



UNIVERSITÄT **BONN**



ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE RECTORATE  
**2020**

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## Masthead

### Publisher:

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## INTRODUCTION BY THE RECTOR

”*“You all – members of the administration, the teaching staff and students – have achieved great things in the past year. You succeeded in maintaining teaching, learning and examinations despite the many hurdles involved in establishing an online-only university format. This demanded an enormous effort from you all, not least the members of the technical and administrative staff, who although never prominent on the university stage, prove their worth in such exceptional situations. I should like to extend my heartfelt thanks to you all.”*

Speaking in the name of the University of Bonn, I should like to echo the thanks and praise of Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, expressed in a well-received speech held in April of this year. The success, in which the University of Bonn also shares, in responding to the pandemic and maintaining university operations, is ongoing. I need only think of the digital meetings of the Senate and the University Council; the work of the task forces for teaching, research and operations; the weekly deans' consultations and the months of Rectorate meetings, often with multiple meetings held in a single day; and the many direct meetings between the Rectorate and the managing directors, the central academic and operation units and students, researchers and teachers. The work of many heads and hands behind the scenes ensured that we were able first to establish and then maintain University operations amidst the most challenging and changing of circumstances.

This applies especially to the research conducted this year at the University of Bonn. Despite the pandemic, the pages of this report list the numerous successes of the researchers at work in our seven faculties, six Clusters of Excellence and six Transdisciplinary Research Areas, in-

cluding a new Collaborative Research Center. The consistent level of excellence achieved is reflected in our performance in the latest edition of the leading Shanghai-Ranking: Bonn achieved 4th place in Germany and 87th place in the world.

At no point in the last year did anyone doubt that good teaching, as well as a strong University community in general, thrive on personal contact and discussion. The past year has taught us however, that new formats of direct digital communication represent successful and expedient methods with which to supplement existing formats. This was reflected by the findings of a survey of more than 5,000 students conducted by the Center for Evaluation and Methodology. A large majority of respondents recognize the opportunities and benefits presented by digital solutions. Just one example: The welcome event for first-semester students conducted online for the first time in 2020, involved more participants than ever before! The digital Unifest 2020 and the opening ceremony of the academic year – live-streamed for the first time ever – incorporated a number of innovative elements, which in view of the challenges involved, provided a suitable substitute for the real thing.

Although the pandemic effectively brought international mobility to a stop, the work conducted with our international partners continued unhindered, a success not least due to the quality and reliability of our global cooperation, among others with our strategic partners. One especially good example of this was the European University of Brain and Technology – NeurotechEU, which started its work last year.

The values of equal opportunity and diversity are fundamental to the University of Bonn, and we are committed to strengthening their cause. To this end, we have established a new central unit working in this area and were able to

increase the number of female professors. We have also taken action to advance progress in the digitalization of research, teaching and university operations under the leadership of our new Digital Science Center, Bonn (DiCe). The same applies to important knowledge transfer activities and our transfer center enaCom, which has improved the networking of academia with industry and wider society. The year past also saw the University of Bonn make great strides in the field of sustainability, an issue of relevance to nearly every area of our operations. To this end, the University of Bonn moved to establish a new Vice Rectorate dedicated to this area.

The successes outlined in this report do not constitute an end point, but are intended to provide the foundation for sustained future successes in the form of excellent research and innovative teaching. It is our stated aim to continue the development of the University of Bonn as a global university fit for the 21st century. 2020 saw us make valuable steps towards realizing this aim.

**Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Michael Hoch**  
Rector



# THE UNIVERSITY



## COMING TOGETHER DURING THE PANDEMIC

Unforeseen and perhaps unforeseeable, a new virus suddenly spread throughout the world within the first weeks of 2020. As the number of cases and deaths increased, the World Health Organization announced the emergence of a pandemic on March 11, 2020, and its impact was soon felt on academic life at the University of Bonn. It is still with us at the time of publication.

### An immense effort of coordination

The first reaction of the state and local governments was to reduce public life to a minimum. The University of Bonn entered the first ever lockdown in its history. Realizing the enormity of the challenge presented to continued academic operations, the university management responded by establishing a number of task forces dedicated to translating new legal ordinances issued by government into practical action, manifested in countless Rectorate's resolutions, circulars and practical measures. After establishing a minimal level of operation at the start of the crisis, the University moved step by step into safe operations made by the end of May.

Faced with a mammoth task of coordinating the University response to the crisis, the Rectorate, faculties, administration, groups and bodies held countless video conferences with each other, meeting a number of times in a single day at the start of the pandemic. Despite working under immense time pressure, those involved maintained good communications, often communicating more openly, intensively and directly than ever before. Looking back, our success in maintaining research and teaching operations was a noteworthy achievement.

Life at the University of Bonn continued (albeit in reduced form, the majority of it online) even in the weeks of public lockdown in March and April 2020. The most pressing problem experienced during this period was the need to conduct examinations. Solutions were found in record time and a number of spaces – such as the reading room of the Bonn University and State Library – were equipped for e-written examinations. The University also developed a number of assistance and support measures for families and early-career researchers. Transitional provisions of the German Law on Temporary Employment in Higher Education meant that we were able to extend terms of employment for those on fixed-term contracts, thereby reducing the impact of the pandemic on the careers of those affected.

## Signs of life—keeping up the conversation



University Communications started the Signs of life—keeping up the conversation campaign, which motivated numerous University members to report on their experience of the pandemic. Over several months, the campaign turned into a collection of texts reflecting a diverse range of personal and professional perspectives on the pandemic from both students and staff from almost all faculties. A start was made by the philosopher Prof. Dr. Markus Gabriel. His call for a metaphysical pandemic had an international impact and was translated into more than a dozen languages.

The pandemic presented a particular challenge for those working in international affairs. The closure of a number of borders and the imposition of travel restrictions meant that academic mobility ceased almost entirely. A number of students and researchers from the University of Bonn were stranded abroad. The International Office was able to maintain contact with those affected and help those wishing to return to do so. A number of services usually requiring presence in the International Office were replaced by digital formats.

