

Case study on scientific
governance:
What (not) to do

Disclaimer

I present what was reported to me by the members of our group.

The purpose of sharing our stories is to contribute to a well working governance in science organizations.

The current governance is not meant to protect students or employees

Machtmissbrauch an Hochschule

"Ihr Verhalten

hat

Gender B

How di

Cam

Unequa

In a dispute over Germany's presidential organization's resignation.

An MPS-wide survey of "work culture and work environment" that nearly 60 percent of female scientific leaders reported "gender-related unequal treatment."

Survey sheds Mobbingvorwürfe

Institut

Neue Mobbingvorwürfe an Max-Planck-Gesellschaft

"Es

Belästigung und Mobbing

Tatort Universität

Schikane
Max-Planck-Gesellschaft
der Elite

Von Kris
14.08.20

Das Machtgefälle an Universitäten begünstigt Mobbing. Die Fälle werden aufgeklärt.

Von Philipp Kollenbroich
27.02.2018, 10.30 Uhr

SEXUALISIERTE GEWALT AN STUDENTINNEN

AUF SEINEM TISCH LAG EIN
STACK

Machtmissbrauch in der Forschung

Die Wissenschaft versagt bei der Selbstkontrolle

Machtmissbrauch und Manipulation in der Forschung werden zu oft totgeschwiegen. Wir brauchen mehr Transparenz!

AUS DER
ZEIT NR. 09/2023

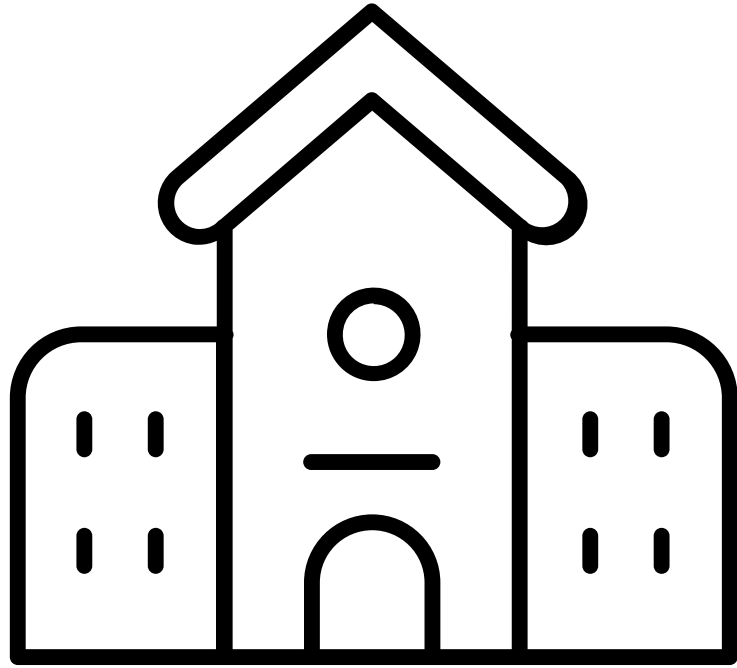
Emotionaler Rollercoaster: Die Max-Planck-Gesellschaft wird von neuen Mobbing-Vorwürfen erschüttert. Diesmal richten sie sich gegen die Direktorin eines Leipziger Instituts.



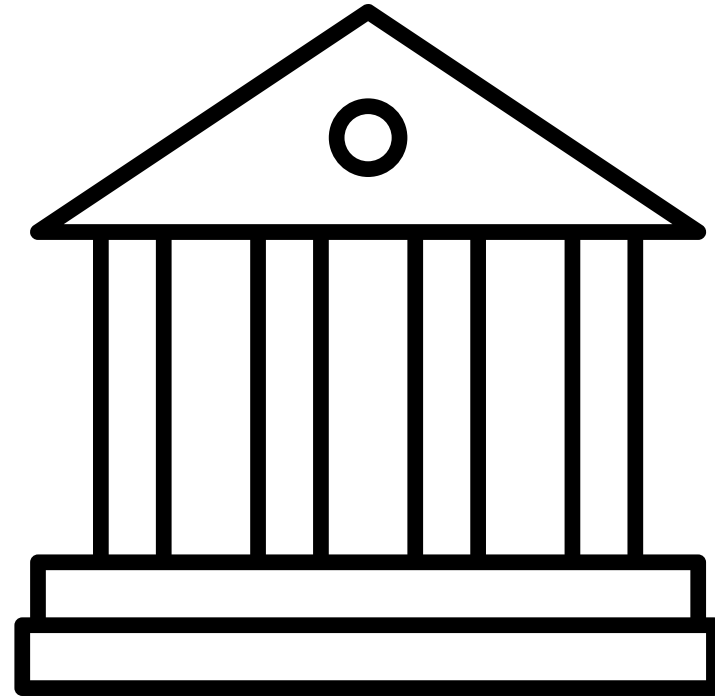
What happens when
students/researchers seek help
within the current governance?

