

Pressemitteilung

Jade Hochschule - Wilhelmshaven/Oldenburg/Elsfleth

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09.07.2019

<http://idw-online.de/de/news718955>

Studium und Lehre
Gesellschaft, Meer / Klima, Umwelt / Ökologie, Wirtschaft
überregional



Students develop sustainable use concept for Heligoland's harbours

Over the last few months, 15 students from the Maritime Management and Logistics Studies Department of Jade University of Applied Sciences have been examining the sustainable use of Heligoland's harbours. "Various studies on Heligoland's harbours drawn up by consulting companies are already available", says Florian von Kroge, one of the student project leaders. Together with his fellow student Janik Baum, he made sure the concept devised by the students is more holistic than previous approaches.

"We looked at life on the island and analysed local needs", explains Baum. At the beginning of March, the students interviewed the inhabitants of Heligoland and took part in the island conference. They found that currently the Outer Harbour, especially the Heligoland Quay, and the South Harbour are used for a range of purposes. For example, passenger ships, offshore and supply ships dock in the harbours. Based on the island's needs and their analysis, the Maritime Management students developed practical concepts. "Looking at the aspect of sustainability, the students suggested that many of the piers should be retained and refurbished", explains Prof. Dr. Peter Wengelowski, who conducts the module together with Prof. Ralf Brauner. "New construction creates high CO₂ emissions and impacts on the ecosystem. These effects can be avoided by working with what's already there."

At the residents' meeting held on 25th of June in the Nordseehalle in Heligoland, the students presented their results to interested islanders. They proposed using the island's five existing harbours for different purposes and optimising their use. In the Elsfleth-based students' concept, the South Harbour and also the Heligoland Quay are the tourism landing points, while the Heligoland Quay is mainly reserved for offshore shipping as well as the island's supply and waste disposal traffic. The North-East Harbour is envisioned as a marina, and the Inner Harbour becomes a spill-over harbour for sport boats. "It was important to both the municipality and the students that they applied a neutral, unbiased approach without any results dictated by the initiator", says Brauner. After the presentation, von Kroge summed up the evening as follows: "We had a discussion round with islanders that went very well, and we're happy with the presentation of our results."

Apart from factual knowledge, the students also gained key qualifications in project management. "In a project like this, you learn a great deal - also about yourself", says von Kroge. And Baum adds: "This kind of practical experience including excursions to determine the current situation and a presentation before a large audience can't be matched by any course of lectures." The excursions and group dynamics made the project very time consuming, he says. However, both agreed that the experiences gained were extremely valuable and the soft skills the students developed would be useful in their professional lives after graduation.



Over the past few months, the students have been working on the sustainable use of Heligoland's harbours.
Ralf Brauner



Successfully presented their sustainable harbour use concept in Heligoland: students of Maritime Management with their lecturer, Prof. Ralf Brauner (centre).
Jade University