

StuRepport

Student Council of the TU Ilmenau

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The debate on language courses

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Special - The debate on language courses

Editorial

The Referat für Hochschulpolitik des StuRa (= department of university politics of students council) would like to inform you again about the fees for facultative language courses.



Studierendenrat der TU Ilmenau

imprint

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History – how everything started

The story of the language class fees started in 2009. As a part of the in these times debated new concept for language teaching of Sprachinstitut (= Institute for Languages), the fees for the classes were discussed intensively. Though, the introduction of fees was prevented by an alliance of professors, staff and students. In the meetings of the senate at this time all groups of the university agreed with the rector's office, that language classes are an important part of a highly qualitative education at TU Ilmenau and an English monoculture should be avoided. In fact, it was planned to develop a concept which can offer a wide variety of languages. Fees were declined as TU Ilmenau wanted to create chances for students to get additional qualifications and the possibility to prepare themselves for stays abroad. Fees were seen as contrary to the internationalisation of TU Ilmenau.

However, three years later rector's office introduced fees (30€/course) for facultative language classes in Rektoratsmitteilung 11/2012 (= rector's office announcement) starting in winter term 2012/2013. The office stated that this step is needed for securing a high variety of language classes at TU Ilmenau. The response of rector's office on further questions of StuRa (= students council) clarified that there are costs which have to be covered. However, calculations were kept secret. This was justified by comparing students and staff with costumers. Also companies would not reveal internal calculations to their customers.

Already at this point StuRa criticised not only the charge of fees but also the lack of transparency as there was neither a transparent basis for the decision nor the inclusion of the university's committees. These have to be considered according to the law.

Because of the introduction of a scaling for the fees this June (<8 participants: no class; 8<participants<15 50€; 16 participants< 110€) the topic is back again on the

agenda.

At the same time rector's office also tried to raise the fees for DSH-courses (= entry requirement for international students at German universities) strongly without considering the senate.

In the last months, students' representatives intensively dealt with the topic. This resulted also in first achievements, which will be described later on.



Historical links

A detailed chronicle and reference to an article of StuRapport (= information brochure of StuRa) of June 2013 regarding this issue can be found on the website stura.tu-ilmenau.de.



Short Chronicle of the on-going debate about language classes

The rector's office announcement

On 02/07/2014 the rector's office's announcement 09/2014 regarding "Erhöhung der Sprachkursentgelte der fakultativen Sprachkurse" (= increase of fees for facultative language courses) was published in the university's intranet which is inaccessible for students. This message consists of information about the raise of the charge for facultative language classes from 30€ up to 110€ (for groups greater than 15 persons 50€) for students respectively 50€ up to 190€ (for groups greater than 15 persons 130€) for staff members. It was argued that this step secures the wide variety of offered language classes at TU Ilmenau. The students and their representatives haven't been informed directly. In advance of this decision, neither university committees like the senate and its commissions nor the direct affected persons had the chance to participate.

Information of the students and a broad public

On 07/07/2014, StuRa sent a message via students@tu-ilmenau.de which was forwarded to all students on 09/07/2014. StuRa informed the students about the raise of fees and the possibility to give their opinion via email to rector's office. More than 160 students took the opportunity.

On 11/07/2014, rector's office replied on the complaints via active-students@tu-ilmenau.de which does not inform all students. In this message, it was said that the raise of charges would secure the variety of language classes. Also rector's office did not see any other possibility than the increase of income as subsidising the courses was not possible due to the current budget of the university. Furthermore, language courses are seen economically. As a reason for not including the university's committees, the rector's office argued that that the charges are not "Gebühren", but "Entgelte". This form of fees is charged by the rector's office which may decide without including the university's committees, so the rector's office stated. (Annotation: According to ThürHG § 33 Abs. 1 Pkt. 12 an advisory opinion of the senate is needed for the change of fees; ThürHG = Thuringian university law).

On 14/07/2014, the exam period for students and teaching staff started.