## Learning Spaces 2020 – study smarter with distance

Seeking to support students and the teaching staff during the pandemic, the Bonn University and State Library (USL) significantly expanded the scope of its digital services. Using emergency funding from the state government, the library obtained additional licenses for numerous eBook packages and databases. Late summer saw the launch of Learning Spaces 2020. Organized by the USL and supported by the General Students' Committee (AStA) and the Studierendenwerk, the concept involved the establishment of 195 socially-distanced workstations in the Bonn canteens to enable students to work undisturbed and participate in digital courses. The learning spaces were supervised by student assistants, thereby providing work for students who had lost their jobs due to the pandemic.

## A massive stimulus to the digitalization of the University

The acquisition of a number of campus licenses for Zoom software packages meant that summer semester 2020 could be provided almost entirely digitally. More than 200,000 Zoom courses were conducted over some 1.5 million hours in the first six months alone. The use of eCampus, the University of Bonn teaching and learning platform also increased tenfold. Whilst lecture halls and seminar rooms stood empty, the application of stringent safety measures enabled a few selected laboratory courses to be performed on site. A survey conducted at the end of the semester recorded a predominantly favorable view: the majority of courses were performed as planned, despite the greater efforts required from students and teaching staff alike. Blanket online teaching was a new experience for all involved and required some adjustment.

Winter semester 2020/21 began as a hybrid semester, with small courses such as tutorials and seminars taught on site in compliance with strict hygiene standards, before increasing rates of infection resulted in a general return to online teaching.

The COVID-19 pandemic has injected a massive stimulus into the digitalization of research and teaching operations, from which the University will profit over the long term. By now, almost all courses use eCampus, the University of Bonn teaching and learning platform. Another first for the University came in October 2020, with over 3,000 participants in the first-ever virtual welcome event for first-semester students, a number exceeding any of the traditional in-person events. The hybrid ceremonial opening of the academic year 2020/21 also attracted more participants than the long-term average, only this time a majority attended online and not in the University main auditorium. The basis for good digital communication is an adequate technical infrastructure combining good performance with data protection safeguards.



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## Rollout of the tenure track program underway

In 2019, the University of Bonn was awarded funding for 28 tenure track professorships within the scope of the state and federal government program for funding early-career researchers. The successful applicants are to be employed as W1 professors with a tenure track to W2 or W3. Every faculty and Transdisciplinary Research Area may appoint candidates to one or more of these professorships. With more than a dozen appointment committees set up in 2020, the first new professors from these programs will start work in 2021.

The program seeks to anchor the tenure track concept in academia as an established path to a professorship. Aimed predominantly at early-career researchers, it seeks to change the culture of academic appointments and to enable young researchers to commit themselves to a career in academia at an earlier stage.



## PERSONALITIES

### Appointments to high profile professorships within the scope of the Excellence Strategy

The most prominent measure of the Excellence Strategy is the establishment of High Profile Professorships. This development seeks to strengthen the work of the Transdisciplinary Research Areas (TRA) and faculties, thereby effecting the institutional renewal and dynamic development of the University of Bonn. Seeking to attract the best-possible candidates to these new posts and thereby realizing the aims of the measure, the University has awarded a very generous multi-year starting package to enable them to supplement their resources through the acquisition of third-party funding.

The TRAs have successfully identified interdisciplinary research questions and started the appointment process with Hertz chairs, focusing on outstanding academic personalities, able to develop the focus and caliber of the TRAs. The establishment of the new Argelander Tenure Track Professorships establishes a further instrument for the recruitment of excellent early-career researchers to the TRAs and provides a method to allow for greater collaboration between TRAs in areas of mutual interest.

The establishment of Schlegel chairs enables the faculties to strengthen areas with development potential. The holders of a Schlegel professorship are appointed to work on selected issues in tandem with the TRAs and act as a catalyst for the development of the work in the individual faculties. Exploratory talks between the TRAs and the faculties have by now transitioned into promising negotiations; the first appointments are set to be made in the course of 2021.

### Award of the State Innovation Prize to Matthew Smith



Prof. Dr. Matthew Smith, a proven expert on human factors in IT security was awarded the Innovation Prize of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia in the innovation category in the fall of 2020. The €100,000 prize money is earmarked for research into the Code Intelligence startup. Appointed Professor of Computer Science at the University of Bonn in 2014, Prof. Smith also heads a department at the Fraunhofer Institute for Communication, Information Processing and Ergonomics (FKIE). Prof. Smith has developed a reputation as a pioneer in a form of IT security that focuses on humans as both users and developers of software and has co-initiated the Cyber Security bachelor's degree program.



### Robot ethicist Aimee van Wynsberghe accepts a Humboldt professorship



The increasing integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in everyday life poses a number of ethical challenges, as all innovation must take social values into account. The University of Bonn was delighted to announce Prof. Dr. Aimee van Wynsberghe's decision to accept her appointment to a Humboldt Professorship funded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. With €3.5 million of research funds, this is the best-endowed research prize in Germany and is aimed at attracting renowned international researchers. Prof. van Wynsberghe has joined the University of Bonn from TU Delft. Her research will focus on a number of issues, including the search for expedient forms of sustainable Artificial Intelligence, and will be conducted under the aegis of the Transdisciplinary Research Area Individuals, Institutions and Societies.

### Heinz Maier-Leibnitz Prize awarded to scholars at Bonn



Together with eight other academics, immunologist Prof. Dr. Elvira Mass and mathematician Prof. Dr. Georg Oberdieck were joint winners of the Heinz Maier-Leibnitz Prize, the most important prize awarded to early-career researchers in Germany. Coming with funds of €20,000 each, the prize is funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). The prize is intended both to recognize achievement and encourage excellent young researchers to continue their endeavors. Since 1980, the prize bears the name of atomic physicist and former DFG president Heinz Maier-Leibnitz; the prize was first awarded during his time in office (1973–1979).

### New Emmy Noether research group in the agricultural sciences



The DFG-funded Emmy Noether Program enables highly-qualified early-career researchers to head their own research group over a period of six years to enable them to qualify for a professorship. Dr. Peng Yu from the Institute of Crop Science and Resource Conservation was awarded this high honor in the fall of 2020. His project is set to focus on the interaction between microbes and the root of corn plants.

