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MAXIMILIANS-  
UNIVERSITÄT  
MÜNCHEN

# insightLMU

The international edition of the LMU Munich newsletter

## Competition facilitates more solidarity than sharing

Interview by Maximilian G. Burkhardt

Ethics are a resource in the “competitive environment”, states business ethics expert Professor Karl Homann. He urges companies to include frequently overlooked ethical risks as a factor in their calculations, and considers it their duty to take responsibility for the framework of business rules. Within this framework, runs his thesis, profit motives also enhance general welfare. Given these premises, he believes that competition facilitates more solidarity than sharing.



▲ “Nowadays, under the terms of competition, profit maximization is the immediate motivation driving people’s actions,” Karl Homann notes. “Profit maximization is the system imperative of the market economy and, within a regulatory framework, serves the general welfare.”

For the complete article, see



[www.en.lmu.de/news/insightlmu/2009/01\\_01.pdf](http://www.en.lmu.de/news/insightlmu/2009/01_01.pdf)

## Calling all excellent postdocs

by Kathrin Bilgeri

LMU Munich awards 20 “Research Fellowships” to postdocs in all disciplines. Until 15 April 2009, excellent candidates from all over the world are invited to apply for one of the fellowships that come with an attractive compensation and enable them to conduct research at one of LMU’s prestigious faculties. The “LMU Research Fellowships” are one of the main instruments of the “LMU Academic Career Program” designed to support outstanding young academics from graduation to professorship in the pursuit of their academic career.

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## LMU on iTunes U

by Katrin Gröschel

iPods, mp3 players and Walkman phones are now a part of everyday life – at universities as much as anywhere. It was only a matter of time before universities started making presentations on portable audio and video players. Now, alongside the world’s top universities such as Stanford and Cambridge, LMU Munich is represented on iTunes U, providing a huge range of content free for download.

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## Calling all excellent postdocs

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“Young academics are the assets of a modern university,” says LMU Munich president and chair of economics Professor Bernd Huber. “Math is simple: we must promote the best young scientists today so that tomorrow they develop innovative solutions to the societal challenges of the future.” It is for this very purpose that LMU Munich now focuses so strongly on the promotion of new academics with its institutional strategy “LMUexcellent”, and has created the “LMU Academic Career Program”. With it, LMU Munich intends to support young researchers from all fields and at all stages of their academic career – from graduation to professorship.

One focus of the new career program is on increasing the support of doctoral students and improving their qualification path. LMU Munich has therefore developed a dedicated Doctoral Research Training Program which aims at extending the number of supervision arrangements and offering supplementary research training. For many years, doing a doctor’s degree in Germany meant that a postgrad was supervised by only one professor during the whole dissertation process. “But experience has shown that doctoral students benefit greatly from networking and frequent exchange with supervisors and colleagues from their own discipline and academics from neighboring fields of research,” says Dr. Isolde von Bülow, head of GraduateCenterLMU, the university’s central coordination and support unit for structured doctoral programs. Currently, LMU offers fourteen doctoral programs and plans to enlarge this number by several specific measures bundled within the new LMU Doctoral Research Training Program. It also includes funding for distinct events such as doctoral workshops and symposia – mainly intended for students who have opted for an individually supervised doctorate. “We want to encourage the diversity of available options, so that all doctoral students can choose the path that best suits their academic interests and the demands of their field,” von Bülow emphasizes.

In order to attract the best postdocs from all disciplines, LMU Munich will be awarding 20 research fellowships as of July 2009. The internationally recruited candidates will be able to research at LMU Munich for up to four years – combined with an attractive compensation and numerous additional project grants. During their research stay, the young academics will be integrated into the university as comfortably as possible: They will have a professorial mentor to intellectually support



their project, and whose faculty they will also be settled into. They can also become immediately involved in teaching if they desire. Moreover, the newly established Center for Advanced Studies will be available to the fellows, where they can keep in regular touch with experienced top academics of LMU. With these new research fellowships, LMU provides outstanding young academics the best conditions for them to build up an academic profile. LMU Munich is already a prime address among young academics in Europe – and not only since its success within the Excellence Initiative, a Germany-wide competition to promote high-level university research.

