

Introductory Statement of Professor Margret Wintermantel

Panel Debate “What kind of PhD graduates do we need in Europe and North America?” Frankfurt/Main 09.11.2006

It is our conviction that the universities are the core of every science system and it is their task to prepare the future generation of researchers and science workers in general.

German Universities have to consider that about one half of their doctoral graduates will work in future outside academia. And even the doctoral graduates that will stay in academia will be confronted in future with tasks requiring skills beyond pure scientific excellence.

These are the driving forces behind our efforts to reform doctoral education in Germany.

The German Rectors' Conference has organised in May 2006 a big conference in Bonn discussing with our members and the scientific community elements of such a reform.

These have been the results:

- Doctoral candidates have to learn how to achieve research results independently and in full personal responsibility – as we formulated in Salzburg in 2005 – to “advance knowledge through original research.” This has been, is and will remain the core mission of doctoral education and the third Bologna cycle for German universities.
- PhD candidates need more freedom, but on the same time more counselling and support from the side of their supervisors. This will have to be achieved through a more structured form of doctoral education. It is the tasks of the universities alone, in **cooperation** with other universities, with non-university research or industry to create a research and excellence oriented climate, favourable for the exchange of ideas and knowledge

among the doctoral candidates and vis-à-vis their supervisors and the international science community in and outside academe.

- These structured forms of doctoral education can have the form of graduate research schools or doctoral programmes. You will hear during the workshop that German universities are in full swing to turn to these new organisational concepts.
- These structured forms will improve the training of doctoral candidates in skills that they will need in future – that is to say the ability
 - to initiate and to organise projects
 - to build up and lead teams of researchers
 - to sell the content and the results of their work to the scientific community and to the general public
 - to organise and accompany the transfer of the acquired knowledge into “products” in a wide sense of the word

The doctoral graduates that have learned these skills are the ones that we will need in future inside and outside of the universities and academe.