Sharing Information on Progress Report 2017
As part of the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME)
Dear Reader,

I am delighted to have assumed the leadership at the HWZ in 2017 as its new president. A suite of ambitious changes are being initiated aimed at positioning the HWZ as the premier educational partner for business professionals in the Zurich metropolitan area. A core objective of mine is in creating an organizational culture that thrives on change, and thus innovation. Only thus are we able to provide our students with dynamic and timely educational offerings. The creative impulses that are gleaned from partner universities in the PRME network can be a valuable contribution to these objectives.

In the course of a new federal legislation on higher education, the HWZ was recently accorded the institutional accreditation in higher education from the Swiss Accreditation Council and is the first university in Switzerland to have done so. This provides us with a continued mandate for excellence, renewal and responsibility, in which the PRME can play a fruitful role.

In the following, you will find in succinct form a few of our current and future initiatives of relevance to the PRME.

Sincerely,

Peter Petrin, President
University of Applied Sciences in Business Administration Zurich
Presentation of the University and Commitment to Excellence

The HWZ - Hochschule für Wirtschaft Zürich (University of Applied Sciences in Business Administration Zurich) - is the largest business university in Switzerland that is exclusively targeted to working professionals. All our B.S., M.S., M.B.A. and certificate programs are structured part-time and permit our students an optimal mix between theory and practice. A total of 2,096 students are engaged in over thirty degree programs. While our department heads and full time professors are involved in both research and teaching, the HWZ lecturing staff, numbering around 500, hails to a large part from the Swiss service and industrial sectors, as also from NGOs and public institutions. This integral connection with the larger business community on both lecturing staff and student body makes the comprehensive PRME implementation process both a challenge and a formidable opportunity to make a significant, real-world impact. At the end of 2016, the HWZ was the first University in Switzerland to be fully accredited by the Swiss Accreditation Council, which also ensures that the PRME relevant "social sustainability" is adequately integrated into the University's organization as well as teaching and research activities.

In this vein, our commitment to the PRME and the institutional requirements presented in the accreditation report is reflected in our mission statement:

“As a member of the PRME, the HWZ strives to take on a leading role amongst business schools in order to connect the social and ecological challenges with economic objectives in a responsible fashion.”
The Teaching Challenge

The HWZ – unlike many PRME signatories presented in the two “Inspirational Guide for the Implementation of PRME” booklets – has an exclusively part-time student body. The vast majority of lecturers, moreover, is not part of the permanent HWZ staff, but comes directly from industry to share their experience in the classroom. While this proximity to industry creates a timely and highly relevant educational experience for our students, it also makes the comprehensive implementation of the PRME across the entire university curricula challenging in terms of reaching and coordinating all lecturers to review and revise their syllabi to reflect our commitment to the principles of responsible management education.

Student Stakeholder Dialog

In a series of PRME presentations in various bachelor and master classes, the opportunity was taken to enter into a dialog with students about what it means for them to be a stakeholder of the HWZ. Specific questions asked are what they are already doing today in line with the PRME and what they personally would like to do tomorrow, and what they would like to see done at the HWZ in the future (e.g. a paperless classroom option). This is then discussed as a class and the input is collected and formulated into concrete objectives to be provided to the respective directors of study for potential implementation.

This kind of approach is very engaging for the students and provides the HWZ a much more targeted and rich feedback tool than traditional student surveys as to what we could do better as a university.

Lecturer’s Stakeholder Community

Another initiative, inspired by our review panel of the Swiss Accreditation Council, has been the fostering of a lecturer’s stakeholder community. This issue has been recognized as a priority for the HWZ, of particular importance in view of the fact that our lecturers come primarily from industry and are thus only loosely bound to our university.
Another exciting development is the integration of the GVV (Giving Voice to Values), as developed by Mary Gentile, into our curricula and further education offerings for HWZ staff. An initial GVV workshop was presented internally and was very well received. Opportunities for integrating the GVV as part of a "Values Driven Leadership" program into existing courses of study are currently evaluated. Options include:

- Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA): a series of GVV modules will be offered in the 2nd semester of study, after which the GVV procedure will be integrated directly into specific subjects such as Accounting, Marketing or Finance, each with their own idiosyncratic points of moral tension. A capstone workshop in their last year will have students present their own GVV dossier they developed throughout their course of study.

- HWZ Academy Workshop: a two-day GVV workshop geared specifically for senior management or directly to companies. This could be carried out in conjunction with the ZGP (Zurich Association of Human Resource Management).

