

Grußwort

Campus for Climate – The importance of Sustainability

Redner: Prof. (HSG) Dr. Sascha Spoun, Präsident

Ort und Anlass: Leuphana Universität Lüneburg: Grußwort anlässlich der „Sustainability Lectures“

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Dear Professor Scott, dear Prof. Stoltenberg, dear colleagues and friends,
Dear guests of today's first lecture within this year's Sustainability Lecture Series,

First of all, I would like to congratulate the organizer of this highly relevant and truly inspiring lecture series, Prof. Ute Stoltenberg, for her tremendous efforts in putting this series together.

Developing innovative concepts for education on sustainable development represents an enormous challenge not only for our institution, but for universities, schools and other educational institutions across the world. And I could not imagine a more engaged, competent and respected host for this endeavour than Ute Stoltenberg.

She has shaped the German debate on education for sustainable education not only in the academic sphere, but also in arena of public debate and policy-making like no one else during the past decade. She has initiated and currently leads many prestigious research projects on the practical implementation of education on sustainability, among others, „Leuchtpol“ and „KITA 21“, which aims to foster projects on sustainability in early childhood education. For the later she was awarded the „365 Places in the Land of Ideas“ Award by the German Federal Government – one of many recognitions she received.

I could go on like this, but then you would miss an excellent lecture by Professor William Scott who visits us from one of the most renowned institutions in the United Kingdom, the University of Bath. And as you all know, there must be a very significant reason for a British to cross the wide channel between the United Kingdom and „the rest“, that is continental Europe. So his presence might be one of the greatest compliments one can make Ute Stoltenberg for her efforts. So thank you very much again!



Martin Luther King has become an iconic figure in many regards, but probably not because of his acquaintance with the principle of sustainable development, which was coined by the Brundtland Commission exactly 20 years after his famous civil rights march in Washington and 15 years after his death. However, he has perhaps delivered one of the most inspiring definitions of sustainable development without knowing it, in 1965 at a rally in Ohio:

"All of life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied to a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly."

In my view, education has become the most significant driver in order to raise the awareness for this „inescapable network“. It is indispensable to make future generations more successful than ours in preventing major catastrophes like the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, in shaping a robust post-Kyoto world with regard to climate change as well as in recognizing the great opportunities of a sustainable world order. Education is the key for a truly sustainable future in which long-term solutions are not sacrificed for short-term political or economic gains.

Therefore, institutions of higher education like ours have an important responsibility. We not only educate young leaders who will hopefully drive sustainable practices in companies, government institutions and civil society, but we also educate those, who can install an awareness for the challenge of sustainable development in future generations: our teachers.

At Leuphana University we take this responsibility very seriously, not only in research and teaching, but also with regard to campus development. Among others, we integrated an introduction to sustainable development as one of four mandatory courses that our students have to take during their first term at college – no matter which major they aim to choose later on. Thereby, sustainability becomes an important building block of their studies right from the start. We also offer courses on current sustainability challenges as part of the bachelor's general studies curriculum.

In 2007, we established sustainability research as one of the four scientific initiatives at Leuphana University. The corresponding faculty has opened last month. Since 2005, our colleague Gerd Michelsen holds the UNESCO Chair of „Higher Education for Sustainable Development“. All of this will allow us to focus our scientific endeavours at the fascinating crossroads of social and natural sustainability sciences and it will allow us to bring students in touch with the most recent frontiers of research on sustainable development.



We are also convinced that a holistic approach to education on sustainable development has to incorporate the campus as a “living laboratory” for organizational and individual learning processes on sustainable development. Hence, since 2008, our central campus has been one of the first worldwide to operate climate-neutral, among others, by using innovative in-house developments like “CO2 traffic lights” in every seminar room, which foster concentrated airing-outs by indicating the CO2 concentration in the room. – At the moment, the air quality in this room seems to be ok, but you are invited to check it over there – Car sharing is offered on campus as well as organic food at our cafeteria. Our new central building will be built as a “Net Zero Emission Building“.

I could give you many more examples, but I think what this demonstrates is that universities can be major catalysts for sustainable development - not only in research and teaching, but also as laboratories for innovative ways of working and living, which is, in my view, an important foundation for a comprehensive education for sustainability.

I hope this conference will intensify the dialogue on this issue and the transfer of best practices. We should be keen on learning from each other. As the quote in your program flyer tells us:

“Knowing what others are doing in the world is a significant source of learning and innovation, and frequently an encouragement and motivational force to persevere the long term.“

So it is with great pleasure that I give the floor to Ute Stoltenberg who will introduce today’s speaker: Professor William Scott.

Thank you.