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University College Freiburg: Towards a new unity of research and teaching in academia.

Against the backdrop of a state-funded, but quickly changing higher education scene in Germany, this contribution aims to show the specific features of University College Freiburg (UCF) and its Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) program. In the broader context of liberal education the fundamental conceptual ideas of this new institution are three 'Is': Internationalization, Interdisciplinarity, and Innovative Teaching.

Internationalization takes into account the challenges of globalization in a positive sense: bringing students from different national and cultural backgrounds together is a major contribution to orientation in a globalizing, multicultural and multifaceted world.

Interdisciplinarity is related to the nucleus of Freiburg University's strategy of new *universitas*, of bringing the individual (hyper)specialized disciplines nearer to each other and especially bridging the gap between the humanities and sciences / technology. UCF applies this rigorous interdisciplinary orientation to the field of academic education on a fundamental level.

Innovative teaching results from a research orientation: on a basis of epistemological self-reflexion, it is necessarily problem orientated and project-based, taking curiosity as point of departure and using scientific and scholarly methods in dealing with problems.

This educational approach does not only adequately prepare for further academic training and for many professional fields, but also strengthens analytical skills, capacity in problem-solving, critical thinking, and other intellectual and cultural abilities. It is therefore strictly connected to the formation of the personality as a whole, beyond specific scholarly and vocational competencies.

The paper will deal with these general principles more concretely, esp. by demonstrating how they are used in the organization of UCF as an institution and in the shaping of the curriculum of the LAS-bachelor. It will conclude with a tentative appraisal of how the approach relates to an informed understanding of the formative ideas of German higher education ikon, Wilhelm von Humboldt.