How the current governance fails to
protect students & employees
and approaches to improve the
situation

Current state of affairs

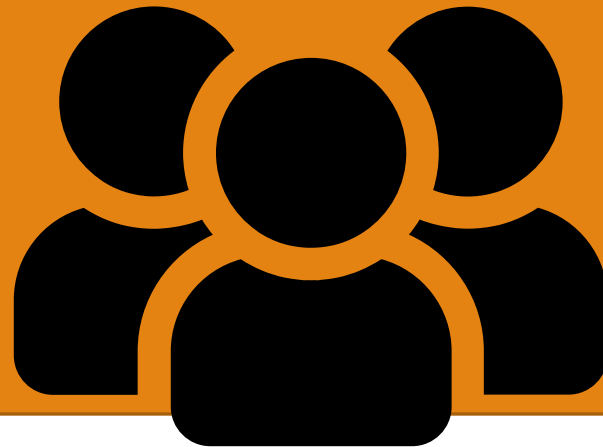


RESEARCH INSTITUTE



UNIVERSITY

This slide originally contained examples of misconduct. We removed those example in this slide deck (for distribution) in order to protect all involved individuals



Let's try to get
help within the
system

2 group members (master students)

Is there an Equal Opportunity Officer or Ombudsperson to contact?

Yes. We know from **30** officers responsible in our case:

Research Institute : 4 **conflict counsellors**, 1 ombud person, 3 **equal opportunity officers**, workers council

Research Society: **solicitor law firm**, central gender equality officer, ombud person

University: central equal opportunity officer (+ 3 deputies), faculty equal opportunity officer + deputy, **diversity vice president** + 2 diversity management coordinators, **anti-discrimination officer** + deputy, 2 **ombud persons** + deputy

Excellence Cluster: 1 **diversity coordinator**, 3 equal opportunity managers

We talked to **7** of those persons (from each group at least one)

1. Equal Opportunity Officers & Ombudspersons



Results of talking to the Equal Opportunity Officers

Research Institute's Equal Opportunity Officer

Excellence Cluster Diversity Coordinator

University Diversity Vice President

University Anti Discrimination Officer



Understanding and “holding hands”

Results of talking to the Equal Opportunity Officers

Research Institute's Equal Opportunity Officer

Excellence Cluster Diversity Coordinator

University Diversity Vice President

University Anti Discrimination Officer

- Contacting Supervisor
- Mediation
- Anti-sexism training for supervisor
- 2h voluntary anti-sexism training for lab

Results of talking to the Equal Opportunity Officers

Research Institute's Equal Opportunity Officer

Excellence Cluster Diversity Coordinator

University Diversity Vice President

University Anti Discrimination Officer

“You should talk to your group/professor again, they are smart people, I am sure they can understand”

Results of talking to the Equal Opportunity Officers

Research Institute's Equal Opportunity Officer

Excellence Cluster Diversity Coordinator

University Diversity Vice President

University Anti Discrimination Officer

- “Start conversations with positive tone using we & I want X , instead of you are/aren't doing Y, Z”
- “You should tell them what you need, not what they should do”

Results of talking to the Equal Opportunity Officers

Research Institute's Equal Opportunity Officer

Excellence Cluster Diversity Coordinator

University Diversity Vice President

University Anti Discrimination Officer

“The group is prone to excellence, you should appreciate the intellectual accomplishments. So you can't expect to be done with work at 2pm & take a walk at the park, that's not how science works”

