

Press release, May 2, 2024

University of Bern posts a deficit of CHF 34.1 million

The University of Bern was able to evolve in a positive direction last year in an increasingly difficult environment and once again proved itself to be an outstanding education and research institution. The increasing deterioration of the financial conditions gave reason for concern, as shown by the 2023 Annual Report.

In the reporting year, the contribution from the Canton of Bern amounted to CHF 329.9 million, with a total turnover of CHF 942.2 million. In its accounts, the University of Bern generated a total deficit of CHF 34.1 million. In basic funding, there was a loss of CHF 43.5 million. The balance sheet is thus even more negative than in previous years.

To date, the University had capital reserves at its disposal that could be used to compensate for the result. Markus Brönnimann, Director of Administration, explains that these reserves are, however, now exhausted: “We are now confronted by a situation where we will have to cover further structural deficits using external funding that is not intended for structural financing. Funding is then diverted and the University weakened as a result.”

In his message in the Annual Report, Rector Christian Leumann also stresses: “We are relying on the cantonal funding level being adjusted. This is the only way we can continue to meet our service mandate in full, achieve the strategic goals of the Cantonal Government and make our contribution to the region.”

The basic funding by the Canton of Bern and the federal government is key for the University of Bern, explains Director of Administration Markus Brönnimann: “The development of basic funding is, however, increasingly lagging behind cost development. For example, the University has to cover salary measures decreed by the canton without the canton compensating for this with a contribution. However, the University has to rely on growth and development if it is to flourish over the long term in a national and international environment.”

In order to secure its long-term competitiveness and appeal, the University also launched the program “Fit for Future” with twelve fields of action. Through this program, the University of Bern aims to align its structures, processes and approaches to future requirements and tackle other major challenges apart from financing, such as the shortage of infrastructure.

Excellent academic training and outstanding research

The current appeal and the high quality of the University of Bern is particularly evident in the interest shown by high school students from all over Switzerland and abroad. A new record was set during the Bachelor's open days on December 5 and 6 with 4,465 prospective students taking part. In the fall semester 2023, 19,640 students were enrolled at the University of Bern, which represented a slight growth in comparison to the previous year.

The University of Bern also proved its excellent research for example by taking part in the [European Space Agency \(ESA\) Jupiter mission "Juice"](#) and by the fact that the Biosafety Center at the Institute for Infectious Diseases at the University of Bern was named a "[Collaborating Center](#)" by the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#). On a national level, the University of Bern shows its expertise among many other things in Federal Council elections and with studies on the effects of climate change in Switzerland.

The complete statistics, developments and highlights of the year are available in the digital Annual Report: <http://www.annualreport2023.unibe.ch/>

Contact:

Media Relations, University of Bern

Tel. +41 31 684 41 42

medien@unibe.ch