Once up-and-coming academics have completed their doctoral studies, pursued their research work for a number of years and gathered enough teaching experience, then they can apply for tenure. This is usually a limited professorship, for which the candidates must reapply when it expires. “We want to make the step into tenure easier for young academics, which is why we were one of the first universities in Germany to set up tenure track professorships more than ten years ago,” says Huber. “This is our way of reinforcing the understanding within the faculties that such young professors have not simply reached the end of the road in their university careers, but require free scope for the advancement of their scientific profile.” Of course, a lifetime position is only granted to those who can produce outstanding performance in research and teaching.



## LMU on iTunes U

(continued from page 1)

On the subway or out jogging – iPods, mp3 players and Walkman phones are everywhere. All kinds of content – movies, music or podcasts – can be played on these colorful little devices. So it was only a matter of time before universities started making presentations on these portable audio and video players. Now, alongside the world's top universities such as Stanford and Cambridge, LMU Munich is also present on iTunes U. Since the beginning of the year, LMU has been offering a broad spectrum of audio and video files of lectures, current research results and information about the university as free downloads on a special page within the Apple iTunes Store.

Most popular among visitors are the lectures. Professor Heinrich Hussmann, for instance, has been recording his lectures for many years. As professor of media informatics, he is naturally concerned with providing students with additional means for learning. "I see the recording of my lectures as a supplementary service," says Hussmann. His lectures are recorded live from a laptop computer, which concurrently runs PowerPoint presentations. "I have to spend about 20 minutes afterwards editing the audio file to synchronize the sound with the slides. But then I can publish the file on my department website and now, as a recent addition, on iTunes." Students can then use the file to flip forwards and backwards between slides, while the soundtrack is divided into individual sections that can be accessed along with the accompanying slide. "I have received nothing but positive feedback so far," Hussmann relates, "and I don't believe these recordings will hurt face-to-face teaching. They provide support when learning for exams, helping to consolidate what has been learnt; and that is to be desired."

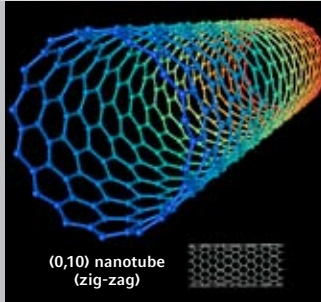
Armin Rubner of the Virtual University of LMU Munich was already aware that podcasting would be beneficial for e-learning at LMU as far back as 2007, when the first North American universities started up on iTunes U – the U standing for "University". "We were already aware that the project had great potential even back then," says Rubner. Now, four German universities including LMU Munich have been present on iTunes U since the beginning of 2009. The advantage of iTunes U is that for the first time all of LMU's multimedia content can be downloaded collectively and easily stored on any computer or portable player. "We are experiencing harmonization of media formats," explains Rubner. A



diverse range of content and variety of different media formats are now available on iTunes – from e-dissertations or research literature to lectures. "Anyone looking for information for a paper on the 'White Rose', the student resistance group against the Nazi regime, for example, will find a video, literature, learning material, a lecture or even an e-dissertation on the topic there," Rubner continues. "In the future, all relevant information such as e-dissertations, literature or lectures will be linked by pooling content on iTunes U."

All this is thanks to collaborative efforts between the Virtual University, the University Library, various faculties and Communications and Media Relations. Within six weeks, a sizeable volume of content was produced and then placed on the portal along with existing content. All this can be found under the categories "Über die LMU", "Forschung" and "Studium" ("About LMU", "Research" and "Study"). Alongside general information about LMU, the student video art project *LMU-eMotions*, for example, provides insights into the university history and present-day LMU Munich. The university library presents a selection of its extensive range of electronic media for download. Yet another new feature is the "ScienceCasts": these present recent findings from research, so that science fans can find out, for example, exactly how coral reefs are threatened by climate change. The LMU Munich site had nearly 40,000 hits in the first two weeks after its launch alone, and more than seven terabytes have been downloaded amounting to 1800 DVDs-worth of content. And the range of content will continue to be expanded in future: one of the categories to come, for example, is "Events and Congresses".



 RESEARCH
(0,10) nanotube  
(zig-zag)

◀ Stronger than steel, harder than diamond, and lighter than aluminium: carbon nanotubes are destined for use in a broad range of industrial branches.



◀ Mass release of sperm and egg cells of scleractinian corals near Heron Island, Australia.

