



Prof. Alice Gast

Professor Alice P. Gast became President of Imperial College London in September 2014. Prior to her appointment at Imperial, Alice Gast was the 13th President of Lehigh University, Pennsylvania, USA. She also served as the Vice-President for Research and Associate Provost and Robert T. Haslam Chair in Chemical Engineering at MIT from 2001–2006.

Alice Gast's academic interest is in surface and interfacial phenomena, in particular the behavior of complex fluids. She has co-authored numerous scientific publications and a classic textbook on colloid and surface phenomena. She was a faculty member and professor at Stanford University, where she was also affiliated with the Stanford Synchrotron Radiation Laboratory. Alice Gast is a member of a number of UK and international advisory committees and boards.

An award from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation brought her to Germany in 1999, and to TUM, where she worked in the research group of experimental physicist Erich Sackmann. 2015 saw her awarded the honorary title "TUM Ambassador" by TUM President, Prof. Wolfgang A. Herrmann.

International Cooperation – Building a New Foundation for the Future

Imperial College London is a global top ten university with a world-class reputation in science, engineering, business and medicine.

Globalization, advances in technology and changing political environments are dominant, interrelated forces in today's world. They are bringing about changes that have profound effects on individuals, institutions and governments. We know that with change come new and exciting opportunities. We also know that with changes like Brexit the future becomes more uncertain and setting strategy and planning become more difficult.

How then do we best approach these times of both opportunity and uncertainty? How do we continue to move forward? How do we deal with the present and approach the future with optimism and resolve?

I think the answer lies in staying true to the core values of excellence and international collaboration. Adhering to these core values fosters innovative solutions to complex problems that will benefit society in Europe and in the rest of the world.

For decades, institutions and individuals across Europe have established professional relationships that have created progress and prosperity. We see this in the beneficial discoveries arising from European funding of talented people working together. We need to continue to work together on areas of common interest and importance. International cooperation is essential. We must not let political change affect our commitment to thinking about the common goals we share.

We also see the value of collaboration in its lasting effect upon individuals and institutions. The exposure to different ideas and perspectives is intellectually enriching and advances excellence.

These values of excellence and international collaboration are evident in Imperial's relationship with Germany and with TUM. Germany is second only to the United States for research collaborations with Imperial. Our researchers have collaborated on more than 5,000 publications with their peers in Germany within the last five years. During the same period, Imperial and TUM have published almost 400 joint research papers.

One recent example of the Imperial-TUM relationship is our joint work on the important issue of urbanization. Over half the world's population now live in cities, and this will grow to 66% by 2050. This creates many new challenges, including resource allocation, the integration of migrants, health-care and strained transport systems. Our universities bring together talented doctoral students to explore solutions to this increasingly ubiquitous global issue. The participants in the Imperial-TUM Global Fellows are applying their knowledge and talents to these issues with the goal of improving the quality of life for current and future urban populations.

These are exciting, challenging and uncertain times. The impacts of the changes brought about by globalization, advances in technology and political uncertainty are felt throughout Europe. We need to make the most of the opportunities that await. That requires a renewed commitment to the core values of excellence, internationalism and collaboration. By continuing to work together, we will build a new foundation for the future in this changing world. □