### Two new Heisenberg scholarships



Named after the Nobel Prize winner for Physics, Werner Heisenberg, the DFG Heisenberg Program is open to researchers of all subjects who fulfill the requirements for appointment to a permanent professorship. Two Heisenberg Scholarships were awarded to researchers at the University of Bonn in 2020: Classical philologist PD Dr. Andreas Schwab will work in the Department of Greek and Latin Philology on the project The building blocks of a polyphonic history of religion in ancient Greek literature. Dr. Peter Soba will take his Heisenberg Scholarship to the LIMES Institute.

## Amazon research prize awarded to Bonn computer scientists



Multinational technology company Amazon has endowed a number of research prizes to fund research into machine learning. A total of 51 recipients from 39 universities in 10 countries have been awarded up to \$80,000 in funding for research in this area. Prof. Dr. Sven Behnke from the Institute for Computer Science at the University of Bonn was the only German recipient of this prize in 2020. Amazon deploys mobile robots in its warehouses that bring shelves to packing stations; reaching into the shelf and executing the order still requires human intelligence and dexterity. Amazon began funding the research of Prof. Behnke's working group on autonomous intelligent systems in 2018.

## New members of the NRW Academy of Sciences and Humanities



Prof. Dr. Klaus Ferdinand Gärditz and Prof. Dr. Thomas Litt from the University of Bonn were received into the North Rhine-Westphalian Academy of Sciences, Humanities and the Arts.

Lawyer Prof. Gärditz from the Institute of Public Law at the University of Bonn was elected to the Class of Humanities; paleobotanist Prof. Dr. Thomas Litt from the Institute of Geosciences at the University of Bonn was elected to the Class of Natural Sciences and Medicine.

## THIRD-PARTY FUNDED PROJECTS

### New ERC starting grants

Individual grants from the European Research Council (ERC) have advanced to become some of the most important signifiers of excellent research and are awarded to persons at differing stages in their career through various grant programs.

**Starting Grants** from the European Research Council are highly prized, because they come with funding of up to €1.5 million over five years. The reporting period saw three researchers from the Department of Economics at the University of Bonn and the associated Behavior and Inequality Research Institute (briq) granted funding: Prof. Dr. Francesc Dilmé from the Institute for Microeconomics, Prof. Dr. Joachim Freyberger from the Institute for Finance and Statistics and Prof. Dr. Florian Zimmermann, briq. All three are also members of the Bonn-Cologne Cluster of Excellence ECONtribute: Markets & Public Policy.

An ERC **Proof of Concept Grant** was awarded to biotechnologist Prof. Dr. Volker Busskamp. Bringing funding of €150,000, the grant is intended to enable him to transfer research findings from previous ERC-funded projects into commercial applications. Prof. Busskamp and his team at the Ophthalmic Clinic at the University Hospital Bonn are currently working on an approach to improving our understanding and treatment of retinal degeneration and blindness.



## DFG-funded collaborative research projects

The German Research Foundation has provided approval for the University of Bonn's new **Collaborative Research Center (SFB) 1454** Metaflammation and Cellular Programming. Led by Leibniz Prize winner Prof. Dr. Eicke Latz, the work of the center focuses on the relationship between a western lifestyle and chronic inflammatory illnesses; for instance how the influence of a combination of excessive calorie intake and insufficient movement can encourage the development of cardio-vascular disease, neurodegenerative conditions or a metabolic syndrome.

Working together with researchers from the University of Cologne, the consortium was able to obtain funding for a new **Research Training Group** Template-Designed Organic Electronics (TiDE) – Understanding Transport by Transition from Disorder to Order. Led by the University of Cologne, the project seeks to improve the performance of organic semi-conductors. Working with funding of some €6.9 million, it will host 14 doctoral students and a research group focusing on organic electronics. The co-speaker for the University for Bonn is Prof. Dr. Arne Lützen.

2020 also saw the grant of 4-year **extensions to the funding** of SFB TRR 185 (speaker Prof. Dr. Corinna Kollath), TRR 110 (speaker Prof. Dr. Ulf-G. Meißner) and SFB 1060 (speaker Prof. Dr. Stefan Müller), as well as of the international research unit IRTG 2168 (speaker Prof. Dr. Christian Kurts).



## SARS-CoV-2: millions in funding awarded to a consortium from the University of Bonn

Established in 2020, the COVIMMUNE consortium of specialists from the University Hospital Bonn and the University of Bonn led by Prof. Dr. Eicke Latz is set to deploy immunological and systembiological methods to investigate the relationship between an immune reaction to a SARS-CoV-2 infection and the clinical course of a case of COVID-19. The BMBF has awarded some €2 million for this project. COVIMMUNE stands for Understanding Diverging Host Reactions to SARS-CoV-2 Infections Through Precision Immunology. The project seeks to unite clinical researchers with the immunological expertise of academics at the University of Bonn.



## CESOC: we see more together

The Universities of Bonn and Cologne and the Research Center Jülich, represented by Prof. Dr. Astrid Kiendler-Scharr, Research Center Jülich, Prof. Dr. Susanne Crewell, University of Cologne, Prof. Dr.-Ing. Jürgen Kusche, University of Bonn (from left), established the Center for Earth System Observation and Computational Analysis (CESOC) in the fall of 2020. This step has established the Rhineland as an international center of global monitoring and analysis; the data gathered here will help understand and predict changes in the earth system. The establishment of the center was one element in the German application as the location for the planned European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF). The application was successful, and the council of the ECMWF moved in December 2020 to select Bonn as one of its new locations. The University of Bonn and its partners welcomed the decision, calling it a step of considerable importance for the future.



