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New Leadership for VDE's Study, Work and Society Committee: Professor Martina Hofmann Takes Over as Chair

(Frankfurt am Main, 8/18/2021) The VDE Study, Work and Society Committee is a central point of contact for issues related to training, career choice and the importance of technical developments for society in the fields of electrical engineering and information technology. Its new chairwoman, Professor Martina Hofmann from the Aalen University of Applied Sciences (Aalen UAS), is an experienced networker who will focus on the topics of women in tech and climate protection in addition to the committee's traditional remit.

An untapped source of expertise

The increasing shortage of skilled workers is one of the ongoing topics VDE regularly addresses. In Germany, there is an increasing lack of engineers, electrical engineers and IT specialists across all industries. Providing existing staff with further training is one way to counter this, as is recruiting specialists from abroad. "We also, however, have a resource in this country that is not being sufficiently addressed, and that's women," says Prof. Martina Hofmann. "We still have far too few examples that young women can point to as viable career paths in technology."

Hofmann, who served as Dean of Studies of the Department of Electrical Engineering at Aalen UAS until the beginning of 2021, has long been active in the field of women's advancement. She regularly mentors students, including in the mentor network at Goethe University Frankfurt since 1999, and also has creative ideas that extend far beyond the traditional. "We've already organized children's birthday parties for tomorrow's female researchers and developed mother-and-child workshops on how a solar-powered outdoor lamp works," she says. As the new chair of the VDE Committee on Study, Work and Society, Hofmann will work with her colleagues to raise awareness of women in tech. "We have to shake up established ways of thinking," she

continues. “While [German crime series] *Tatort* popularized the role of the female police detective, female electrical engineers are still waiting for their breakout moment.”

Shaping the climate protection transformation

Another area that is highly relevant for society involves VDE’s support for the transformation toward increased climate protection from a scientific and technological perspective.

Prof. Martina Hofmann has been working in this field for years in connection with student theses, the creation of a new master’s degree program, and her current contributions to a transfer center for efficiency, climate protection and climate change mitigation. “My aim is to provide communities and companies with tangible support to help them succeed in this field,” she explains. “Why should we set small goals when our actual objectives are much bigger? Through VDE, and particularly through the Committee on Study, Work and Society, we can shape societal change and get the major players on the same page.”

Helping young professionals find their path

Which steps should I take in terms of education and training? How do I plan out my professional career in order to achieve my goals? Prof. Hofmann often fields such questions in her role as a lecturer at Aalen UAS. “I see a great deal of uncertainty because students’ primary concern tends to be how something will look on their resumé,” she reports. As an experienced, well-connected scientist, Hofmann believes that the key to success is to free oneself from the constant pressure of expectations and complete one’s studies for more than mere academic credits.

“Ultimately, there are no wrong moves because every step helps us advance. If we’re happy in our jobs and the things we do every day, we can really shine and achieve something. That’s why it’s also worth taking a look at classes or lectures that aren’t necessarily required to complete your chosen course of study.” Under Hofmann’s leadership, offering guidance to young professionals who are just starting out, educating people about different job profiles, and strengthening internship opportunities will all continue to be key focuses of the VDE Committee for Study, Work and Society.

About Professor Martina Hofmann

Prof. Martina Hofmann (PhD) completed her studies in electrical engineering with a specialization in electrical power engineering at the Technical University of Darmstadt, Germany, graduating in 1997. She then continued her studies at TU Darmstadt's Institute of Electrical Energy Conversion, where she earned her doctorate in 2002. From 1998 to 2001, she had studied on a scholarship from the German state of Hesse's "Women in the Engineering Sciences" doctoral funding project.

Since 1999, Hofmann has been active in Goethe University Frankfurt's mentoring network for women in science and technology at institutions of higher learning in Hesse. From 2002 to 2012, she worked in the fields of transport engineering, oil and gas, and mining at SIEMENS AG before becoming a professor of renewable energies at the Aalen University of Applied Sciences in September 2012. Hofmann served as Dean of Studies at Aalen UAS from September 2014 to February 2021 and was elected the chair of VDE's Committee for Study, Work and Society on June 25, 2021.

About the Committee for Study, Work and Society

Digitalization, the energy transition, e-mobility, artificial intelligence: VDE covers significant developments like these not only from a purely technical perspective, but also with regard to education, professional issues and the importance of technical advancement for society. The Committee for Study, Work and Society's remit encompasses the entire framework of electrical engineering and information technology studies, as well as its effects on education issues, career entry, corporate requirements for various engineering professions and the engineering labor market.

What image do electrical engineers have? How many electrical engineers work for engineering service providers? What changes under new engineering laws? How do we get the next generation interested in technology and the engineering profession? How do new megatrends affect university courses? The committee tackles these and other questions and provides corresponding guidance to companies and politicians.

About VDE:

VDE, one of the largest technology organizations in Europe, has been regarded as a synonym for innovation and technological progress for more than 125 years. VDE is the only organization in the world that combines science, standardization, testing, certification, and application consulting under one umbrella. The VDE mark has been synonymous with the highest safety standards and consumer protection for 100 years. Our passion is the advancement of technology, the next generation of engineers and technologists, and lifelong learning and career development “on the job”. Within the VDE network, 2,000 employees at over 60 locations worldwide, more than 100,000 honorary experts, and 1,500 companies are dedicated to ensuring a future worth living: networked, digital, electrical.

The headquarters of the VDE (Association for Electrical, Electronic & Information Technologies) is in Frankfurt am Main. For more information, visit www.vde.com.

Press contact: Melanie Unseld, Tel. +49 69 6308-461, melanie.unseld@vde.com