



CharitéCentrum für Neurologie, Neurochirurgie und Psychiatrie

Charité | Campus Benjamin Franklin | Hindenburgdamm 30 | 12203 Berlin

Chair WPA Secretary Nominations Committee

Re: Application for Secretary for Scientific Meetings

Klinik und Hochschulambulanz für Psychiatrie und Psychotherapie

Direktorin:

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Esteemed Members of the Nomination Committee, most honorable President Herrman,

It is with great interest and sincerity that I hereby submit my application for your consideration for the position of Secretary for Scientific Meetings.

Rather than presume a familiarity on the part of the committee with my professional development, let me begin with a brief sketch of my professional experience and qualifications that have naturally led to my great interest in serving as Secretary for Scientific Meetings. I will then describe in greater detail the motivation for my application that stem from my aspirations for this important position in the WPA.

After medical school and residency training in Germany, I was awarded a Fogarty Fellowship by the U.S. for research in psychiatry at the National Institutes of Health in 1986-88. Returning to Germany at the end of my Fellowship, I worked the next six years as a senior clinician-scientist as well as an attending psychiatrist at the Max-Planck-Institute of Psychiatry in Munich. Not only is this Max-Planck-Institute one of the most influential and productive research facilities for psychiatry and neurosciences in Europe, it also runs a large academic clinical center that includes the most important in- and outpatients' departments of modern psychiatry. From Munich I moved on to a tenured professorship at the University of Heidelberg where I simultaneously held the position as deputy director of the Central Institute of Mental Health (CIMH) in Mannheim, another major psychiatric research hospital in Germany. In 2001 I moved to Berlin becoming the first woman in Europe to be appointed to the directorship of a psychiatric university department at the rank of full professor.

Over the past nineteen years at Charité-Campus Benjamin Franklin, I have successfully joined, established and/or supported national and international networks and professional/scientific societies both to improve treatment and care for patients with mental health disorders and to foster and promote new research in psychiatry. My three overarching objectives in all of these efforts have been (1) to train the staff to do relevant and significant clinical research and yet provide the best care available to our patients; (2) to establish supportive and sustainable international collaborative and exchange programs; and (3) to provide critical support to promising women needed to compensate for existing structural obstacles to women's research career advancement.

Let me illustrate my approach using a concrete example of my organizational efforts to achieve these goals that could be regarded as a template for what I would bring to the position of Secretary for Scientific Meetings. As you are well aware, women physicians, and especially psychiatrists, are vastly underrepresented in low- and middle-income countries (LAMICS). In 2011 a young Vietnamese woman fresh from Medical School in Hanoi, Dr. Ta, applied for a residency training

position at my department because she trusted that I would support her in the first instance but also because she very much wanted to become a clinician-scientist. At the time of her application, I was impressed by Dr. Ta's ambition and dedication. I was not disappointed. Through the support of various public organizations, including the Deans of Charité and of Hanoi Medical University, we have been able to initiate and to establish a "Hospital Partnership" between the Departments of Psychiatry at Charité-Campus Benjamin Franklin and Hanoi Medical University. Such a partnership is now a formally recognized and German government-funded project (Bundesministerium für Zusammenarbeit; BMZ). Our project contributes for the first time to the development of a long-term partnership for the field of psychiatry in the areas of professional education, clinical care, and scientific research. Between 2016 and 2019 three national conferences in Vietnam, each lasting three days, have been organized by my team together with my colleague, Prof. Nguyen Van Tuan from Hanoi Medical University.

Most recently we were awarded large-scale funding for "Partnerships for the Health Sector in Developing Countries" between the Department of Psychiatry of Charite-Campus Benjamin Franklin, Hanoi Medical University and the National Institute of Mental Health and Provincial Hospitals in Vietnam for the period from 2019 to 2022. One of the main goals of this new partnership is to give postgraduate and postdoctoral students from Vietnam the opportunity to train in psychiatric clinical research at my department and to establish an exchange program between the two countries and, secondly, to develop joint research projects.

As an indication of the great value our Vietnamese partners have seen in my efforts to establish this scientific program, my colleagues of the Medical University Hanoi awarded me an Honorary Professorship of their Department of Psychiatry in October 2019.

Esteemed Committee, I am firmly convinced that one of the keys for the best possible care for our patients will be found ultimately in the creation of new scientific knowledge through international cooperation and scientific exchange. This is of course not a new or revolutionary idea but lies at the very foundation of WPA. It is my intention to work collaboratively and collegially to this end with both the leadership and the membership of WPA. As outlined by the CoC of WPA this will be done in a culturally and personally engaging as well as mutually supportive fashion. To share together, we must pull together. I am very proud to confirm that the German Psychiatric Society (DGPPN) has nominated me to apply for the position.

I will be able to afford the amount of time necessary to fulfill the obligations and I would hope you favorably consider my application for the position of Secretary for Scientific Meetings.

Most sincerely yours,



Isabella Heuser

Enclosures:

- A sketch of my CV

- WPA Nomination Form signed by the President of DGPPN Prof. Dr.Dr. Andreas Heinz