

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52

by Dr. Walter Kühme, Head of Administration
Brandenburg University of Applied Sciences
Date of Visit in Strasbourg: 2 June – 3 June 2008

Content:

1.) Related Areas to communication

2.) Chances

3.) Challenges:

- 3.1. Challenge no. 1: Leadership
- 3.2. Challenge no. 2: Naming
- 3.3. Challenge no. 3: Founding date
- 3.4. Challenge no. 4: Mission
- 3.5. Challenge no. 5: Branding
- 3.6. Challenge no. 6: Corporate design
- 3.7. Challenge no. 7: Organizing communication
- 3.8. Challenge no. 8: Financing communication
- 3.9. Challenge no. 9: Uniting the campus
- 3.10. Challenge no. 10: Appearance

4.) Strategies of communication

- 4.1. Analysis of stakeholder and target groups
- 4.2. Accentuation of benefits
- 4.3. Integration of critics
- 4.4. Inventory of tools of communication
- 4.5. Internal communication before external communication
- 4.6. Yearly plan of communication
- 4.7. Communicating the transitional period
- 4.8. Evaluation of strategy and communication

5.) Conclusion

1.) Related Areas to communication

The field of internal and external communications is connected to and influenced by other fields within the overall framework of university administration. These relationships became obvious during conversations with partners from the future University of Strasbourg, especially while analysing issues more deeply. Therefore, in some instances of the analyses of findings and problems as well as within the suggestions for solutions the report will leave the very strict limits of internal and external communications in order to work out a clear analysis and concrete possible solutions. The topic of internal and external communication is interrelated to the following fields of management and can hardly be treated independent from them:

- History of the University
- General Strategy for the future University of Strasbourg
- Governance and management
- Facility and space management
- Event management
- IT-structures
- Personal: in terms of development, recruiting and leadership
- Alumni Management
- Raising Friends for the future University of Strasbourg
- Raising Funds for the future University of Strasbourg
- Finance
- International Relationships

2.) Chances

The chances for a success of the merging process itself and for the future University of Strasbourg in general as well as for the internal and external communication structures and activities can be considered as very good:

- **Decisions** by the boards of all three Universities pro merger have been taken with huge majority.
- Up to 1971 the three Universities of Strasbourg had a **common history**.
- The common history includes a common **founding date**, which is crucial for the communication and marketing of a university with a good reputation. The question

- 1 of the founding date for the University of Strasbourg should be decided as soon
2 as possible (f.e. 1538, 1621, or 1681).
- 3 • The three Universities share a **common campus** at Strasbourg.
 - 4 • **Strasbourg** is known worldwide and has a positive image.
 - 5 • The town of Strasbourg is extremely attractive in terms of **history, culture,**
6 **diplomacy, politics and by its surrounding nature** of the Vosges, the Rhine
7 Valley, and the Black Forest.
 - 8 • The **region of Alsace** has an excellent international reputation, which may further
9 assist the University of Strasbourg in communication its attractiveness.
 - 10 • **Alsatian food and wine** may facilitate communication.
 - 11 • Strasbourg has an **international airport** and a **central railway station** with train
12 connections between France and Germany.
 - 13 • The **closeness to Germany** can make international communication and
14 academic exchange with Germany very easy.
 - 15 • With the **Universities of Heidelberg, Freiburg and Karlsruhe** there are three (!)
16 German Universities in the neighbourhood of Strasbourg, which have won the
17 **German Excellence Initiative**. The chance of close communications and
18 relationships to these German Universities can be considered as promising.
 - 19 • In addition to that the **University of Basle** and the **Saarland University** (at
20 Saarbrücken) should be mentioned as neighbours – the latter of which was
21 founded in cooperation with France.
 - 22 • The Louis Pasteur University is already member of the prestigious **League of**
23 **European Research University** (LERU), which includes Europe's best 20
24 Universities and which has tremendous influence on the research policy of the
25 European Union.
 - 26 • The merging process itself will probably further improve the position of the
27 University of Strasbourg in **international university rankings** (f.e. Times Higher
28 Education Supplement, Shanghai Ranking).
 - 29 • With the **Palais universitaire** the future University of Strasbourg has a
30 representative building for academic celebrations, which could serve as an
31 important tool of external and internal communication.
 - 32 • The chances to become a **pilot project in France** and to get more attention (and
33 hopefully additional flexibility and funding) seem to be given.
 - 34 • The present **team of communication** of all three Universities and of the Pôle
35 universitaire européen is motivated and ready to work professional.
 - 36 • By merging of all these four **teams of communication** there should be sufficient
37 human resources for basic services of communication for the future University of

1 Strasbourg. Though the question of how to deal with additional tasks in the field of
2 communication (f.e. University shop, networking with alumni, friends raising and
3 funds raising, lobbying within politics) has to be resolved.