# ORGANIZATION

## Appointment portal for a digital and transparent appointment procedure

The rollout of a new appointment portal began during the reporting period as part of the Excellence Strategy. Initially established in three pilot areas, it has been designed to bring a greater level of transparency to the appointment process. Created in cooperation with the Erlangen-based company Uni 4.0 (LA2 GmbH), this portal has been adopted by a number of German universities. Piloted in the Faculty of Agriculture, the Faculty of Medicine and in appointment procedures overseen by the University, e.g. for positions in Transdisciplinary Research Areas, the system allows candidates to enter their data in the portal and view the state of the procedure at any time. All references are requested via the portal and are uploaded to it; data is held on the University server. The new portal is also set to reduce the workload of the appointment committees and staff in the dean's offices, as all documents, overviews and lists are held on a central server and can be accessed at the push of a button. An overview and sort function also facilitate monitoring of the procedure. Initial successes of the system have laid the foundations for the next steps, set for 2021. The Appointment Management team is working with other units to expand the functions of the portal, thereby allowing digitalization of further steps in the procedure. The stated aim is to connect all faculties to the portal and enable universal access to the benefits that it brings.

## Development of the digital strategy

In 2020, the Digital Science Center (DiCe) was focused on identifying necessary digitalization projects and promoting their implementation, whilst working together with the faculties in developing visions for the successful digitalization of the University. The DiCe was also highly successful in ensuring that students were able to use video conferencing technology to keep in touch with their teachers during the online summer semester. An extension of the central University computing infrastructure enabled researchers and students alike to use cutting-edge technologies to simulate and analyze their research projects. This and other projects run by the DiCe will be established within the context of a new digitalization strategy to be implemented in cooperation with the faculties, thereby enabling the University to use the full potential of digitalization to realize its strategic aims.

## The USL Bonn extends its services for researchers

One of the core tasks of the USL Bonn is to support the work of researchers at the University of Bonn. The USL provides requirements-appropriate support throughout the research cycle, ranging from the project application, through the project realization and culminating in publication. Its expertise includes consultation and support in the procurement of academic literature and information, digital humanities issues and research data management. The services on offer were extended during the reporting period by the institution of the Open Access Service Point. Seeking to integrate the various services in a single provision, they have been incorporated into the USL Division for Research-Related Services, which is provided with additional personnel funded through the University of Excellence grant program.

## New grant program: Argelander grants for research into the COVID-19 pandemic



Reacting to the major developments of 2020, the University of Bonn announced funding opportunities for research projects on the development, spread and containment of the current COVID-19 pandemic. This involves the provision of individual grants of up to €25,000 for a total of 15 research and publicity projects run by early-career researchers. The funding is provided through so-called Argelander Grants established to give talented doctoral students and postdocs support in starting their academic career.



## KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

### New online formats

2020 saw the start of the online series Better safe than sorry, a campaign intended to show early-career researchers how to respond to and minimize risks when preparing proposals and conducting research. Aimed at postdoctoral researchers, it provides an introduction to the legal, ethical and formal rules of the research world. Organized by a consortium of offices in the University (including the Equal Opportunity and Diversity Unit and the Research Data Service Center), the series was very well received. The entire workshop program organized by the Argelander Program for Early-Career Researchers was also moved online. The welcome event for new doctoral students was also hosted digitally for the first time.

### More consultation, workshops and networking

enaCom, the transfer center of the University of Bonn is filling up: Early November 2020 saw two of the University of Bonn startup teams move into the co-working space. Neuro11 and kiresult are the first startups to move into Brühler Straße 7. The teams profit from offices with modern equipment and a range of help and support services provided by the three startup advisors and the quality manager in the enaCom team. In addition to bespoke support services, enaCom also organizes a range of events such as the first in the new regular series of Reasons for Starting up workshops, which was held in December. A range of externally-organized events such as the GründungsCamp organized by the IHK Bonn/Rhein-Sieg in November introduce students and researchers to the possibilities and opportunities presented by startups. enaCom serves as a link to industry and other stakeholders in this area.

### Prizes and funding for University of Bonn startups



The startup project Midel Photonics run by Dr. David Dung, Dr. Christian Wahl and Frederik Wolf (from left) was selected for participation in the state-wide HIGH-TECH.NRW program. Taking part in the 10-week accelerator, the physicists from the University of Bonn received advice from companies and universities from North Rhine-Westphalia on how to adapt their business model and speed up the market-readiness of their idea. Midel Photonics has developed a method with which to bring laser beams in the desired form.

Working together with OCCIDENT, the startup Code Intelligence has succeeded in raising €2 million under the leadership of LBBW Venture Capital. These investments are designed to enable the development of a software platform and to accelerate setting of a new standard for software security.



After participating in the Digital Innovation competition organized by BMWi, the startup Murmuras was awarded a prize for a software solution which provides new opportunities for conducting smartphone-based surveys. Led by Ionut Andone, Konrad Blaszkiewicz, Qais Kasem and Alexander Markowetz, the innovative startup was awarded a €7,000 prize, coaching services and an invitation to online seminars.

The startup Identity Guard, led by computer scientists Prof. Dr. Michael Meier, Timo Malderle and Pascua Theus is currently preparing the market launch of the BMBF research project EIDI. To this end, the startup project was awarded €240,000 from Startup-Transfer-NRW starting in December. The aim is to apply an innovative new procedure to protect individuals and companies against identity theft.



# TEACHING AND LEARNING



## Starting a degree during a pandemic

With a majority of courses held online, first-semester students are in even greater demand for support services to facilitate a successful start at university. In reaction, the Central Study Advisory and Counseling Service developed the bilingual web portal "Studienstart/Starting Your Studies" ([www.studienstart.uni-bonn.de](http://www.studienstart.uni-bonn.de)). This provides new students with all the most important information about starting their studies, including recommendations for the planning and organization of their courses and information about various digital supplementary offers such as University Sports and the University counseling and service points. The portal also provides a downloadable copy of the annually-published "Study Compass" and information about contactless collection of the printed version.

This is possible at locations such as the open bookcase in Poppelsdorfer Allee 49 opened by Rector Michael Hoch as an information box about studying. In addition to the Study Compass 2020/21, the bookcase also provides a range of further information material about studying at the University of Bonn.



## Improving digital studies



As long as a significant proportion of teaching is conducted online, targeted support services for students provided by the University will remain especially important. This was underlined by responses to the **student survey** on the digital summer semester 2020. Seeking to provide students with valuable advice and support and both to integrate them in and help them negotiate the challenges presented by online studies, a joint initiative involving all central counseling and service point was launched under the leadership of the Central Study Advisory and Counseling Service.

