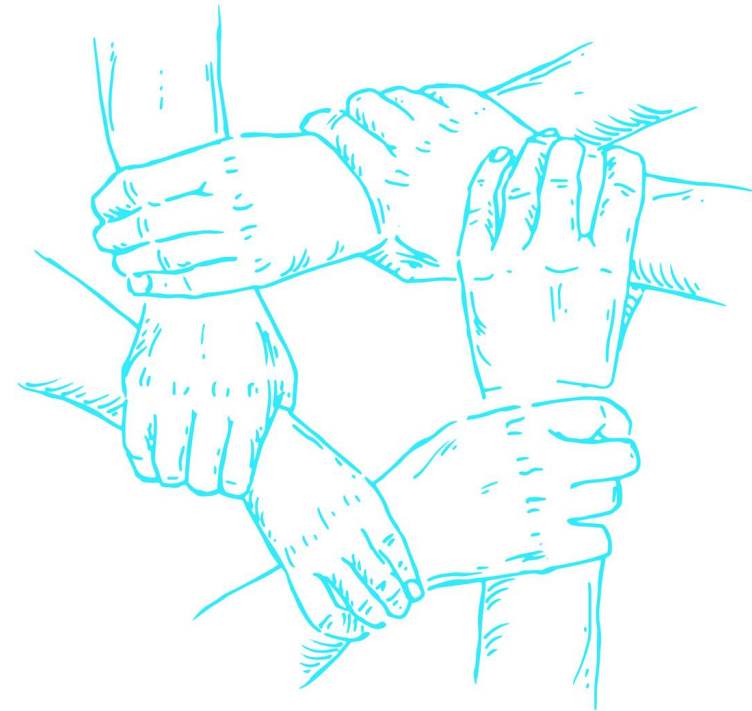


**With, from
and for one another**



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German Association of Communication Professionals in Higher
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Munich, 14. June 2019

Escaping the echo chamber: public communications, community engagement and research and innovation *impact*

About me:

- Director of Communications and Marketing at the University of Konstanz
- Director of the German Association of Communication Professionals in Higher Education
- This association brings all German university directors of communications together at the strategic level
- Regularly appointments to expert committees on the status and future prospects of science communication, e.g. by the Bundestag (German federal parliament; in 2015) and by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (since 2018) and ...
- ... in 2013/2014: German Council of Science and Humanities working group that prepared a position paper on knowledge and technology transfer for the purpose of enhancing German institutional strategies in the field of *impact*.

In Germany: Diverse initiatives to promote science communication and public engagement

- Sharp increase in social and political interest
- Siggener Kreis (annual meeting of science communicators, researchers and journalists)
- Working group “Leitlinien für Wissenschaftskommunikation” (guidelines for science communication) – (German Association of Communications Professionals in Higher Education, science in dialogue with the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), German Council of Science and Humanities (WR), academies ...)
- “For the purpose of advancing communication between science, society and the media” (Leopoldina, acatech and the Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities), parts 1 and 2
- Many initiatives of political parties and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)

Science communication and public engagement at universities

- well-established
- professionalised
- diversified
- Target groups and their communication behaviour are regularly changing
- Variety of channels
- Roles and actors: Communicators, journalists, researchers, citizens/general public
- Overabundance of communication and public engagement “Without target group-oriented, differentiated communication and clear priorities, both the quality and credibility of science communication may be damaged” → need for critical self-reflection, strategies and intelligent task-sharing in light of limited resources

Science communication and public engagement at universities

- The voice of “the media” as an authority that appraises and categorizes was and is becoming weaker.
- The reputation of research can be damaged by scientific misconduct, by economizing and orienting science communication according to measures (eventisation, inappropriate advertising measures).
- International networks are not fully developed.
- Researchers have the opportunity to address the public directly, e.g. through social media channels. Nevertheless, many researchers don't take this direct communication route.

Science communication and public engagement

Values:

- Truthfulness and credibility
- Benefits for society
- Transparency
- Readiness of science to actively engage with society
- Self-criticism and willingness to change
- Independence
- Willingness of all actors to work together

(Siggener Kreis 2013)



Knowledge and technology transfer: self-perception and vision I

- In 2015/2016: transfer audit by the “German Stifterverband” foundation (which provides funding in the sciences and humanities) and the Heinz Nixdorf Stiftung. University created a project group that developed the [University of Konstanz’s self-perception and vision](#).
- The University of Konstanz defines its knowledge and technology transfer as a reciprocal process between science, industry, politics and society.
- Knowledge and technology transfer is categorised into three spheres of activity: [“communication”](#), [“advice”](#) and [“application”](#) (in line with German Council of Science and Humanities)
- Close interrelation between the spheres of activity; here: focus on public engagement and science communication

