



Exmatriculate Right-Wing Ideology!

The LandesAstenKonferenz Berlin supports the statement of the AStA FU Berlin against right-wing ideological and discriminatory teaching (1). Discrimination is still a massive problem at Berlin universities, there is a lack of independent and capable complaint offices as well as a clear commitment of the universities against right-wing ideologies and any discrimination. The present cases underline the urgency of previous demands of the LAK Berlin in the area of anti-discrimination in BerlHG and the coalition agreement.

We would like to point out that the present text contains racist and sexist quotes as examples and can therefore be potentially triggering for those affected.

Currently, Freie Universität is dealing with the case of lecturer Michael Grünstäudl, who shared right-wing content among students in his position as a lecturer at the FU. In response to the exposure of Grünstäudl's dissemination of racist and fascist ideas, the FU is allowing his contract to expire - but only after vehement protest from the students. However, the promised cancellation of all of the lecturer's teaching obligations has not yet been implemented. A comprehensive reappraisal or reflection of this incident is still pending.

The case of lecturer Grünstäudl is not an isolated case, neither at the FU (1), nor in Berlin. Right-wing, racist and discriminatory structures are part of everyday life at Berlin universities.

Humboldt University

The Humboldt University of Berlin also does not live up to its mission of opposing any "form of discrimination, intolerance and cultural self-exaltation" (1). Numerous lecturers who have made discriminatory statements inside and outside their seminars, who have demonstrably been active in right-wing conservative associations or who are close to their ideologies, still teach at the university today.

Prominent cases include the ex-AfD member Prof. Dr. Markus Egg, who teaches in the Department of English and American Studies at HU (2), and Jörg Baberowski, who is employed as a professor for the history of Eastern Europe. In the case of the latter, a court even ruled in 2017 that it is permissible within the framework of freedom of expression to call him a right-wing radical (3). Particularly scandalous are his verbal, as well as physical, attacks on left-wing students. In 2019, for example, he publicly called a student "unbelievably stupid and radical leftist," who, along with another student, subsequently took him to court (4). In 2020, he ripped election posters for a left-wing university group out of a left-wing student's hand and threatened to "punch him in the face" (5). Baberowski also spoke out publicly against Merkel's refugee policy on several occasions, for example by rejecting the "talk of welcome culture" (6). In 2022, Baberowski is still teaching at HU. In 2016, professor Ruud Koopmans also publicly advocated the theses that "Multikulti should be declared a failure" (7). In 2022, he again speaks critically about the current migration policy in an interview with the magazine "Cicero" (8).

Technische Universität

The B*PoC collective of the AStA TU reports on racist incidents that have been collected via an anonymous reporting form since 2020:

Project seminars in which students who are read as being of Turkish origin are basically graded worse on the grounds that "Turkish students have problems with conceptual design". Teachers who make



statements such as "in Albania only holes are dug", innovation takes place in Germany or the USA or "the only way to stop climate change is if all women in Africa would learn to use contraception". There were also cases of black students' disadvantages being dismissed as excuses or the N* word being used uncensored. Students also reported to the AStA TU that the lecturer for foreign students, of all people, repeatedly made racist, sexist and anti-Semitic comments during his lectures.

At the TU, the problem of the lack of contact points for those affected is also clearly evident:

Although there is an anti-discrimination officer, he is responsible for employees and not per se for students. Although his website states that he is available to all members of the TU, the AGG complaint procedure, which can be initiated by him, is aimed solely at employees. There are no legal sanctioning possibilities (1). In the case of a procedure, the university is "obliged as an employer to create appropriate measures to remedy the discriminatory acts".

Furthermore, the current anti-discrimination officer, Alexander Hoffmeier, is a white cis man who has no previous experience in anti-discrimination counseling (2). Experiences of racial discrimination are often traumatic for those affected. This necessitates not only counseling in terms of what to do next, but also a safe space where affected persons feel adequately supported and do not have to fear that their experiences will be denied or questioned. A better alternative would be so-called peer counseling, i.e. counseling by people with the same characteristics or in the same life situation as the person being counseled. This type of counseling is also considered beneficial by the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency (3), among others, and offers the basis for a counseling free of domination through the relationship of trust between the client and the counseling person.

Acting from necessity of a lacking contact point, the B*PoC students at the TU organized themselves and founded an autonomous B*PoC department in the AStA in November 2021. The fact that urgently needed anti-discrimination work depends, as so often, on the voluntary commitment of students is disproportionate.

Universität der Künste (University of Arts)

The University of the Arts also employs numerous teaching staff who have no sensitivity to certain issues. Racist and sexist comments as well as microaggressions are unfortunately part of everyday life, especially for international students.

The student initiative I.D.A, is currently collecting anonymous experiences of discrimination from Udk students and publishing them through their channel on Instagram (@ida.udk) (1). The results are concerning and the list is long - attempts to demean musical or artistic cultures of international students through inappropriate comments and to portray Western culture as superior usually go unpunished. In addition to BIPOC discrimination, women are also discriminated against. A sexist example: "You are all women, so we can draw shoes".

The above are not isolated cases. The problem of discriminatory teaching at universities is structural. For example, the LandesAstenKonferenz received reports from students at almost all universities whose teachers use the N* word in their lectures. It is also obvious that colonial thought patterns are reproduced and trivialized at universities, and racist basic assumptions are constantly found in teaching.



The problems of students who suffer from structural discrimination are often talked down by those responsible and even dismissed as "excuses". It is particularly problematic that the university structures often not only do not actively combat problematic behavior of teaching staff, but even practically support it, since professors who obviously make racist statements are backed up by university administrations or responsible bodies do not see themselves in a position to do anything about lecturers. Even if students have been sexually harassed or discriminated against several times.

