



## PRESS RELEASE

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# University of Tübingen Founds Research Center for Science Communication

**Professor Olaf Kramer from the Department of General Rhetoric heads the center, which will also involve the public**

The University of Tübingen is boosting research and development into science communication by establishing a specialist research center. "Over recent years, the dialog in scientific policy has focused on the issue of how universities and research institutes can not only produce excellent science but also convey this to society more effectively," says president of the university, Professor Karla Pollmann. "It has become extremely clear that science communication is itself becoming an increasingly important field of research, and the University of Tübingen wants to play a key part in this." The research center has been founded in response to these developments.

Olaf Kramer, Professor of Rhetoric and Knowledge Communication at the University of Tübingen's Department of General Rhetoric is the director of the center. "Research often gives rise to social resistance – whether relating to artificial intelligence, vaccination or climate change," explains Kramer, "One outcome of the corona pandemic was definitely the knowledge of how important science communication is." The new center's cooperation partners include the university's Institute of Media Studies (IfM) and the Hector Research Institute of Education Sciences and Psychology (HIB), as well as the Leibniz-Institute for Knowledge Media (IWM) as an external partner.

"Science is communicated via an increasing number of channels," says Kramer. "Only a center with an interdisciplinary approach can analyze and present the numerous ways and effects of science communication." While corporate communication and marketing have been researched in depth for decades, science communication is still a new field of research. "Tübingen can draw on outstanding researchers in every field that is relevant here – from educational research through computer science, cognitive and media studies, to psychology and rhetoric," stresses Kramer.

Rhetoric at Tübingen has already launched many research and practical science communication projects in recent years, and the new research center will now build on these. For instance, the RHET AI project is currently researching among other things the public discourse on artificial intelligence and its presentation in the media, and has set up a national dialog to ask citizens what they think are the risks and opportunities of this technology, and their concerns and expectations.

Cooperation partners include the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT), the Excellence Cluster Machine Learning: New Perspectives for Science, and Cyber Valley.

At the Department of General Rhetoric, the Presentation Skills Research Center, supported by Heidelberg's Klaus Tschira Foundation, has trialed innovative forms of science communication in numerous projects since 2011. The national competition 'Jugend präsentiert', for example, trains school pupils in how to pass on scientific knowledge. The journal Science Notes reports not only on results from science, but also on the processes involved. The publication arose from a series of brief scientific lectures with the same title, that are presented to a background of electronic music in clubs in Berlin, Hamburg, Tübingen and other cities. The new research center will also train Tübingen scientists in how to present statistics and facts visually, and formulate research results comprehensibly. In addition, the current certificate program, Science Communication and Media Competence, is being expanded.



Living science: The "Science Notes" event series in July 2022 in Tübingen.

Photo: Ilkay Karakurt



Professor Olaf Kramer heads the new Research Center for Science Communication.

Photo: Katja Brandt

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