

18 March 2021**Against the backdrop of the pandemic: Ensuring the future viability of studies and teaching**

The experience of the Corona pandemic once again makes it clear that ensuring the future viability of studying and teaching requires a series of political decisions and considerable public investment. In a digital meeting on Tuesday, the Senate of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) named necessary measures to be taken by the Federal Government and the Länder for both the current and the coming legislatures.

HRK President Prof. Dr Peter-André Alt: "The pandemic situation once again demonstrates the great efficiency and willingness of the universities. However, it also reveals long-standing structural deficits in the framework conditions for teaching and learning, which the universities are unable to compensate for on their own, or are unable to do so permanently. The Senate's 10-point paper in this regard will be sent to the federal and state governments in the near future.

With a view to the upcoming elections, we will also examine very critically whether the parties take up these issues and offer credible solutions. The high performance of teaching and the attractiveness of higher education are among the factors that determine Germany's social and economic future."

Among other things, the HRK Senate calls for a federal-state agreement on the **digitisation** of universities. There is a comprehensive need: In addition to the equipment of workplaces and teaching rooms, qualified specialist staff as well as the continuous further and advanced education of all groups of people involved are decisive.

The universities want to gradually expand digital elements to supplement classroom teaching in order to meet the increasing demand. The HRK points out that the associated increased effort must be taken into account in the **work loads** of teaching staff. For **digital examinations** to be available as an option in the future in general and in particular in connection with part-time study, distance learning and international students, clear legal foundations are also required with regard to data protection and data security. The HRK Senate urges that these be created across the board.

Against the backdrop of the federal government's emergency assistance funding to students in the Corona pandemic, which is often considered inadequate, the Senate considers a fundamental reform of the **Bafög**, including an emergency component, to be necessary. The Senate also calls for increased investment in **halls of residence** in view of the sharp drop in the accommodation rate and to ensure high-performance **internet access** in halls of residence as well as at the universities themselves.

Structural obstacles for **international students** have once again become apparent in the pandemic. Among other things, this concerns student health insurance and the issuing of visas. According to the HRK Senate, these obstacles must be removed as a matter of urgency.

The Senate also calls for the necessary funds for the quality-guided creation of new degree programmes for the **health professions**, the essential importance of which has been made particularly clear by the pandemic.

The Senate urges that **copyright** law should ensure that copyright-protected materials can be used for university teaching in the long term, and that the open questions of remuneration should be finally clarified with the collecting societies.

Furthermore, the Senate considers it necessary to fundamentally modernise the **capacity law**, which has been in need of reform for a long time and should no longer impede the qualitative development of teaching.

The Senate calls for the development of viable solutions to reduce the enormous financial backlog in **university construction** and the additional needs caused by climate protection measures and changed room concepts in the course of the restructuring of studies.

To the text of the resolution