



Dear readers and members!

It is not uncommon for the pursuit of further academic qualifications and starting your own family to happen at the very same stage of your life. And of course, the same can apply to caring for and supporting family members. To offer the best possible assistance to junior researchers in meeting the special challenges of such a situation, TU Dresden has a variety of contact points providing advice and support as well as practical help that we would like to present to you in more detail in this edition of our newsletter.

We have also asked our GA member, Prof. Katja Beesdo-Baum, to let us into her personal secret for a successful career with "kith and kin."

Yours,

International and transdisciplinary – GA's Convention of Doctoral Candidates

Now it's official: The Graduate Academy has an elected representation of doctoral candidates. The nine members of the convention of doctoral candidates will now be in office for a year and they have big plans.

In the end, it was a classic ballot box that was set up for the first election of the GA representation of doctoral candidates. In the traditional way, ballot papers were used to vote for the nine candidates. As it turned out, all those nominated made it into the first convention of doctoral candidates.

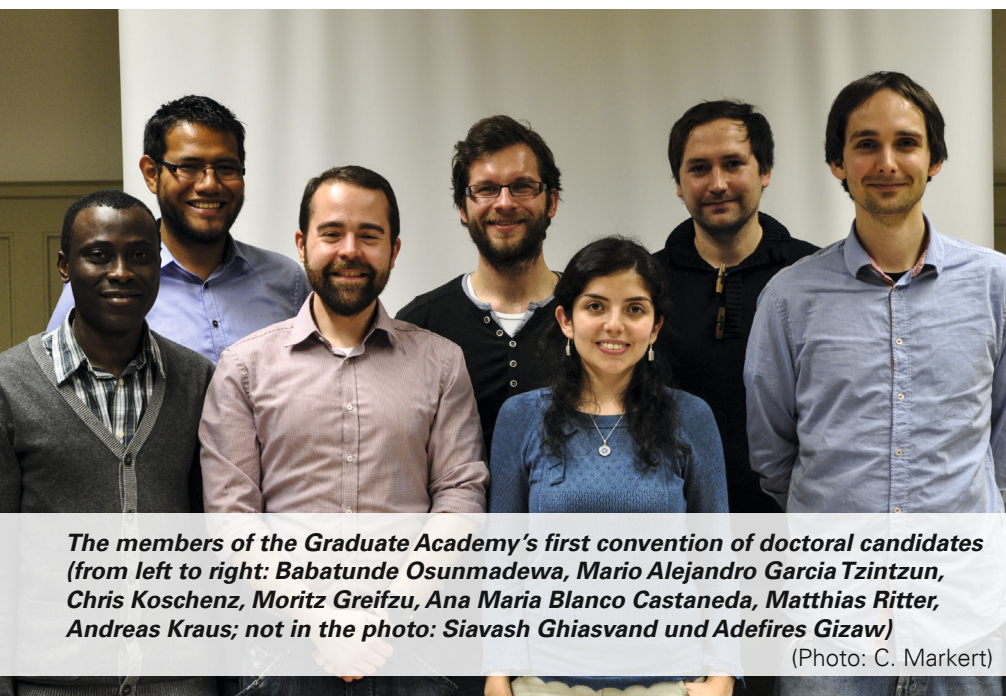
Moritz Greifzu, a research assistant at the Institute of Aerospace Engineering, and, since spring 2014, an active member of what was then still the provisional convention, was elected to be the convention's spokesperson. His deputy is Mario Alejandro Garcia Tzintzun, who is originally from Mexico and a PhD student at the

Faculty of Civil Engineering. Both have now also been appointed as members of the GA board.

Following their inaugural meeting, the newly elected representatives are largely in agreement concerning the main objectives of their work over the next few months:

- Setting up a network among the GA group of doctoral students and beyond in order to identify common subjects, problems and requests of PhD candidates,
- improving the visibility of doctoral candidates as an interest group at TU Dresden,
- creating a platform for the cross-faculty exchange among PhD students,
- networking with conventions of doctoral candidates from other universities and
- introducing suggestions and proposals for developing the range of support provided by the GA.

The members of the convention of doctoral candidates are looking forward to meeting many of TU Dresden's PhD candidates at planned events such as the regular convention breakfast or barbecue evenings. But you also can contact the convention at any time with your requests and suggestions, preferably via e-mail to: phd-konventdresden@mail.de KU



The members of the Graduate Academy's first convention of doctoral candidates (from left to right: Babatunde Osunmadewa, Mario Alejandro Garcia Tzintzun, Chris Koschenz, Moritz Greifzu, Ana Maria Blanco Castaneda, Matthias Ritter, Andreas Kraus; not in the photo: Siavash Ghiasvand und Adefires Gizaw)

(Photo: C. Markert)

Reconciling Academic Career and Family Life

What is the actual family policy component in the “Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz” and how is this discretionary provision handled at TU Dresden? Is it possible for a fixed-term employment contract to be extended for the duration of maternity or parental leave? What are the family-related regulations for scholarship holders? What services are available for junior researchers in terms of childcare and advice? Frequently asked by junior researchers, these and many more questions relating to the compatibility of having a family and gaining academic qualifications will be taken up in the following article.



