Institutional Sustainability, Human Digital Transformation and Caring Society







Manuel Fischer, Sarah Dégallier Rochat, Carolin Fischer

Berner Fachhochschule | Haute école spécialisée bernoise | Bern University of Applied Sciences

BFH Thematic Fields / *BFH Themenfelder*

In line with our vision, our university is positioning itself in the most pressing issues of our time: “Sustainable Development”, “Humane Digital Transformation” and “Caring Society”.







Promoting „cultural change“ at BFH

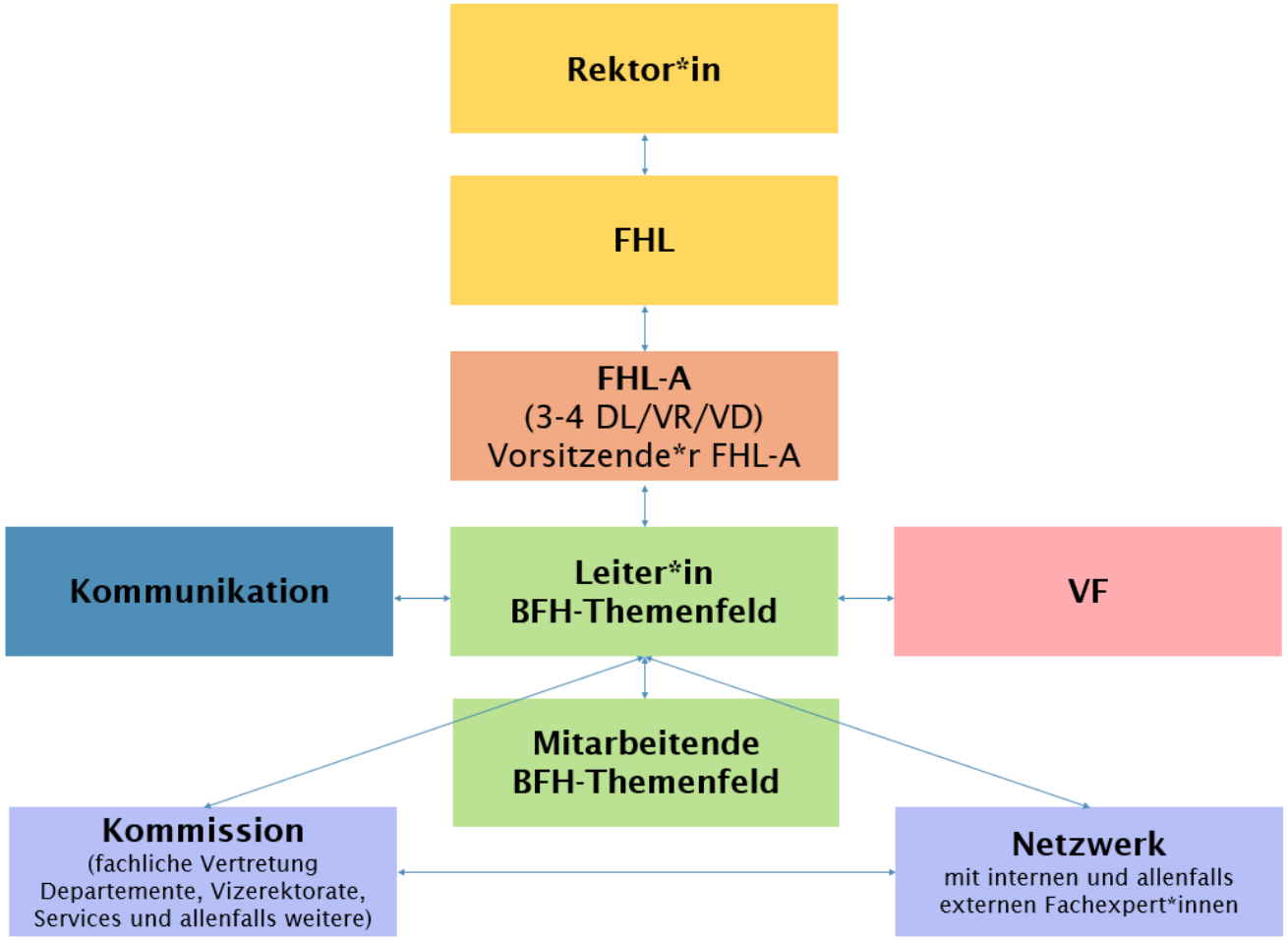
Inter-departmental collaboration to address current societal challenges



Changing narratives

It is neccessary and it is possible to work towards a future marked by social justice, responsibility and sustainability

Institutional Embeddedness



Caring Society

Carolin Fischer

Berner Fachhochschule | Haute école spécialisée bernoise | Bern University of Applied Sciences

How do we understand care?