- 4 • The process of merging and the strategy of communication are supported by
5 professional tools of **change management**. 65 change projects have been
6 singled out to be implemented.
- 7 • There are ideas for a **communication plan** after the merging process on the level
8 of staff.
- 9 • The awareness, that each change project needs its own **communication**
10 **strategy** is already there.
- 11 • The discourse on merging has been on a wide base with a lot of possibilities for
12 wide **participation** throughout the three universities.
- 13 • Many members of staff are actively engaged in working groups.

16 **3.) Challenges**

17
18 Even though chances and potentials for the merging project in general are considered to
19 be good, there are still open questions, challenges, and even some risks for the success
20 of the project.

21 22 **3.1. Challenge No. 1: leadership**

23 *Communication by a visible face*

24
25 The plan to elect the founding president of the University of Strasbourg after the merging
26 process, i.e. after 1st of January 2009, causes a lot of problems for the preparation of the
27 process itself and for the elaboration of a communication strategy and a communication
28 structure.

29 The unit of communication needs a structure, a leader, and a communication plan,
30 especially for the month of January 2009. Without an elaborated plan of communication
31 from the 1st January 2009 onwards the risk of a false start becomes very real. The head
32 of communication needs a very close and trustful relationship to the founding president.
33 That is to say: the head of communication needs to be appointed by the founding
34 president. Without knowing who will be the founding president of the University of
35 Strasbourg it will not be possible to appoint the head of communication. Without a head
36 of communication there can hardly be an approved communication plan for January 2009
37 and the the first year of the merger. Without a head of communication there will be

1 neither an approved functional structure within the communication unit, which is needed
2 very badly. Without a structure that defines concrete personal responsibilities the
3 communication unit might face a problem, which many public universities (outside
4 France) are facing: nobody feels responsible for anything. Without personal
5 responsibilities and without a communication plan the start of the University of Strasbourg
6 can become a false start. A false start can threaten the success of the whole project by
7 giving it a bad image in the academic discourse and in the media. Therefore the founding
8 president of the University of Strasbourg should be elected as soon as possible, possibly
9 by all three existing administration councils of all three existing University or by a merger
10 of all three administration councils into a kind of founding administration council for the
11 University of Strasbourg of tomorrow. The newly elected president should take over at
12 the same time as the new University of Strasbourg is going to be existent, which is the 1st
13 of September 2008.

14 Equally important, the process of merger and the new University should be driven by a
15 **visible face** as “Ms. Merger” or “Mr. Merger” right from the beginning, even better before.
16 The academic community as well as the general public and the media will probably like to
17 see a responsible person as founding president, who is willing to guarantee that the
18 merger of all three universities will be a success and who will show how to lead the
19 University of Strasbourg to a great future. Especially in times of change stability is
20 needed, at least on a personal level. If the merging process is ought to become a
21 success, the members of the administrative councils should vote a candidate as founding
22 president who is willing to stand for the merger, and to implement it with equal respect to
23 members of all four existing institutions.

24 25 **3.2. Challenge No. 2: naming**

26 *Communicating identity*

27
28 To communicate the existence of a future University of Strasbourg, its profile, mission,
29 and strategies a proper **name for the new institution** is needed. From the rather
30 personal view of the counsellor the name “**University of Strasbourg**” would be perfectly
31 alright (as for instance “University of Heidelberg” also is.)¹; but this important question
32 has to be decided by an authorized body of the University, or by all three bodies of the
33 still existing universities of Strasbourg. After the definition of a name the new University of
34 Strasbourg should look for an official **seal** (possibly deduced from historical examples)
35 and / or an **emblem**. It might also need a **flag, colours, an anthem**, and possibly even

¹ The complete name of the University of Heidelberg is: „Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg“. In the international discourse hardly anybody knows “Ruprecht” or “Karl”. What really counts is the name “Heidelberg”. The same might be true for “Strasbourg”.

1 **robes** depending on French custom, of course.² The importance of colourful pictures of
2 academic celebrations, f.e. graduation ceremonies, with graduates wearing colourful
3 robes should not be underestimated – but of course this question should be decided
4 within the general framework of French habits and customs.

6 **3.3. Challenge No. 3: founding date**

7 *Communicating history*

8
9 The question of when the University of Strasbourg came into existence needs to be
10 resolved as soon as possible by an established historian of universities in France. If the
11 institution of higher education which was founded in Strasbourg in 1538 was a university,
12 then it would be good for external communication to define this date as the founding year
13 for the University of Strasbourg, since **age stands for quality** in the international
14 competition of universities. The brochure of Robert Schuman University says that the
15 founding institution had already the four classical faculties: theology, philosophy,
16 medicine, and law. These are exactly the same faculties that also the University of
17 Heidelberg had at its beginning in 1386.

