



## MISSION STATEMENT *DIVERSITY+* IN UPOL

For UPOL the following aspects are particularly important in professional and interpersonal dealings with each other:

- mutual appreciation and respect,
- equal rights for all employees\* (according to responsibilities),
- good communication and participation within the department and
- a culture of cooperation.

It is a special concern of ours to reflect and welcome diversity in the department. By diversity, we mean the variety of perspectives, skills, ways of thinking and social positions resulting from personal experiences, backgrounds and characteristics considered as relevant by society. These characteristics include gender, age, culture and ethnicity<sup>1</sup>, religion and worldview, health and impairment, gender identity and sexual orientation, family constellation, lifestyle and many more. Understood as constructed characteristics, not as real and unchangeable conditions.

Everyone has the right to freely develop their personality without discrimination on the basis of the above-mentioned characteristics, including within the working environment<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, we understand diversity as a strength for our work. With regard to our work as researchers in the field of sustainability, it is essential to integrate a variety of perspectives in order to develop relevant and creative solutions for social problems.<sup>3</sup>

In order to express these concerns explicitly, we agree on the following mission statement.

1 Understood as constructed characteristics, not as real and unchangeable conditions.  
2 Social discrimination, including in the working environment: *Barres, B.A. (2006): Does gender matter?; Scherr et al. (2017): Handbuch Diskriminierung; S. 133ff.: Direkte und indirekte, institutionelle und strukturelle Diskriminierung; S. 656ff.: Diversity Management als Anti-Diskriminierungsstrategie*  
3 Diversity as a strength for scientific work: *Hunt, Layton, Prince (2015): Diversity Matters; Powell (2018): The power of diversity: being inclusive gives teams a competitive edge in science. It also happens to be the right to do; AlShebli et al. (2018): The preeminence of ethnic diversity in scientific collaboration; Adams, J. (2013): The fourth age of research; Woolley et al. (2010) Evidence for a Collective Intelligence Factor in the Performance of Human Groups*

### A) RESPECT AND APPRECIATION

**Appreciation:** We regard all employees\* – scientific and non-scientific staff alike – as individual personalities with different skills, experiences, perspectives, approaches and knowledge. We endeavor to treat each other in an appreciative manner, which is expressed in respectful language and respectful interaction. We also strive to articulate our appreciation for each other.

**Conflict avoidance and constructive handling of conflicts:** We name problems, ambiguities or conflicts. We create a space (ombudsperson/arbitration board or similar) where these issues can be addressed in a fearless and confidential manner. We work out constructive feedback structures and feedback possibilities that provide a framework for an open, honest and respectful exchange in order to address possible problems and difficulties at an early stage and also to express appreciation. These structures, both to prevent and to deal with conflicts, should work top-down, horizontally as well as bottom-up. We would like to use conflicts to learn more from each other, to learn with each other, to recognize obstacles in open exchange and – where possible – to reduce them. In this way, we want to facilitate productive cooperation, a workload that is acceptable for everyone and a good work-life balance.

**Forbearance and good will:** We talk about colleagues in a factual and appreciative manner and are understanding and forgiving when mistakes are made or when we are overloaded. We strive for empathy with others. We do not assume any ill will where ignorance, coincidence or carelessness may have been the cause. Our togetherness should not be characterized by dogmatism and mistrust, but by the assumption of good intentions as well as respect and unbiased friendliness.

**Open-mindedness towards diversity:** We cultivate an open-minded attitude towards different ways of thinking, perspectives, experiences, levels of knowledge etc. In our professional context, we recognise and value the different contributions of the various disciplines.

### B) EQUAL RIGHTS

**No place for discrimination:** Devaluation and exclusion of people on the basis of skin colour, origin, gender including gender identity, religion, physical characteristics and abilities, sexual orientation, age etc. have no place in UPOL. We do not tolerate discriminatory remarks and discriminatory behaviour. At the same time, we are aware that we, as a part of society, are not free of discriminatory structures and therefore reproduce them. We therefore strive to act in a reflective manner. We stand up for the equal treatment of all employees\* and support each other in solidarity in case of discrimination. At the same time, we want to promote mutual understanding and, in the event of violations of boundaries, we seek mutual approach (e.g. through dialogue on the background of the violation and apology).

**Compatibility of work and care activities:** We create awareness and sensitise people to the burdens of care activities. We want to enable all employees\* with children or relatives requiring care to participate fully in department meetings, workshops, project meetings and other activities. We pay attention to family-friendly working hours.

**Inclusive and respectful language:** In UPOL we ensure that the language is inclusive and respectful. This includes a gender-sensitive language as well as the consideration of language barriers (non-native speakers) and different levels of knowledge. We formulate emails and texts addressed to other people in UPOL in a gender-equitable manner as far as possible, so that everyone feels equally addressed and seen, regardless of whether or to which gender they belong. In addition, we try – if possible and appropriate – to communicate in both English and German.

### C) COMMUNICATION AND PARTICIPATION

**Openness and listening:** We are committed to ensuring that all employees\* can openly address issues and questions that are important to them. We listen and let each other speak out. In doing so, we aim to cultivate a direct, clear and differentiated language.

**Communication at eye level:** It is our goal that communication always takes place at eye level. Everyone involved should be able to express themselves equally and be taken seriously by others (regardless of position, experience, etc.).

**Culture of welcome and farewell:** In UPOL we actively support a culture of participation and inclusion. We are actively committed to ensuring that all new employees\* and guests in our department are welcomed openly and warmly, introduced to and involved in internal structures and processes, and are given a friendly farewell.

**Transparency:** In UPOL, we actively support a transparent exchange of information, e.g. about decision-making structures, personnel policy, etc. We are also aware of the limits of transparency and handle confidential and personal data responsibly. Everybody is invited and encouraged to ask questions, make suggestions and thus contribute to transparency.

### D) COOPERATION

**Culture of error and experimentation:** We advocate a culture of learning and experimentation in which we interpret errors as learning opportunities and deal with them openly: "Try to fail as often and early as possible". This includes the courage to share even unfinished things.

**Feedback:** Feedback is an instrument that we use both on a horizontal and vertical level. We see feedback as a tool to support learning and not as criticism (of the person); feedback refers to as concrete examples as possible, is immediate and desired. Feedback is always subjective and is based on observations and perceptions (avoid evaluations). When we give feedback, we show suggestions for concrete development possibilities from our point of view; when we receive feedback, we can filter what we want to accept and what not.

**Cooperation:** The structural conditions in which we work also include unequal treatment and competition for career opportunities. We want to treat each other fairly and cooperatively at the same time. This creates a field of tension that we acknowledge. We actively support cooperative work processes and structures which enable the participation of colleagues in projects and (where appropriate) decision-making processes according to criteria of interest and strengths (abilities). We want to work together instead of against each other and promote a culture of cooperation. We support each other in our work and our professional development.

**Hierarchies and responsibilities:** We have flat hierarchies in UPOL, which still entail different decision-making powers and different access to information. In the case of decisions with personnel consequences, we involve the persons concerned in the considerations beforehand as far as possible. We see it as an important task to bring in and integrate the previous knowledge, experience and competencies of the employees\* as much as possible into the work of the department and into the projects. We expressly welcome members of the department who wish to take on responsibility and support them in doing so.

### OUTLOOK: IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH CONCRETE MEASURES

The mission statement is underpinned by a concrete programme of measures that is jointly developed and supported by the employees\*.