

Workshop Proposal for the Heidelberg Laureate Forum

by Martin Potthast

Title of the Workshop

Building a Successful Research Group --- People, Money, Output

Description

Many participants of the Heidelberg Laureate Forum have reached or will soon reach a point in their careers when they become independent researchers. For young professors, it is important not only to continue to carry out high-impact research but also to start educating graduate students and to create a stable environment for them: a research group.

Working in a group of like-minded people can have tremendous benefits for everyone. People inspire each other, they share responsibility and organizational duties, they learn from each other, and they can tackle much more ambitious projects, ultimately maximizing their scientific output. But there are also drawbacks that can turn a group into a hindrance for one's personal success, such as an increased management and communication overhead, (cultural) conflicts, diversity of ability, frequent change in personnel, etc. On top of it all, for a group to survive it requires considerable amounts of money which have to be continuously acquired.

In this short, 60-90 minute workshop, I will invite the laureates as well as the participants to share their stories of how they turned themselves into successful scientists *and* successful managers. Specific topics to be discussed may include things such as how to acquire money, how to find, hire, and keep good people, how to foster their personal development from junior to senior researchers, how to keep up motivation, how to be tough, and, how to maintain one's own research output. How big a group is enough, both in terms of group size and money? Would unlimited funds help, or is a certain kind of scarcity to be preferred?

I expect this workshop to be highly interactive, so that, after a short introduction, the laureates may share their views on specific topics and the participants may ask their own questions.