18 Just in case the founding charter of the University of Strasbourg can be found, the future
19 University of Strasbourg owns an extremely valuable document which needs to be
20 conserved with great care. It could also be used as a source or as a picture for tools in
21 the field of communication and merchandizing.

23 **3.4. Challenge No. 4: mission**

24 *Communicating a central message: First University of France?*

25
26 The document “Demain l’Université des Strasbourg. Projet d’Etablissement. 2009-2012”
27 defines the self-conception of the future University of Strasbourg as following (page 8):

28
29 *“Au cœur de l’Europe, héritière d’une grande tradition née de*
30 *l’humanisme du XVIe siècle, l’Université de Strasbourg offrira des*
31 *formations et des recherches pluridisciplinaires qui, en raison de leur*

² Excursus: Some traditional universities in Germany reintroduced robes for their rectors, vice-rectors, and deans. These robes appear traditional and underline historical claims of the particular institution. In the field of history there is an academic discours on the „Invention of Tradition“ – see f.e. the book of the same name by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1992). It argues that some old appearing traditions are indeed later inventions. So, why not (re-) inventing traditions for the University of Strasbourg, if they are needed for the identity of the new institution – possibly based on historical samples of the University of Strasbourg before 1971?

1 *concentration et de leurs synergies en un même lieu, seront d'une*
2 *diversité et d'une richesse uniques en France. Européenne de*
3 *tradition et de conviction, internationale par vocation, elle attirera des*
4 *étudiants et des enseignants-chercheurs venus d'horizons et de*
5 *cultures différents, sûrs de trouver une université ouverte, pluraliste,*
6 *alliant l'excellence et la performance. Cette université, par son*
7 *potentiel humain, intellectuel et scientifique, sera en mesure de*
8 *relever les défis actuels et, par sa capacité à innover, constituera l'un*
9 *pôles majeur de la vie universitaire européenne."*

10
11 For the content of any communication a self-conception like this is extremely important. It
12 needs to be repeated many times, before all stakeholders and target groups really know
13 and understand it. For communicating the mission of the future University of Strasbourg it
14 would be very nice and helpful, if it could be possible to focus the mission into one
15 statement, or, even better, into one single slogan. The department of economy (Ecole de
16 Management Strasbourg) is claiming to be "la Business School de la **1^{er} université de**
17 **France**" after the merger. Indeed, this could be the message, even in form of a single
18 slogan, for the whole University of Strasbourg, if approved by the board of the future
19 University of Strasbourg resp. by the existing boards of the still existing three universities
20 at Strasbourg.

21 Excursus: Just to give an example for a slogan of a change project in a University in
22 Germany: The board of the University of Heidelberg choose the slogan:
23 "University of Heidelberg: The future. Since 1386".

24 It is of crucial importance, that the board of the future University of Strasbourg or the
25 boards of the three still existing universities of Strasbourg respectively discuss the
26 content of a single message that can be expressed by a single slogan. Just in case the
27 claim "University No. 1 of France" should not be the selected slogan, it could be
28 advisable to ask a professional communication agency to work out and to suggest one or
29 some slogans on the basis of the self-conception of the future University of Strasbourg
30 quoted above. The suggested slogan should be approved by the authorities of the future
31 University of Strasbourg resp. by the three existing universities.

32
33

1 **3.5. Challenge No. 5: branding**

2 *Communicating quality*

3

4 On the basis of its self-conception the future university may decide which principles and
5 messages it will stand for within the international academic and within the general
6 discourse. So far as one can see by now already, these principles could be (list not
7 complete and due to be modified or replaced):

8

- 9 • tradition of humanisme
- 10 • interdisciplinary research and teaching
- 11 • academic excellence
- 12 • European tradition
- 13 • International future
- 14 • cultural diversity
- 15 • uniqueness in France and Europe
- 16 • attractiveness of Strasbourg and surrounding area

17

18 These principles or claimes (and / or others) could serve as a basis for the
19 communication of the future University of Strasbourg as a brand with national and
20 international reputation.

21

22 **3.6. Challenge No. 6: corporate design**

23

24 If possible the **corporate design** of the new University of Strasbourg should be deduced
25 by the main principles of the University and also from its historical symbols. The basis of
26 the corporate design could be accompanied by a professional psychologist who can give
27 advice on the psychological impact of certain colours and forms. A complete corporate
28 design concept (in the form of a booklet) is needed for any printed or electronic tool,
29 which is used by the new University of Strasbourg. If possible it would be helpful to be
30 completed and fixed well before 1st January 2009.

