



## On Track for Tenure



**Beatrix Eugster**

*Beatrix Eugster is a tenure track assistant professor of economics and co-director of the University's Center for Disability and Integration. She explains the secrets of her time management for success on multiple fronts, researcher, teacher, policy analyst and mother of two kids.*

**You are a tenure track assistant professor, on track for an academic career. What is your research about? What were the biggest milestones so far?**

My research is about empirical policy evaluation in general, and labor and health economics more specifically. Recently, I have studied how different policies can foster the integration of people with disabilities into the society and the labor market. My biggest milestones have been the acceptance of one of my dissertation papers at the Journal of Political Economy (after 6 years of revisions) and the acquisition of SNF funding for my latest project on the education of children with special needs.

**You are also a managing director of the University's Center for disability and Integration. What is the mission of the center and what are your responsibilities?**

The CDI-HSG was founded in 2009 to study the integration of people with disabilities into the labor market. Together with my colleague, Stephan Böhm, I am responsible to manage the finances and personnel resources of the Center, just as in a small firm. Furthermore, I am supervising the economics research team, consisting of two postdoctoral researchers, a PhD student, and two student assistants.

**You are a co-editor in the Project Next Generation. How can students benefit and personally contribute to inform the public debate with insights from economic research? Are you personally engaged in policy analysis?**

Many of our economics students will be doing some form of policy consulting in their future. Being able to understand and transmit policy relevant research is a key qualification for them. The Project Next Generation provides a platform to train this competence and at the same time intends to inform the public about current issues in economic research.

My own research is strongly related to policy analysis. I work together with cantonal and



federal offices to collect data (on e.g. educational and labor market outcomes of children with and without special needs) and on return try to provide them with useful feedback on their policies (e.g. on how to best assemble classrooms in an inclusive education setting).

**Looking back, why did you study economics? What were the most important steps in the past and what is the next big thing?**

My economics high school teacher strongly influenced my decision to study economics. I liked both: thinking in terms of economic models and the mathematics involved with the analysis. While studying at the University of Zurich, I got the chance to work as a student assistant and got in touch with the academic world and with empirical policy evaluation. This fascinated me and I did a PhD. The decision to apply as a PostDoc at the CDI-HSG was rather spontaneous and driven by personal and family considerations. However, when I got the chance to become an assistant professor with tenure track I immediately accepted, because I very much appreciate the research and teaching environment as well as the good contacts with the faculty at the University of St. Gallen.

The next big thing will hopefully be tenure...

**There seem to be many demands on your time, researcher, teacher, policy analyst and mother of two kids. How does time square up?**

It very often doesn't. I had to learn to set priorities and I can rely on a lot of help from my family. I have also learned how important family-friendly policies are, such as e.g. comprehensive and well-organized day care for kids. And last but not least, I have gathered very good people around me at the CDI-HSG, which ensures that research still progresses.