on the national and European level? What measures are necessary in order to make the Bologna process gender-equitable? One of the main findings of our exchange was that there is a contradiction between national and international declarations on gender equality in the Bologna process and actual practice. The principle of gender mainstreaming far too often resembles a “toothless paper tiger,” and there is a need for a change in practice. This was the starting point of the conference.

In her talk “Bologna and Gender – a Chance for Innovative Institutional Development?” keynote speaker *Ada Pellert* (Donau University Krems, Austria) referred to the structural reform as a core challenge of higher education development and insisted that a modernization of universities would fail without a serious and constructive treatment of the gender issue. Pellert pointed out that structural academic reform and equal opportunity are both ‘orphan’ issues. Nevertheless, she argued, linking these two neglected challenges of higher education reform is innovative for the following reasons:

- As “latecomers” in the university system, women have accumulated institutional knowledge urgently needed in the “managerial revolution” in higher education.
- Academic reform needs the perspective of women’s and gender studies on the level of content.

This last point – that the Bologna process depends on women’s and gender studies for the renewal of degree programmes – was made by several other speakers as well.

This combination seems to be particularly successful in Spain. *Capitolina Diaz* (Ministry for Education and Science, Madrid, Spain) reported on initiatives of the Science Ministry such as a conference with over two hundred gender studies instructors and the adoption of a bill that states: “The curricula of the university degrees must take [into] account that the instruction of any professional activity must be realized from the value of the fundamental principles of equity between men and women. For that reason, it must be included in the curriculum of the degrees in which it is appropriate, subjects [...] on equity between men and women.” *Amparo Ramos* (University of Valencia, Spain) also demonstrated with her presentation of thirteen masters degree programmes at Spanish universities that the Bologna process can be used to implement gender studies curricula and to create independent gender studies degree programmes.

Ruth Becker (University of Dortmund, Germany) made it clear that integrating gender studies into curricula essentially depends on the balance of power at the univer-

sity in question. She pointed to three different and contradictory tendencies that can be observed in Germany today:

1. The restructuring of degree programmes made an official integration of gender studies in the curricula possible for the first time. (Strengthening of gender studies)
2. The restructuring did not change anything. (In most cases this means that gender studies were included neither before nor after the reform.)
3. Gender studies are seen as “not belonging to the core canon” and are forced out in the process of restructuring due to a very strict organisation of courses.

Becker also argued that it is possible to integrate gender issues into all degree programmes, since, in addition to a number of issues specific to women’s and gender studies, there are several problems and topics that are relevant to all disciplines. These include professional aspects of the discipline (history, profession, job market), critiques of the discipline (gender bias, biography, language), and aspects relating to the production and use of the discipline’s findings.

The Leuphana University Lüneburg, Germany, provides an example of a particularly comprehensive approach to the implementation of gender and diversity competence in the context of the Bologna process. *Bettina Jansen-Schulz* (Lüneburg) introduced this approach and its five levels: Academic Action Fields, Gender-Diversity Competence, Integrative Gendering, Strategies, and Gender Training. As regards the Bologna process, this means shaping the reform in such a way that forms and structures of instruction appeal equally to students of both sexes, understanding gender issues as an integral component of research and teaching, and making innovative forms of instruction and learning as well as key qualifications into integral components of university education.

Sabine Mader (University of Bremen, Germany) pointed out several critical aspects of the Bologna process such as the decreasing of degree programme timeframes, which will have a negative effect on work-life balance and especially on the reconciliation of motherhood and university studies. The new Bachelor/Master degree programmes are less flexible in terms of time than were the “Diplom” programmes they replaced in Germany, for instance. Mader anticipates that as a result of graded courses of study, women will feel more pressure to make their careers earlier, more quickly, and without interruptions. She suggested that new, quality advisement structures need to be put in place at universities that offer gender-equitable course guidance as well as life planning to (female) students.

There was universal agreement that the Bologna process should be conducted – and thus also evaluated – in a gender-equitable way, but how to ensure that this is the case remained an open question. *Christa Sonderegger* (University of Basel, Switzerland) presented the Swiss indicator model with its three components: reporting, monitoring, and support. She used the examples of workload strain and the transition from BA to MA to Ph.D. to emphasize that when quantitative gender differences become apparent, they should be analysed and remedied with appropriate measures.

An essential outcome of the talks in this track and of the international exchange at the conference was the observation that there is a flagrant contradiction between

Links

www.gender-in-gestufte-studiengaenge.de
www.gender-curricula.eu
www.uni-lueneburg.de/genderkompetenz

official statements about the Bologna process and the actual application of the principle of gender mainstreaming, and that it is time to insist on the realization of the official declarations on the European, national, and regional levels. It also became clear, however, that an active gearing of the Bologna process toward gender mainstreaming can contribute to gender equality in studying and teaching and thus to a modernization of higher education and research.