Knowledge and technology transfer: self-perception and vision II

- Broad spectrum: from diverse channels and measures relating to science communication, to scientific consulting of policy makers, expert evaluation reports as well as creating spin-offs.
- More and more German universities work with this definition and with this three spheres for strengthening their institutions' *impact*
- For us, transfer and strengthening the impact is an integral component of all our performance areas (research and teaching) and not a third mission

First sphere: science communication



- Strive to sustain the public's trust in science
- Taking on social responsibility means first and foremost carrying out a dialogue.
- Various communication formats, including media activities, online dialogue, public forums, exhibits, publications and events at schools.
- societal network that is comprised of partners, staff members, teachers as well as interested parties and information multipliers on the regional, national and international level.
- Example: The [Konstanz Science Forum](#) founded in 2006. One of the University of Konstanz's platforms working at the interface of industry, politics and society. Forum acts as a dialogue partner on various topics related to higher education and research.

Framework conditions I

Competition

Staff members, students, cooperation partners,
Competition and legitimization pressure to acquire public funds,
Research funding and additional funds
high-profile and politically promoted campaigns such as the German
Excellence Strategy

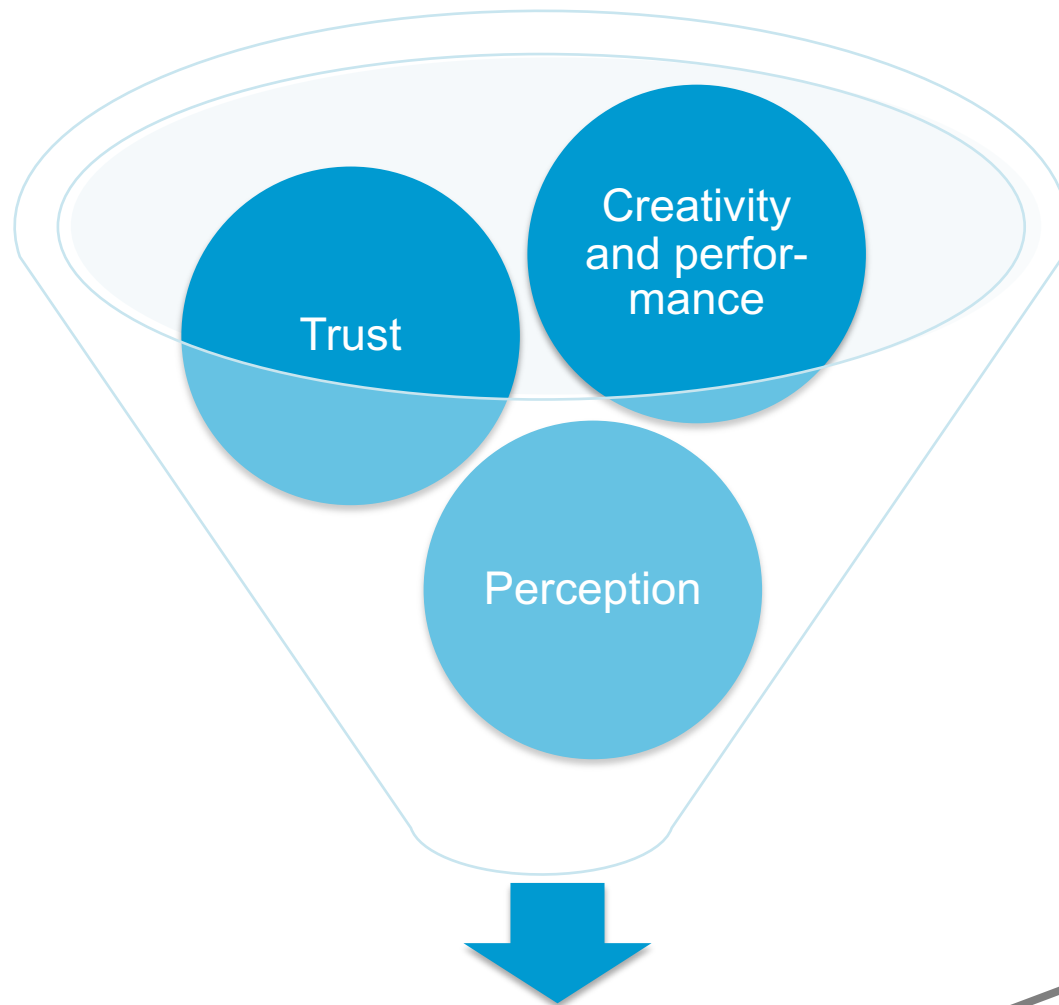
Autonomy

Withdrawal of the state and a gain in autonomy along with the simultaneous
increase of political influence through performance indicators, rankings and
the externally controlled diversification of the higher education landscape

University and society

Universities as spaces in which the boundaries between science and society
can be redrawn
Universities as places for educating future generations who will generate
new knowledge

Framework conditions II



Principles of university
communication and engagement

- build trust
- foster authenticity
- encourage participation

Further Information



uni.kn/societyandbusiness

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