…as a **universal human need**

…as **attentiveness, empathy** and **responsibility** (*caring about*)

…as **nurturing (hands-on) practices** (*caring for*)

…as **solidarity with the life circumstances and needs of others** (*caring with*)



…as equally **life-giving** and **life-sustaining**

…as an **open, supportive attitude** towards others, one's own community/communities, society, and the natural environment

…and what defines a **caring society**?

Idea of a **solidary society**

…practices both **justice** and **social cohesion**, and **promotes the well-being of all**

Care as **collective responsibility**

Access to care is relatively equally distributed

Responsibility for care is broadly supported and carried by diverse actors



The **realization of a caring society** can take place in **various social spaces** and can consist of **different actions.**

Caring society @ BFH – goals of the *Themenfeld*

Promote the **physical, mental and social well-being** of people in all life situations

Anchor a focus on Caring Society in research, education and continuing education; **live the principles of a Caring Society** in BFH's day-to-day operations

Develop and communicate **concrete, practice-oriented approaches** that **promote** a caring, inclusive society



Caring Society an der BFH - Schwerpunktthemen

Generationen & Alter

Gesundheit & Wohlergehen

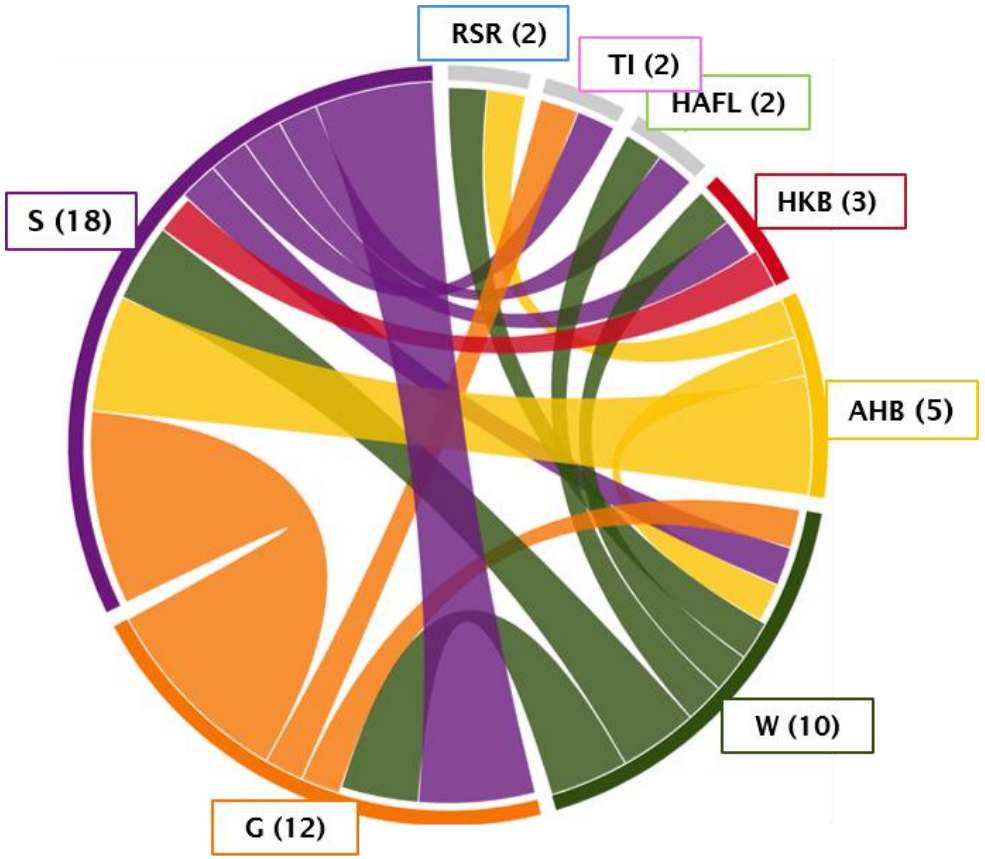


Soziale Gerechtigkeit, Diversität, Partizipation & Inklusion

Caring Spaces

Project funding and interdisciplinary collaboration

Interdepartemental collaboration in 2025



Inter- and transdisciplinary collaboration in different project formats

Developing manifold research innovations that support idea of a Caring Society in different ways

