



Dear colleagues,
dear staff,
dear students

I would like to begin this first newsletter of my period in office as President of your University with my best wishes for the year ahead of us, our first together.

Together we will have to work in the next six months on the renewal application for the Institutional Strategy in the second round of the Excellence Initiative. Thanks to my visits to all faculties, I have been able to gain a very good insight into the different institutions and had the pleasure of meeting many individuals. I also received a lot of support from our partners in the Max Planck Institutes, and my work in the Göttingen Research Council has begun very constructively. Likewise, my initial contacts with representatives in politics and economics have shown me that Göttingen really does offer space for education and research and harbours a high potential for even better local partnerships.

At my inauguration I was particularly pleased with Prime Minister David McAllister's confirmation of the continued support our University will enjoy in future. And a first meeting of the rectors of Lower Saxony with the Minister for Science and Culture Prof. Johanna Wanka has shown me that in her we have a competent science minister who, with a high level of objectivity and transparency, makes science policy fully in keeping with the universities' interests.

Good prospects for retaining our Excellence status

These encounters give me confidence that we will be successful in maintaining our University's Excellence status. The joint projects approved and positively assessed in recent weeks, such as the two specialist Collaborative Research Centres of *Cellular Mechanisms of Sensory Processing und Collective Behaviour of Soft and Biological Matter* as well as the two DFG Research Training Groups *Metal Sites in Biomolecules* and *Transformation of Global Agri-Food Systems* have also contributed to this. The Medical Centre is an important part of the University and I was delighted with the foundation of the Heart Research Centre Göttingen last year, which in cooperation

9th of February 2011

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with three Max-Planck-Institutes and the German Primate Centre is also one of the locations pinpointed in the preliminary selection for a health centre of the BMBF. In connection with the Institutional Strategy it is furthermore very positive that the joint project of the Göttingen Research Campus *Centre for Molecular Physiology of the Brain (CMPB)* based at the Medical Centre has moved into the third funding phase.

To prepare the continuation of the Institutional Strategy we will collect the ideas of all the faculties, research associations and the administration in an initial gathering on the 11th and 12th of February 2011. The concept created on this basis will then be discussed again with the responsible partners of our University in a second meeting in May before being finalised in the summer. We will also include innovative teaching approaches in the concept and under the catchword »tradition« take into consideration the many academic collections. Additionally, the support of young scientists should not only be optimised by attracting high-calibre junior scientists in the sense of Brain Gain, but we also want to further improve the opportunities for academics in Göttingen itself.



Programmes for junior scientists and students

On a related note I am delighted about the recent commencement of a qualification programme for junior scientists (<http://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/192401.html>) as well as a mentoring programme for doctoral and post-doctoral students (<http://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/190013.html>), and that Vice President Wolfgang Lücke is working together with the students on several important initiatives in the area of teaching. One of these is the funding application for the improvement of study conditions and quality in teaching, with which we will hopefully again receive financial support to improve the teaching provision. I am confident that on the basis of such projects, and thanks to our concepts for the improvement of the curricula of the bachelor and master courses, we will also be able to increase the students' essential educational freedom in the next semester.

A particular challenge for our University is sure to be the increase in applications for University places as a result of the double cohort of school leavers combined with the simultaneous suspension of conscription. I am confident, though, that with the support of the State and through joint effort as well as mutual understanding we will be up to it. In this context we have to hope that the new admissions system for courses with restricted admissions does not create additional problems for us.

Open to changes

I have been particularly delighted with the positive cooperation within the Presidential Board and the openness to changes. For instance, we have rearranged the areas of responsibility of the individual Presidential Board members and compiled them in the revised organisational chart

(<http://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/918.html>). In this respect I would

just like to mention that I have taken responsibility for the equal opportunities division myself as this is a topic of particular importance to me. Also, I am not looking after a faculty but am guiding the inter-faculty institutions, during the course of which I am initially aiming to gain an overview of the existing centres and graduate schools. Additionally, the Presidential Board has decided that the coordination for joint research projects will remain in the hands of project leaders in the future with additional support avail-

able from the administration where needed. The project leaders will be comprehensively informed of the details shortly.

During my first weeks in office I was assailed by many issues and received many queries and suggestions. I am looking forward to dealing with them all, but I would also request understanding for the fact that not everything can be done at once.

I am looking forward to my time at the University of Göttingen and am hoping for successful collaboration with all groups of the University.

There is lots to do! Let us tackle the tasks ahead of us together. This requires a coordinated vision and a high level of engagement, but also thoughtfulness, the ability to accept criticism and mutual tolerance. I am confident that our University and the Research Campus Göttingen provide all the prerequisites for success in the second programme phase of the Excellence Initiative.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Ulrike Beisiegel'.

Prof. Dr. Ulrike Beisiegel

President