Photo © contrastwerkstatt_L - Fotolia.com

Since 2007, TU Dresden has been certified as a family-friendly university. It supports students and members of staff in reconciling professional/study-related and family demands. The Campusbüro Uni mit Kind (Campus Office Students with Children) has been a pillar of TU Dresden's family-friendly approach for many years. In cooperation with the Studentenwerk Dresden, Campusbüro Uni mit Kind offers members of staff and students advice, courses, events and opportunities for meeting others, as well as a comprehensive range of services related to the compatibility of profession/studying and family. Furthermore, their cooperation with the Studentenwerk includes providing 57 kindergarten places or daycare places for members of staff at TU Dresden. The Studentenwerk also provides childcare places and short-term childcare options for students. The Campusbüro Uni mit Kind is available for advice on questions

relating to the provision of childcare.

For children accompanying a parent to the University, specially equipped parent-child work spaces, rooms for changing diapers and “quiet” rooms are available at TU Dresden, along with facilities for playing. In addition, the Studentenwerk Dresden has a special food option for children in the dining halls.

However, simply providing advice and childcare is not sufficient to make the family and an academic career compatible. This requires a legal framework created by the legislative authorities, applied in different ways to parents in employment and to those who are financing their PhD with scholarships.

Parents doing a PhD while in temporary employment

As gaining a scientific qualification is often associated with temporary employment, TU Dresden's amended fixed-term employment guidelines provide at least a certain degree of planning security for starting/taking

care of a family. According to these, contracts for less than a year will no longer be issued as a matter of principle. Moreover, the maximum fixed-term contract period is to be chosen – for contracts financed by third parties, this means contracts are to be concluded for at least the total duration of the existing approval of funding; for contracts funded from the budget, as a rule, a period of three years for a new recruitment is envisaged.

If the PhD is obtained during a temporary position financed through the budget or through third-party funds, then the individual is entitled to parental leave for up to a maximum of three years. This can be applied for informally at the directorate for personnel. Based on the federal law for parental leave and parental allowances (BEEG), employees have the right to a leave of absence of 12 (+2) months to care for their newborn child and as a rule, to receive a parental allowance to the amount of 67 percent of their net income from the time before the birth of the child.





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Frequently, there is insecurity with regard to whether it is possible to extend a temporary employment contract for the length of the family-related interruption. In the case of a fixed-term contract in accordance with §2 para.1 of the law governing fixed-term employment contracts for academics at German universities („Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz“ WissZeitVG), the duration of the contract that is still outstanding at the time of claiming parental leave will be added to the regular duration of the contract, pursuant to §2 para.5 n°3 WissZeitVG. The situation is different, though, for third-party-funded employment contracts that are limited in accordance with §2 para.2 WissZeitVG. Here, there is no legal claim for extending a contract on the basis of maternity or parental leave. However, even in these cases, solutions can be found with the support of the employer and the provider of third-party funding.

The so-called family policy component constitutes an innovation in the WissZeitVG. It is applicable for fixed-term employment contracts that are limited in accordance with §2 para.1 WissZeitVG and allows the maximum fixed-term contract period to be extended by up to two years per child, if the supervision of one of more children below the

age of 18 occurs within the period of gaining academic qualifications.¹

This is a discretionary provision, applied by TU Dresden as a matter of principle. Applications for the family policy component can be made informally at the directorate for personnel. The exact duration of the extension beyond the regular maximum fixed-term contract will be agreed between the directorate for personnel and the Chair in question. The directorate for personnel can provide information about the options for extending individual contracts.

Parents doing a PhD on a scholarship

For PhD candidates who receive a scholarship, the situation is less clearly regulated and varies according to the provider of the funds. As being funded via a scholarship does not form an employment contract, the legal regulations of maternity and parental leave are not applicable for holders of scholarships. For this reason, most providers of scholarships have their own family-related regulations. Inquiries about these regulations should be made directly with the provider of the scholarship.

As regards parental support, scholarship holders are legally entit-

led to the basic rate of 300 euros per month for 12 (+2) months.

Registered PhD students

Registered students are not entitled to parental leave but can apply for leave of absence from their studies at the Admissions Office. As a rule, one semester leave is granted for a pregnancy. Students with a child are entitled to a total of six additional semesters off for childcare during the first three years of the child's life. You can find more detailed information at the Campusbüro Uni mit Kind.