Students themselves generally have little power to act within the universities with regard to all these problems. There are no rights of co-determination in the selection of lecturers. In appointment committees, as in all other decision-making bodies at universities, students can always be outvoted because the status group of professors always has a majority of seats in these bodies (A). At the same time, as illustrated by the example of the TU, there are hardly any independent complaint offices where students can get adequate help. Students are often put off, and very few of the contact points at the universities have actual authority to act.

Due to existing hierarchies, students also have little chance to defend themselves against discrimination or the spread of questionable ideologies. Especially in small departments, it is not possible for students to avoid certain lecturers. Even if a case attracts greater attention at the department, lecturers rarely have to bear the consequences for their statements and affected students are still forced to experience statements and discrimination of certain lecturers in lectures, seminars or during examinations.

We therefore demand:

- actual sensitization of students and lecturers for discrimination instead of content-less "diversity strategies".
- direct reactions to the dissemination of right-wing, racist and discriminatory content by lecturers
- actual co-determination of students in the allocation of professorships
- Critical reappraisal of university history
- Expansion of contact points for students affected by discrimination as well as clear powers of action and responsibilities in this regard
- Clear and consistent positioning of the universities against all forms of fascism, racism and other forms of discrimination.

Furthermore, we want to encourage all students to stand up against any discrimination in teaching and at universities. We have to stand in solidarity with all our fellow students who are taught by right-wing, racist and otherwise discriminating lecturers and thus have to go through extra difficulties, disadvantages and stressful to traumatic experiences. None of us may look away, remain silent or abstain when right-wing ideology is spread.

We can only claim our right to non-discriminatory teaching together! So come together, talk to each other, react - if possible - directly and immediately to discrimination in teaching. Contact your student representation in cases of discrimination. You can find free and solidary counseling offers on the respective website of your AStA.



Contact for queries:

Feel free to email info@lak-berlin.de

Links und Footnotes:

Freie Universität

(1) Statement ASTA FU: <https://astafu.de/rechte-ideologie-exmatrikulieren>

Kontakt: hochschulpolitik@astafu.de

Humboldt-Universität

(1) <https://www.hu-berlin.de/de/ueberblick/humboldt-universitaet-zu-berlin/leitbild/leitbild>

(2) <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/afd-politiker-und-hu-professor-maskierte-greifen-dozenten-der-berliner-humboldt-uni-an/14927574.html>

(3) <https://www.spiegel.de/lebenundlernen/uni/bremer-asta-gegen-berliner-professor-baberowski-urteil-gibt-beiden-recht-a-1139619.html>

(4) <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/wissen/wegen-aussagen-auf-facebook-hu-studentinnen-zeigen-joerg-baberowski-an/25114666.html>

(5) <https://www.asta.uni-bremen.de/soll-ich-dir-was-in-die-fresse-hauen-zum-umgang-der-humboldt-universitaet-zu-berlin-mit-linken-studierenden/>

(6) <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/wissen/historiker-erhebt-schwere-vorwuerfe-joerg-baberowski-legt-sich-mit-humboldt-uni-an/24943774.html>

(7) <https://www.nd-aktuell.de/artikel/1018789.fuer-forschung-ohne-feindbild.html>

(8) <https://www.cicero.de/aussenpolitik/migrationsforscher-ruud-koopmans-die-ampelkoalition-belohnt-menschen-die-irregulär-eingereist-sind-migration-fluchtlinge-asyl>

(1) <https://www.hu-berlin.de/de/ueberblick/humboldt-universitaet-zu-berlin/leitbild/leitbild>

(2) <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/afd-politiker-und-hu-professor-maskierte-greifen-dozenten-der-berliner-humboldt-uni-an/14927574.html>

(3) <https://www.spiegel.de/lebenundlernen/uni/bremer-asta-gegen-berliner-professor-baberowski-urteil-gibt-beiden-recht-a-1139619.html>

(4) <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/wissen/wegen-aussagen-auf-facebook-hu-studentinnen-zeigen-joerg-baberowski-an/25114666.html>

(5) <https://www.asta.uni-bremen.de/soll-ich-dir-was-in-die-fresse-hauen-zum-umgang-der-humboldt-universitaet-zu-berlin-mit-linken-studierenden/>



- (6) <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/wissen/historiker-erhebt-schwere-vorwuerfe-joerg-baberowski-legt-sich-mit-humboldt-uni-an/24943774.html>
- (7) <https://www.nd-aktuell.de/artikel/1018789.fuer-forschung-ohne-feindbild.html>
- (8) <https://www.cicero.de/aussenpolitik/migrationsforscher-ruud-koopmans-die-ampelkoalition-belohnt-menschen-die-irregular-eingereist-sind-migration-fluchtlinge-asy>

Technische Universität

- (1) https://www.tu-berlin.de/asv/menue/antidiskriminierung/agg_beschwerdeverfahren/
- (2) <https://de.linkedin.com/in/alexander-hoffmeier-321268150>
- (3) https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/publikationen/BT_Bericht/gemeinsamer_bericht_dritter_2017.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=6

Kontakt: bipoc@asta.tu-berlin.de

*The B*PoC collective of the AStA has set up an email distribution list, through which they will inform in the future about events in the field of racism sensitization and B*PoC empowerment and will soon also publish a column for racism sensitive education. Feel free to sign up: <https://asta.tu-berlin.de/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/antira>*

Universität der Künste

- (1) <https://asta-udk-berlin.de/de/initiativen/ida/>

Kontakt: ida@asta-udk-berlin.de

Instagram: @ida.udk

Further:

- (A) Wegweiser Hochschulpolitik: <https://astafu.de/hopo#gremien-und-organe-der-fu-berlin>