Projects address all focal themes

Examples of funded projects

Development of the CAS Specialist in Interprofessional Healthcare for Older People (2025)
Depts. S, G and TI, project lead: Regula Blaser



- Holistic healthcare for frail older people requires interprofessional competencies
- The CAS is intended to enable professionals from the health and social sectors to contribute to interprofessional and integrated care structures
- The macro-didactics had already been developed; the micro didactics were developed as part of the project
- The CAS is now available in BFH's course offering

Examples of funded projects

Development of the university preparation course for refugees (2025)

- *Depts. TI, G and S, project lead: Milena Wegelin*

- Each year, Dept. TI offers a university preparation course for 10-12 people with refugee and migration backgrounds
- Skills needed to meet the admission requirements are taught
- The plan is for access to also be opened up at Depts. G and W → further development for these areas



Examples of funded projects



Living Library (2024-2025)

Depts. G, S and HKB, project lead: Sebastian Funke

- Living Library as a method for strengthening exchange between academia and the general public at eye level
- The method can be used in public engagement events, teaching and research
- As part of the project, the handbook “Living Library for Higher Education” was developed; it offers a low-threshold guide for putting the method into practice
- Further reading was compiled, and a checklist for planning and carrying out a Living Library was developed
- The handbook is publicly available

Public Engagement and Stakeholder Events



Kurs /
Care-zentrierte Perspektiven und Ansätze für gesellschaftlichen Wandel

Wie können care-zentrierte Perspektiven in unterschiedlichen Disziplinen und Handlungsfeldern wirkungsvoll und transformativ eingesetzt werden? Mit Inputs und interaktiven Methoden erarbeiten die Teilnehmenden in diesem Kurs ein umfassendes Verständnis von Care.

Ziele

Die Teilnehmenden...

- ✓ kennen unterschiedliche Bedeutungen des Konzepts Care
- ✓ verstehen, wie Care zu gesellschaftlicher Transformation beitragen kann
- ✓ sind in der Lage, die Bedeutung und Relevanz von Care auf ihre eigene Arbeit und Disziplin zu übertragen
- ✓ können aus im Modul erarbeiteten Inhalten care-zentrierte Ansätze für Forschung, Lehre und Praxis entwickeln



Care! Und wie wird der Begriff in deine Disziplin und Arbeit übertragen?



Wirtschaft und Fürsorge: Kein Widerspruch

Wie kann KI zugunsten einer fürsorglichen Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft eingesetzt werden?

Ein Diskussions- und Vernetzungsanlass für Vertreter*innen von Unternehmen und Wissenschaft

Donnerstag, 29. Oktober 2026
ZID, Bernapark 28, 3066 Stettlen

STADTBIBLIOTHEK
BIBLIOTHÈQUE DE LA VILLE
BIEL/BIENNE

Home Veranstaltungen Medienangebot

Home ‹ Veranstaltungen ‹ Caring society, 05.1...

