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Where were you active/engaged during your studies?

I was mainly active in the MACH/CIW student council at KIT, and later also in the student accreditation pool.

In the student council, my involvement in the first semesters was mainly "internal" (orientation phase, office hours, parties, printing old exams...), and later I served for several years as a student representative in the Bachelor and Master examination committees. As part of this role, I also accompanied the reorganization of the MACH curriculum in the study commission. Additionally, I was a member of the commission for the allocation of tuition fees for several years, participated in a few appointment committees, and was part of the admission committees for applicants, where points for social engagement were evaluated.

In the student accreditation pool, I accredited technical study programs at other universities with various accreditation organizations (including Oldenburg, Zittau, AKAD, FOM). This was also a nice side job later in my studies, as the compensation was quite attractive.

What does student engagement mean to you?
Generally, it means the commitment to improving study and other conditions at the university/college. This ranges from quite specific improvements in study programs—usually through involvement in the student council or faculty committees—to broader (university) political engagement at the university and beyond.
Personally, I found the involvement in the student council and faculty more pleasant, as the participants usually worked concretely and constructively on topics, while in more "political" committees like the student parliament (StuPa), there were often moderately productive fundamental discussions. However, this might also be a peculiarity of KIT or Baden-Württemberg, where the specific participation rights of students or the student union (UStA) were quite limited for a long time.
The most enriching experience for me was working in the examination committees or advising students in the student council on preparing hardship or deadline extension applications, as it was specifically about avoiding the loss of examination rights or exmatriculation. But also, during the discussions in the study commission on the redesign of the MACH study programs, repeatedly emphasizing and enforcing the aspects of study feasibility was an interesting experience.

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What benefits do you see for yourself, your university, and society in your engagement, also with regard to your current job?

For me:
It was fun, I met cool people (including my best man), and it led to two semesters abroad.

For the university:
Without the feedback of student opinions and concerns in various committees, it is easier for the university to lose sight of student issues and thus become less attractive to students or freshmen. But without new students, the place won't run for long.

For society:
Engaged students usually become responsible, active citizens. Additionally, you learn early on that the world is often complex and seemingly obvious, simple solutions are usually deceptive.

For my career:
Without my long-term engagement, I probably wouldn't have gotten into the trainee program at EnBW, through which I landed my current job. This likely made my application stand out in the selection process.

How did you get involved back then?

After the orientation phase, I attended my first departmental meeting, found the people there great, and decided to stay. The involvement in various committees came over time, as there always seems to be much more to do than there are people.

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