

Press release

Expanding the Executive Board

Two additional vice presidents strengthen ETH Zurich

Zurich, 25 September 2020

ETH Zurich is expanding its Executive Board with two new domains. At the request of ETH President Joël Mesot, the ETH Board has appointed Julia Dannath-Schuh as the new Vice President for Personnel Development and Leadership, and Vanessa Wood as the new Vice President for Knowledge Transfer and Corporate Relations.

Since 2008, the ETH Zurich Executive Board has comprised five members. In the meantime, competition has become fiercer, while the expectations of society and the political arena have intensified. ETH Zurich has grown considerably over the last few years, with student numbers more than doubling since 2000, and employee numbers increasing by 60 percent; the university has also become more diverse, both culturally and academically. The number of ETH spin-offs has surged too, and ETH Zurich has intensified collaboration with large companies and SMEs.

ETH Zurich wants to be competitive among the world's top universities in leadership culture and personnel development, and to consolidate its position as a driver of innovation in Switzerland. To achieve this, it is reorganising these two areas of responsibility and expanding the Executive Board accordingly: expertise built up over the years will now be brought together and enhanced. At the request of ETH President Joël Mesot, the ETH Board appointed Julia Dannath-Schuh as the new Vice President for Personnel Development and Leadership, and Vanessa Wood as the new Vice President for Knowledge Transfer and Corporate Relations on 23 September 2020.

Developing the management and corporate culture

"I'm delighted that we've been able to recruit two such extremely skilled leaders to serve as vice presidents on the ETH Zurich Executive Board, and that we can harness their wealth of expertise in these two fields," says ETH President Joël Mesot, who [initiated the idea](#) of expanding the Executive Board in June 2019. "Since I first took office, I've been committed to strengthening personnel development at

all levels and developing the leadership culture. I'm convinced that creating a new Executive Board domain and appointing Julia Dannath-Schuh as vice president brings us one big step closer to this goal."

Dannath-Schuh is an HR expert with more than 12 years' experience in assisting organisations in Switzerland and abroad in developing their leadership and corporate culture. She has a PhD in psychology and has several publications to her name. "I've been a fan of ETH Zurich ever since I worked here many years ago as a scientific assistant. I'm aware of the challenges and potential conflict situations in my area of responsibility, and I'm looking forward to tackling and solving these constructively, together with those concerned," says Dannath-Schuh. She will be joining the Executive Board on 1 November 2020.

Stepping up the transfer of knowledge

Vanessa Wood will bring her expertise to the Executive Board as of 1 January 2021. She will continue as an ETH professor at the Department of Information Technology and Electrical Engineering, but with a reduced workload. "I've always had a keen interest in the interface between research and industry; I'm delighted that I can now assist ETH at an institutional level in facilitating the transfer of knowledge to society," she says. Wood has been carrying out research into nanotechnology and batteries at ETH Zurich since 2011, and her findings have been incorporated in several spin-offs. She has also received numerous awards for promoting the transfer of knowledge to industry. As a professor and head of department, Wood has demonstrated leadership qualities and expanded her network within ETH Zurich and industry. "Given the rapid pace of technological change, it's crucial that research findings from ETH labs find their way swiftly to industry and society. I've no doubt that Vanessa Wood will succeed in enhancing and expanding knowledge transfer at our university," asserts Mesot.

Major milestone in the rETHink project

In expanding the Executive Board, Mesot is pursuing his goal of developing ETH Zurich in a systematic, demand-oriented manner and securing its position as one of the most renowned universities in the world. The appointment of two new vice presidents is a key milestone in the [rETHink project](#), which reviews and develops ETH structures and processes.

More information

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The current Executive Board and the new domains

Until the end of 2019, the Executive Board comprised President Joël Mesot (overall responsibility), Rector Sarah Springman (teaching), Vice President for Research and Corporate Relations Detlef Günther, Vice President for Finance and Controlling Robert Perich, and Vice President for Human Resources and Infrastructure Ulrich Weidmann. The two new vice presidencies, “Personnel Development and Leadership” and “Knowledge Transfer and Corporate Relations”, were created from the existing Executive Board domains in January 2020 and led ad interim by Ulrich Weidmann and Detlef Günther. As of 1 November 2020, Ulrich Weidmann will devote himself to the Infrastructure domain, while as of 1 January 2021, Detlef Günther will focus entirely on the Research domain.

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