

An die
Hochschulleitung der Universität Bayreuth

Bayreuth, 16 August 2019

Statement of the Scientists for Future at UBT on the accusations against the Students for Future Bayreuth

In the summer term of 2019, the Students for Future Bayreuth held a plenary meeting at the University of Bayreuth which resulted, apart from positive resonance, also in some disparaging and insulting reactions. In this statement would like to comment on this situation.

It is scientific consensus that our current economy and way of living are major causes of climate change and a number of serious ecological and social problems. Previous efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions have been inadequate and have not led to a reduction in per capita emissions in Germany over the past decade.¹

If global warming continues at the present rate, the livelihoods of future generations will be undermined. Young people are particularly affected by these developments, which is why school pupils and university students have been demonstrating for months. In a statement, 26,800 researchers – including many from the University of Bayreuth – have supported the demands of the Fridays for Future protests as justified, well-founded and urgent. The statement of the Scientists for Future says:

The young people rightly demand that our society should prioritize sustainability and especially climate action without further hesitation. Without far-reaching and consistent change, their future is in danger. This change means, among other things: introducing renewable energy with new courage and the necessary speed; consistently implementing energy-saving measures; and fundamentally changing our patterns of nutrition, mobility, and consumption.”²

As the University of Bayreuth recognised in the “Struktur- und Entwicklungsplan 2025” (University Development Plan 2025), universities play an important role in change towards sustainability. In this context, we support the recent initiatives of the Students for Future to call for concrete measures at the University of Bayreuth.

Just like us as Scientists for Future, the Students for Future see themselves as a movement that is independent of political parties and oriented towards the scientific consensus on the urgency of said change. Against this backdrop, the denigration of the student movement as an “appropriation of the university by left-green ideologists” in the open letter of the state board of the “Junge Alternative

¹ Source: CO2-Calculator of the Umweltbundesamt, online available at: <https://uba.co2-rechner.de/>.

² The full statement ist available at: <https://www.scientists4future.org/stellungnahme/stellungnahme-de/>.

Bayern“ to the president of the UBT, as well as the personal attacks on committed individual students on internet platforms are unacceptable. We, therefore, welcome the commitment of the university administration to sustainability and hope that it continues to grant the necessary administrative support to the student parliament.

This support in no way calls into question the political independence of the university and its administration, but is rather in line with the “Struktur- und Entwicklungsplan” and the goals it has set itself. On the contrary, given the broad scientific consensus on the human influence on climate change, statements that severely call this influence into question cannot be accorded a comparable status. We therefore hope that the university administration will firmly reject statements that negate the scientific state of the art on climate change, some of which were made in the letter of the “Junge Alternative Bayern”.

Certainly the demands of the students present the university with great challenges. But as the national statement of the Scientists for Future rightly states:

„While the need for participation and discussion remains, action must be taken now. Discussion and action are not mutually exclusive.“ (Scientists for Future 2019)

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