

Klaus Tschira Foundation Founds National Institute for Science Communication at KIT

NaWik Is to Make Scientists and Students in Germany Fit for the Dialog with the Public

Citizens dialogs, science blogs, children universities, and many more efforts are undertaken by scientists to start a dialog with the public. As a rule, however, the committed researchers are self-taught in this respect. Students and young scientists hardly find any training offers in the field of science communication. In university education, lessons conveying communication competence apart from the subject proper are still lacking. For this reason, the Klaus Tschira Foundation will found the National Institute for Science Communication (NaWik) at Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT). The institute is planned to start its education program in October 2012. Funding granted by the Foundation amounts to up to EUR 10 million for a duration of five years.

Founder Klaus Tschira is convinced: "Excellent research needs comprehensibility!" Scientists must be able to explain the subject of their current work, for what public funds are used, and which chances and risks are associated with their activities. The National Institute for Science Communication is to educate and train scientists and students in target group-oriented science communication. NaWik will concentrate first on the group of PhD and master students. The Institute will develop and test the corresponding training modules and integrate them in selected study courses. These offers will be applicable to all German universities and non-university research institutes and supplied all over Germany.

KIT President Horst Hippler welcomes the commitment of the Klaus Tschira Foundation and sees a big chance for both Karlsruhe and entire Germany: "It is our objective to establish science communication as a new field of research and teaching at KIT. The instruction units developed by NaWik can be applied in all study courses." As a second program in the field of science communication, KIT will start the new bachelor and subsequent master program "Science – Media – Communication" at the Department of Humanities and Social Sci-

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ences in the next winter semester.

To ensure practical relevance of NaWik, NaWik will cooperate with the *Spektrum der Wissenschaft* publishing company (Heidelberg). Steven Inchcoombe, Director of the Nature Publishing Group, to which *Spektrum* belongs, explains: “*Nature* and also *Scientific American* have been standing for a direct dialog between research and the public for more than 100 years now. Via *Spektrum der Wissenschaft*, we contribute this expertise to the National Institute for Science Communication.”

Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) is a public corporation according to the legislation of the state of Baden-Württemberg. It fulfills the mission of a university and the mission of a national research center of the Helmholtz Association. KIT focuses on a knowledge triangle that links the tasks of research, teaching, and innovation.

The Klaus Tschira Foundation supports natural sciences, mathematics and informatics, and their appreciation in society. With its training offer “Sag’s klar” (Say It Clear), it has been supporting communication competence of scientists since 2001. Since 1997, young scientists, who explain their excellent research in an understandable way, have been awarded the Klaus Tschira Prize for Understandable Science. Further information is available at www.klaus-tschira-stiftung.de.

The Spektrum der Wissenschaft publishing company publishes “Spektrum der Wissenschaft” as well as the magazines “Gehirn&Geist” (Brain and Spirit), “Sterne und Weltraum” (Stars and Space), and “epoc”. In all four journals, researchers report about their work in a generally understandable manner. More than 70 scientists of various disciplines blog on the SciLogs.de blog platform operated by “Spektrum”. The portal Spektrum.de is a leading platform for up-to-date science reporting. www.spektrum.com

This press release is available on the internet at www.kit.edu.