

21 October 2015**HRK conference: "A university management culture suited to both men and women"**

University management culture needs change if a high number of talented women are to remain working in research and science. This was the result of a conference entitled "*Gendergerechte Führungskultur*" ("A university management culture suited to both men and women"), which saw the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) invite female leaders of universities and non-university research institutions to Göttingen on Monday and Tuesday.

The proportion of women gaining doctoral degrees, postdoctoral qualifications and working as non-professorial teaching staff significantly increased through specific promotion over the past two decades. Nevertheless 80 percent of professorships are still held by men. Furthermore, the proportion of women in professorships has only increased by an average of one percent per year over the past 15 years.

Professor Dr. Ulrike Beisiegel, HRK Vice-President for Management and Governance, said: "The conference has shown that women in science and research still face structural and cultural disadvantages. In the appointment process, concerns that have nothing to do with the female researcher's work are voiced and selection criteria are geared towards men."

She added that changes in university management culture are necessary in order to effectively overcome these traditional impediments. "Generally speaking, there is a need for systematic preparation for leadership roles in order to professionalise university management," said Professor Dr. Johanna Weber, HRK Vice-President for Medical Institutions and Health Sciences. "Teaching leadership skills to scientists and researchers who have been appointed to management positions must become a matter of course. It is also worth teaching the importance of gender equality, personal diversity and staff development for the success of the individual institution."

Prof. Beisiegel believes that the initial step required to change management culture is to create networking opportunities for female university leaders. "We need to work together to break through the 'glass ceiling' that faces many hopeful female early career researchers and to make it acceptable for women to work in professorship roles."