

Friday Conference

The “Friday Conference”

The “Friday Conference” is an innovative teaching approach that brings together all of the languages taught at Germersheim. During the semester, the conference takes place every Friday from 11:20 to 12:50 in Room Dol I and is open to all interpreting and translation students. The main conference language alternates between the working languages of the Masters in Conference Interpreting, in such a way that each language is represented at least once a semester. Dr. Maren Dingfelder Stone currently chairs the conferences. The faculty staff members for each language within the Interpreting Department are in charge of finding a speaker. Students in the “official” booths interpret the presentations and the ensuing debate, which can be led in any of the conference languages. Members of staff from each language department assess the interpreting and can thus provide direct feedback on the students’ performance. As students are faced with a real conference situation, this provides an advantage over an otherwise artificial learning environment.

The conference also offers the students hands-on experience and gives them the chance to interact with future employers, professionals in the field, the EU as well as different ministries, and to enquire about the profession’s practical requirements. The different situations that arise during the conference, such as the wide range of languages, the controversial debates, the complicated speeches, jokes or word games, and possible misunderstandings due to the interpreting are all an excellent way to prepare the students for their future professional life.

Those students, whose main language combination is used during the conference, prepare the correspondent conference material in advance, as they then interpret in the pivot-booth, which acts as a relay station for the other booths. The preparation material consists of terminology lists, power point presentation and articles on the subject, which can be borrowed and photocopied at the tape library a few days in advance.

The conferences are recorded on video and are available to borrow at the STEFL tape library or to download as a video-stream [here](#).

In 2008, the “Friday Conference”, led by Prof. Dr. Dörte Andres, was awarded a Prize of Excellence by the Rhineland Palatinate.

The goal of this competition is to encourage the development of innovative concepts, which promote teaching and stand out from everyday life. The applications are submitted to a jury, which is composed of three experts from each of the following areas: education and university research, university administration and student representatives. The Rhineland-Palatinate awards up to €50.000, and in special cases up to €100.000 to a maximum of three departments per year. A prize of €55.000 was awarded to the “Friday Conference”.

Thanks to these funds the “Friday Conference” now has access to new media to turn it into a more future-oriented event. Furthermore, the funds also allow the department to invite speakers of particular interest, and to cover their accommodation and travel costs and general expenses.