31

32 In order to assist the communication of the new University of Strasbourg and to help its
33 perception by a positive image, it might be useful to start a university shop, which sells
34 merchandising products designed within emblems and symbols of the University of
35 Strasbourg. The Christmas Feast of 2008 could be used to sell (or to give as a present)
36 as many items with the emblem and corporate design of the University of Strasbourg as
37 possible. Possible products with the University of Strasbourg's emblem could be as

1 divers as there are things to sell or to give as a present: pins, needles, ties out of silk and
2 tie pins, shawls, caps and hats, shirts and t-shirts, shorts, cups and plates, pens and
3 pencils, calendars, papers, envelopes, lighters, picture frames, games, balls, belts,
4 watches, jewels of any kind, wine or sparkling wine, sweets and chocolates, and even a
5 University of Strasbourg flavour within a perfume could be thinkable of in order to
6 communicate the new institution. Christmas in Strasbourg 2008 could be celebrated in
7 the spirit of the new University of Strasbourg by offering a lot of goods, that could also be
8 sold in the shops of Strasbourg town to guests, visitors and tourists, or even on the
9 Strasbourg Christmas fair.

12 **3.7. Challenge No. 7: organizing communication**

13 *Communication planed and implemented by an organisational unit*

14
15 The future University of Strasbourg needs a well equipped and staffed professional
16 integrated unit of (internal and external) communication. The unit of communication
17 should have one head and a deputy head. The head is responsible for everything what is
18 being done (or what has not been done) within the unit of communication. He reports
19 directly to the president. He needs to know what to communicate about and what is not to
20 be communicated at all. He needs access to the president at least ones per week and
21 should be allowed to assist at board meetings. The head of communication must be a
22 person, whom the future president of the University of Strasbourg trusts 100%. Any future
23 president of Strasbourg University should have the right to choose his own head of
24 communication. That means the head of communication should be in charge as long as
25 the president is.

26 The head of the communicational unit should organize his or her unit into sub-units as he
27 or she may think to be useful or appropriate in order to do a good job. Possible sub-units
28 and tasks for the communicational unit could be:

- 29 • communication strategies (to be done by the head of communication himself,
30 possibly to be pre-discussed with his team): strategies and plans of
31 communications are to be elaborated and to be presented to the president and to
32 the board in order to be approved by him resp. by it
- 33 • yearly plan of communication (to be done by the head of communication himself,
34 to be pre-discussed with his team)
- 35 • implementing the approved communication strategies (to be secured by the head
36 himself with the help of his team)

- 1 • counselling the president in the field of internal and external communication and
2 image building (by the head of communication himself)
- 3 • internal communication of change and internal communication in general (internal
4 mailings and letters to all members of the University of Strasbourg, organizing
5 periodical faculty visits of the president, discussions, university meetings,
6 university festivals and events of the president).
- 7 • corporate design (as a service for any unit of the university)
- 8 • printings: University flyers, newspapers, magazines, yearly reports of the
9 president
- 10 • press relations (newspapers, radio, television)
- 11 • management of expertises of the University of Strasbourg to the press: inducing a
12 list with scientific experts on a wide range of subjects interesting for the media
13 and arranging meetings with scientific experts of topics demanded by the media.
- 14 • cooperation with the communication unit of the city of Strasbourg
- 15 • cooperation with the communication unit of the university hospital of Strasbourg
- 16 • electronic media (sending of mailings, internet and intranet)
- 17 • marketing study programmes, PhD-programmes, and services. As far as the town
18 of Strasbourg is concerned a cooperation with the marketing unit of the city of
19 Strasbourg could make sense for both sides
- 20 • merchandising (university shop)
- 21 • alumni-networking and friend raising
- 22 • lobbying the interests of the University to local, regional, national, and European
23 politics, companies, and partners
- 24 • evaluating tools and activities in the field of communication (can be done by an
25 external team as well)
- 26 • financial planning of communication (to be done by the head himself)
- 27 • networking within the networks of LERU heads of communication (by the head of
28 communication himself)

29

30 The list reflects first ideas, only. The real structure of the communication unit might be
31 completely different. Important is just to have a proper structure that fits in the needs of
32 the future University of Strasbourg.

33

34 As long as the future president of the University of Strasbourg is not being elected, it
35 seems advisable to appoint an acting head of communication for the period up to the
36 appointment of a real head of communication by the founding president of the University
37 of Strasbourg. The acting head of communication has a very important task in preparing

1 plans and structures for the beginning of the communication process of the future
2 University of Strasbourg.

3
4 **3.8. Challenge No. 8: financing communication**

5 *Communication on the basis of a yearly budget*
6

7 One very fortunate aspect of the merging process is the objective of creating synergies
8 between related units. This process can result in more efficiency and better quality of
9 services without spending more financial resources on them. Nevertheless, the unit of
10 communication will need some additional resources for the period of transition and for
11 possibly new tasks of the team as well. Concerning the yearly budget for communication
12 it has to make sure that financial resources for communication of all four existing
13 institutions will be the basis for the yearly budget of communication of the future
14 University of Strasbourg.

15 Therefore, the acting head of communication should talk with all four heads of finance of
16 the existing institutions in order to assure the budgets for the future unit of
17 communication.

