



## **CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

### **“Closing the Gaps: Students and Faculty in Transition”**

44th International Conference on Improving University Teaching

**July 24<sup>th</sup> - July 26<sup>th</sup> 2019, University of Applied Sciences Ruhr West (HRW)**

Changing students, an evolving workplace, and evidence-based pedagogical innovation are not new to the university. What is new, however, are the pace of change and the gaps that have therefore opened between student expectations on the one hand and the realities of university instruction and the workplace on the other. Increasingly students arrive unprepared for what they find on entering the university; nor are faculty always prepared for what the students bring with them in terms of either expectations and knowledge.

Why is this so? Students who have been raised in a digitized world may question the purposes of a more traditional higher education curriculum, feel uncertain about the academic standards to which they will be held, and thus fail to adjust to the academic culture they find. Faculty, too, may experience a gap between what they expect from student performance and what students are actually able to deliver, especially in the first year. Academic staff often remain uncertain about how to deal with the preparedness gap. If they offer additional academic support to their students, they risk their growing accustomed to such help, making it difficult to withdraw it during succeeding years. Yet such academic “scaffolding” can be at best temporary, especially if we wish their university studies to prepare students for the often unforgiving world of work that awaits them after graduation.

How can we best ease students’ transition into the world of the university and help them navigate the challenges they encounter? How can we help faculty to strike a better balance between academic support and maintaining academic standards? How can we foster a sense of common enterprise that narrows the gap between promise and performance on both sides? Over three days in Mülheim we will address these and related questions. Our host will be the University of Applied Sciences Ruhr West (HRW) — a university dedicated to science and technology that will soon celebrate its tenth anniversary. Such a young institution, born in our new millennium (like some of our incoming students), seems an appropriate setting for exploring this year’s conference theme. We hope you will join us there.

#### **Seven sub-themes underlie the overall conference topic:**

- Research on the changing student population
- Improving student preparedness
- Engaging first-year students

- Implementing institutional change
- The promise of participation and student-faculty collaboration
- Closing the gaps in course design
- Related innovations in teaching and learning

The **submission deadline** is **February 8th, 2019**; presenters will be notified of the decision by March 8th. (All papers to be presented at the Conference will be included in the Conference proceedings.)

For further information, including the submission format for the proposals, please visit the IUT website, [www.iutconference.com](http://www.iutconference.com), where you will also find the link for proposal submissions.