

New network for prehistoric research

FAU palaeontologists receive funding from the Volkswagen Foundation

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The field of palaeontology is not widely represented at universities. In Germany, there are only 44 professorships for the subject, which are spread across various locations. This fragmentation means it is difficult to develop joint strategies and research priorities. The Volkswagen Foundation's initiative for structural support for rare subjects addresses this problem and provides funding for innovative ideas. The Palaeontology Department at FAU has successfully secured funding from the Foundation for its concept amid tough competition. Starting in October 2019, the Volkswagen Foundation will be providing funding worth nearly one million euros for palaeontology as a subject for the next seven years.

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Kießling from the Chair for Palaeoenvironmental Research at FAU and Prof. Dr. Manuel Steinbauer from the University of Bayreuth are leading the project. Their aim is to provide support for the subject of palaeontology in German-speaking countries, set up networks, define joint research priorities and promote opportunities for young researchers.

The key element of the project involves setting up synthesis workshops involving various experts in the field, which are to be held at FAU. The contents of these workshops are to be jointly defined by all palaeontologists involved. These workshops will enable research groups from all over the world to come together and carry out joint research. One of the main aspects of these synthesis workshops is to develop visions and strategies: What are currently the most important issues in palaeontology and how can we address them together? In addition to the workshops, the team hopes to develop a mobile app that can automatically identify fossils and is suitable for non-expert users. In addition, additional training and innovation workshops will be set up where students and teaching staff can receive further training and establish international networks.

Further information

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