

CONFERENCE THEME

Gendered careers and disciplinary cultures in science and technology

Susanne ACHTERBERG and Jennifer DAHMEN
University of Wuppertal, Germany
achterberg@wiwi.uni-wuppertal.de
jdahmen@uni-wuppertal.de

Abstract

How much Gender Equality Policies fits into the university? A case study at a German University

This presentation highlights the current state of perceived gender equality of academic staff members at the University of Wuppertal, a mid-sized German institution of higher education. We will do this by connecting data from two studies, which were carried out separately but their results are strongly linked.

The first study is part of the European project 'GenderTime', which wants to tackle the challenge of a gender equal organization by initializing organizational structural change. Our considerations are based on the results of qualitative focus groups, in which the following issues were discussed: How does the female academic staff perceive their organizational work culture? Are the activities considered as helpful and/or career supporting? Or are informal support mechanisms much more efficient in terms of achieving a scientific career?

The data of a second study was collected in appointment procedures for new professorships. In the period from 2009 to 2012 responses of 350 candidates were collected out of 50 appointment committees. In these interviews members of the Appointment Committee asked the candidates what ideas, experiences and plans they have to bring forward equality between women and men at university. The data was analyzed by using the method of circular deconstruction.

The analysis shows that gender inequality as a topic and as well as equality policy as a strategy to overcome inequality has arrived in higher education, but also shows clearly its limitations.