18 The financial budget of the future unit of communication of the University of Strasbourg
19 could be (und should be) calculated by the following formula:

20 Present Budget for communication of the URS
21 + Present budget for communication of the ULP
22 + Present budget for communication of the UMB
23 + Present budget for communication of the Pôle universitaire européen
24 + Additional Budget for additional activities (alumni-networking, friend raising,
25 merchandising products, staff development etc.)
26 + Profits from the merchandising activities, which might be realised in the long run (not to
27 be realised in short term, in any case; at the beginning of the University of
28 Strasbourg it is necessary to invest in this field)

29
30

= Total budget of communication for the future University of Strasbourg
31
32

1 **3.9. Challenge No. 9: uniting the campus**

2 *Communication by meeting*

3
4 The campus of the future University of Strasbourg will be the heart of its communication.
5 Members of the university communicate at places wherever they meet each other and
6 wherever they find favourable conditions for conversation. The main campus of the
7 University of Strasbourg is located very close to the centre of Strasbourg. It has the
8 potential of becoming a very attractive meeting point for professors and students from all
9 over the world, and for staff as well. Some areas look like parks already. A botanic
10 garden is existing. The main problem for communication on campus results from the fact,
11 that the campus is separated in the middle by the public road "Boulevard de la Victoire". If
12 a road is still needed in the future for the flow of traffic of Strasbourg, it should be
13 relocated into a tunnel underground. If the University of Strasbourg really is going to
14 become the First University of France one objective should be communicated to
15 politicians, partners and influential friends of the University (and the media as well): The
16 campus of the First University of France must not be divided by a road. Thus, the town of
17 Strasbourg, the mayor, his administration, and financial potentially friends of the
18 University will become partners of strategic importance to the future University of
19 Strasbourg. The place over the tunnel could become a park with trees, grass, benches,
20 cafes and restaurants, where students and other university people like to meet and where
21 they will find places for communication with each other.

22 In order to facilitate communication on campus, to encourage academic discourses
23 between students and scholars from different fields and faculties the future University of
24 Strasbourg could adapt a policy that forbids any car traffic on campus except the official
25 car of the president and emergency cars in cases of fire, accidents, or criminality. Thus,
26 the parking lot on Rue René Descartes also should be relocated underground in order to
27 give space for the green park on campus where people meet and communicate with each
28 other. (Again the same argument: The First University of France must not locate a
29 parking lot in its centre. The First University of France needs attractive places and space
30 for academic discourse between people who will get together on the campus of
31 Strasbourg from all over the world).

32 In the long run it would be very valuable for the future University of Strasbourg to
33 complete its centre on a spatially coherent campus. This idea concerns on the one hand
34 the space and buildings between Boulevard de la Victoire, Rue de l'Université and (east
35 of) Rue Lobstein and on the other hand the space and buildings between Rue de
36 l'Université, Boulevard de la Victoire, Rue Grandidier and Rue Blessig, both of which
37 seem to be owned by private owners by now. Due to legal propositions the idea to unite

1 these spaces with the campus of the University of Strasbourg might be ambitious. At any
2 rate, the future University of Strasbourg would need influential partners and friends and a
3 lot of sympathy of the Society of Strasbourg and within the medial as well in order to
4 become able to realise this idea of uniting the last off-campus spaces which are located
5 in the centre of its campus. On the other hand, if the claim to become the First University
6 of France means anything, objectives like these at least should be allowed to be
7 discussed in order to promote communication on campus.

8
9
10 **3.10. Challenge No. 10: appearance**

11 *Communication by first impressions*

12
13 Communication of the future University of Strasbourg should on the one hand be planed
14 as profoundly as possible. On the other hand: there are things, places and buildings that
15 give impressions to the members of the University of Strasbourg and its visitors, which
16 cannot be influenced by the communicational unit at all. To give an example: The
17 Building of Biology “communicates” somehow to the academic community and to guests
18 of the University of Strasbourg in a way which may be wished neither by the president
19 nor by the head or team of communication. Thus, renovation of buildings becomes an
20 important issue for communication – since buildings do communicate to the visitor on an
21 unconscious level but possibly with long lasting effects. The botanic garden and the
22 Palais universitaire should be maintained with great care, since they also play an
23 important role in the communication of the University of Strasbourg with the world off
24 campus. Equally important, other parts of the campus should be renewed, trees and
25 grass could be planted, and benches could be placed at many places. Also, the place for
26 the fountain in front of the Faculté de droit should be renovated. In a close cooperation
27 with the organisation responsible for student housing the Résidence universitaire Paul
28 Appell and the Résidence universitaire de la Somme should be checked with regard to
29 possible necessities of renovations. This would help the University in offering attractive
30 living conditions for students who will come to Strasbourg University from all over the
31 world and who will expect favourable places for communication.

