# TU WIEN Informatics

## Strategy Paper for Supporting Women at the Faculty of Informatics[1]

Working group "Women's Support Measures"
of the Faculty of Informatics[2]

January 31st, 2016

### Content

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[1] as application for female professorships (full and assistant with tenure track), as advertised in the TUW newsletter of October 21st, 2015

[2] This working group consisted of Monika Di Angelo, Thomas Eiter, Gerti Kappel (chair), and Silvia Miksch. The cornerstones of the concept have been unanimously supported by the newly elected Faculty Council on January 20th, 2016.

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## 1. What happened so far

The Faculty of Informatics has been supporting the advancement of women at all university career levels as a strategic goal since 2003, and has implemented various funding programs since then. These include:

(1) Women Postgraduate College for Internet Technologies (WIT, 2003-2007 [C]): WIT was and is a convincing model of a women's dissertation program with accompanying career support measures.

(2) In the framework of WIT, the co-creation of FIT and annual active participation in this program, see e.g. the lecture by Gerti Kappel on January 25th, 2016 on the topic "Sense and nonsense of women's support measures".

(3) Postdoctoral positions for women: this has been a success story of the Faculty of Informatics. Ivona Brandic, Agata Ciabattoni and Laura Kovacs were originally hired by TU Wien via female postdoctoral positions and are now winners of FWF START Prizes and ERC Starting Grants.

(4) A joint effort by the faculty and the rectorate also made it possible to successfully implement women-supporting policies for the appointment to full professorships. As of April 1st, 2016, six female full professors (including the three former "postdoctoral women" mentioned above) are on the staff of the Faculty of Informatics (6 out of 23 full professors).

(5) At the 2015 Winter Epilog we once again awarded the Siemens Award for Excellence, a scholarship for female undergraduate and graduate students. The internationally known *Dean's lists* of the top 5-10% students were and are the model for this.

(6) In September 2015, for the first time, a bridging course entitled "Introduction to Programming with Java" for prospective female students has been established to compensate (at least to some extent) the heterogeneous previous knowledge of female and male freshmen due to heterogeneous secondary schools.

(7) Since November 2012 the project BLUE&MINT in cooperation with the WIT (Women in Technology) group of IBM Austria has the goal of improving mutual learning between TU Wien students and IBM IT professionals.

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## 2. What we have learned

Our experience with female support measures over the last 13 years coincides largely with the existing literature, see e.g. [B], [E], [F]. Three issues are important:

- **Sustainability**: All measures are hardly "worth their money" if they are not implemented for a longer period of time. All investigations show (see [A], among others) that at least 30% female participation is necessary to implement sustainable change.
- **Resources**: It requires financial and human resources.
- **Sensitization**: Raising awareness for the necessity of female support measures is just as essential for women as it is for all scientific employees. A survey among female Bachelor's students (Informatics and Business Informatics) in the summer term 2015 revealed that only 27% of the respondents explicitly welcome women's support measures. Evidently, there is still need of sensitization!

## 3. What we want to do

Based on existing experience, the proposed contributions of the Faculty of Informatics are summarised under the motto "Recruiting – Keeping – Promoting" [1]. In addition, awareness-raising measures are being intensified. The following measures also cover the points referred to in the tendering directives: (i) increasing the proportion of women in the total number of labor force in scientific top positions, ii) career and human resource development for young female scientists, and (iii) the recruiting of female students for Informatics and Business Informatics.

### 3.1 Recruiting

I. The bridging course "Introduction to Programming with Java" for prospective female students will be offered every September. This sends out a clear signal that the IT and Business Informatics studies are not only intended for HTL graduates, but that we are also intentionally looking for AHS graduates and thus especially women.

II. Within the framework of the admission procedure for Informatics and Business Informatics for winter semester 2016/17 a women's quota is to be implemented. In order to prepare a sensitive implementation of such a quota, talks with the head of the Gender Competence Department, Dr. Brigitte Ratzer and with the former Vice Rector for Teaching at the Medical University of Vienna, ao. Univ.-Prof. Dr. Karin Gutiérrez-

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Lobos took place. The admission procedure will be implemented in cooperation with the University of Vienna.