Results of talking to the Equal Opportunity Officers

Research Institute's Equal Opportunity Officer

Excellence Cluster Diversity Coordinator

University Diversity Vice President

University Anti Discrimination Officer

"If you still have a problem talk to the Dean of the faculty"



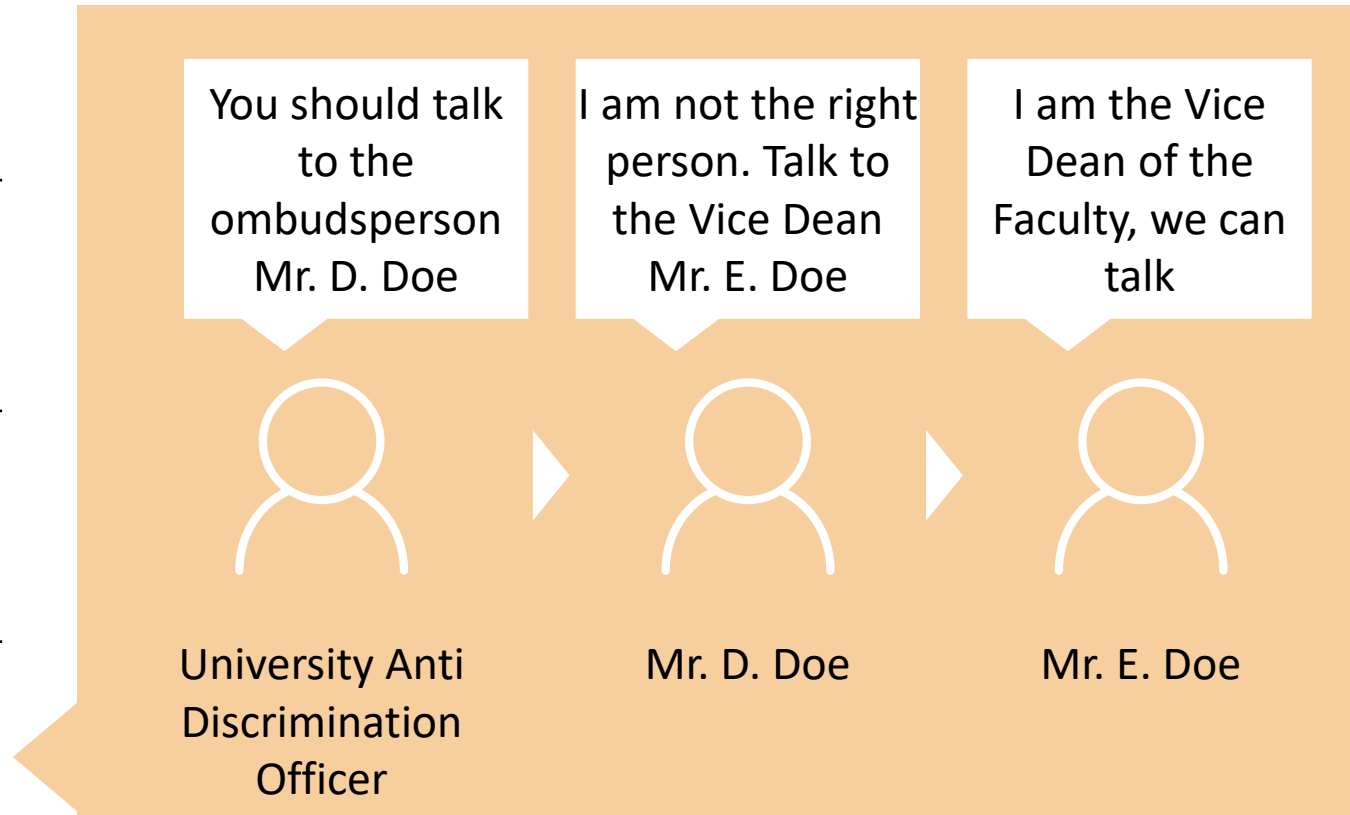
Results of talking to the Equal Opportunity Officers