32
33 The visitor who comes to the university campus from the Place du Foin is “welcomed” by
34 a recycling box for used glass and papers. These boxes could be removed to an
35 alternative place by the administration of the town of Strasbourg. In any case, recycling
36 boxes should not give the first impression of the First University of France.

1 Having given this critical points it should be underlined at the same time: With its location
2 in an extremely well known and at the same time extremely attractive town the basic
3 requirements for the future of the First University of France are there already. Hence, an
4 optimistic view on specific objectives and solutions for problems in particular might be
5 justified at this point here.
6
7

8 **4.) Strategies for communication**

9

10 4.1. Analysis of stakeholder and target groups

11

12 As a first step for the new team of communication it is suggest to collect a list of all
13 stakeholders and possible target groups of the future University of Strasbourg, to present
14 this list to the future president and his board and to discuss with them the particular
15 interests of each grouping of stakeholder. The question of how each stakeholder group
16 could do something for the future University of Strasbourg and help it to achieve its
17 objectives could also be addressed. Just as very first suggestions one might single out
18 the following stakeholder:
19

- 20 • Members of the University (resp. past members or possibly future members of
21 the universities):
 - 22 ○ president, vice-president of the University of Strasbourg
 - 23 ○ ex-presidents, ex-vice-presidents of all three Universities of
24 Strasbourg
 - 25 ○ board members (senate, administration council)
 - 26 ○ professors and scholars
 - 27 ○ future professors and future scholars (yet to be recruited on the
28 international academic labour market)
 - 29 ○ emeriti and past scholars
 - 30 ○ professors, scholars, physicians, staff and students from the
31 university hospital and the faculty of medicine
 - 32 ○ PhD.-students
 - 33 ○ Future PhD-students (yet to be recruited)
 - 34 ○ graduate and undergraduate students
 - 35 ○ future students (yet to be recruited)
 - 36 ○ alumni
 - 37 ○ academic staff

- 1 o administrative and technical staff
- 2 o future staff (yet to be recruited)
- 3 o past or retired staff
- 4
- 5 • Stakeholders in the field of Sciences and Education on a national level
- 6 o Presidents of universities in France
- 7 o Presidents of the Ecoles Normales Supérieures, Grandes Ecoles
- 8 o Presidents of the Institutions of higher Education for engineering
- 9 o Presidents of national research organisations and facilities
- 10 o Presidents of foundations for research and education
- 11 • Stakeholders in the field of Sciences and Education on an international level
- 12 o Presidents of international partners of the Universities of Strasbourg
- 13 o Presidents of rectors' conferences of neighbouring and closely
- 14 related countries to France
- 15 o Rectors of the Universities of Basle, Freiburg, Karlsruhe, Heidelberg
- 16 and Saarbrücken
- 17 o Famous alumni of either of the three universities of Strasbourg living
- 18 abroad
- 19 • Stakeholders on a regional or local level
- 20 o Authorities of the city of Strasbourg
- 21 o Representatives of the economical, political, cultural, intellectual,
- 22 religious and sportive institutions of Strasbourg
- 23 o Directors of Schools in Strasbourg
- 24 o Authorities of the Département of Alsace
- 25 o Authorities of the land of Baden-Württemberg
- 26 o Leaders of private companies of Alsace (f.e. president of General
- 27 Motors Alsace or of Companies of Life Sciences etc.)
- 28 o Diplomats living in Strasbourg and their families
- 29 o Members of the European Parliament, in their role as inhabitants or
- 30 part time inhabitants of Strasbourg
- 31 o Staff of European Parliament administration
- 32 • Stakeholders in the field of politics on the national level:
- 33 If the objective to become the First University of France will be approved of by
- 34 the university boards and by the founding president, it will be of tremendous
- 35 importance to involve politicians and administrators in national ministries for
- 36 this ambitious goal in order to get their consent on it. This could be done
- 37 possibly by first addressing to alumni who are working in political or

1 administrative fields who studied at any of the three universities in Strasbourg.
2 Together with them it could be built up a network of “Friends for the University
3 of Strasbourg”. As a second step it could be advisable to underline the
4 uniqueness of the future University of Strasbourg and to define it as a project
5 of national prestige by stressing its role as the First University of France. This
6 might be done successfully by addressing to the patriotism of political leaders.
7 The project of creating the First University of France should receive the same
8 priority attention of political leaders as f. e. projects of aerospace. The more
9 the following stakeholders are getting the feeling that the University of
10 Strasbourg is their First University of France the better for the project itself:

- 11 ○ Alumni of either of the three universities of Strasbourg who work in
12 politics or ministries
- 13 ○ Minister of Higher Education and Research
- 14 ○ Minister of Foreign Affairs
- 15 ○ Prime Minister of France
- 16 ○ President of the French Republic
- 17 ● Stakeholders in the media, local, regional, national, international level:
 - 18 ○ Newspapers
 - 19 ○ Magazines
 - 20 ○ Television channels
 - 21 ○ Radio programmes