More detailed information on the family-friendly university TU Dresden is available at:

http://tu-dresden.de/die_tu_dresden/portrait/uni_mit_kind

Article: Franziska Schneider
Photos: Campusbüro Uni mit Kind, contrastwerkstatt_L - Fotolia.com

¹ Source: Vereinbarkeit von Familie und wissenschaftlicher Qualifizierung. Ein Rechtsratgeber der Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft. 2013 (a legal guide from the Trade Union for Education and Science).

Three questions to:

Dagmar Terbeznik

Coach and Leader of the GA Workshop "Career Planning for Dual Career Couples"

What, in your experience, are the greatest challenges dual career couples face in science and academia?

The greatest challenges are probably

- finding tailor-made jobs at the same location for both partners,
- having planning security at least for the mid-term and
- finding time for a life outside the job, such as with children and family.

The often precarious nature of career paths in science and academia is difficult for early career researchers to combine with starting a family and with the responsibility for children. It is often the women who put their careers on hold for family-related reasons.

In your estimation, what distinguishes couples who succeed in combining two academic careers?

These couples have completely individual approaches. What they frequently have in common is their constructive attitude to partnership and their mutual appreciation of the professional satisfaction of their partner. In addition, these couples do not strive for perfection in all areas of their lives. Many academic couples accept, at least for a certain time, they will not be able to live in the same place. They come to terms with the fact that their children will often be looked after by other people, and not just in institutions such as kindergarten or at school, but also by babysitters or childminders/aupairs etc. They spend a large part of their income on household-related ser-

vices. And finally, for an extended period of time, they accept insecurity with regard to their future and the success of their academic careers. Anyone who is prepared to live with all of that must, in my experience, be passionate about wanting this life and this profession.

Creative drive and the ability to assert yourself with your employers are additional factors when it comes to dual career success. There are numerous examples of solutions that were found in the end (e.g. two professorships at the same university), which were initially not considered feasible.

What can dual career couples learn in your workshop?

Dual career couples are still described as lifestyle pioneers, meaning there are no clearly established paths or model solutions. The workshop provides a structure for participants to plan their individual path as a couple, to become aware of their personal values and priorities and also to come up with or to recognize alternatives. The objective is to support and strengthen couples in their joint endeavor to accept what are often great challenges – or to make a conscious decision not to.

(Almost) last but not least

The DFG (German Research Foundation) announcement concerning the 7th workshop for early career researchers, "Thermodynamik und Kinetik in mehrkomponentigen metallischen und keramischen Werkstoffen" (Thermodynamics and kinetics in multi-component metallic and ceramic materials), provides an excellent opportunity for junior scientists from the field of Materials Science and Engineering to look intensively into the subject of DFG applications. During the workshop, DFG applications (project outlines) will be drawn up and submitted at the end of October 2015. At the end of January 2016, the DFG will hold a one-day colloquium for appraisals during which the participants will present their DFG applications to a committee of experts.

Dr. Udo Krause, Project Scout for the field of Smart Materials and Structures, provides advice and support to all those interested in applying. The workshop will have a maximum of 20 places.

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(Photo: R. Lohse)

New GA Funding Programs – Apply now!

The GA is starting 2015 with three new funding programs. These complement the “classic” GA funding portfolio, which has by now enjoyed great popularity for more than a year and a half, and which will also be continued this year. The new funding programs focus on the international mobility of junior researchers, international postdocs interested in the Saxon employment market and teams of doctoral candidates who are planning their own specialist events.

great! ipid4all (group2group exchange for academic talents)

This DAAD-funded program aims to promote the exchange and collaboration of junior researchers based on international collaborations between research teams. An already existing collaboration between research teams is a requirement for funding.

What is being funded:

In each application

- At least one stay by a TUD junior researcher at a partner university abroad must be applied for.

Additionally, the following can be applied for:

- Research visits of further doctoral candidates and/or postdocs of the partner teams (incoming and outgoing)
- Research internships for international students with the participating junior researchers at TUD
- Joint workshops and meetings of the partner teams either in Dresden or at the location of the partner for scientific exchange or to prepare joint publications or third-party funding applications.

Those entitled to apply:

University professors and TUD Young Investigators together with a foreign university professor of the partner team.

Level of funding:

- Up to 7,500 euros (inner-European collaborations) and
- Up to 10,000 euros (non-European collaborations).

Application deadlines:

Applications are possible until 15 March, 30 April and 31 October 2015 respectively. Funding periods begin: 1 May 2015, 1 August 2015 and 1 February 2016 respectively.

SASTIP (Sachsen stärken durch Internationale Postdocs)

The aim of the SASTIP project is to keep highly-qualified international specialists in the region so that expertise in R&D can be retained for the Saxon employment market. For this purpose, the Saxon State Ministry for Science and the Arts has approved funding for an initial period of one year.