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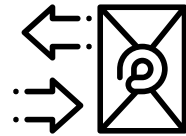
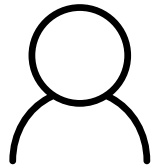


2. Dean & Vice Dean

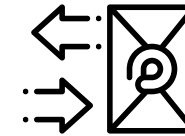
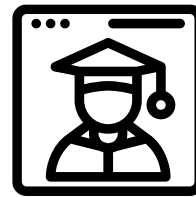


Contacting the Dean*

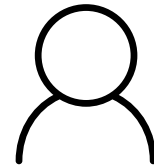
Student 1



Dean



Student 2



Answer Dean: Can you give me more context?

Student 1: Gives context

Result: He did not reply, but informed the professor that the student complained without consent of the student

Answer to student 2:

“[...] Remember also that being able to perform a master thesis at this [Research Institute] is just a courtesy of [Research Institute] towards you [...]”

*) Dean of the faculty of the affiliated university, also director at a neighboring [research institute]

Contacting the vice dean of the faculty

Understanding the problem

Mistrusting the dean regarding the confidentiality (he was right...)

Recommends to accept the misconduct and do nothing to “not escalate the situation further” to not hurt career of the student

3. The solicitors of trust appointed by the Research Society (external law firm)



We contacted the solicitors

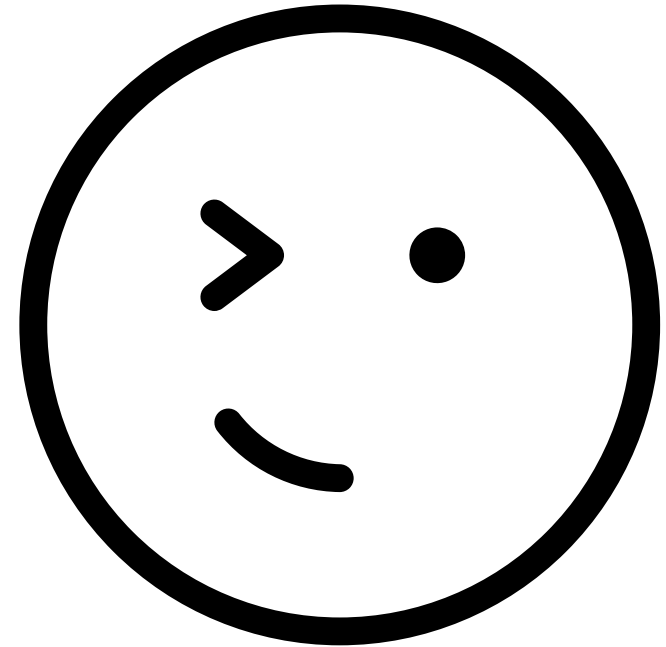
1 Understanding and supportive

2 Conflict is solved from [Research Society]'s point of view as master student aborted her Master Thesis and is no longer at [Research Society]

3 Offered to contact the “The Internal Investigations Staff Unit at Administrative Headquarters” (Stabsstelle) but let shine through a recommendation not to as this might hurt career

What would
help?

We need more
contact persons to
report to!



Let us start with what is NOT going to help

1 More Equal Opportunity Officers

2 More contact persons (Anlaufstellen) in general

3 Another external contact point (such as the law firm)

Still all of those are important!

Again: What
would help?

Some actions based on discussions and literature



Reduce dependence

- **Strict separation of direct supervision, HR management and grading/mentoring**
- More (permanent) research positions to decrease career pressure
- Provide students in fundamental research with alternative career options (e.g. mandatory internship in industry or other associations)



Governance

- **Need external regulation or governance that protects students & holds faculty accountable**
- Install transparent and fair structures
- Take example on other reporting systems, e.g. German Military



Culture

- **Train/Inform faculty of their role as advisors, leaders, human beings etc**
- **Educate students & employees about their rights and contact persons/solicitors**
- Increase awareness against power abuse

Thank you very much for your attention & engagement

**Let's make the German Science System
excellent in EVERY aspect!**



Contact us via ScienceGovernanceGroup@posteo.de