23 4.2. Accentuation of benefits

24

25 As in any change project the most important message consists of the benefits of it to different
26 stakeholders. When the advantages of the merging process have been worked out
27 profoundly, it is important to express the benefit with very simple and understandable words
28 and to repeat. The founding president, the vice-presidents, the deans, the head of
29 communication, heads of staff, anybody who holds responsibility for the future University of
30 Strasbourg: all of them will have to repeat the benefits of the merger, the arguments for
31 creating the future University of Strasbourg many times, in some phases probably several
32 times per day. Since the president will not always be able to talk to everybody on a personal
33 basis, it would be helpful to single out personalities who have much influence within the
34 academic community of the future University of Strasbourg and to meet with a group of these
35 influential insiders on a regular (or irregular) basis. There should be meetings with deans,
36 heads of schools etc. as well, since they have to be informed by the presidents on the

1 merging project. Each dean or head should be asked to pass down information into their
2 proper faculty or team of staff (=passing information down in form of a cascade).
3 The basis of any communication on the merger should be a simple and reasonable answer
4 to the simple but reasonable question: "Why merging the three universities of Strasbourg?"
5

6 4.3. Integration of critics 7

8 Critics inside universities are usually rather intelligent. They point out to real weaknesses of
9 the concept or the implementation of change and ask questions that are often not
10 comfortable for the main actors. Within the university discourse there are big chances that
11 players of change may learn and gain profit from their critics. Several rules might be helpful
12 for the internal communication strategy:
13

- 14 • Internal critics of the merger should be listen to by the president and other
15 players (better internally than by external media)
- 16 • Critics should be taken seriously.
- 17 • Since critics often point out to real problems, aspects, and risks, it might be
18 appropriate to keep in mind their arguments and to modify even
19 implementation plans in case of convincing arguments.
- 20 • Critics should play an active role during the transitional period which can
21 become a constructive one. The more critics are heard and taken seriously by
22 internal actors and players of the University of Strasbourg the less they will
23 communicate their criticism to the public or to the media.
24

25 4.4. Inventory of tools of communication 26

27 For the communication unit it will be helpful to list all tools of communication in order to work
28 out a communication strategy and communication plans for any stakeholder or groupings
29 interested in university issues. Tools of communication are on the one hand the media which
30 are run by the university itself: University newspapers, flyers, magazines, brochures, internet,
31 intranet, mailings and blogs. But even in times of internet and electronic communication
32 personal communication by meetings, discussions, lessons, speeches, academic
33 celebrations, festivals, and even concerts still play an important role as they did in times
34 before the internet. The internet is not replacing personal communication but rather
35 completing it.
36

1 Apart from tools which refer to the rational side of communication and perception there are
2 different other tools which address to the rather emotional side: If possible it would be a nice
3 thing to unite university orchestras, bands and a University of Strasbourg chorus who could
4 give a great concert for the future University of Strasbourg; maybe even on the first of
5 January in 2009 in order to make sure that everybody understands and feels the meaning of
6 the date for the future First University of France. The same strategy might be possible for a
7 university theatre or other cultural activities of students or staff. Other tools of communication
8 on a rather emotional level could be artificial fireworks. Nightly fireworks for the “re-birth” of
9 the University of Strasbourg could be done possibly on New Years Eve or maybe on the
10 French national festival on the 14th of July 2009.

11

12

13 4.5. Internal communication before external communication

14

15 The importance of communication by the president to the member of the University of
16 Strasbourg (professors, students, staff, and friends of the University) can hardly be
17 overestimated.³ As a general rule: The more members of the University feel that they are well
18 informed about important changes of the University the better will be the perception of it
19 inside the press. It might be advisable therefore to communicate all changes first internally by
20 the president to the members of the University of Strasbourg and to address to the press and
21 the media after having done that. Members of the University of Strasbourg should not get the
22 impression that they are informed about important changes and issues concerning their
23 university after the media have been informed. The better internal communication works the
24 better external communication will reflect that. This is due to the fact, that journalists usually
25 do not only ask presidents and heads of communication units. They also interview other
26 members of the university, as they like, whose view on the merger might be critical, if they
27 feel bad informed by the president. A good tool for internal communication could be a regular
28 report of the president on recent developments of the merging process (resp. other
29 responsible actors) at the beginning of every board meeting.

30

31

³ A group of students from Brandenburg University of Applied Sciences invented the internet-tool „directly to the candidate”, which is being used in the campaign for the elections of the president in the USA and in other prominent instances. In case of interest by the University of Strasbourg it will be very easy to make a contact to this group in order to implement this tool for the University of Strasbourg.

