Science Lab UZH sparks young people’s interest in mathematics and science

The Science Lab UZH of the University of Zurich (UZH) is a science learning center for students and teachers – and is also an investment in the future. The prosperity of the Swiss economy depends on innovation, yet in mathematics and science there are fewer and fewer interested students. The Science Lab UZH of the University of Zurich will help reverse this trend by attracting young people to these fields.

Need
High-performing universities and a sufficient supply of labor in technical and scientific fields are the motor for innovation, competitiveness, and growth. In export-oriented Switzerland, this is especially true. Today, however, too few young people choose to study mathematics, informatics, the natural sciences, or engineering. Women in particular are underrepresented in these fields. Additionally, more than a third of the first year students who do study these subjects drop out, often because they have weak conceptual understanding. As a result, the Swiss economy is confronted with a dangerous shortage of qualified professionals in the areas mentioned. If the innovation and competitiveness of universities and businesses are to be maintained, effective countermeasures to these trends are needed. The University of Zurich is contributing to these countermeasures with its new structured Science Lab UZH.

Goals and Target Groups
The offerings of the Science Lab UZH on the Irchel campus of the University of Zurich are aimed at school classes in the 7th to 12th school years in the entire German-speaking part of Switzerland. Through its full and half-day programs, the Science Lab UZH offers students and teachers a lively and motivating glimpse into mathematics and science in which “sustainability” plays a principal theme. The Science Lab UZH can serve nearly 200 schools per year. This represents more than a fifth of all classes in the Canton of Zurich. Together with technically and didactically-trained staff, as well as doctoral students from the UZH, young people develop their own research questions and answer them in experiments. Successful experiences make the students more curious and pique their enthusiasm for science and technology. At the same time, they get a first impression of the university community. A further goal is to strengthen the creativity and critical thinking skills of young people.
For school teachers, the Science Lab UZH provides training opportunities in interdisciplinary projects in maths and sciences (including physics, chemistry, and geography). The imparted know-how in current research methods and findings will allow teachers to create their own lessons motivating and effective for learning.

Resource Requirements
The UZH classifies the Science Lab UZH as a strategic project. The Science Lab UZH needs donations in order to employ graduate students and experts to design stimulating educational programming, to acquire additional teaching rooms and office space, and to develop an interactive Internet platform. The acquisition of these resources will be achieved by the UZH Foundation on behalf of the University of Zurich.

Facts in a Nutshell

Goal
To spark an interest in mathematics and science in young people between their 7th and 12th school years and to motivate them to study these subjects at UZH.

Product
Development and management of a science learning center for students, organization and delivery of courses for various school classes per year.

Financing
Almost CHF 1.6 million from 2017 – 2019 are required for the running costs of the Science Lab UZH. UZH is going to finance nearly two-thirds of the running costs which equals to CHF 1 million. Additional donations in the total amount of CHF 401’532 are required.

Driving force and motivation
The Science Lab UZH builds upon the interdisciplinary expertise of the Mathematics and Natural Sciences Faculty and the Faculty of Arts.

The initiator of the Science Lab UZH is Prof. Dr. Michael Hengartner, Molecular Biologist, former Dean of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, and current Rector of the University of Zurich. He is committed to enhancing cooperation between universities and secondary schools and society. He was a co-founder of the Life Science Zurich – Learning Center of the University of Zurich and ETH Zurich, which serves as a model for the Science Lab UZH.

Gifts in Swiss Francs:
Bank: Zurcher Kantonalbank, 8010 Zurich
IBAN: CH17 0070 0110 0039 2046 3
BIC (Swift): ZKBKCHZZ80A
Account number: 1100-3920.463
Clearing-Nr.: 700
ZKB Postkonto: 80-151-4

Be sure to include your name, your address and the purpose of your donation «Science Lab UZH» when transferring the sum so that we can send you a confirmation for your donation.

Contact
UZH Foundation
Culmannstrasse 1
CH-8006 Zurich
www.uzhfoundation.ch

Manon Fritschi
Fundraising & Communications Assistant
Phone: +41 44 634 40 03
manon.fritschi@uzhfoundation.ch