

## **EAIR**

### **Track 5: Visions, Missions and Values**

#### **Track Chair:**

Timo Aarrevaara • University of Helsinki, Finland

The **visions** of higher education institutions **are in** a state of **change** because the demands on them are changing. Actors in the higher education scene are questioning technology, citizen science, ownership and the operating environment. Higher education institutions have also had to **change their strategies** to increase their legitimacy. The **contemporary missions**, visions and values that create the basis for the academic community and its principles are sometimes **in contradiction with traditional academic values**. They are also constructed as a precursor to building a strategy. The tools for strategies can be fuzzy, as the strategies and academic community's perceptions of higher education institutions are not necessarily in synch.

The aim of the track is to analyse the extent to which institutional strategies are successful; but also to **stimulate discussion of the perspectives of higher education institutions and their engagement in relation to societal and institutional stakeholders. What does higher education stand for?**

- **Why we need visions, missions and values for higher education?**
- How academy's attempts to meet the expectations of different stakeholder groups?
- What is a public perception of higher education institutions?
- **Do changes in missions and visions reflecting changes in the knowledge base?**

## ***Using various missions for positioning***

*The missions of Higher Education Institutes (HEI) are no longer restricted to teaching and research. Furthermore the institutes need a variety of individual visions and missions for positioning in a changing society. The HEI compete for external research funds, outstanding staff and students. In addition, the needs of and requirements from society and the economy changed in the last decade. It can be said that the knowledge society demands for additional effort of HEI. However the single HEI cannot fulfil every mission on the same high level. To stay a well-positioned HEI it could help to concentrate on specialities. These could be within the mission of teaching, of research or of Third Mission. Third Mission, like Technology Transfer, Life-Long-Learning or science communication, can also be used as a performance area for positioning. In this talk the possible areas of performance will be outlined and it will be explained how a HEI can use different performances for positioning. The findings are based on qualitative and quantitative surveys among rectors and professors of German Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS).*

In Germany more than 400 Higher Education Institutes (HEI) exist and the competition for external research funds, outstanding staff and students increases. Apart from this basic situation the needs and requirements from the society and the economy are changing. Globalisation, demographical change and the need for academically qualified professionals are some of the topics the scientific system is facing. Not every single HEI is able to cover every demand coming from society or the economy. The HEI, especially the smaller ones, have to focus on a selection of topics – and on missions. On the one hand, obvious differences in the internal structures and also the external surrounding of the HEI exist and lead to different profiles of the institutions. On the other hand, these challenges foster the readiness to invest in a new HEI strategy, a new mission statement or a new vision of how the university should be positioned in the scientific community as well as in society in general. Therefore profiles are necessary for HEI. Otherwise they have no chance to become visible and competitive in a more and more complex academic market. This background conveys that higher education systems are in a state of change. As pointed out in the track theme: visions, missions and values are necessary for HEI to face this challenge. HEI need a vision for their future and can reach this by concentrating on one mission like research, teaching or the so-called Third Mission. Within these missions they can work out their own profiles and their own emphases.

This necessity is especially important in countries with a large number of HEI such as Germany. Aggravating circumstances in Germany are such that only 30.5 % of the 423 HEI are full- universities. The rest are Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) or specialised institutes like Universities of Arts (Federal Statistical Office, 2014). The number of UAS is tremendously high and therefore they need own visions and individual profiles to become visible outside academia. With a profile based on outlined visions and missions it is possible to be visible as an attractive partner for cooperation with enterprises or as best research institution for a specific topic. While full universities mainly focus on research performance, UAS can use a wider range of profiling instruments. The history of UAS explains why they are more independent from a pure research profile.