On 22/07/2014, StuRa sent a further information message via students@tu-ilmenau.de and a press release in order to clarify that language classes are a sovereign duty of university. The current politics of the rector's office are in contrast to the aim of internationalisation and a wide variety of highly qualitative language classes. Moreover, the StuRa justified that rights of senate and ministry were violated and the affected people were not included in the decision making.

Increase of DSH-fees

At the same time, on 22/07/2014, rector's office again sent a message about the increase of DSH-fees which is not published yet –neither in the Intranet nor via email. However, the Institute for Languages charges since 17/07/2014 the higher fee referring to Gebührenordnung (= schedule of fees).

In the press debate which followed rector's office again stated its opinion in public and invited students' representatives to dialogues.

Dialogues with the rector's office

On 22/08/2014 and on 12/09/2014 student's representatives and the rector's office discussed about the issue. The topics were on the one hand, the impact of the decision on the internationalisation and on the variety of the offered language courses and therefore the range of teaching and on the other hand the information politics as well as possibilities for solving the problems and for a long-term strategy. In these meetings participants agreed on discussing the issue in the next meeting of the senate in October.

Information email for the students

StuRa sent information about possibilities of avoiding the fees (Europa-Studium, double degrees, non-technical elective courses etc.) according prior agreement with the rector's office. The information can also be found in this booklet. (Seite 4)

The senate meeting of October

On 08/10/2014, students' representatives introduced the issue during the senate meeting. In a positioning statement with proposals for a vote, the information politics and the internationalisation strategy of TU Ilmenau were brought up for discussion and the lawful basis for the increase of the fees was doubted. Already before the meeting, irritations came up, as the topic should have been discussed at the item "Sonstiges" (=

any other business) of the agenda. The rector's office also complaint, that students' representatives sent the paper with proposals for voting to all senators before the meeting. The senate couldn't agree on a solution after a heated debate. There was no vote for the proposals of the students' representatives. But it was announced that the issue will be discussed in the upcoming meeting of Hochschulausschuss für Entwicklung und Qualitätssicherung (HEQS; = Senate commission for development and quality assurance). The rector's office accepted the doubts about the increase of DSH-fees and agreed on investigations by the legal office of the university.

Withdrawal of the increase of DSH-fees

The legal office found out that the increase of DSH fees was not legal and the DSH-students can get the amount of 220 € back if they are asking for it. The rector's office officially stated it made a mistake, but did not give further detailed justification.

Abolition of the first language classes

Sprachinstitut announced, that some language classes will not be held this winter term (see table below). At least one language course will not be held because the teacher declined working under these conditions and decided for working at a different university. Simultaneously, Sprachinstitut searches for at least one further course a teacher. StuRa feels confirmed in his fears of loosing language classes.

language classes	qualification
Polish	A1.1
Chinese	A1.2, A2
Italian	B1
French	A2, Wirtschaftssprache
Russian	A1.2, A2+
Japanese	Alle Kurse

abolished language classes in WS 14/15

Discussion in HEQS

HEQS discussed about the issue language classes on 28/10/2014. Rector's office pointed out, that the additional offers of language classes have to be financed by fees. It thought moving the responsibility to TU Ilmenau Service GmbH. Students' representatives indicated that by this action the courses' fees would increase and this would finally result in turning away from language courses as a part of education at TU Ilmenau.

Furthermore, rector's office also considered accepting courses with less than 8 participants when the participants cover the rest of all upcoming costs.

Students' representatives suggested using long-term study fees, which actually have to be used for teaching – controlled by students' representatives. Rector's office declined this as it already decided to use the money differently (marketing, quality assurance). You can find impressions of the senate commission's meeting and the senate's meeting in this booklet.

Legal inquiries – payment via subject to condition

Due to the attitude of rector's office and due to the already withdrawn increase of the DSH fees, StuRa sent a further email. In this email is described how one can pay "unter Vorbehalt", which means that it is paid via subject to conditions. When this text is added students may ask for getting their money back in case it will be found out that the increase of the fees is illegal. The information can be found in this booklet as well.

Recent discussion of the increase of DSH fees in the senate

The increase of DSH fees was discussed in the senate meeting on 04/09/2014. The chancellor of TU Ilmenau presented the item in order to ask the senate to decide about the increase for next term.