1 4.6. Yearly plan of communication

2

3 Since there are events, dates and celebrations as well as academic activities, which will be
4 repeated every year it seems advisable for the new head and team of communication to work
5 out a yearly plan of communication. Even for the unique events in a single year the yearly
6 plan of communication should be worked out in order to prepare events in a professional,
7 non-hectic manner some time before the start of it. A yearly plan of communication could
8 include also activities and planning even for non-academic occasion, if they can be used as
9 causes for the communication of the University of Strasbourg (f.e. Christmas-time as a
10 period of importance for the university shop).

11

12 4.7. Communicating the transitional period

13

14 The tool of a concrete communication plan, which indicates objectives and messages, target
15 groups and stakeholders, expected benefits of communication project and measures, the
16 medium and events, a time schedule and financial resources as well as the colleague, who is
17 responsible for the implementation and other colleagues who are involved in it, will be of
18 particular importance for the period of transition. Since the new University of Strasbourg will
19 start as a legal entity on 1 September 2008 it will be appropriate to have a communication
20 plan that starts at that time already. When the period of transition will end is due to definition
21 by the steering board of the process respectively of the University of Strasbourg. At least the
22 month of January 2009 will probably have to be considered as part of the transition period
23 still.

24 The existing units of communication could serve as pilots in the process of merging the three
25 universities and the Pôle. It would be a good idea to merge them in September 2008 already,
26 since even if the administrative and management tasks of the three existing universities will
27 be existing up to 31 December 2008, the future University of Strasbourg has tremendous
28 needs of communication. There is an urgent need to communicate the transition period and
29 the change process itself. This has to be done by the new team of communication in order to
30 practice its cooperation as the future unit of communication, which will have crucial
31 importance for the success of the merging process. These tasks should not be performed by
32 outsiders, but by the very existing staff, which will have to do that task after 1 January 2009
33 anyway. The communicational services for the “dying institution” should be stopped no later
34 than by September 2008, when the future University of Strasbourg will have been founded as
35 an entity and will require more attention and communication as the three existing universities.

36

37

1 4.8. Evaluation of strategy and communication

2

3 In order to start a communication strategy it is useful to define concrete objectives for each
4 communication measure as the document "Stratégie de communication Phase 2" already
5 does. In order to define realistic objectives which can be accomplished by the communication
6 measures it would be helpful to know how the members of the University of Strasbourg
7 (profs, scholars, students, and staff) feel about the merger, which hopes and fear are
8 accompanying it. This would be the starting point for a communication strategy with the goal
9 to improve knowledge and perception of the merger by members of the university. The more
10 the communication unit knows about the thoughts and feelings of their target groups and
11 stakeholders the better the following measurement of communication can reply to deficits in
12 information or fears of change. An answer to the question of how the merging process is
13 being perceived and thought about could be worked out by an anonymous survey of the
14 main target groups of the universities (these are professors, scholars, students and staff).
15 The decision if such an inquiry is possible and the way how it would be designed (f. e.
16 internally or externally) depends of course on the financial resources for the merging process
17 itself. If there are any resources for an anonymous consensus its result would give a valuable
18 basis for the communicational work of the founding president as well as for the work of the
19 communication unit.

20

21

22 **5. Conclusion**

23

24 The fusion of the three universities of Strasbourg into one University of Strasbourg gives the
25 great chance to become an international recognized comprehensive University with a wide
26 range of subjects and disciplines. The interdisciplinary profile will probably be unique in
27 France. As an institution like this it will be able to give interdisciplinary answers to questions
28 of the academic world, which other institutions in France will not be able to give. So far, the
29 future University of Strasbourg will realise chances which other universities in France don't
30 have or don't take (yet). Even if other universities in France would follow the example of
31 Strasbourg, the future University of Strasbourg will still be important steps ahead.
32 For the internal and external communication of the future University of Strasbourg the
33 advantages and chances of the fusion should be stressed out very elaborated. The
34 communication of the benefits because of the merging process should be understandable for
35 any member of the University from the Nobel-Prize-winner down to the concierges and
36 cleaners as well.

Report on Communication

1 Many people are engaged actively in the process. Working groups on the merger seem to be
2 very big in terms of members, with a lot of people participating very actively. What is needed
3 by now is responsible leadership for the future University of Strasbourg that defines clear cut
4 personal responsibilities in a top-down approach. Many open questions have been asked
5 within working groups. These open questions are justified and need to be decided by the
6 leadership of the future University of Strasbourg, if the risk of a standstill of the project has to
7 be avoided.

8

9 “Rome was not built in a day”: Even if the leadership of the future University of Strasbourg
10 will not have the capacity to implement all suggested strategies or tools of communication,
11 the chances for a success of the merger in the long term can still be considered as high, due
12 to favourable conditions for the University of Strasbourg and last not least due to its
13 academic performance.

14

15 Good luck to it!

16

17

18 Brandenburg at the river Havel, Germany, 17 June 2008

19

20

21

22

23 Walter Kühme