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Biography of Professor Dr. Peter A. Abplanalp

Until December 31, 2005, Professor Dr. Peter Abplanalp was the President of the University of Applied Sciences Solothurn Northwestern Switzerland since it was chartered by the Swiss Federal Government in 1998. Previously, since 1983 he was Director of the Graduate School of Business Administration in Olten, which he merged with four other institutions to form the University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland Solothurn. Later he also had an active role in merging his own school with several other institutions in the Northwestern part of Switzerland to form the *University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland*. After the merger he stepped back from his management functions and since January 2006 he is again working as a professor at the University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland.

Professor Abplanalp's subjects are strategic management and cluster development. He has been teaching in graduate and executive education programs for years. He is a recognized authority on the subject of Strategic Management in Switzerland and his widely acclaimed books 'Strategisches Management' (4th printing, 2005), 'Unternehmensstrategie als kreativer Prozess' (München 2000, which he both co-authored with Roman Lombriser) and "Strategien für KMU, Zürich 2007 (together with Roman Lombriser and Klaus Wernigk) have become the most widely accepted on the subject of Strategic Management in Switzerland. Since 2003 Professor Abplanalp is teaching the course "Microeconomics of Competitiveness" (Cluster Development) based on materials developed by Prof. Michael E. Porter's Institute of Strategy and Competitiveness at the Harvard Business School. This also raised his interest in cluster development and cluster management and led to several publications in this developing field.

Professor Abplanalp obtained his Ph.D. with distinction at the University of Basel in the early 1970's. He was a Visiting Scholar at Cornell University, Ithaca N.Y. from 1976-78 and a visiting professor at the Southern Utah University in 2006. Currently he is also Adjoint Professor of Sturt University (Australia) as well as honorary professor of Lanzhou University of Science and Technology (PRC).

He has always straddled the 'real world' of business and academia: prior to and intermittent with his academic career, he held managerial positions with leading Swiss companies such as Elektrowatt Holding, the Bâloise insurance group and the Swiss Federal Railroad system.

Consequently, Professor Abplanalp's key concern has been the transfer of state-of-the-art knowledge and skills to practitioners. During his 15 years as Dean of the Graduate School in Olten, he has pioneered and run numerous executive education programs, including several widely acclaimed post-graduate and executive MBA programs. One of the most renowned is the post-graduate degree program for personnel managers now in its 27th session. Other programs include an executive MBA in change management and similar programs in logistics and IT-management. He was also the founder of the "Wirtschaftsinformatik-Schule" (School for business informatics) and of the "Unternehmerschule Schweiz" (School for young entrepreneurs). All of this has made the new University in Olten the leader and the financially most successful University in executive education in Switzerland.

With the emergence of China on the international scene, fostering exchanges with Chinese universities and businesses has become the recent focus of Professor Abplanalp. He has initiated numerous seminars for prominent Chinese managers, administrators and professors. He has been granted the "Dunhuang Award" by the government of Gansu Province (PRC), honorary professorships from two Chinese universities, and just recently (September 2006) has received the "Friendship Award", the highest award issued by the Chinese Central Government to foreign experts. He was also a member of the Swiss governmental committee which visited China in 2003 and has led a group of Swiss University leaders on a trip to China in June 2006. His current favorite China activity is creating a new Sino-Swiss network on the level of the Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences and their counterparts in China. Furthermore, Professor Abplanalp has got involved in an educational development program in North Korea and in addition he will also be teaching at the Banking University in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam the coming month. (February 2008)