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## Press Release

### Universities bled dry – President calls day of protest

**Tübingen: “Further cuts mean shutting down” – students to march in protest at state government funding cuts**

Tübingen, 19 May 2014

The President, staff council and students at the University of Tübingen are calling on all members to join the statewide day of protest on Wednesday, 21 May, to express their concern at the state of Baden-Württemberg’s plans to further cut financing to higher education.

The latest policy “has taken us to the brink of ruin;” says President Bernd Engler, “basic funding for our University has been stagnating since 1997. Insolvency has been staved off only by short-term programs to accommodate more students and by a big increase in third-party funding. Baden-Württemberg’s universities need real increases in state funding from 2015.”

Professor Engler stressed the University was already battling a structural deficit of €12.8m annually, caused by rising energy and building maintenance costs. Unless state funding increases significantly from 2015, he said, by 2020 the University’s deficit could rise by €15m. “And then we’ll have to cut 300 jobs at the University,” President Engler said.

The head of the University staff council, Thomas Nissel, expressed alarm at that prospect, and said the unions would fight attempts to increase employees’ workloads – so that further cost-cutting would likely hit student services hard; and that institutions such as the Botanical Gardens and the Museum would be threatened.

Student representatives demanded assurances from the state government that more cash would go to the Universities starting next year. “With estimated cuts of 10-15 percent, they may as well shut the whole uni down,” said Sebastian Bernd Preuss, adding that “we need well-financed universities, not underfinanced academic chicken runs.”

“If the state government goes ahead with its plans, the unis will soon become unrecognizable,” said his fellow student, Chris Borg. If 300 jobs are cut, Borg said, whole courses will be in jeopardy and some institutes might have to close their doors.

The day of protest kicks off **Tuesday 6pm** with a **24-hour lecture** by students in the Kupferbau (Hölderlinstraße 5): “Tübingen’s longest lecture against funding cuts.”

The President's Office invites all University members to an information session about University financing on **Wednesday at 3pm** outside the **Neue Aula** (Geschwister-Scholl-Platz) – entitled “further savings mean shutting down.”

Student representative groups have called for all students to be there, and to join a subsequent **protest march through the center of Tübingen**.

The day of protest ends on Wednesday with a **student party starting at 9pm in the Kupferbau**.

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