On the level of higher education, it is possible to articulate very precise criteria for gender equality.

Gender equality in a degree programme has to do with

- ACCESS to the course of study, including factors such as the attractiveness of the subject, admissions procedure, and fees,
- FEASIBILITY of completing the course in the required amount of time; the time-frame of the course,
- the RECONCILIATION of studies, family, and gainful employment,
- ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION: teaching, supervision, advisement, and mentoring,
- TRANSITION from BA to MA and into a profession,
- the INTEGRATION of women's and gender studies.

Institutions of higher education require a plan for how they will structure the Bologna process in a gender-equitable way, which must include:

- a description of the CRITERIA with which "gender equality" will be measured.
- an ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN for how these criteria will be enforced in the development of degree programmes in the departments and faculties.
- a plan to inform, advise, and further educate everyone involved in the development, accreditation, and implementation of degree programmes (FOSTERING GENDER-COMPETENCE).
- a plan for securing the necessary SPECIALIST COMPETENCIES (gender studies).
- a plan for effective QUALITY CONTROL (evaluation, monitoring, controlling).

Significantly, the exchange that took place in the Bologna-process track went beyond a (sober) assessment of the current situation. The conference gave participants the opportunity to learn about a number of innovative strategies, so that we may assume that beyond being a platform for new contacts, it will have a long-term effect as an inspiration for new ideas and thus itself be a contribution to a gender-equitable application of the Bologna process.

RESPONSIBLE FOR TRACK D:

BEATE KORTENDIEK, GABRIELE JÄHNERT, AND ANDREA D. BÜHRMANN

Regionally specific studies on the university environment that make broad and critical use of the work-life-balance concept are necessary to achieve this goal in the university setting.

The Work-Life Balance in Higher Education work group discussed studies that examine the reconciliation of an academic career and other areas of life. There was also a presentation of best-practice models for an improved work-life balance.

Inken Lind (CEWS, Bonn, Germany) began her talk by observing that the marginalisation of women in the academic world and work-life balance problems should be distinguished from each other and treated separately. She noted that there is a tendency particularly in German-speaking countries to explain the under-representation of women in the academy primarily by pointing out problems in the reconciliation of family and career. The main part of Lind's talk consisted of the presentation of quantitative and qualitative studies on parenting and academia, making it clear that there is still a lack of reliable statistical data and, in particular, comparative data and studies on this issue. Initial results show that there are vast differences in childlessness and number of children among academics in various European countries. The studies give important indications of the different conditions and models of the reconciliation of family and academic career, which is significant for the integration of women in teaching and research. German studies on academics in the early stages of their careers show that traditional models of partnership and family dominate, whereby a relevant minority of young researchers contest these models. Male academics are increasingly expressing the need for better conditions for the reconciliation of familial duties and an academic career.

Organizational factors influencing the decision for or against children, the interaction between individual and structural factors, as well as structural aspects that handicap the balance between parenthood and research will be analysed in a new project by the Center of Excellence Women and Science CEWS (see www.bawie.de). In the discussion following the talk there was an emphasis on the importance of including women and men both in the studies and programmes.

Simonetta Manfredi (Oxford Brookes University, UK) and *Liz Doherty* (Sheffield Hallam University, UK) addressed the conditions for good practices in the improvement of work-life balance in higher education. A study accompanying a project at Oxford Brookes University (2003-2004) on the work-life balance of the university's academic and administrative staff showed that mid-level management – deans and department heads – play an important role in the improvement of work-life balance. A follow-up project aimed to identify management styles that promote work-life balance and the use of flexible working hours. The study showed that a manager's values and a person-oriented leadership style are conducive to good work-life-balance conditions. Manfredi and Doherty concluded by calling for management training and for university administrations' support of beneficial leadership styles.

In the talks and discussions the following issues and challenges emerged as important for future efforts:

- A BROAD UNDERSTANDING of work-life balance is necessary. It should not be reduced to reconciliation between child-care duties and an academic career.

Links

The research project “Balancing Academia and Parenthood”: <http://www.bawie.de>

Oxford Brookes University Work-Life Balance Action Plan: http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/hr/eod/wlb/action_plan.html

ETH Zurich Dual Career Advice: <http://www.dca.ethz.ch/>

- There was frequent reference to the problem in academia of “MOBILITY” as a career requirement and the resulting difficulties for couples. It also became clear, however, that the dual-career dilemma is different for research universities such as the ETH Zurich than for teaching-oriented and regional institutions.

The term work-life balance was itself seen to be problematic, as it presupposes a dichotomy between (gainful) work and (private) life contradicted by feminist views on, for instance, reproductive work.

Finally, the fact that young male academics are increasingly demanding a better reconciliation of work and private life and familial duties is seen as an important challenge but also a promising opportunity.

COORDINATOR OF THE WORK GROUP:
ANDREA LÖTHER