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Leipzig, July 6, 2021

“You Don’t Need a Work-Life Balance if You Find Your Passion”

Director of SPRIND motivates graduates to start their own businesses

In his address, the founding director of the Federal Agency for Disruptive Innovation SPRIND, Rafael Laguna de la Vera, encouraged graduates of HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management to start their own businesses and follow their own passions.

“If you find your passion for something, become an expert at it and create something meaningful, you don’t need a work-life balance. Creating won’t feel like work, but it is lived passion,” said de la Vera at HHL’s graduation ceremony for 221 students and 31 doctoral candidates from 31 nations.

De la Vera, who comes from the Leipzig region himself, founded his first company at the age of 16 after leaving East Germany. From his point of view, the city itself has changed in a great way over the last ten years. “Leipzig has become a hotspot for exciting growth. I am very pleased that we were able to locate the Agency for Disruptive Innovation here,” de la Vera continued. He illustrated that development and creation have no time limits using the example of Horst Bendix, a Leipzig engineer who, at the age of 90, has found a way to make wind energy cheaper and easier to use.

Addressing the graduates, Lutz Meschke, Deputy Chairman of the Executive Board of Porsche AG and Chairman of the HHL Supervisory Board, emphasized that the coronavirus pandemic had forced this cohort to study in a way that no one had ever known before — without real-life contact, group work or social events.



“Despite all the obstacles that stood in your way, you have achieved two things. You have obtained a degree from HHL which stands for high-quality education, and you have proven that you can achieve your goals even under very adverse conditions. As HHL graduates, you have the potential to be among the world’s leaders and thus bear a great responsibility.”

(Lutz Meschke, Deputy Chairman of the Executive Board, Porsche AG/Chairman of the HHL Supervisory Board)

Graduates had to wait a year for the ceremony. They had already graduated in 2020 and, due to the pandemic, decided to postpone the festivities so they would hopefully be able to celebrate in person a year later. However, due to the hygiene protocols in place, only a virtual graduation ceremony was possible this year after all. Laura Schmiedl, HHL graduate, who started her studies in 2019, said,

“We thought we would all be reunited on the Leipzig campus after our term abroad but that never happened, because of the pandemic.”

Dennis Vetterling, HHL graduate, commented,

“Through all the challenges, I have found the members of the HHL family to be the ones who did not get stuck or discouraged but were able to come up with solutions quickly. The HHL spirit for me is the unconditional will to change things and make them an inherent success.”

HHL Dean Prof. Dr. Stephan Stubner emphasized how experiencing the pandemic highlighted the vulnerability of your own life, how clearly people became aware of their dependence on others, and how visibly the value of a good education came to the fore. He therefore called upon the graduates,

“Use the skills you acquired to do something meaningful! Don’t just ask ‘Does it sell?’ Also ask ‘Why do I do it? How do my actions improve my life, the lives of my children and the generation of my grandchildren?’”

(Prof. Dr. Stephan Stubner, Dean of HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management)

You can watch the virtual graduation ceremony of the Leipzig Graduate School of Management (HHL) in its entirety in English on YouTube at

<https://youtu.be/K3ny3osyrv>



About HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management

HHL stands out for its excellent teaching, its clear research focus, its effective knowledge transfer into practice as well as its outstanding student services. The 2020 edition of the renowned Global Masters in Management Ranking awarded top places to the education offered at HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management both in Europe and worldwide (2nd place in Germany, 23rd place globally). In 2021, *Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft* (Donors' Association for the Promotion of Humanities and Sciences in Germany) ranked HHL as the best entrepreneurial university in Germany for the fifth time in a row. Over the last few decades, HHL has produced more than 300 startup businesses which have created over 40,000 jobs. HHL was the first private German business school to be accredited by AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) in 2004 and has since received this certification of quality four times. The courses of study include a university-level, full and part-time Master in Management education in the form of M.Sc. and MBA programs, a doctoral program as well executive education courses.

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