Warum wir eine sorgende Gesellschaft brauchen

Mit Caroline Fischer und Regina Dürig. Vortrag und Lesung



Sustainable Development

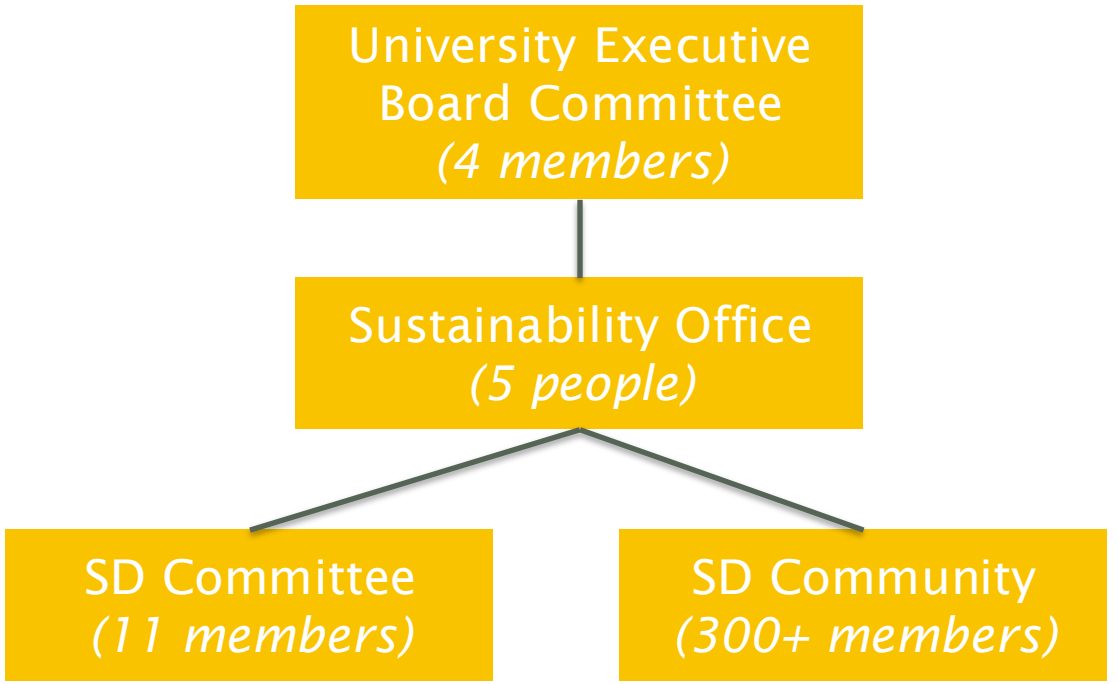
Manuel Fischer

Berner Fachhochschule | Haute école spécialisée bernoise | Bern University of Applied Sciences

SD at BFH – Organizational integration

Thematic strategic field «Sustainable Development»

- Interdepartmental unit, attached to the President's Office
- Mandate and annual performance goals set by the President
- Mission: Promote inter- and transdisciplinary teaching and research on SD, public engagement in SD, corporate sustainability



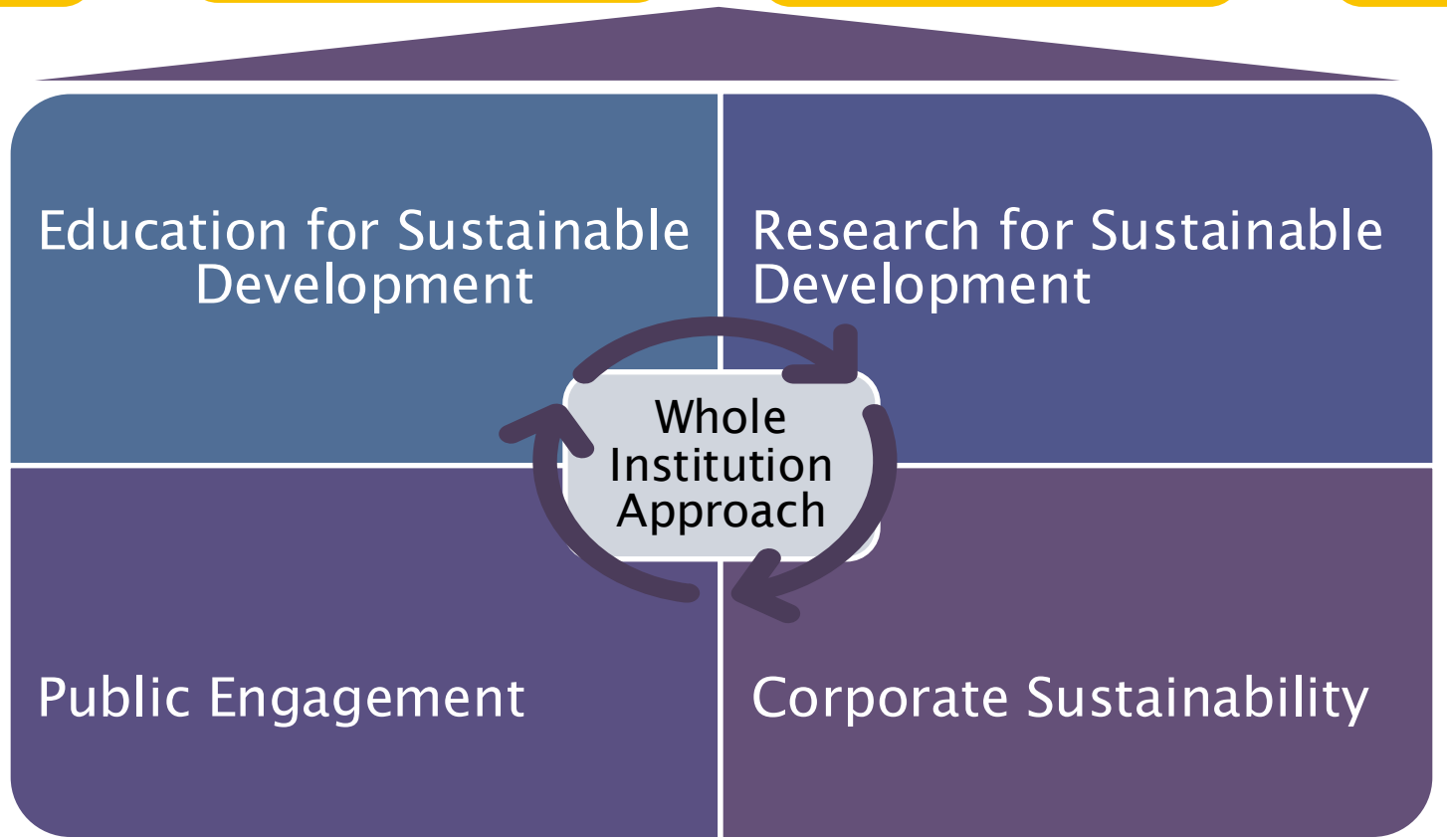
SD at BFH – Focus Topics and Areas of Action