### 3.2 Keeping

I. Fix the leaky pipe in the context of the undergraduate studies in Informatics and Business Informatics (just under 20% female beginners, just over 10% female graduates [D]). A statistically and empirically significant study has to provide information about the background and verify existing assumptions.

II. Longer-term measures are course evaluation and further development of gender-sensitive teaching contents.

III. Develop a MOOC for "Introduction to Programming" with gender-sensitive content. This project and the one mentioned before (II) will be part of the goal setting negotiations with the rectorate within the framework of the innovation budget.

IV. Continue annual Award for Excellence for female undergraduate and graduate students, for the time being sponsored by Siemens.

V. We offer positions for female study assistants which introduce them to research. Research units can apply for a maximum of one study assistant position per year.

VI. Approach and recruit female graduate students individually, enthuse them about research, and send them to conferences with the aim to inspire them to continue their academic careers as predoctoral assistants.

### 3.3 Promoting

I. Postdoctoral positions should continue to be advertised explicitly for women. Right now, there are two postdoctoral positions for women in the process of being filled (advertised in the course of 2015). The goal is to be able to advertise postdoctoral positions for women every 2 to 3 years.

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II. For female co-authors who give a talk at a conference, the financing of the conference visit will come from faculty budget. This shall motivate young female predoctoral assistants and junior researchers to give lectures to the research community and thus positively position them as role models.

## 3.4 Sensitizing

I. In order to raise the faculty's awareness of the necessary support of women, gender competence in the scientific community is to be developed and further built up, e.g., with unconscious bias training, etc. [F]. For this purpose, the educational offer of the staff development department of TU Wien will be taken into account. The aim is to ensure at least one participation per research unit and year in a workshop/lecture on the topic of gender competence. This should provide the basis for gender competence over the next few years within the Faculty of Informatics.

II. In future calls for professorships gender competence will be included as desired skill.

III. A female quota for guest professors, among others of the Vienna PhD School of Informatics, will be implemented. At least one out of five visiting professorships shall be awarded to a woman.

## 4. How much it costs

The implementation of these actions requires financial and human resources. As a first measure, each research unit contributes €1,000 their budget to finance the women-dedicated positions of study assistants (may be considered as "Gender Budgeting light"). In addition, it is intended to use the innovation budget of the Faculty for the implementation of this strategy paper.

## 5. Information on the intended professorship/tenure track position for women

The Faculty of Informatics applies with first priority for a woman's professorship and with second priority for a woman's tenure track position.

Open professorship or tenure track positions are located within the area of our five research foci of the Faculty of Informatics: Logic and Computation, Multimedia and Visualization,

Computer Engineering, Distributed and Parallel Computing, and Business Informatics. Depending on the excellent women who are available at the time of the opening, the position is to be dedicated to one of these foci.

Within the scope of an initial screening, colleagues have searched for excellent women for professorships or tenure track positions in their respective fields. The result was a list with eleven names of internationally renowned young academics and professors. For understandable reasons, we won't mention their names here. Furthermore, the Academia Net, initiated by German chancellor Angela Merkel and part of the Robert Bosch Stiftung[3], has been used to search for young female scientists and professors.

## A. Bibliography

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[C] Wissenschafterinnenkolleg Internettechnologien, http://www.wit.at (last access: January 20th, 2016)

[D] Brigitte Ratzer, Women's and Men's Report, 78th Session of the Senate of TU Wien, December 14th, 2015

[E] Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Female Professors Program - Measures to promote gender equality - Best Practice, Germany, https://www.bmbf.de/de/das-professorinnenprogramm-236.html (last access January 20th, 2016)

[F] European Research Consortium for Informatics and Mathematics, ERCIM News No. 104, January 2016, http://ercim-news.ercim.eu/en104 (last access January 20th, 2016)

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[3] http://www.bosch-stiftung.de/content/language2/html/31095.asp