

Voice of Engineering: representing the interests of the engineering sciences in Germany and worldwide

TU9 President Hans Jürgen Prömel presents TU9 Guideline on the content of engineering study programs and takes positive stock of his term in office

Berlin, December 18, 2017 – Outgoing TU9 President Professor Hans Jürgen Prömel has given a positive review of his four-year term in office: “TU9, the Alliance of leading Universities of Technology in Germany, carries weight in the science policy discourse. We put pressing issues on the agenda and present a clear position.” Most recently, the TU9 Alliance presented a TU9 Guideline on the content of engineering study programs emphasizing the importance of giving profile and visibility to engineering degrees.

Clear identification of study programs and degrees has been made all the more important by the phasing out of German ‘Diplom-Ingenieur’ degrees as a result of the Bologna reform. This has meant that many study programs no longer have the word ‘engineer’ as a professional designation in the degree title. TU9 Universities will therefore identify their engineering study programs as such and record the fact that they are engineering programs in the diploma supplement.

The TU9 Alliance aims in the guidelines to present the “essential nature of engineering sciences” with criteria that are open to change and modification – especially considering that the traditional image of ‘product-focused’ engineering disciplines, such as in construction, electrical engineering and mechanical engineering, is becoming increasingly obsolete. Superseding that image, TU9 sees the rise of new or modified methodological approaches that are independent of specific application areas and are developing into new disciplines (such as computational engineering). The establishment of computer science as an engineering discipline is also cited as an example of how knowledge-based sciences continually evolve new disciplines whose methodologies and approaches qualify them as engineering sciences.

“A characterization of the core features of engineering disciplines and a set of learning outcomes based on those core features are key conditions for safeguarding the quality of German engineering studies,” said TU9 President Professor Hans Jürgen Prömel, who is also President of the Technical University of Darmstadt. “Our TU9 Guideline helps us in determining whether a degree program is an engineering program.”

The development of this paper is just one of many activities with which TU9 represents the interests of the engineering sciences in Germany. As examples from the early days of his term, Professor Prömel cited the clear position taken against universities of applied sciences (Fachhochschulen) being given an independent right to award doctorates “which is detrimental to Germany as a center of science”, as well as guidelines on fair employment conditions for early career scientists.

This summer, TU9, together with the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Technischer Universitäten (Association of Technical Universities, ARGE-TU), drew attention to issues surrounding industry-sponsored doctorates with their Position Paper on “cuckoo’s egg” doctorates “Quality Assurance and Adherence to Scientific Standards in Doctorates Carried out in Cooperation with Industry”. The TU9 Key Issues Paper now concisely summarizes the key rules for the various phases of a doctorate.

Last year, TU9 celebrated its tenth anniversary in Berlin with a symposium on the future of Germany as a hub for science and innovation. Federal Minister of Research Professor Johanna Wanka and acatech President Professor Henning Kagermann both spoke at the ceremony and were followed by a discussion with leading decision makers from academia, policymaking and business.

A key feature of Professor Prömel's tenure was the development of international relations and thus enhancing TU9's profile and international visibility. TU9 delegations traveled to partners in South Korea, the United States and Israel. In Japan, TU9 scientists joined forces in a symposium with the German Centre for Research and Innovation Tokyo (DWIH Tokyo) to present the most recent advances in Industry 4.0.

Globally, the TU9 Alliance also intensified networking and exchange with other associations of technical universities, including the Australian Technology Network (ATN), the network of Northern European technical universities (Nordic Five Tech), TU Austria, and the network of Dutch technical universities (4TU).

"We have succeeded in taking TU9 out into the world and with it the innovative German Engineering brand," President Prömel concluded.

About TU9

TU9 is the Alliance of leading Universities of Technology in Germany: RWTH Aachen University, Technische Universität Berlin, Technische Universität Braunschweig, Technical University of Darmstadt, Technische Universität Dresden, Leibniz University Hannover, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Technical University of Munich, and University of Stuttgart.

Tradition, excellence, and innovation are the hallmarks of TU9 Universities. Founded during the Industrial Age, they contributed decisively to technological progress back then and continue to do so today. They enjoy an outstanding reputation around the world as renowned research and teaching institutions that promote the transfer of knowledge and technology between universities and practice. As such, they train exceptional young academics for careers in science, business, and administration and assume social responsibility. TU9 Universities foster top-class international networks and diverse cooperation with industry, making them a key element of Germany's position as a location of science and innovation.

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