They collaborated with University Communications to develop the Better digital studying web portal ([www.uni-bonn.de/besser-digital-studieren](http://www.uni-bonn.de/besser-digital-studieren)), which combines and makes more visible the wide range of support services developed during the course of the digital semester. The central elements of this portal include a target-group specific event directory, information about learning and workstations, financial assistance and childcare, the latest pandemic news and a University newsletter.

## Award of the University of Bonn Teaching Prize

Once again, a number of prizes were awarded to recognize teaching excellence at the University of Bonn. 14 members of University of Bonn teaching staff were presented with certificates by Prof. Dr. Karin Holm-Müller, Vice Rector for Teaching and Learning at a ceremony held in the Rectorate.

The teaching prizes were awarded on an inter-faculty basis; each faculty was awarded a number of prizes depending on student numbers and size of the faculty. The awards were decided upon by the faculties on the basis of student course evaluations or nominations by faculty bodies with major student involvement.

The prize winners from 2020:

### Faculty of Arts

- ➔ Dr. Birgit Zacke, Department of German Language and Literature, Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies
- ➔ Marthe-Siobhán Hecke, Department of English Studies, American Studies and Celtic Studies
- ➔ Beryl Büma, Department of Archaeology and Cultural Anthropology

### Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences

- ➔ Prof. Dr. Andreas Eberle, Mathematics
- ➔ Prof. Dr. Oliver Grufß, Biology
- ➔ Prof. Dr. Nadine Marquardt, Geography
- ➔ PD Dr. Anke Schiedel, Pharmacy

## Focus on good teaching: a day for new teachers

February 19, 2020 saw the first Focus on good teaching event, organized as a joint project by the faculties and the Bonn Center for Higher Education (BZH). Aimed at early-career researchers with teaching responsibilities, the event focused on student-centered teaching and attracted some 60 participants from different disciplines with varying levels of teaching experience.

All participants welcomed the opportunity to network with committed teachers and discuss a range of teaching issues. The organizers plan to continue the format and have already begun to integrate participant feedback in its design.

### Faculty of Catholic Theology

- ➔ Prof. Dr. Dr. Jochen Sautermeister, Moral Theology

### Faculty of Agriculture

- ➔ Prof. Dr. Andreas Schieber, Nutrition and Food Sciences

### Faculty of Medicine

- ➔ Dr. Andreas Fleischer, Anesthesiology/Skillslab 2
- ➔ Dr. Thorsten Hornung, Dermatology

### Bonn Center for Teacher Education (BZL):

- ➔ Dr. Nils Thönnessen, Department of Geography, Didactics of Geography working group

### Faculty of Law and Economics

- ➔ Dr. Simon Dato, Department of Economics
- ➔ Prof. Dr. Jens Koch, Department of Law

### Coordinating unit for service learning starts its work

Early summer 2020 saw the Coordinating Unit for Service Learning at the University of Bonn offer its first workshop for members of the teaching staff. The unit also established a range of contacts and prepared for the provision of service learning offers.

Service learning (learning through volunteering) is a form of teaching and learning that combines academic learning with community service. It consists of two main components:

- ➔ The learning component: students are introduced to the theoretical foundations of an issue through classroom-based teaching, after which they reflect on and summarize what they have learned in the volunteering phase.
- ➔ The service component: students apply what they have learned in practical projects conducted with partners from the not-for-profit sector.

### Launching a career after university

The University of Bonn Career Center provides advice and support to students of all faculties in choosing and entering a career. In addition to personal consultation services, participants can take part in workshops focusing on career planning and application procedures. The exigencies of the pandemic situation mean that these services and events are currently provided either online or via telephone consultation sessions. The 2020 annual career day at Dies Academicus was also conducted online for the first time. The Career Center provides information about other interesting events and advice services on its website.

### Initiative Prize for Digitally Aided Teaching Innovations

Seeking to promote the development of new and existing eLearning systems, the Initiative Prize for Digitally Aided Teaching Innovations is awarded every year to provide 12 months of funding for excellent initiatives from teaching staff at the University of Bonn. 2020 saw the prize awarded to: ACTIVATE – Acquiring Competencies Through Innovative Video Annotations in Teacher Education, a project run by Prof. Dr. Jutta Standop from the Bonn Center for Teacher Education.







### The opening of the European NeurotechEU University

The European Council works to strengthen strategic partnerships between universities in the EU through the establishment of European Universities. One of these pan-European alliances is the European University of Brain and Technology (NeurotechEU), which started its work in December 2020. It connects the University of Bonn with seven partners throughout Europe, including Oxford University (UK) and the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm. Students will be able to take courses at any member institution, thereby gathering international experience and benefiting from the expert knowledge of a number of universities.



### Henriette Herz Prize awarded to the University of Bonn

In 2020, the University of Bonn was one of eight universities awarded the prestigious Henriette Herz prize from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. The award was made in recognition of the University's concept for recruiting the best international early-career researchers. The University of Bonn has developed a range of measures to introduce top international academic talent to the work of the University in general and the ImmunoSensation2 Cluster of Excellence in particular. The researchers can learn about the University of Bonn by participating in virtual 360° campus tours and interactive laboratory visits. A digital roadshow has been designed to promote dialog and facilitate the decision of interested parties to relocate to Bonn.

## The University of Bonn joins the New University in Exile consortium



The reporting period saw the University of Bonn and the New School for Social Research in New York City (US) sign a cooperation agreement. Taking effect on December 21, 2020, the University of Bonn became part of the New University in Exile consortium. The consortium is an alliance of universities that seek to help endangered academics and protect the intellectual resources currently threatened by a range of attacks on academic freedom throughout the world. The primary mission of the consortium is to assist academics who have suffered persecution and displacement and to instill a sense of intellectual community amongst exiled scholars.

