

Candidacy for the Office of Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Tübingen

Prof. Dr. med. Dr. rer. nat. Ghazaleh Tabatabai



Motivation and Vision

The successful further development of the Faculty of Medicine in Tübingen requires, in addition to **excellence in research and teaching at the interface with clinical care**, a **unifying leadership culture** characterised by clear strategic priorities, participatory working practices, and shared responsibility. For these reasons, I have decided to stand for election as Dean of the Faculty of Medicine

I explicitly understand the role of Dean as a **team-based effort** and as an **integrative leadership function**. For me, leadership means providing orientation, bringing together diverse perspectives, and creating reliable frameworks within which excellent scientific, clinical, and academic work can emerge and be sustainably strengthened. **At the same time, this office is strongly externally oriented**: the interests of the Faculty must be represented visibly and effectively at regional, national, and international levels. A prerequisite for this is an internally aligned Faculty that is capable of dialogue. From my perspective, a **transparent and unifying leadership culture** therefore forms the **foundation for cohesion, performance, and long-term sustainability** of the Faculty of Medicine.

Professional Background

As an appointed Professor of Neuro-Oncology, a consultant neurologist, *clinician scientist*, and Medical Director, I have many years of leadership experience with comprehensive responsibility for staff, budgets, and complex organisational structures. My approach to leadership is based on clear goal orientation, transparency, and reliability in implementation, combined with a respectful and inclusive manner of collaboration. The consistently very positive results of my leadership feedback evaluations confirm the effectiveness and sustainability of this approach.

Through my long-standing involvement in leadership teams—among others at the Hertie Center for Neurology, the Comprehensive Cancer Centre (CCC) Tübingen–Stuttgart, and the Centre for Personalised Medicine—I am thoroughly familiar with the strategic management of cross-departmental, interdisciplinary, interprofessional, and translational structures. This experience is complemented by targeted postgraduate training, in particular degree programmes in *Systemic Management in Health-*

care (University of St Gallen) and *Clinical Trials Management* (University of Zurich).

Against this background, I consider myself very well prepared to actively contribute to the strategic development of the Faculty of Medicine in Tübingen while also assuming responsibility for budgetary management and for the steering and oversight of Faculty finances.

Teaching, Early Career Development, and Skills Development

A central focus of my work is the **promotion of students, early- and mid-career researchers and clinicians**. As a university lecturer and mentor, I actively contribute to teaching within the degree programmes in Human Medicine and Molecular Medicine. In addition, I have supervised and supported more than 40 early-career researchers at different stages of their academic careers, providing targeted guidance for their professional development.

Furthermore, I have initiated and implemented innovative concepts for early- and mid-career support, mentoring, and equality. For the German Neuro-Oncology Working Group, I played a leading role in establishing the Equal Opportunity Commission *Diversity in Neuro-Oncology (DivINe)* as well as a structured mentoring programme (*DIAMOND*). In addition, I conceived and edited a specialist textbook specifically aimed at junior doctors in the early stages of their careers. A particular concern was to involve younger colleagues at an early stage as authors, thereby enabling visibility and responsibility.

I regard the recruitment, development, and promotion of excellent talent as a decisive factor for sustainable excellence in research, clinical practice, and teaching. I understand **competence development** as a **continuous process** across all phases of an academic career. This process **begins during undergraduate studies** and continues **throughout professional life**.

Research, Translation, and International Networking

My national and international research profile in neuro-oncology is characterised by the close integration of scientific, clinical, and structural development activities. The work of my research group spans the entire translational pathway, from preclinical basic research to innovative clinical trials.

I am actively involved in international research networks and study groups, serve as a *Principal Investigator* within the Cluster of Excellence iFIT, and played a leading role in the conception and successful acquisition of funding for the Else Kröner Research College Tübingen “Understanding and Overcoming Acquired Resistance in Solid Tumours”. I have established sustainable collaborations with industry and act as the international coordinating investigator of a multicentre Phase I clinical trial. These activities have provided me with extensive expertise in the strategic planning, funding acquisition, and implementation of complex collaborative projects, clinical trials, and industry partnerships.

Experience in Academic Self-Governance and Science Policy

I have broad and well-founded experience in research-oriented committees as well as in matters of university governance and science policy within academic medicine. From **2016 to 2020**, I was a **member of the Dean’s Office of the Faculty of Medicine**, initially as **Dean of Studies for Molecular Medicine and subsequently as Vice Dean**.

For the past six years, I have been an elected member of the Neurosciences Review Board (Fachkollegium) of the German Research Foundation (DFG), and since two years I have been serving as the **Chair of this review board**. These roles have had a lasting impact on my understanding of higher education and science strategy, decision-making processes in academic self-governance, and the criteria used to assess scientific quality.

Team and Strategic Fields of Action

For the **future Vice-Dean team**, I propose the following colleagues:

- Deputy Dean, Vice Dean for Structure and Development: Prof. Dr. Nisar Malek
- Vice Dean for Research: Prof. Dr. Mathias Heikenwälder
- Vice Dean for Teaching: Prof. Dr. André Mihaljevic
- Vice Dean for Digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence: Prof. Dr. Carsten Eickhoff

Together, we form a cooperative and strategically oriented leadership team.

We have identified the following **strategic fields** of action as priorities:

- Early career development and competence development
- Research
- Digitalisation and artificial intelligence
- Internationalisation, translation, and societal transfer
- Governance and finance

For all fields of action, concrete measures will be defined. Their design and implementation will be developed **jointly with the Faculty through a participatory approach**.

Further details on our strategic fields of action and prioritised measures are set out in our programme **THRIVE**.

Outlook

In the role of Dean, I see the opportunity to foster a forward-looking leadership culture together with the Faculty, to implement strategic priorities effectively, and to further strengthen the national and international profile of the Faculty of Medicine in Tübingen.

I would like to assume this responsibility together with the proposed Vice-Dean team.



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