

## **GEOMAR Postdoc General Assembly 1 October 2019**

35 postdocs (0-4 years after PhD: 14, 4-6 years after PhD: 9, >6 years after PhD: 12)

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### **General information**

Postdocs (fixed-term contract with PhD) make up 48% of all scientific staff at GEOMAR

GEOMAR Postdocs currently represented by two speakers that were elected by the Integrated Marine Postdoc Network (IMAP) of the Cluster of Excellence "The Future Ocean" in January 2018: Timm Schoening, Morelia Urlaub

IMAP speakers have no official mandate to represent GEOMAR postdocs

No Helmholtz-wide postdoc representation (i.e. comparable to Helmholtz Juniors)

### **Report on the meeting of the IMAP speakers with the Director in July 2019**

GEOMAR's participation in the Helmholtz Younger Investigator Group Program Call (expected January 2020):

- GEOMAR has not participated in the program in the last years
- Participation recommended by the Scientific Advisory Board, Scientific Council, IMAP speakers
- Was discussed in the Erweitertes Direktorium (ED)
- Final decision will be made after the POFIV Evaluation in December 2019
- Information from the last meeting of the ED: No tenure track guaranteed for junior research group leaders. Alexandra Drossou-Berendes adds that negotiations are possible.
- DFG Eigene Stelle still co-funded centrally (no financial burden for the Research Division)

Downgrading in tariff system after contract breaks at GEOMAR (for example due to research stays abroad):

- Correct in German law
- Not conform with the Helmholtz Postdoc Guidelines, which declare work abroad as a highly recommended qualification
- Director considers this as unacceptable, and agrees with Head of Human Resources (Janpit Peters) to find a solution
- Members of the audience report several recent cases where downgrading was still in effect

- Alexandra Drossou-Berendes suggests writing a formal note (Vermerk) to the Directorate in these cases and highlights the possibility to negotiate tariff level prior to signing the contract
- Inconsistencies in statements obtained from HR department regarding Inge Lehmann Fond
- Equal opportunities officer Ulrike Loemnitz states that there is no regulations regarding the tariff level of Inge Lehmann grantees

## **GEOMAR 2.0 strategy**

- This initiative has been put forward by the Director because Geomar is facing a new leadership in September 2020, a new POF program, and a number of Professors to retire in the years to come
- Meetings have taken place and will take place with various status groups (W1 professors and junior research group leaders, Mittelbau, Professors, Scientific Council)
- IMAP speakers joint the Mittelbau meeting
- The Director welcomes ideas and suggestions of the Postdoc community to the following questions:

What does GEOMAR stand for? What makes GEOMAR attractive?

- it is a big institute and therefore covers different perspectives and approaches, e.g. modelling, observations, lab experiments, etc.
- In Kiel

Where do we want to be in 10 years?

- More attractive to postdocs, tenure track positions,
- More international people should be attracted (<30% currently)
- More transparency
- More career support
- Increase loyalty of employees

Which areas do we want to strengthen? What research to give up?

- No new soft money for postdocs because it will make situation worse
- Concerns that due to high fluctuation, lots of experts are lost
- Talent management, keeping talents
- Group sizes currently too large
- Move away from hierarchical working group structure
- Missing loyalty with the institute and missing perspectives, therefore no interest in bringing forward ideas
- General atmosphere at GEOMAR not welcoming for sharing ideas, high level of competitiveness
- Increase possibilities of applying for soft money to realise their own ideas
- Closer move to the Helmholtz community

- Contracts too short to develop a deeper understanding of the GEOMAR system and to think about fundamental strategic issues
- Strengthen topics that favor a) interaction between disciplines and b) that require the Helmholtz infrastructure (that universities cannot provide)
- Where to provide ideas to? Who to communicate with?
- Anja Reitz & Alexandra Drossou-Berendes: encourage postdocs to openly share ideas, possibly develop a white paper or similar to express ideas and views
- Timm & Morelia: to organise a discussion group with Postdocs before the second GEOMAR 2.0 meeting of the Mittelbau status group on 11 November

### **PACT (C. von den Bogaard)**

Presents format of the new Postdoc Academic Career Support Center

Many questions still open that need to be decided and formalised prior to its start in January 2020

GEOMAR postdoc speakers will decide together with C. von den Bogaard (leader of PACT)

### **Elections of interim postdoc speakers**

With the upcoming decisions to be made regarding PACT, to increase visibility and to address current issues with more vigour the present postdocs decide to vote for an interim group of speakers representing the status group of postdocs and non-tenured scientists until proper elections will be held as part of PACT.

The present postdocs voted for the following 10 interim speakers:

- Ulrike Lomnitz (RD2)
- Leni Hauss (RD3)
- Lucia Pita (RD3)
- Philipp Brandl (RD4)
- Allanah Paul (RD2)
- Laura Gomez (RD4)
- Cathleen Schlundt (RD2)
- Morelia Urlaub (RD4)
- Timm Schoening (RD2)
- Eleni Anagnostou (RD1)

The speakers will start their work as of now.