Thriving Spaces

Circular Economy

Food Systems

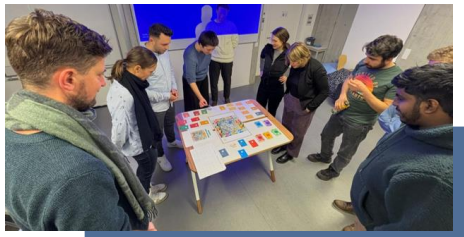
Societal Transformation



Key Activities

- Project Funding





- Courses and Teacher Training

Education for Sustainable Development

Research for Sustainable Development

Whole Institution Approach



- Students4Sustainabillity

Public Engagement

Corporate Sustainability

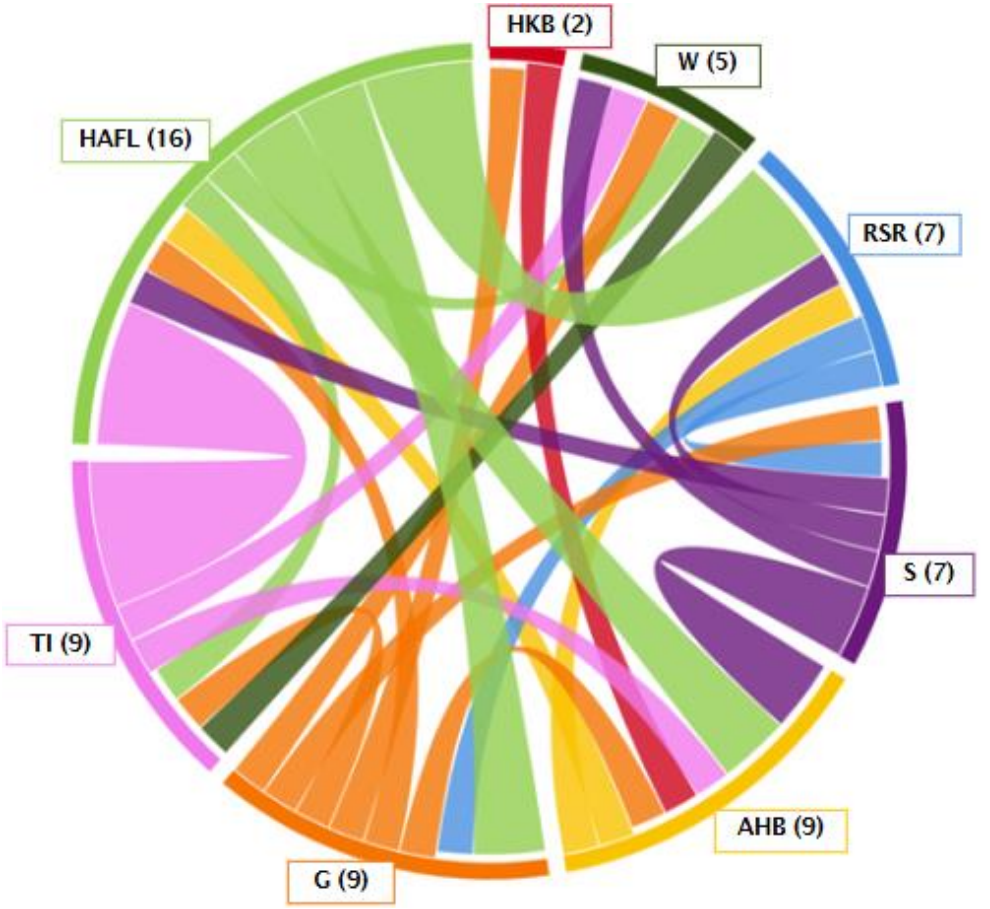


- Public Engagement Events and Activities



- Roadmap Climate neutrality

Interdepartmental cooperation in teaching and research 2025



The departments are arranged around the outer edge of the circle.
The number in parentheses indicates the total number of collaborations.
The colour of each chord corresponds to the respective lead department.
The wider the chords (connections), the more intensive the collaboration