What is being funded:

An orientation and application phase for a maximum of four months for international postdocs interested in the Saxon employment market. Participation in the GA's SASTIP program (workshops for preparing to start a career and for career planning) is mandatory for all those funded and essential for continued funding for the fourth month.

Those eligible for funding:

Applications can be submitted by international postdocs who have completed their doctorates at a Saxon university no longer than one year prior to applying, and international doctoral candidates of TU Dresden who will have completed their PhDs by the beginning of the funding period they are applying for.

Level of funding:

The maximum grant is 1,518 euros/month plus family allowance where applicable, and will be paid for up to four months.

Application deadlines:

Applications are possible until 15 March and 15 June 2015.

Accordingly, funding will then begin on 1 May and 1 September 2015.

Conference Award

Planning and holding your first scientific event – PhD candidates will in future receive moral and financial support for this. The funding is open-topic and not limited to any particular specialist field. The concept of the event should demonstrate an interdisciplinary and/or international focus.

What is being funded:

The following formats for scientific events are possible:

- Symposia
- Congresses
- Conferences
- Meetings and
- Workshops (only in combination with the above-mentioned event formats)

Those eligible for funding:

An application can be submitted by PhD candidates from all disciplines at TU Dresden together with a professor or TUD Young Investigator.

Level of funding:

Up to 10,000 euros per event can be applied for.

Application deadlines:

Applications are possible until 30 April and 31 October of every year. Accordingly, funding will then begin from 1 August or 1 February at the earliest.

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Introducing our Members

In the current edition, we would like to introduce a GA member from among the supervisors: Katja Beesdo-Baum, Professor of Behavioral Epidemiology at the Department of Psychology at TU Dresden. We were particularly interested to learn how she, as a professor and mother of two children, managed to reconcile successfully the planning of her academic career and of her family.

When did you decide to pursue a scientific career and what were your key motives?

Thinking back, my interest in working on scientific questions developed while I was writing my diploma thesis, that is, towards the end of my studies. On the recommendation of my diploma thesis supervisor, I applied for a position with the newly appointed holder of the Chair for Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy – Prof. Wittchen. On the one hand, this position enabled me to pursue a scientific career and at the same time, to begin training as a psychotherapist while I was working. At that time, I wasn't thinking ahead to or consciously striving for a habilitation, let alone a professorship; this idea didn't develop until the time after my doctorate, once I was a work group leader myself and setting up my own projects.

In your experience, what are useful strategies for dealing with obstacles and resistance on the

way to a professorship?

I have always found it quite helpful to concentrate on the next goal, which at the beginning of my academic career, was first doing my doctorate and later the habilitation. These two milestones are still relatively easy to plan and can be achieved with determination and perseverance. Of course, the support of your supervisor is equally important.

Things are really quite different when it comes to being appointed to a professorship. As a result of the law governing fixed-term contracts for academics, you really do have time breathing down your neck, and in the end luck also plays a major role – because a suitable call – at least if you restrict yourself to Germany – doesn't come along more than once or twice a year. The competition for these positions is huge, and the decisions of the appointment commissions ultimately lie outside your sphere of influence. What you can do, of course, is to make sure you have the necessary stamina and endeavor in the application phase and at the same time carry out your research and teaching as best you can, in order to keep up with the competitive field of applicants. All this demands staying power and your family's sympathetic understanding.

How important was the question of combining family and profession in planning your career, and how do you deal with this challenge today as a professor and mother?

There are two aspects to this question. The first is the role the family plays in planning the career itself and the decisions involved. In this regard, my family always had a decisive influence on me. For example, in 2010, I ended up not accepting an appointment as Associate Professor at a Canadian university, as it turned out

that I was pregnant with the twins and we anticipated that the geographical proximity to the grandparents would become very important. When our children were three years old, I was offered a first W3 appointment at the Universität Bamberg. This meant we had to ask ourselves whether we would move as a family or whether one of us would commute, since my husband was reluctant to give up his good position here in the region. Fortunately, at the same time, an alternative professorship became available for me here at TU Dresden, which I was then very happy to accept – for family-related reasons, too.

The second aspect of the question is the daily challenge of how to reconcile professional duties with those demanded by the family. To achieve this, developing everyday routines and consulting your partner are of most help. Business trips that last several days and evening appointments are particularly critical. These occur frequently in my job and also that of my husband. We let each other know about them as early as possible so that no clashes occur and our children are always looked after. The grandparents often come to the rescue, too.

Against the background of the long hours that have to be invested in a successful academic career, along the way, I have now and again asked myself whether it would not be better to work in an altogether more “family-friendly” profession. For instance, I could set myself up as a psychotherapist at any time. However, I have experienced and still experience such delight in my interesting daily work at the university that I have never seriously considered this option and try instead to combine family and profession as best as I can, with the help of some forward planning.



Katja Beesdo-Baum (Photo: privat)