

## *Making Teaching Count – Der Lehre Gewicht geben*

### **Results of the first ID-E Berlin Conference, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2007**

1. **Experiences in Australia, Canada, the UK and the USA demonstrate that it is possible to make excellent teaching count in its own right at universities - alongside excellent research** – thanks to a multitude of national, institutional and individual initiatives and efforts. In the countries introduced in this context, the traditional approach was also to place the emphasis on research performance – i.e. for appointments, lobbying for third-party funds or with regard to the reputation of an institution. However, in order to prepare a growing share of young people to successfully pass their university degree, traditional views had to be challenged. In addition, the introduction of tuition fees has led to higher expectations towards universities among the students. **“Teaching has to be put on the agenda and the quality of teaching needs to be discussed in public”** – experts at the conference recommended unanimously.
2. **All countries have invested considerable funds to improve teaching:** In the UK alone, over £650 million were allocated through the “Teaching Quality and enhancement Fund“ and the programme “Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning“ between 1999 and 2005. In all countries, new funds were allocated to institutional measures – i.e. supporting the foundation of “Centres for University Didactics“ or introducing individual rankings to identify outstanding university teachers - but also to research programmes in university didactics.
3. Universities need to develop **their own culture of teaching and learning** and it would be advisable for them to incorporate a formal strategy for university didactics at the institutional level. Individual efforts are important, yet cannot lead to sustainable changes if they remain in isolation.
4. **Teaching itself has to count as part of the portfolio of university academic staff** – for the evaluation of their performance and not least for appointments. While working towards their doctorate, doctoral candidates ought to receive systematic advice on how to teach academic research.
5. In the long run, it does not suffice to set and monitor minimum quality standards. **Much rather, universities need to establish a culture of continuous improvement and ongoing efforts in the field of teaching.** Regular investments are necessary to develop suitable instruments and to build up the required competencies.
6. In terms of the **evaluation of teaching staff**, a wide range of methods ought to be implemented - from self-evaluation to evaluation by students and colleagues, evaluation of developed teaching materials, etc. In addition, evaluation should not stop at individual performance, but also monitor whether individuals show charisma and practise leadership within the institution for the benefit of improved teaching.
7. **Carefully nuanced approaches are required to improve teaching at universities.** Quality teaching to prepare for the Bachelor’s and the Master’s

degrees or for doctorates varies significantly. Thus, university didactics have to gain in importance and count more as a field of research in its own right in the future.

8. All efforts to improve teaching have to focus on the **learning success and learning experience** of the students. This results-oriented approach ought to be reflected in the respective evaluation instruments.