Sustainability Report 2026



- Sustainability Report 2026 (in german)

BFH Climate Goals



- 2030: Climate neutrality
  (minimum 60% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions)
- 2040: Net-zero emissions

Examples of measures

Buildings



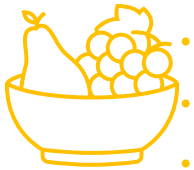
- CO_2-neutral heating and cooling generation
- Installation of photovoltaic systems
- Optimise floor space usage per person
- Transition to 100% renewable electricity

Mobility



- Policy for rail and air travel
- Incentives for the use of public transport
- Promotion of active mobility (Cycling/Walking)
- Parking Management
- Information platform for mobility issues

Food Services



- Plant-based offerings & reduced meat consumption
- No air-frighted foods or foods from
- fossil-fuel-heated greenhouses
- Reduction of food waste

Awareness Rising



- Communication
- Energy and climate action initiatives
- Event guidelines
- Teaching modules on climate education

IT



- Sustainability criteria for IT infrastructure
- Extending the service life of IT equipment

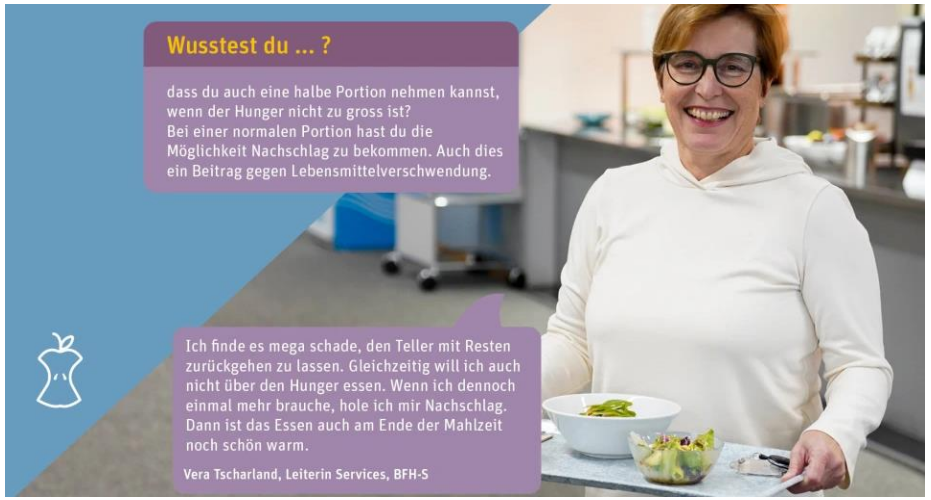
Sustainability initiatives (Sustainability in everyday working life)



- Bike to work



- Sustainability Days



- Awareness



- Switzerland Overshoot Day

Humane Digital Transformation

Sarah Dégallier Rochat

Berner Fachhochschule | Haute école spécialisée bernoise | Bern University of Applied Sciences

Four Values as Compass



Inclusion

Empowerment





Digital sovereignity

Wellbeing & Heath



WHOSE IMAGINATION
ARE YOU LIVING IN?











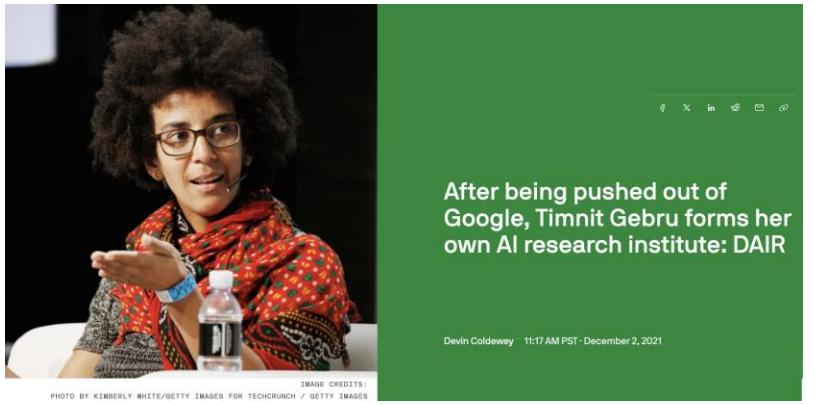






DAIR: Imagine your technofuture!