UAS have been funded in the 1970s as teaching institutes with a focus on practical education of young academics (Kulicke & Stahlecker, 2004). From 1985 on they were also given a mandate to do research (Kulicke & Stahlecker, 2004). Ever since they cover the two core missions of HEI, teaching and research. In addition to that, activities like life long learning, technology transfer and science communication have also become more important. These activities can be summarized as “Third Mission” of the HEI (E3M-Project, 2012; Görason, Maharajh, & Schmoch, 2009; Laredo, 2007; Benneworth & Zomer, 2011). The German UAS are predestined for this Third Mission (Roessler, Duong, & Hachmeister, 2015). First of all, they are focused on applied research. Secondly, one of the

entrance qualifications needed for a professorship at an UAS is a professional job outside academia for at least three years (Hochschullehrerbund, n.d.). This leads to professors who are well connected with society and business networks and who speak the same language as the professionals – in addition most of them have earned a doctoral degree in academia. Therefore, the professors have got a feeling for the needs and the challenging questions of the society and economy but are also socialised in academia.

The study presented is based on three data sources. On the one hand, 40 qualitative interviews with UAS rectors, UAS professors and experts from the areas of research and Third Mission have been evaluated. The method of the qualitative content analyse (Mayring, 2010) was used to draw a picture of the research and Third Mission situation at German UAS. On the other hand, a quantitative survey among UAS-Professors and UAS rectors was conducted to get a comprehensive insight into the current situation of the visions and missions of the UAS and to answer the following questions in detail:

- Which visions do the German UAS have for their type of HEI?
- Which missions do they accomplish?
- On which topics will the German UAS focus in the future?
- Which obstacles exist at the moment regarding a more intense profile on research or Third Mission?
- How can profiling in research or Third Mission be supported?

The possible profiles of UAS may be divided into three main categories: 1) Research profile, 2) Teaching profile (incl. Life Long learning) and 3) Third Mission profile. This system of classification provides a basis for further analyses and subcategories. Especially the Third Mission profile should be divided into subcategories. Nevertheless, all missions exist at the same time. Teaching-only or research-only UAS do not exist. Neither are there UAS with a Third Mission profile that do not do at least a certain amount of research or teaching. The emphasis of these three missions creates the individual profile and vision of the individual HEI. The results of the analyses show on the one hand that the way to a (new) profile based on all three missions is difficult. On the other hand, the study shows that the Higher Education Institutes use a wide range of foci.

Nevertheless, obstacles emerge on the way to new profiles and to new emphases. The obstacles can be classified into internal and external factors. Internal factors are for instance a too large amount of teaching obligation, the lack of equipment or an administration that is not yet laid-out for missions like technology transfer or EU-research projects. External factors are for example the lack of funding for applied research or legal restrictions. The surveys also give hints and ideas on how to respond to these obstacles. Possibilities are for instance providing central administrative support, third party funding applications, reducing the teaching obligation load for the professors or establishing central institutes for research and Third Mission.

The results show impressively that some UAS have already taken various steps to turn into institutions where research and Third Mission are made possible besides teaching. Their experience is provided in a how-to manual for those HEI which are interesting in turning their own institution to research and Third Mission friendly HEI.

As explained before, it is necessary for HEI to design an own profile. The HEI can work out this profile by highlighting their performances. They can concentrate on at least one out of three missions (research, teaching, Third Mission) and create an own vision of how they want to be seen on these missions.

The study "Using various missions for positioning" closes some lacks in the research about the missions of HEI. It explains the need for profiling and how HEI can deal with this need. To be able to use existing missions for profiling it is necessary for the HEI to answer the following questions:

- What can be my vision?
- Which mission do I need for that vision?
- Which obstacles do occur?
- How can I respond to these obstacles?

The study gives hints on how to answer these questions, because Germany is a good example for how HEI can deal with the changing needs and requirements of the society and economy. In total, more than 400 HEI exist, more than 50% belong to the special type UAS. This type of university is in many ways qualified for differentiated profiles. The UAS are already emphasizing plenty of visions and missions. Their experience can be used by other HEI for the development of own visions and hence for own profiles.

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