

unterscheiden, wenn nicht wissenschaftliche Institutionen? Wer sonst kann klären helfen, welche Antworten auf gesellschaftlich drängende Fragen trotz der bestehenden Meinungsverschiedenheiten in einer pluralistischen Gesellschaft wissenschaftlich informiert und moralisch verantwortlich sind (Hinsch und Meyer 2019)?

Universitäten kommen aber für diese für die Gesellschaft und die Demokratie so wichtige Rolle nur infrage, wenn sie sich auf ihr Wissenschaftsverständnis besinnen und dieses auch leben. Keine Hypo-

these – sei es zur nächsten Pandemie, sei es zu bewaffneten Konflikten, zur Klimapolitik oder sonstigen gesellschaftlich relevanten oder umstrittenen Themen – sollte ohne interdisziplinäre, wissenschaftsbasierte Diskussion beiseite gewischt und für das Einbringen von Hypothesen sollte niemand diffamiert werden. Eine wichtige Aufgabe von Vertreter(inne)n der Wissenschaft auch gerade in der öffentlichen Diskussion ist, Unsicherheiten zu benennen und die Gründe für vernünftigen Dissens auszuweisen.

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AKTUELLE NACHRICHTEN

Enhancing biodiversity at universities

Biodiversity measures still play a subordinate role in most environmental agendas and sustainability strategies of universities, while climate change already plays a prominent role. Moreover, universities have a major responsibility as role models for society, economy and policy makers. We argue that biodiversity loss must be addressed equally and together with climate change. Through this commitment, universities will be able to raise awareness both internally and publicly.

Biodiversity loss might be caused by many activities of universities (Bull et al. 2022). Impacts on biodiversity can occur in two ways. 1. Property that is under administration of the university is directly influenced by activities of staff, students or contractors (e.g., horticultural services, experimental sites for research, laboratories). 2. Activities that can be influenced indirectly, such as production processes and supply chains of external suppliers with potential impacts on biodiversity (e.g., food supply, energy or water supply, mobility, or chemicals).

Ad 1. Properties such as university campuses can be altered to have a direct positive local or regional impact on biodiversity and/or awareness of the biodiversity crisis. Such activities include sustainable land use management of parks or other

open spaces, such as providing breeding sites for birds, insects, bats or other animals and restoring insect-friendly and species rich meadows or garden structures. Space could also be provided for community gardening or orchards of endangered fruit trees. Many larger universities also have botanical gardens or museums, which could increasingly function as centers for the transfer of biodiversity knowledge beyond research.

Ad 2. Universities should also develop strategies for addressing their indirect impacts on biodiversity. In addition to land-use aspects, energy production could also have an effect on biodiversity, for instance hydroelectric power has predominantly severe negative effects. Laboratories in particular have been shown to have an even greater impact on biodiversity than mobility, as a recent study by the University of Oxford has shown (Bull et al. 2022). This area deserves special attention.


We recommend first and foremost the development of a sound, long-term biodiversity strategy for the university and the provision of adequate resources. Such a strategy must include the knowledge of the status of biodiversity on campus. This can be achieved through university courses or bachelor's or master's theses, thereby inte-


grating the topic into education at the same time. Mitigating indirect effects might require a much wider range of expertise for decision making and might be more costly. Professional cooperation with internal and external experts is recommended.

Finally, biodiversity measures on campus can contribute to the well-being of university staff, students and society. There are many ways in which universities can contribute to the transformation towards a sustainable society, not only by addressing climate change but also by tackling the pressing biodiversity crisis.

References

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