

## **IMAP meeting 6**

Venue: CAP4, Room 519

Time: December, 2014; 9.00-11.00 am

Participants: Avan Antia, Nina Keul, Anne Kupczok, Kristian Laß, Heike Link, Barbara Neumann, Anke Regenber, Janne Repschläger, Jörn Schmidt, Jie Song, Marlene Spinnner, Tobias Steinhoff, Gesche Braker.

Guest: Anja Voss hall

Minutes: Gesche Braker

### **Agenda**

- 1) Position paper of Kiel University on the situation of early career scientists
- 2) Update on ECC 2015

Ad 1) Anja Voss hall introduced herself as the coordinator for writing the position paper and briefly summarized the purpose of the position paper to the German Rectors' Conference (HRK). The position paper will summarize the current situation of scientists at the postdoctoral level at Kiel University and how the University plans to approach this issue in the future. Therefore input was collect from several groups at Kiel University. Since IMAP and the Cluster has been discussing intensely the situation of scientists at the postdoctoral level for several years the University was interested in first-hand opinions of IMAP members.

### **Aspects that were discussed:**

#### **work – family:**

- part-time contracts, options of 2 complementary project partners working in part-time, problem: competition, maybe if clear distribution of tasks
- extension of all contracts following parental leave, problem: BMBF does not allow to extent contracts cost-neutrally
- opportunities given are frequently delineated by institutional constraints, e.g. human resources is overly careful
- flexibility should be granted
- some programs (e.g. 6+4-program) are only available to women in science, on the other hand women and families should be particularly supported

**dependence from mentors:**

- strong and continuing dependence from mentor which is fostered by the funding system, mentors' support is inevitable for applications for 3<sup>rd</sup> party funding, fix-term contracts foster dependence from mentors and prohibit early independence

**teaching activities:**

- rules, who is eligible to teach Bachelor and Master students differ strongly between disciplines
- Institutional contracts (Landesmittel) have a focus on teaching, while 3<sup>rd</sup> party funded contracts allow for some teaching, although exceptions exist where also 3<sup>rd</sup> party funded postdocs are strongly involved in teaching activities to be fulfilled by their department
- the University could financially compensate teaching activities that are not covered by the respective contracts, e.g. by 10% more salary
- teaching as profession, difficult teaching should always have a background of research, but there is a conflict between research and teaching obligations
- lecturer positions would only be attractive if established career path
- teaching often is considered a burden, publications and supervising students is the currency that counts

**roles of mentors:**

- mentors have tasks beyond being a researcher and teacher, they should reflect their own career paths and give advice on which career path to follow and how
- performance reviews should be considered as an opportunity to self-reflect the career path chosen, the teaching portfolio etc.
- question is whether performance reviews by the mentor are useful for scientists working on fix-term contracts, or whether the strong dependency prohibits honest and open feed-backs
- performance reviews/certificates: mentors are lacking expertise/experience but training on this instrument could be part of mentoring programs for newly employed
- requirements for trainings in mentoring are difficult to communicate neutrally

**definition of postdocs:**

- who is meant by postdocs?
- term 'Nachwuchs (young talents, junior staff)' – who should be accepted by Kiel University to be part of this group and which career opportunities can be offered?
- problem after 6 years of being postdoc – how to these experienced postdocs fit into the structure of a research group?
- researcher as a profession, but not professor, contrast researcher – junior professors
- international: assistant professors, but they are independent

- in Germany junior professors: per definition with professor status, but really independent? – depends on discipline
- in Germany: professor or nothing
- professors are leaders of very large groups with overarching power to distribute available funding
- aspect of continuity in teaching, mentoring the less experienced
- very late decision to quit science and to continue careers in the non-academic labor market is a problem

Ad 2) Kristian Laß gave a short update on the planning status of the ECC 2015.