Excursus

payment via subject to condition

As already written in the last email and the articles before, we assume that the charge of fees for the language classes acts against law. Therefore we want to start legal investigations about that topic and think on taking this topic to court.

When these investigations have a positive result, you can benefit – as long as you paid via subject to condition (Zahlung unter Vorbehalt).

This will not have negative consequences for you, as you already paid the fees and you just keep the option of getting your money back.

Here is a short overview how to pay:

1. Pay per bank transfer and add to the reason for transfer „unter Vorbehalt: <http://stura.eu/skp2014>“.
2. Inform us via sprachkurse@stura.tu-ilmenau.de so that we can tell you how the legal investigations ended
3. <https://ftp.tu-ilmenau.de/index.php?id=969303f4124ecb335ef6930438c9e4ec>
Here you can find the document "empfangsbestaetigung_uebergabeprotokoll" (You have to log in with your Uni-account). With this document, you can make your language class teacher confirm your payment via subject to conditions

If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact us via sprachkurse@stura.tu-ilmenau.de.

Information about chances for avoiding the fees

By current state of knowledge, you have several options for avoiding the fees:

1. Get enrolled in a double degree programme <http://www.tu-ilmenau.de/international/studierende/doppelabschluesse/>

2. Take part in Europa-Studium (studium generale)
3. Non-technical elective courses, when this is part of your study conditions (see study conditions of the master programmes Biomedizinische Technik, Communication & Signal Processing, Elektrochemie und Galvanotechnik, Elektro- und Informationstechnik, Informatik, Ingenieurinformatik, Werkstoffwissenschaften)
4. Language skills, when this is part of your study conditions (see study conditions of the bachelor programmes Technische Physik, Medienwirtschaft, Wirtschaftsinformatik, Wirtschaftsingenieurwesen)



Position of the students' representatives

Generally speaking, the students' representatives stand in for the right of all people for free education at no charge. We support variety of language skills for a dialogue with people from all over the world and for an internalisation of TU Ilmenau. Therefore we agree that a high variety of language classes is an essential part of the academic education of TU Ilmenau and also of the qualification of students, who educate themselves outstandingly.

At the same time, we consider the democratic participation of all groups of university in current decisions as the highest asset of a democratic university. This is only possible with far reaching transparency and consideration of all affected protagonists.

In the following we want to express our opinions as we already did in the senate meeting on 30/10/2014.

1. Information policy and transparency

The students' deputies are of the mind that the communication of the rector's office

regarding the formerly exposed situation has not been useful to solve the problems.

In order to avoid similar situations in the future, we request the immediate information and participation of the university committees as well as the affected groups and institutions insofar as increase in fees and changes of the long-term structural development is concerned.

Furthermore we request access to all necessary documents, particularly the calculations for the language courses and the statistics showing the language institute's development over the past five years.

You will find detailed explanations justifying our postulation below.

- a) Prior to the decision, the students' deputies were informed about the preparation of an updated fee calculation by the leadership of the »Zentralinstitut für Bildung« and the »Prorektor Bildung«. Detailed information on the dimension of the increase or on the timeline was never received. Nor did any participation in the decision process happen.
- b) Also the decision itself was not directly communicated to the students as persons concerned. This did not happen until the students' council distributed its information e-mail.
- c) Even now, the appropriate message from the rector's office is only available in the internal area of the university's website. Most students don't have access to this area although they are affected.
- d) The rector's office's message 2014-09 contains the following sentence: „A participation of the staff council did take place.“ On enquiry, the staff council replied that it was merely informed. In a critical statement the staff council asked for the underlying figures. This request remained unanswered.
- e) The members of the university committees were not able to obtain access to the calculation—even after multiple requests.

- f) A more detailed justification for the decision was given not before numerous students requested it from the rector's office. In this statement the rector articulates his opinion that fees for language courses are solely determined by the university's administration. We consider this juristic questionable and, together with the actual information policy, contradictory to our concept of transparency and participation in decision-making processes.
- g) The rector's office employed the „active-students“ mailing list to communicate statements. This mailing list does not reach all students at TU Ilmenau. Here again, it was the students' council that informed all students as persons concerned.
- h) Upon request, the language institute informed that it was not involved in the development of the calculation. Therefore, it could not influence the estimation of realistic group sizes.
- i) Upon request, the TU Ilmenau International Office also informed that it was not involved in the decision-making process.