AI in Education & Research

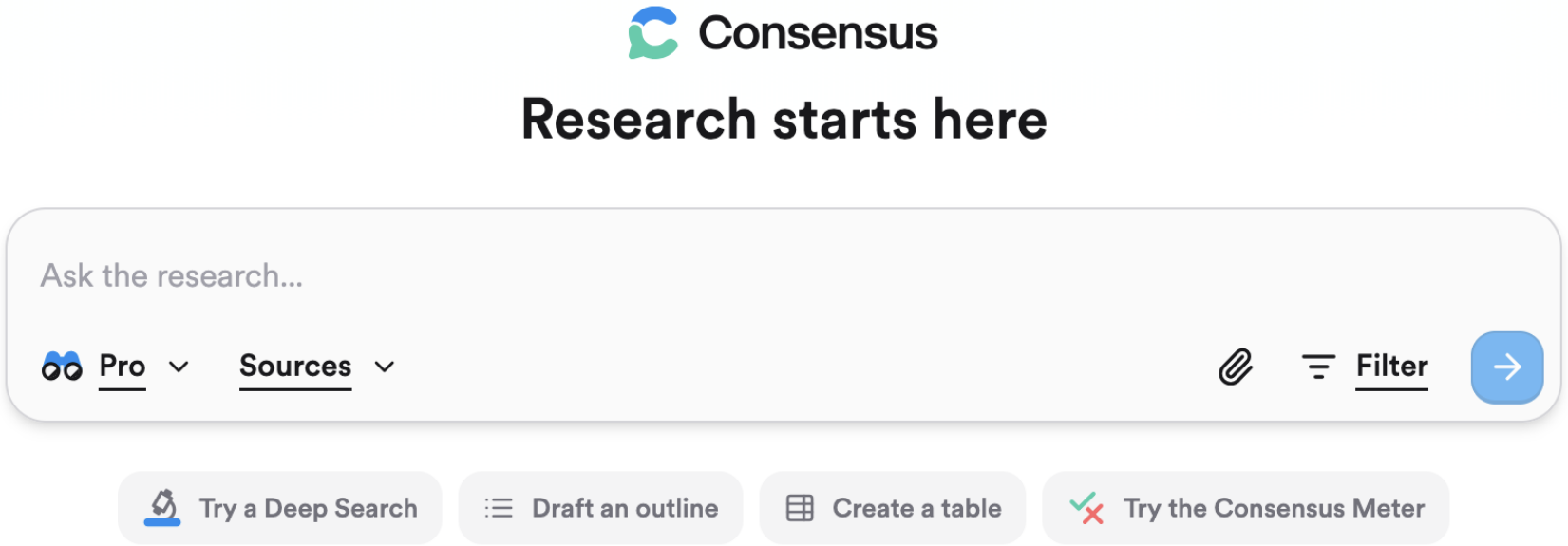
Changing the narrative from:

- **How do we need to adapt to AI?**

To

- **What are our pedagogical/research goals and how can we integrate AI to better reach them?**

„Consensus writes in seconds a more exhaustive literature review that I could write in days.“



Formation for students: AI Souvereignity

Students should not only learn how to use AI, but also how to make conscious decisions aboutwhether, how, and why they use it. Three key perspectives are explored:

Learning mindset and the impact of AI on learning

What is the purpose of education at a university of applied sciences or a traditional university? In which cases does AI support this purpose — and in which cases does it undermine it?

