

## MEET THE DEAN



**RETO STEINER,**

Dean of the ZHAW School of  
Management and Law, Zurich-  
Winterthur, Switzerland

### ◆ TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR BACKGROUND.

While studying management and law at the University of Bern (Switzerland), I became interested in public management as a possible career path. At the same time, the methodological aspects of how to generate new research findings fascinated me. I wanted to combine these two interests. That's why I decided to study for my Ph.D. right after completing my master's program.

At the same time, I started to get involved in politics by becoming the elected president of the parliament of the city where I'd grown up, and as a member of the parliament of my home canton (state). After completing my Ph.D., I became a lecturer and then, after a few years, an assistant professor at the University of Bern. I have spent guest semesters at the Vienna University of Economics and Business, the National University of Singapore, and the University of Hong Kong. I was also a professor at the Free University of Bolzano in Italy.

Two years ago, the University Council elected me Dean of the School of Management and Law (SML) at Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW). The SML is the second largest business school in Switzerland.

### ◆ THE SML MOTTO READS, "BUILDING COMPETENCE. CROSSING BORDERS." WHY IS THIS GLOBAL MINDSET SO IMPORTANT?

For a small country like Switzerland, being open and having an active exchange with other countries and economies is vital. Only an open country is a prosperous country. In the 19th century, many Swiss immigrated to the US; today, we welcome people from other cultures to Switzerland. We want to provide our students and researchers with an environment that promotes such a global mindset in the knowledge society and beyond.

### ◆ THE FACT THAT THE SML HAS ESTABLISHED PARTNERSHIPS WITH MORE THAN 170 UNIVERSITIES WORLDWIDE REFLECTS THIS COMMITMENT. HOW DOES ZHAW ENCOURAGE/PROMOTE A GLOBAL MINDSET IN ALL ITS STUDENTS?

One-third of our classes are already held in English, enabling both lecturers and students from other countries to work and study here.

In addition, we expect our researchers to engage in research that deserves international recognition and to present their findings at conferences and to internationally active companies.

I'm particularly proud that the SML is part of the Champions Group of PRME (Principles for Responsible Management Education) of the U.N. We want to deliver sustainable management education and provide training to companies that helps them to contribute to a better society.

### ◆ THIS ISSUE OF HONORS MAGAZINE IS FOCUSED ON THE VALUE OF STUDYING (AND WORKING) ABROAD. HOW CAN THESE TYPES OF EXPERIENCES AFFECT ONE'S CAREER OR GENERAL WORLDVIEW?

A well-known proverb says to walk a mile in someone else's shoes before judging them. I believe that students and researchers who have lived and worked in another country for a while will be able to judge the culture and ways of life in their temporary homeland quite differently. This knowledge is essential to succeed as a leader in an internationally oriented company. In addition, such people are also valuable citizens because they have a more complex view of the world and can thus contribute to solving the important problems of their countries. Travel is a form of "bench learning" that enables us to learn from and with others.

### ◆ THINKING ABOUT BGS MEMBERS WHO ARE ALREADY ESTABLISHED IN THEIR CAREERS: HOW CAN THEY INCREASE THEIR GLOBAL AWARENESS AND EMBRACE THIS SHIFT?

I think you only really understand a country if you have lived there for a while. I would even encourage people who are already working to consider whether a stay abroad might help them strengthen their profile. This can also be inspiring for the whole family; you don't have to be twenty-something, carefree, and single. I experienced this myself when I was a guest professor at the National University of Singapore. For my daughter, who was four at the time, our stay was both exciting and educational. Even today, as a nine-year-old, Singapore is her favorite destination when we go overseas and, surprisingly, she still has memories of those days.