Summing up these explanations, none of the affected groups or institutions were involved in the calculation of the updated fees, although they increased by 66% and 266% respectively. This huge change has an impact on the strategic orientation of our university. Concerning the university's strategy, it would have been necessary to involve the committees and all affected groups and institutions. That is in terms of acceptance and common solution determination.

2. Impacts on international strategy, financing of the language courses, and legal matters

The actual information policy and the non-involvement of university committees and affected groups and institutions (see point 1. Information policy and transparency) led to disquietness and uncertainties inside the university. This caused and still causes misunderstandings and lack of understanding.

In our view, language education is clearly one of the primary and sovereign tasks of a university. It is an immanent part of the education and thus must be financed from the therefor assigned public funds and should be free of charge for all students.

Without adequate language education, it nowadays is almost not possible to persist in science and economy and to communicate internationally. For many students it is financially not possible to pay the fees which causes—as we already notice—the termination of language courses in the long term (see XY). However, this contradicts the expressed rector's office's goal to maintain language courses.

Moreover, TU Ilmenau falls behind other universities as the overview regarding fees for language courses at other universities shows.

For this reason, we see the TU Ilmenau's internationalization strategy jeopardized.

Hence, we demand the withdrawal of the rector's office's message 09/2014 as it already happened with the rector's office's message regarding the increase of the DSH courses. This would create the required space for a discussion.

Anymore, we consider a rector's office's message as the basis of the fee juristic questionable and we will initiate a juristic examination.

In addition, we invite the entire university to discuss the value of the internationalization strategy in general and the language courses in particular as well as the general financing of the university. Out of this discussion, strategies and decisions can be derived in a democratic search for consensus.

internationalization strategy

After her example and the Thuringian university law the University of Technology of Ilmenau is urged to exert itself paragraph 6 ThürHG) for „lived internationality“ as well as international cooperation (§5. An internationalisation strategy which is questioned

according to our opinion by the carried out measures was fixed by the headmaster's office of the University of Technology of Ilmenau and the senate for this.

In the following points we would like to come on the problems which arise according to our opinion as a result of the headmaster's office decision concerning the internationalisation of the University of Technology of Ilmenau.

- a) A big hurdle is laid the students who are interested in a stay abroad by the remuneration rise financially in the way. Foreign semestres are already by the flight or attacking tuition fees a financial challenge for students. Hence, the decision runs towards all efforts on the part of the International Office, within the scope of the internationalisation strategy the number of the students who perceive a stay abroad to increase with lasting effect.
- b) Also the students who plan, perhaps to aim at a Double-Degree must pay first for her linguistic courses, because these must reach the linguistic level B2 what lasts as a rule 4 semestres. Nevertheless, hence, they would already have to perceive in the bachelor the linguistic courses where they cannot sign up, however, yet in a stand-in's Degree programme. With it the remunerations are also likely to work against the efforts in this area.
- c) In English is the world language and with it condition for applications. Other linguistic proficiency gives Ilmenauer to graduates additional qualifications on the job market and also provides for the reputation of the university. We fear that the elevation of the suitable remunerations will show a massive location disadvantage what appears topically also by the discontinuation of linguistic courses. The students who would like to qualify, in addition, still beside the duty study are punished by this measure. This contradicts the thought of the best possible support of the students and a free and universal education at the university.

d) Furthermore the senate of the University of Technology of Ilmenau has expressed itself in 2012 to set up no monoculture of the English language which is to fear with the topical decision, nevertheless.

e) In general the question positions itself as the University of Technology of Ilmenau would like to follow up her strategy of the internationalisation and what is necessary in addition. Moreover the topical strategy should be reworked and be fixed in the area of the languages in which direction the University of Technology of Ilmenau would like to develop and which means she is ready to start for it. In addition a whole consideration of the strategy of her subranges which also the examination of engagements encloses outside the University of Technology of Ilmenau how the foundation of universities in Indonesia (IULI) or Russia (GRIAT) is necessary according to opinion of the students.

