

German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Alumni Conference

Saturday 20 March 2010

E nga mana

E nga reo

E nga rangitira

E nga hau e wha

Nau mai, haere mai

Haere mai ki Te Whare Wananga o Tamaki Makau Rau

- Hon. Dr Wayne Mapp, Minister of Research, Science and Technology
- His Excellency Thomas H. Meister, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany
- Dr Christian Bode, Secretary General of the German Academic Exchange Service
- Peter Hamilton, Deputy Secretary, New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Former Ambassador to Germany

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

It is my pleasure to welcome you to The University of Auckland and to this 2010 meeting of the alumni of the German Academic Exchange Service.

As we know, science links between Germany and New Zealand are strong, and growing stronger, despite the differences between in the two countries in size, language and geography.

Germany is a respected research powerhouse, not only within Europe but throughout the world. It undertakes 10% of the world's research, two thirds of which is funded by the private sector. Outside the English speaking world, Germany is New Zealand's most important partner in science cooperation. Some 15% of New Zealand academics and researchers have scientific ties to Germany.

Six research areas of particular importance to both Germany and New Zealand have been identified for support through Agreement-related initiatives and activities. The fields in which bilateral research collaboration will be enhanced are: Health; Food/Agriculture/Biotechnology; Information and Communication Technologies (ICT); Environment (especially climate change), Marine; and Antarctic research.

Recognising these important links, the New Zealand Vice-Chancellor's Committee and the German Rectors' Conference united in 2006 with the aim of promoting academic links between higher education institutions of both countries. The "Academic Links Agreement" they signed aims to promote academic cooperation, particularly:

- in the exchange of undergraduate students on both sides;
- in the placement of New Zealand and German graduates and researchers;
- in the fostering and implementation of research projects;
- in the exchange of senior and junior research staff and research assistants; and
- through participation in symposia and other academic events.

The DAAD has been playing a pivotal role in this exchange. It has supported academic exchange between Germany and New Zealand with nearly 1.8 million New Zealand dollars annually in recent years. With its various scholarship programmes it has enabled outstanding young German academics to qualify at the very best institutions of New Zealand and has encouraged excellent students and researchers from New Zealand - like you - to go to Germany for study and research visits. Meetings like this make it possible to maintain and foster contacts in a spirit of tolerance and openness.

In 2010, eight students from the University of Auckland are undertaking or will undertake academic exchange to Germany. Most of them come from the German Department of our University, one of the strongest in Oceania. But with currently over 900 international degree programmes basically or entirely taught in English, language is no longer a barrier for New Zealanders eager to study in Germany.

For German students, New Zealand has been an increasingly attractive study destination lately. Nearly 1000 Germans studied in our country in recent years, making it number 15 of the most popular study destinations for Germans, regardless of the Bologna Process in Europe and the distance.

Perhaps less well known are our research links with Germany.

Active commercial projects at The University of Auckland include some big names from German industry:

- **Conductix- Wampfler**, our licensee for Induction Power Technology applied to materials handling, have provided most German car

companies with robotic and automatic guided vehicles for manufacture, including **Mercedes, Audi and BMW**).

- We provide technology and consulting services for the light metals industry, including **SGL Group and TriMet Aluminium**.
- Our Auckland Bioengineering Institute and Centre for Advanced Magnetic Resonance Imaging are the preeminent providers of cardiac imaging expertise to **Siemens**.

And we are conducting clinical trials research with **Boehringer Ingelheim** to evaluate the effectiveness of drugs used to lower blood pressure.

As you can see, the links between New Zealand and Germany are very strong. We are, to use the title of your meeting, "Bridging the distance" very effectively. I am sure that your discussions will lead to even more effective bridges being built.

Thank you