## First call for proposals for grant programs within the Excellence Strategy

2020 saw the University of Bonn issue its first ever calls for proposals disbursing funds acquired from the Excellence Strategy for collaborative projects with international partners. This included Collaborative Research Grants with our strategic partners from St Andrews, the University of Melbourne, Emory University and Hebrew University as well as start up financing for third-party funded projects conducted with partners in focus countries from our international strategy. Cooperation with universities in Africa, Latin America and South-East Asia is also strengthened through issuing of scholarships for postdoctoral researchers and doctoral students. The University was also able to invite excellent researchers from all over the globe for two-week teaching and research stays. A total of 51 applications proceeded to the funding stage; all University faculties were represented.

## Virtual staff exchange: online dialog with St Andrews

The International Office responded to the exigencies of the pandemic in 2020 by establishing a virtual staff exchange between staff at the University of Bonn and selected partner universities. This service is part of the Internationalization of the Administration project run under the aegis of the Excellence Strategy. International networks can also be maintained online. After a successful pilot project run with the University of Kansas in 2019, the Virtual Staff Exchange format is now an established offer for non-academic staff. December 2020 saw a virtual meeting conducted between staff from the University of Bonn and our strategic partner, the University St Andrews, via Zoom. The event combined a focus on establishing relationships and intercultural exchange with specialist discussions in smaller groups. Participants from both sides found this format a suitably accessible form of international exchange and a suitable vehicle for intensifying international cooperation among administrative staff. Further events incorporating partners in Japan and Ghana are planned for 2021.

## Digital services for international students and doctoral students

In response to the pandemic, the International Office decided to host the Welcome Week for winter semester 2020/21, providing new students with an orientation to their studies, as an online event. A dedicated app was used for the first time ever. All services for international students and doctoral students have been provided in digital formats since summer semester 2020. The support program provided by the International Club and the Study Buddy program were implemented almost entirely in digital form. A group of international doctoral students has also organized an online PhD café since summer semester 2020. Even the International Choir found a way to conduct its rehearsals online: "Africa" was the hit of the summer semester; "Mary did you know" was the highlight of the Christmas period.



## Digital German lessons for students and members of the University

The pandemic also posed a considerable challenge for the new German as a Foreign Language section at the International Office. A range of experiments including lessons with live online participation meant that teaching could be maintained; a number of these services are to be maintained over the long term. The expansion of the University's provision of virtual courses means that international master's degree and program students were able to pursue top-quality German courses from their home country. These courses not only teach the basics of language, but focus on regional characteristics and the newest developments in history, art, economics and academia.

## Individual coaching for newly-appointed international professors

An increase in the proportion of non-German professors is a key part of the University of Bonn Internationalization Strategy. Seeking to make the University more attractive for international academics and to help with the acclimatization of newly-appointed professors, the International Office established an individual German coaching service tailored to the needs of this target group. The bespoke one-to-one training sessions focus on improving language skills and introduce their participants to German culture, everyday practices and university life, thereby facilitating the transition.

## Conference on international university rankings

Working in cooperation with the German Rectors' Conference, the International Office of the University of Bonn hosted a Germany-wide networking event focusing on international university rankings. Some 60 representatives from various German universities took part in the virtual two-day event. Discussions focused on a number of issues including the way in which the metrics developed by Anglo-American providers of international university rankings can be applied to German universities; whether these rankings are able to capture and represent the social role of universities; the relationship of these rankings to the reputation management work of a university; and whether rankings represent an effective marketing instrument for universities.



# EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

## New equal opportunity web portal

The University of Bonn provides a limited measure of financial resources to fund careers, co-operation measures and diversity-led measures. A range of funding options are available to meet the specific needs of different contexts and target groups. In this way, the University of Bonn seeks to promote diversity amongst its researchers, employees and students. The new Equal Opportunity web portal ([www.chancengleichheit.uni-bonn.de/en](http://www.chancengleichheit.uni-bonn.de/en)) provides up-to-date information about grant programs, support services and the relevant contacts at the University of Bonn.

## Holding course

The University of Bonn moved shortly after the onset of the current COVID-19 pandemic to provide extra support to all researchers and students responsible for the care and upbringing of at least one child under the age of 12 who are currently facing special challenges. The situations in which the new Holding Course program can help are many and varied and include the need to complete a doctorate or Habilitation; the need to undergo evaluation as part of their assistant professorship; the need to switch to digital teaching; or increased pressure from the extension of practical training elements.

The package of measures comprises five support options:

### Option 1 – Student assistant or research assistant

Funds are made available for the recruitment of a student or research assistant to support the applicant in their research or teaching.

### Option 2 – Teaching assistance

Lecturers can draw on teaching cover assistance for up to two course units per week.

### Option 3 – Backup childcare

The University backup childcare services (emergency childcare provided to employees who develop childcare requirements at short notice) have been extended.

### Option 4 – Flexible childcare expenses

Allowances can be granted to cover a part of childcare costs to enable academics to perform their duties such as attending advanced training or giving lectures.

### Option 5 – Material expenses

Researchers with childcare responsibilities can apply for funding to purchase literature or hardware/software to support them in their research and teaching duties.

## Significant increase in the number of female professors

2020 saw the University of Bonn succeed in appointing more female professorial staff than in the two preceding years combined. The University was able to use the funds acquired from the Third State and Federal Programme for Women Professors to fund three professorial pre-appointments. Following the funding specifications, which are related to a first appointment to a permanent professorship, all three professorships were awarded to female early-career researchers, one in the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences and two in the Faculty of Arts.

## New childcare services

The summer of 2020 saw the Office of Family Services at the University of Bonn organize its first-ever school vacation childcare service for University members. It took place at the University Sports facility on the Venusberg, and the children were able to participate in creative workshops, play games and sports and compete in a week-long team Olympiad. A total of 31 children aged 8-17 were looked after over the four-week period from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, including lunch. The event was organized by the Bochum company Funtime GmbH, which implemented a special safety and hygiene protocol for children. The University plans to continue this service in coming years.

Responding to the restrictions imposed by the current pandemic, University childcare offers were expanded through the provision of digital services. Seeking to relieve parents working at home, the Office of Family Services commissioned pme Familienservice to provide a free-of-charge online childcare service. The first part of the program promised fun games and activities in small groups, while the second part provided music, games and fun for all in larger groups. Further relief for parents was provided by three online videos and an online workshop from Agentur PROKI Kinderevents. The three twenty-minute videos "The Reading Corner: the Three ??? Kids", "Creativity for the Advent Period" and "Discovering Nature" were tailored to children of varying ages. The videos are available to University of Bonn staff and guests via VPN and can be accessed repeatedly. Pre-school age children were able to participate in an online workshop on magic for children.