Using AI autonomously and confidently in higher education

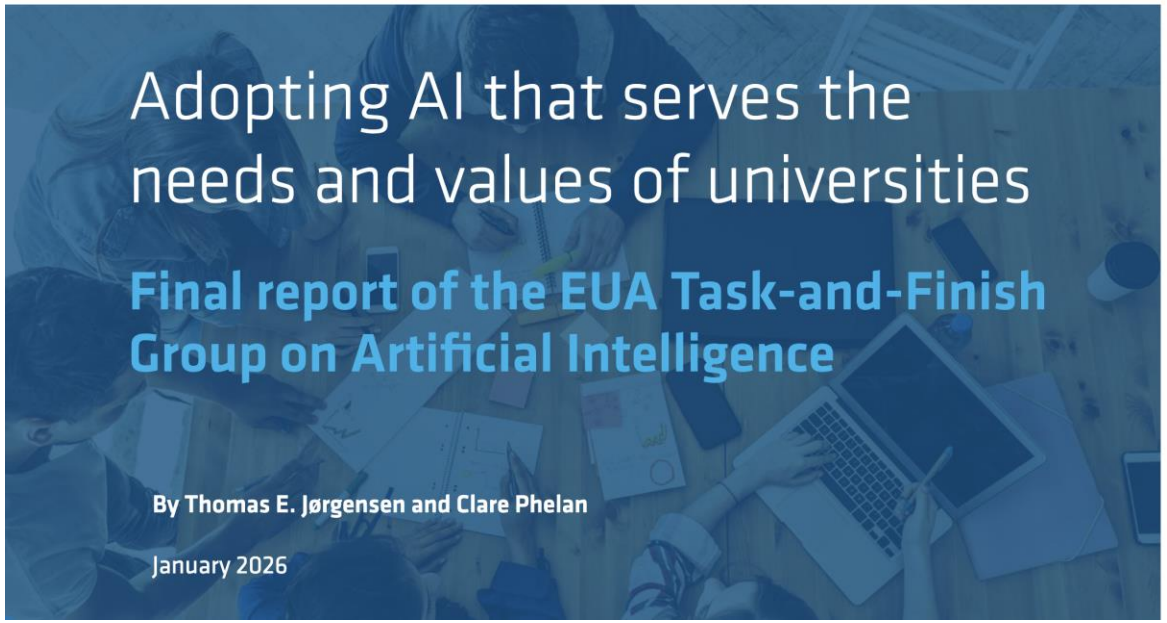
How can I use AI without delegating or losing my own capacity to think, exercise judgment, and learn?

Using AI responsibly as a socio-technical system

What values, interests, and power structures are embedded in AI — and what kind of world aml supporting through my use of it?

Context

EUA AI Task & Finish Group



SwissUniversities AI CoC Group

2026-08-24

Guidance on the Responsible Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence Tools in Research

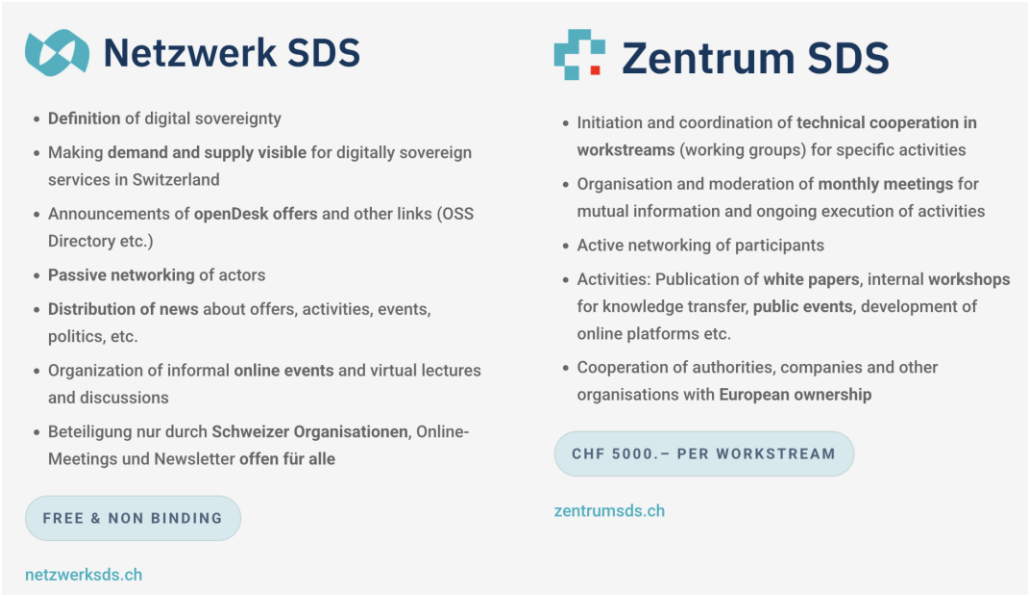
Self-assessment is key to the responsible use of artificial intelligence.

Digital Days



Digital Sovereign Switzerland Network and Center





World Café

Institutional Sustainability, Human Digital Transformation and Caring Society

World Café Questions – Caring Society

How can we as universities explore meanings of and address needs for care in the realms of

research

teaching

university administration

services?

How, where and to what extent does care matter at your institution?



World Café Questions

"Creating a Sustainability Culture at Universities"

- **How do we move sustainability from a strategic commitment to everyday practice?**

- What makes people change their behaviour?
- What creates ownership?
- What creates resistance?
- What role does leadership play?
- What role do peers play

World Café Questions

„Towards digital sovereign institutions and society“

- How can we fight against the “unique story“, that is, the AI hype and dominant narratives of AI companies
- How can we act against the feeling of helplessness regarding the power of big tech companies?
- What can we change at the institutional level? Where do we need to start?
- What can we do as individual?