## INTERDISCIPLINARY INSIGHTS

**Small, smaller – biggest**

by Susanne Wedlich

Nanomaterials may be about to change all areas of human life in the very near future. Research and development into the realm of a millionth of a millimeter has captured enormous attention in the Munich region. Here, physicists, chemists, biologists and medical scientists have joined forces to form the cluster of excellence Nanosystems Initiative Munich (NIM). They are looking to develop new applications above all in medicine and biotechnology.

 For the complete article, see [www.en.lmu.de/news/insightlmu/2009/01\\_02.pdf](http://www.en.lmu.de/news/insightlmu/2009/01_02.pdf)

## NATURAL SCIENCES

**Masters of recycling**

by Thorsten Naeser

Corals perform elementary tasks in a reef ecosystem: they build three-dimensional hard structures that provide a habitat to a huge number of different organisms. Corals also create stable limestone surfaces, which in turn are the substratum for sessile life forms. Marine ecologist and biogeochemist Dr. Christian Wild and his Emmy-Noether junior research group investigate material cycles in coral reefs around the globe. Their findings are helping to protect these threatened paradises in our world's oceans.

 For the complete article, see [www.en.lmu.de/news/insightlmu/2009/01\\_03.pdf](http://www.en.lmu.de/news/insightlmu/2009/01_03.pdf)



◀ For identifying genetic factors that cause schizophrenia, researchers analyse Single Nucleotide Polymorphisms (SNP), i.e. the smallest possible individual variations that can occur in the genetic material.

## LIFE SCIENCES

**A fragmented soul**

by Susanne Wedlich

One person in every hundred will experience a schizophrenic episode at least once in their life. While this severe psychiatric illness is so common, its causes are still largely unknown. Two large international consortia, which included the work of Professor Dan Rujescu, have now identified genetic variations that could be linked to a risk of schizophrenia.

 For the complete article, see [www.en.lmu.de/news/insightlmu/2009/01\\_04.pdf](http://www.en.lmu.de/news/insightlmu/2009/01_04.pdf)



◀ Hearing aids facilitate the educational and social integration of children with hearing impairment into kindergartens and schools.

## LAW, ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

**New approaches in hearing and understanding**

by Christine Amrhein

The newborn screening program is identifying increasing numbers of children with hearing impairment. Such children can thus receive remedial support in good time, enabling them to attend normal schools and kindergartens. School integration is, however, not always without problems. Professor Annette Leonhardt examines the impact of improved provision of early support for such children, and on the integration of these children into schools and kindergartens.

 For the complete article, see [www.en.lmu.de/news/insightlmu/2009/01\\_05.pdf](http://www.en.lmu.de/news/insightlmu/2009/01_05.pdf)

## Representing LMU Abroad

by Claudia Hellmann

It's not every day that one can sit in a cafe in Munich and chat with Dr. Thomas Zimmer. As the LMU representative for China, he is based in Shanghai where he can be found for most of the year. Zimmer, a Düsseldorf native equipped with a Ph.D. from Princeton and Amherst, has spent the past 16 years in Shanghai, where he also established and managed the local office of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). Now he can draw on his extensive network of contacts built up over the years. Zimmer started working for LMU in 2007, two years after the University established its first liaison abroad – the German University Alliance, a joint office in New York together with Freie Universität Berlin. In 2008 a representative for Southeast Asia and Singapore, based in Bangkok, followed.

When you are working for a German university abroad, being well-connected and knowledgeable is key – especially when representing a university like LMU with extremely extensive exchange programs with China. And Zimmer knows Shanghai like the back of his hand. "The city alone boasts more than sixty institutions of higher learning, but you simply can't compare this to Germany. In China, you will not only find research universities, but a broad range of institutions of higher learning, some of which might only qualify as centers of continuing education in Germany. And Germans of course know much less about China than, for example, the US academic scene." So whether it is students or researchers from Munich planning to come to China, or their Chinese counterparts preparing for a stay at LMU, Zimmer is familiar with the respective academic landscapes and can give them sound advice.

While Zimmer is intensifying contact to researchers, one of his main tasks remains advising students and graduate students planning to study at LMU. "With China getting richer, studying abroad is becoming an option for more and more students," says Zimmer. When counselling Ph.D. students interested in going to LMU, he has to overcome cliché images. "Munich is known as a most liveable city, but people know more about castles and beer gardens than about academic achievements – and Germany as a whole is not necessarily perceived as a country of science anymore. The German automobile industry may still be well-known around the world. But who knows, for example, that the MP3 player was invented by scientists from the Fraunhofer Institute?"