## Digital services for members of the University with family responsibilities

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, all advanced training and workshop provision was moved online. Participants in the webinar "Combining Academia and Family? Responding to Challenges During the COVID-19 Pandemic" learned a range of response and communication strategies and self-management methods. For those with responsibility for caring for relatives, two online workshops were offered focusing on the topic of living wills/healthcare proxies (with the assistance of the Consumer's Center and the Clinic for Palliative Medicine) and on resilience.

Seeking to continue its comprehensive provision of advice and support during times of lockdown and the closure of schools and daycare centers, the Office of Family Services and the Gender Equality Office provided video-assisted consultation and office hours.

Donations resulting from a film production were used to help three single parent students suffering financial hardship from no fault of their own. Each of the students was given €500. The Office of Family Services was also able to appoint a research assistant to provide greater assistance to students with children. A newsletter aimed at this group will now be sent out at the start of every semester. The University of Bonn is also drawing up plans to promote international mobility amongst students with children. The Office of Family Services is currently working out guidelines addressing both students and advisors to support students with children in their plans to study abroad. International mobility amongst this group is also set to receive funding in 2021.

## Short-term support

In 2020, the Gender Equality Office and Office of Family Services launched a new initiative to advance the careers of early-career researchers. The short-term support scheme seeks to provide master's and doctoral students in the completion phase of their degree who are responsible for the care of one or more children, with short-term financial support (€400 per month) for the purpose of employing childcare or domestic support. The aim is to help students with children complete their degree. The funding period is capped at a maximum of six months.



### Supporting the structural integration of gender equality in the faculties

Every year, the Gender Equality Office awards funding to three projects aimed at furthering the structural integration of gender equality in the faculties. The calls for proposals are published on the homepage of the Gender Equality Office. The reporting year saw the concentration of funding in this area on innovative projects that seek to deploy the potential of digitalization to reduce gender inequality.

#### WHAT'S UB Women in Higher Education and Top Science - University of Bonn

Launched by the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, this project seeks to establish a University-wide network of female researchers with the aim of enabling inter- and transdisciplinary networking and exchanging of information related to a career in research.

#### Gender-inclusive language on the websites and communications documents of the Faculty of Agriculture

Run by the Faculty of Agriculture, this project seeks to establish a culture and practice of gender-inclusive and non-discriminatory language on the faculty website and its publicity work.

#### Opposing discrimination and promoting gender equality and diversity

Run by the Faculty of Arts, this project seeks to raise awareness of practices of discrimination – both against individuals and groups – in research, teaching and studying, and to draw up guidelines to foster a culture of inclusiveness and well-being.

### Gender Consulting – Extending the consultation services for equal opportunity measures in third-party funded projects

The German Research Foundation is committed to promoting equal opportunity in academia. The EU has also included gender equality markers in its research funding policy. The Gender Consulting unit in the Gender Equality Office provides advice and support to third-party funded projects regarding applications (e.g. sketches, applications for seed-funding and continuation costs), the assessment of research project plans and the implementation of measures within an existing project.

Contact:

➔ [www.gleichstellung.uni-bonn.de/en](http://www.gleichstellung.uni-bonn.de/en)

### Constant extension of the University campaign against sexual harassment

2020 saw extension of the University-wide campaign launched by the Gender Equality Office and its diffusion through a new medium. Run under the motto Clear language to stop sexual harassment, the campaign added the deployment of stickers (especially in toilet facilities) to its previous use of posters and flyers providing information about the advice and prevention services provided by the Gender Equality Office.

Further information is available from

➔ [www.gleichstellung.uni-bonn.de/en](http://www.gleichstellung.uni-bonn.de/en).



# ADMINISTRATION



## DIGITALIZATION

### Digitalization of administrative processes

Following the rollout of the SAP S/4 HANA ERP system on January 1, 2019 (WARP 3 phase) and a consolidation phase in the same year, 2020 saw the extension of the SAP system through the implementation of further system functions (WARP 4 phase). The onset of the pandemic led to delays in several projects, but a number of the projects already started were completed under highly challenging circumstances. This included the extension and optimization of the Faktura app, the implementation of a customs audit trail and the extension of procurement functionalities. The implementation of a digital workflow for electronic invoice receipts (invoice processing) and the setup of HR self-service functions were also initiated. Delays were experienced in the project planning of the digital travel expenses workflow and the consolidation and extension of the reporting system. The completion of these projects has been planned for 2021.

Further elements of the digitalization strategy implemented in 2020 included the establishment and implementation of the initial functions of an online appointment portal and extension of the use of the Confluence collaboration software (Atlassian tools) to support the control and documentation of projects and meetings management.

Working within the scope of the state digitalization initiative for universities, the University of Bonn assumed the leadership of the consortium assembled to address the issue of e-contract management. The preliminary project started in 2020 and led by the University to create the framework conditions for the main project was continued as planned throughout the reporting period, with the aim of starting the main project in 2021.



## CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Based on the legal foundations of the NRW E-Government Act (E-GovG) (digitalization of administrative services) and the Online Accessibility Act (OZG) (improving of online access to administrative services), state plans for the digitalization of its universities and its own specifications, the University of Bonn defined the strategic aim of digitalizing all of its central and decentral administrative processes by 2025. A key element in this area is the extension of the SAP system to serve as the digital backbone of the University administration. These aims were consolidated in the program launched in 2020 under the name "Digitalization of administrative processes" in order to retain an overview of the existing interdependencies and potential for synergies in this area. The scope and degree of complexity of the resulting projects and their interdependence requires an implementation strategy and integration into the overall University strategy for the digitalization of support processes in research and teaching.

The position of an E-GovG/OZG coordinator, responsible for the coordination and communication of cross-university activities and local issues in the E-GovG/OZG area financed by the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, was filled in March 2020 within the wider program for the digitalization of administrative processes.