Financing of the linguistic courses

Because the calculation was not made to us till this day accessible, we can report only after our state of knowledge from the talks with the headmaster's office and the preceding talks. Therefore, the calculation is based on a mixing calculation with respected figures and students became in the courses einberechnet as well as firmly hired employees, teachers for special matters and fee forces. Furthermore the group dimensions were immediately attached for all courses, regardless of the consideration of the participant's figures of the past years. These basic principles of the calculation seem a little load-bearing and raise other problems or questions on which in the following should be entered closer.

a) In the new calculation it was expelled to the fact that the courses have not carried up to now. It puts the question to itself as the deficits were compensated up to now and to what extent the current calculation differs from the basis of the calculation of 2012.

- b) The jump of 50€ on 110€ or from 130€ on 190€ with shortfall of 15 personal borders seems arbitrary and not understandably.
- c) With the registration for the courses students and employees must go out from the maximum costs of 110€ or 190€, because they may not expect that the financially more favorable group size is reached. We have inferred from the feedback of many students that this is looked about many students as not financeable and will keep them from taking part furthermore in linguistic courses. With it it seems questionable whether enough students and employees are found (according to headmaster's office decision at least 8 people), so that many courses take place generally. Nevertheless, this contradicts the aim of the headmaster's office to receive a very wide offer of linguistic courses. The suitable development stands out meanwhile (see chronology page 2).
- d) The new calculation proves higher costs than at the adult education programme (VHS) for employees. Therefore the field leaders would have to send her employees, instead, in VHS by very sparing use of the means. Nevertheless, this would go against the employee's portion of 25% of the total receipts per course.
- e) For stand-in Degree participants and students who book linguistic courses as a study achievement within the scope of her study order (non-technical elective subject or study generals) the visit of the linguistic courses is compulsory and is offered free of charge. In these cases the courses must take place, nevertheless, also without the necessary participant's number is reached. A full costs calculation has there her borders, because compulsory listeners prove no income. Should subsidies of the college towards filling the originating special failures be possible here, this shows that they would be possible in general for all students.
- f) The full expense account of the linguistic courses contains the participant's contribution as the only taking. Other income like the raising of money about special programmes (German Academic Exchange Service, the EU etc.) was not looked of our knowledge after, however, could be pulled up for a financing with. Furthermore cooperation possibilities with external facilities (other colleges) of our knowledge were not included after yet in the consideration.
- g) Here by a reinstallation in the old stand and the development of a common strategy under inclusion of all affected groups and institutions in the college we could reach together a better result which gives an understanding of us to the aim of a lasting and broadly put up linguistic offer.

Legality of the fees or remunerations

It is not portable for us that the headmaster's office falls here unilaterally and without inclusion of the concerning groups at the university such to serious decisions. The plans were not discussed before in the responsible committees, calculations on inquiries were made not accessible.

This action is juridically dubious to our opinion from the following points:

- a) In the calculation of the linguistic courses from 2012 was the speech of "course fees" or "participant fees". Also the accounts speak to students in 2013 of a „subject to charges linguistic course“. It is doubtful, to what extent the renaming of fees (public law relation) is juridically loadable in remunerations (relation under private law) with the same object or contract end.
- b) On the 11. 7 the headmaster's office sent a statement to the discomfort „the rise of the linguistic course fees concerning“ about the "active-students" distributor. The use of the concepts "Fee" and "Remuneration" also does not seem to be pursued by sides of the headmaster's office stringent.