▲ Thomas Zimmer ▼ City skyline of Shanghai (China)



Student and academic exchange is only the first step to address this issue, Zimmer explains: "I try to encourage the students to really make the best of their time in Munich, to join international work groups, the German student organizations and so on. In my experience many Chinese students spend four years abroad but never really leave China." Zimmer hopes that the students, but also the visiting scholars, will be able to participate in the German university experience while at LMU, but he also knows that tightened study times have been making this even more difficult. He recommends the LMU summer schools as an excellent – and affordable – way for potential exchange students from abroad to get to know the university, to orient themselves and get a real taste of university life.

When not touching base in Germany or working in Shanghai, Zimmer also travels for LMU to the Chinese capital. "Politics is still made in Beijing, but going there two, three times a year is mostly sufficient to keep up with the developments," he explains. There, he also represents LMU at university fairs and conferences and keeps close contact with German cultural and diplomatic institutions and the Chinese government.

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For new professorial appointments to LMU, see [www.en.lmu.de/news/people](http://www.en.lmu.de/news/people)

## LMU opens Center for Advanced Studies

The Center for Advanced Studies, established at LMU last fall, was officially inaugurated by the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, on 6 February, 2009. In his speech, Barroso emphasized the substantial role excellent universities and research centers in facing the challenges of the 21st century, such as climate change and the global demographic trend. In his view, research can only resolve urgent issues regarding the future when it is founded on international networks and competition. This applies to both the natural sciences and economics, as well as to the social sciences and the humanities. In this context, Barroso stresses: "The establishment of the Center for Advanced Studies is a step in the right direction." The center is an integral part of LMU's institutional strategy "LMUexcellent", advancing interdisciplinary exchange amongst renowned researchers at LMU Munich and from abroad.

## Urban theorist Mike Davis receives UG culture prize

Professor Mike Davis from the University of California, Irvine, has been awarded the 2008 culture prize of the Münchner Universitätsgesellschaft (UG) [Association of the Friends of LMU Munich]. The award, which was offered last december for the first time, celebrates outstanding individuals in the fields of literature, art or the humanities whose works have brought them popular recognition as artists or academics. This time the award, worth 25,000 euros, was dedicated to the theme of "City of the future – the future of the city". The jury chose Davis, who was teaching at the University of California's Department of History until the summer of 2008, because of the creative ways he had found to remain a non-academic author. In his homeland of southern California he has become well-known for his analysis of social structures and urban development. His latest publications are concerned with topics including neglected "third world" famine and the spread of slums.

## LMU opens the "Flaubert-Zentrum"

Since the beginning of 2009, Munich has its own "Flaubert-Zentrum" – initiated by Professor Barbara Vincken, chair of Romance Literature at LMU Munich. It operates in close cooperation with the Centre Flaubert in Paris and is funded by the German Research Foundation and the French Agence Nationale de la Recherche. The new center aims at liberating Flaubert from the concept of national philology, striving towards a European research association that extends beyond binational relations and will include the USA in a second step. The research focus is on revealing Flaubert's handling of ancient times, religious studies, and theology, which adds an allegorical dimension to his texts. A Flaubert guest professorship with internationally renowned scholars, funded by means from the Excellence Initiative, and a research library, supported by the Carl Friedrich von Siemens Foundation, are designed to open up new horizons in Flaubert research.

## First doctoral degree within the Munich China Program

Young botanist Jun-Ming Tu was recently awarded the first doctoral degree within the Munich China Program, a cooperation between LMU und the China Scholarship Council (CSC). For three years now, up to 30 outstanding graduates from all fields have annually pursued their doctoral studies in Munich. LMU is so far the only university in Germany to have concluded such a far-reaching arrangement with CSC. Tu completed his doctoral studies at the Botanical Institute of LMU Munich under the direction of Professor Hugo Scheer, Emeritus for Photobiology. He investigated the mechanisms used by a certain type of bacteria to achieve optimal light recycling by photosynthesis. Aside from his excellent grades, his research stay at LMU produced a whole series of publications – some appearing in prestigious international journals such as "Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)".

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