

Press Release from Biberach University of Applied Sciences

August 10, 2020

Ecological footprint

Survey shows: In things vacation goes the lastingness thought on journeys

Team X4S, Extension for Sustainability, of Biberach University of Applied Sciences (HBC), which is participating in the international student competition Solar Decathlon Europe 21, is fully committed to sustainability. But how do the team members' fellow students feel about the idea of sustainability? HBC students wanted to know: "How important is sustainability to you?" and conducted a survey at the university.

The answers of the more than 160 participants from all courses of study show that the students are definitely concerned with the topic. For example, two-thirds of those surveyed pay attention to sustainable products for everyday use and are prepared to spend more money on these consumer goods. "The only thing that seems to be out of touch with the idea of sustainability is when it comes to vacations," Nick Sommer and Markus König sum up the results at this point. The architecture students developed, conducted and evaluated the survey together with six students. "Only 43 percent of those questioned paid attention to an ecological footprint on vacation and are willing to spend more money on this," Sommer cites the concrete figures.

The interdisciplinary X4S project team - which includes energy and construction engineers, project managers and architects - is jointly developing a contribution to sustainable neighborhood development in urban areas. They have chosen a comprehensive approach for this: "We not only want to develop ideas for carbon neutral living and housing, but also to raise awareness the population to ecological issues," says Lena Frühschütz, head of the competition team. She sees this as an educational mission for universities, which HBC fulfills in a dual sense. On the one hand through its fields of activity in teaching, research and transfer. But also through its concrete participation in the Solar Decathlon Europe 21: "We want to involve the citizens and provide them with the information in a targeted manner".

From the survey results, the team therefore wants to derive indications of where is a specific need for action. The results show that there is a fundamental understanding of ecology, economy and social issues, says Frühschütz, who, in addition to her work as project manager, is a student in the Master's program in Building and Energy Systems at HBC. The feedback, however, also shows a lack of willingness to forego comfort in favor of environmental protection. "A rethink is still needed here, demands the studied civil engineer.

For example, the survey revealed that although two-thirds regard the balance between the use and regeneration of resources as the most important pillar of sustainability. Only one in five considers the need for efficiency and only about one in seven considers low resource consumption to be a central task. "These data show that the path to greater sustainability is complex," says Lena Frühschütz.

Not only for the sde21 project, she said, we have to generate energy regeneratively, use it efficiently and recover wherever possible. "This is precisely one of the core competencies of Biberach University of Applied Sciences," says Professor Andreas Gerber from the Energy Engineering course, who is leading the interdisciplinary project together with Lena Frühschütz. "With our competition entry, we want to show that sustainability and climate protection as well as affordable living space and a city worth living are not mutually exclusive," says the expert for climate-friendly construction and energy concepts.

Keywords: extension for sustainability, sustainability, energy, climate protection, efficiency, student competition, sde21, interdisciplinary, Hochschule Biberach, Team X4S