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The “Round Table” of Top Scientists

Nikolaus Pfanner Has Been Granted a Research Award and Fellowship by the Hector Foundation II

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Award ceremony in Heidelberg: (left to right) Dr h.c. Hans-Werner Hector, Josephine Hector, Professor Dr Axel Meyer, Rector Professor Dr Ulrich Rüdiger, Professor Dr Nikolaus Pfanner, Rector Professor Dr Hans-Jochen Schiewer and Baden-Wü

Professor Dr Nikolaus Pfanner, the acting Director of the Institute of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at the University of Freiburg, is one of the recipients of the Hector Research Award endowed with €150,000. At the award ceremony in Heidelberg, the biochemist was also named a Hector Fellow by the Hector Foundation II. The other award-winners were Professor Dr Hilbert von Löhneysen from the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology and

Professor Dr Axel Meyer from the University of Konstanz. Theresia Bauer, the Minister of Science, Research, and the Arts of Baden-Württemberg, also honoured the award-winners at the ceremony by praising their outstanding work which tests the limits of knowledge and helps to set new standards. “What better way to honour this achievement than with the Hector Research Award,” she said.

Pfanner is an expert in the field of mitochondria, the so-called power stations inside most cells. Mitochondria provide cells with energy to carry out life-sustaining functions. Pfanner was the world’s first scientist to reveal the composition of these cell organelles. In addition to the structure of mitochondria, he also researches the pathway of proteins in the cell’s cytosol through the mitochondrial membrane into the power station’s interior. Pfanner has served as the president of the Gesellschaft für Biochemie und Molekularbiologie (the German Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology), the largest association of bio-scientists in Germany. He is also currently a member of the BIOSS cluster of excellence and the Spemann Graduate School of Biology and Medicine at the University of Freiburg.

The Hector Foundation II was founded by Dr h.c. Hans-Werner Hector and his wife Josephine Hector. Hector Fellows are specialists who work together on joint scientific goals. This supportive network works as a “round table of top scientists”. Hector Fellowships are only granted to top scientists at excellent universities who have distinguished themselves through outstanding work in science, excellence in teaching and the advancement of their home university.

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