- c) With the DSH courses the fact arises with the not published decision from the 22. 07. 2014 that the fee is regulated in the tariff system of the University of Technology of Ilmenau and is valid at the same time the remuneration regulation of the decision on the part of the headmaster's office. Which part is looked now as a fee or remuneration and is to be led away, remains unclear and would be to be cleared. This has led approximate also to the taking back of the rise of the course increase in charges DSH.
- c) Regardless of the naming as a fee or remuneration is valid after §16 ThürHG that the college „on the basis of a tariff system which needs of the approval of the ministry can raise in accordance with the Thuringian university fees and-entgeltgesetzes fees and remunerations“. In the tariff system the University of Technology of Ilmenau in §1 paragraph 1 stands: „The university raises according to this order in connection with the ThürHGEG fees, displays and remunerations“. Thereby are to be regulated to our opinion after also remunerations in the tariff system. The headmaster's office represents here a diametrically opposite legal view. The senate has the right of the statement to the tariff system after §33 paragraph 1 Pkt. 12 ThürHG.

Excursion: Look about the edge of the plate - linguistic course costs at other colleges

Interesting is also the comparison with other colleges who are similarly big like Ilmenau, because against the assertions of the headmaster's office Ilmenau belongs not to the universities who offer the linguistic courses to low remunerations, but is one of the most expensive universities of this scale in the whole of Germany. Especially clearly becomes this difference, one compares the figures of universities:

university	studying number	Linguistic course fee
TU Freiberg	5575	none
University Bochum	6074	20,00 €
University Karlsruhe	7000	none
RWTH Aachen	35813	none
TU München	35979	none
TU Dresden	36534	none

Selbst die großen Technischen Universitäten verlangen keine Sprachkursgebühren/-entgelte.

Unter den Technischen Universitäten in Deutschland verlangt die TU Ilmenau die dritthöchsten Sprachkursentgelte, teurer sind unter Umständen nur noch die Universität in Karlsruhe und die TU Braunschweig.

university	studying number	Linguistic course fee
Karlsruher Institutionen for Technologie	21301	60 €, bzw. 120 € (with Decree option)
TU Braunschweig	14000	35 €, bzw. 204 €
TU Ilmenau	6818	50 €, bzw. 110 €

The adult education programme in Ilmenau is, according to course and course level for students only slightly more expensive than the new linguistic course remunerations in the Sprachenzentrum. For the staff the national university prices lie even under this, which is why on account of the economic efficiency the adult education programme is to be preferred now.

What has been achieved so far?

discourse of important subjects encouraged

As can be seen in the chronology we encouraged a discourse throughout the college concerning language courses and internationality on one hand, and transparency and college's democracy on the other.

The discussions in the academic senate and its committees showed that those topics are complex and controversial because many different interests meet here.

Despite that we think to have achieved to get involved into said discourse which also comprises the university's funding and decision making culture.

exception from paying language course fees

As you may have noticed, we tried to inform you in the best way possible about the current incidents and probable exceptions from paying language course fees.

It was achieved to at least save some of the courses, though this can not satisfy with the removal of language courses coming.

rise of fees for DSH courses made undone

Through our questioning in the meeting of the academic senate the rise of fees for DSH courses was reviewed by the university's jurists.

After this happening it was disclosed that mistakes have been made and that students can get their 220€ overpayment back. So the course fees are at 630€ just as before. If you are affected by this you can contact the Spracheninstitut (department for languages) under spracheninstitut@tu-ilmeneau.de to demand getting your 220€ back. When problems occur contact us under sprachenbeirat@stura.tu-ilmeneau.de.

Precise reasons concerning the behaviour of the rector's office were never given, but we assume that the jurists discovered that

a change of the university's fee regularity is necessary to rise said fees.

This would have made the involvement of committees essential. A new draft for a change of the fee regularity was shown in the meeting of the senate on September 4th 2014, which would fit in place with mentioned assumption. Therefore the students' representatives foresee good chances on reviews of the remaining language course fees (see payment supra protest - page 4)



What's happening next?

Currently we plan to broach the issues of language courses, internationality and transparency in the university's committees and to sharpen awareness for those issues.

We would like to evaluate and criticize the current development as well as to advance shared strategies in cooperation with all involved groups on the campus. With this we want to keep language diversity and to boost teaching's quality at the university.

Furthermore we want to advance juristical reviews. For this we already sent directions on how to do a so called payment supra protest to all students. We also prepare appropriate complaints concerning the language course fees. Our goal is to demand back and to dispose the (in our opinion) extralegal fees.



further information

Explicit information collected by the students's representatives can be found on: stura.tu-ilmenau.de/publikationen/erhoehung-sprachkursentgelte

Do you want to help?