### The University builds itself – a University pilot project

The introduction of a new option model means that the universities in the State of North Rhine-Westphalia can choose whether to make use of the services of a state-owned construction and real estate organization (Bau- und Liegenschaftsbetrieb, BLB NRW) or realize construction projects in-house. In view of the considerable level of investment required in construction works over the coming years, this new instrument will enable the university management to accelerate construction works and effect a considerable improvement in the fabric of University buildings. The quality of the building infrastructure is assuming an ever-greater importance as a factor in the recruitment of excellent researchers. The University piloted an in-house construction project with the Teaching and Research Forum on Poppelsdorf Campus. The planning competition was launched in 2020, the winner will be chosen in 2021.



### Hand-over of the refurbished University of Bonn underground car park at the Hofgarten

Completed on time and on budget in March 2020, the €19 million refurbishment project of the University of Bonn underground car park realized by BLB NRW means that the University is now in possession of a state-of-the-art parking facility with a range of features including charging points for electric cars and a new passenger elevator providing barrier-free access.

The re-opening of the facility will work to ease the city center parking situation both for University staff and the City of Bonn. The costs of the refurbishment project were borne equally by BLB NRW and the University of Bonn as the facility owner. Operation of the facility has been entrusted to CityParkraum GmbH.





## Commissioning of the rotation building



Poppelsdorf Campus is set to acquire a new building. The Rotation Building has been planned to provide 7,700 square meters of floor space providing laboratories, meeting rooms, work rooms and offices for University institutes forced to move due to the renovation of their regular facilities. With overall responsibility for the project held by BLB NRW, a company was commissioned in late 2020 to plan and build the structure. Construction is set to start in the second half of 2021; it should be completed at the end of 2024.

## SUSTAINABILITY

The University of Bonn has long been committed to driving sustainability from the center. Seeking to intensify its efforts in this area, the University moved in early 2020 to incorporate staff feedback into the planning for making working practices more sustainable. A steering group, including members from all status groups, assesses these ideas and issues recommendations for the development of a University-wide sustainability strategy to be published in 2021. The reporting year also saw the University management set up an electronic letter box for suggestions; a central fund of €200,000 was established to provide funding for sustainability measures in the decentral units and student groups.

November 23, 2020 also saw the award to the University of Bonn of "Fair Trade University" status. The University of Bonn worked towards the award over a two-year period, in which time the University fulfilled all the requirements set out by TransFair e.V. (Fair Trade Germany).



## FAREWELL LETTER FROM THE BONN MATHEMATICIAN FELIX HAUSDORFF DONATED TO THE USL

The Jewish mathematics professor Felix Hausdorff committed suicide on January 26, 1942 to escape the persecution of the Nazi regime. His last letter was donated to the USL Bonn during a ceremony held on May 8, 2020. The USL Bonn has held Felix Hausdorff's *Nachlass* since 1980. The Bonn historian of mathematics Prof. Dr. Walter Purkert took part in the ceremony as the guest of honor.

# KEY UNIVERSITY FIGURES

## FINANCE VOLUME, EUR IN THOUSANDS



Budget (University budget plus Faculty of Medicine third-party funding)	<b>722,823.62</b>
<i>of which third-party funding (University budget incl. Faculty of Medicine)</i>	<b>170,601.18</b>

## NUMBER OF ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES WITH VARIOUS DEGREES (WS 2020/21)



in the bachelor's segment	<b>112</b>
in the master's segment	<b>100</b>
State Examination degree programs	<b>5</b>
Degree programs culminating in a Church Degree	<b>2</b>
Undergraduate Magister degree programs (degree: Magister Theologiae)	<b>2</b>

## COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS



Clusters of Excellence	<b>6</b>
Collaborative Research Centers	<b>12</b>
Research Groups	<b>7</b>
DFG-funded Research Training Groups	<b>5</b>
BMBF collaborative research projects	<b>15</b>
ERC projects	<b>18</b>

## PEOPLE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BONN

	total	male	female	diverse
<b>STUDENTS (WS 2020/21)</b>	<b>38,352</b>	<b>16,721</b>	<b>21,608</b>	<b>23</b>
<i>of which enrolled doctoral students</i>	3,871	1,948	1,922	1
<i>of which international (incl. enrolled doctoral students)</i>	5,404	2,401	3,003	0
<i>of which international (without enrolled doctoral students)</i>	4,375	1,879	2,496	0
<b>Doctoral students *</b>	<b>6,893</b>	<b>3,273</b>	<b>3,620</b>	<b>0</b>
<i>of which international *</i>	2,034	980	1,054	0
<b>Graduates **</b>	<b>4,747</b>	<b>2,010</b>	<b>2,737</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Doctorates **</b>	<b>677</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Habilitations***</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>

\* as per the official statistics on doctoral students as of Dec 1, 2020 (not yet binding)

\*\* Academic year 2018/19

\*\*\* Academic year 2019/20

## STAFF (INC, THIRD-PARTY AND STATE FUNDED)



	total	male	female
<b>Professors (incl. Faculty of Medicine)</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>Academic staff (incl. Faculty of Medicine)</b>	<b>4,479</b>	<b>2,430</b>	<b>2,049</b>
<b>Administrative and technical staff <sup>1</sup></b>	<b>1,812</b>	<b>728</b>	<b>1,084</b>
<b>Apprentices and interns <sup>1</sup></b>	<b>78</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>28</b>

## FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT



	total	male	female
<b>Professors (incl. Faculty of Medicine)</b>	<b>556.61</b>	<b>436.61</b>	<b>120.00</b>
<b>Academic staff (incl. Faculty of Medicine)</b>	<b>3,543.84</b>	<b>1,983.13</b>	<b>1,560.71</b>
<b>Administrative and technical staff <sup>2</sup></b>	<b>1,540.56</b>	<b>687.56</b>	<b>853.00</b>
<b>Apprentices and interns <sup>1</sup></b>	<b>78.00</b>	<b>50.00</b>	<b>28.00</b>

<sup>1</sup> excl. Faculty of Medicine and University Hospital Bonn

<sup>2</sup> excl. Faculty of Medicine and University Hospital Bonn