- A GVV HWZ Darden conference open to business professionals that would feature Mary Gentile and a representative from a company where the GVV has been implemented. Breakout sessions could provide hands-on exercises. Such a conference could be coupled with a subsequent Academy Workshop.

- Internal GVV workshop for HWZ employees: As part of our internal further education offerings, a GVV workshop will be offered to interested HWZ employees.

- GVV coaching offering for all our lecturers: Individual coaching for our lecturers on how to incorporate GVV methods and cases into their specific subjects.

Such a comprehensive, systematic integration of the GVV across our educational offerings would go a long way to realizing the PRME’s teaching objectives.
The Research and the Knowledge Transfer Challenge

The research at the HWZ is in many facets oriented around PRME principles, as evidenced by the singular orientation of the research done at the Institute for Strategic Management – Stakeholder View (led by Prof. Dr. Sybille Sachs). However, also other areas of the HWZ are engaged in PRME relevant realms, such as the Center for Human Resource Management & Leadership (lead by Mr. Matthias Mölleney) and the Center for Accounting & Controlling (led by Prof. Dr. Thomas Rautenstrauch).

Current Research Projects

A number of different research projects with a distinct social and sustainability orientation are currently being pursued at the HWZ, two of which are included below:

- The Kaufmännische Verband Schweiz (Association of Commercial Employees Switzerland) and the Think Tank Thurgau (TTT) provided a research mandate for the HWZ (our institute as well as the Center for Human Resource Management and Center for Digital business) to investigate in an explorative - as opposed to prognostic - manner the impacts of the digitalization on commercial occupations. Investigated was which occupations will be most affected, which new occupational profiles will be created and which competencies will be needed in the future in commercial enterprises in response to the ensuing digitalization. The consequences of the digitalization on the work place will be an increased cost pressure on one hand and an increasing digitalized automatization of routine work. An increased blurring between the boundaries between enterprises and industry sectors is expected. Competency profiles will gain on importance over traditional job descriptions or educational degrees, as exemplified by the portfolio worker working on project basis. Recommendations for workers are to continuously develop their social and self-competencies as well as to strengthen their so called “translational competency”. This latter competency includes being able to translate strategic directives into operative ones as well as the ability to adjust one’s communication to its respective context. Lastly, for educational institutions the recommendation was to stronger develop digital competencies as well as offer individualized learning pathways and provide life-long learning. This research study resulted in considerable media attention in Switzerland (see Publications) and Sybille Sachs was invited to present the results to the Swiss House of Representatives’ committee on employment.

- A project with the Federal Statistical Office (BFS) aims at enabling the core stakeholders in issue-based multi-stakeholder settings. The objective is to enable the management and the involved employees of the BFS to build a comprehensively systemized Stakeholder Management concerning issues and to implement it in a sustainable manner. The primary focus of this project lies on the methodological and theoretical communication, the transfer and the support through the contractors in phases, so that the greatest possible transfer of know-how into the BFS can be made. This year the last of four phases has been completed (as of November 2016), for which a workshop was held where the participants, enabled in the three forgoing phases, formulated different concrete suggestions for implementing a systematic stakeholder management in their organization.
Doctoral Students

Half a dozen doctoral students are currently working on a dissertation with a sustainability and social stakeholder element.

Publications - Articles

Numerous articles which have an emphasis on sustainability and an expanded social responsibly of the role of firms in society are published by our research departments and lecturing staff in peer-reviewed management journals as well as local Swiss publications.

Publications - Books

The book “Stakeholder engagement: Clinical research cases”, authored by Edward R. Freeman, Johanna Kujala and Sybille Sachs, was published by the Springer Verlag. For this book volume, the editors collected a multitude of empirical examples of stakeholder engagement in practice that contribute to build better stakeholder theory. As stakeholder theory has moved into the mainstream of management thinking in business ethics and a number of the management disciplines, there is an increasing need to explore the subtleties of stakeholder engagement via examples from practice. The case studies in this volume explore a number of aspects of the idea of stakeholder engagement, via the method of clinical case studies. Edited by leading scholars in the field of business ethics and stakeholder theory, this text affords a solid grounding in theory, brought to new levels of applied understanding of stakeholder engagement.

People for People Blog

The blog “People for People” continues to engage a steady readership. As of June, 2017, page views totaled over 50,000, with close to 15,000 individual visitors. Team members and guests continue to take turns to author blog posts that communicate stakeholder and PRME related issues. http://www.peopleforpeople.ch/ Our former English blog can be found here: http://stakeholder-peopleforpeople.blogspot.ch/.
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