This topic is subject matter of the department for university politics and a group of language enthusiasts.

We would look forward on more people wanting to help us (not just with the language courses). Get in touch with us, write an e-mail or walk right into our office (basement of house A).

ref-hopo@tu-ilmenau.de

sprachenbeirat@stura.tu-ilmenau.de.



And suddenly the teachers run away

A strong limitation due to the increase of the fees for language courses was expected, although rector's office denied this vehemently. The argumentation was clear – students do not have money, do not enrol and therefore it was not possible to get 8 people for some courses – which is necessary. The course is cancelled. So far, so bad.

But suddenly teachers are not willing to hold the classes and therefore courses are cancelled as well. This may surprise at first sight. But if you see it from the teachers point, it makes sense. Who wants to wait and hope for the chance to teach a course and play in the lottery when you can get certain and safe sources of income.

Impressions from the senate and its commissions

The senate meeting on 07/10/2014 had a disillusioning character as the majority of the senators did not talk about the problems and arguments related to the language class debate. They partly considered it as irrelevant. This attitude could be related to current university politics. Due to a development plan, which was signed by TU Ilmenau itself, there are further savings to be expected – with higher impact than the ones affecting language classes.

Therefore it would be easy to understand that the faculties pay attention with their position as they have to fear financial consequences. The debate about language classes is not only about the right for free education and about increasing the internalisation. It is also about upcoming personal and structural changes at this university.

The meeting of senate's commission for development and quality assurance gave a similar impression. We hope that further groups of university raise their voices and realise the importance and relevance of this topic. It is about nothing more than the future orientation of TU Ilmenau in terms of transparency and democratic thinking.



Languages – yes, no, maybe

discussion in Senate commission for development and quality assurance

And now? Before July, right before the examination period, rector's office drops its bombshell and simply announces the increase of the fees for language classes. Officially with the claim to secure the offer of language classes. But the cancelled classes show that the plan did not work

out. But three months later the argumentation sounds suddenly different. Leading members of the rector's office speak about the "leading language English" and it was decided that language classes are simply annoying. Therefore students should pay for the courses if they want to. Otherwise these courses can simply be abolished. Furthermore, there is the latest idea of outsourcing the courses into TU Ilmenau Service GmbH which makes the courses due to the value added tax more expensive by 19%. But then it would not be needed anymore to discuss about fees and legal investigations or calculations or who finances whom and how. It is the farewell to the duty and task of the university to educate students. The main argument for the discussion is simple. It is all about the money – 60,000€ to be precise. It is really sad that TU Ilmenau intends to get the money from the students with those questionable methods. We already see first consequences in form of a decrease of the offered education. But the consequences by loss of trust due to this shady path might be beyond graspable.



Denial of the proposal of using long-term study fees

In the last meeting of the senate commission for development and quality assurance students' representatives proposed to use long-term study fees in order to finance additional language classes. Last year, TU Ilmenau earned almost 500,000€ and financed marketing or quality assurance.

The idea of the students' representatives was refused arguing that it is already decided how to use these funds and TU Ilmenau would not get any further new students without marketing. However, Rahmenvereinbarung III (agreement with the federal state Thüringen) states: „Die Hochschulen

stellen sicher, dass die Studierenden bei der Entscheidung über die Verwendung der Einnahmen aus Langzeitstudiengebühren mitwirken.“ (= The universities get sure that students' representatives participate in the decision about the use of earned long-term study fees.)

An explicit participation of student's representatives in this decision never happened at TU Ilmenau by now. It is still to be discussed if students' representatives consider quality management and marketing as highly important or if they think that further education offers are more important.



Fazit

We can assume, on the basis of the reaction besides the university and its body, that there will be more economisation in the future because of the structure and development plan, which effect the language courses.

It is not only about the debate of the language course fees for the moment, it will lead to a staffing shortage and will have structural consequences.

With the protest against the language course fees we want to protest for the right of education and support the internationalisation, the codetermination and the transparency.