We visit students and refugees sharing a residential complex on the northern edge of Freiburg

by Stephanie Streif

Längenloh – It sounds like a snail farm – a typical Swedish log cabin bend, with gnarled fruit trees and waist-high grass. Like Bullerby or Lönneberga, Längenloh could be some Astrid Lindgren children’s paradise. But it’s not. Längenloh Nord is located in the Freiburg district of Zähringen, on Gundelfinger Strasse. There’s a supermarket and a gas station across the road. A lot of traffic goes through the area. If you are going into the industrial zone which borders the residential area, you don’t need to push open any white garden gates. A few stone steps lead up and along a metal fence. Welcome to Längenloh, one of 21 refugee shelters in Freiburg. It is also the only refugee shelter in town where students are allowed to live.

Längenloh is a pilot project. Student Services Freiburg-Schwartwald and the Helferkreis Zähringen cooperating to make it work. The idea is that integration starts with where you live. There is already no longer any great difference between official and unofficial volunteer students. Möser confirms: “We’re all working side by side.”

That happened after the cookie-baking adventure. “We really only wanted to see the children home—and before we knew it, we were sitting with the family around the table, being served a delicious dinner.” She says it was a lovely experience. “So open, so spontaneous.” But other meetings in Längenloh are not left to chance. Social involvement is part of the project. Students give German lessons and handicrafts, go along to official appointments with the refugees, and organize games afternoons for the children in the project. There are groups for gardening, soccer, and drumming, and of course – this being Freiburg – a bicycle workshop. The Zähringen volunteers planned and launched most of the projects in Längenloh. The student join in – some because they have committed themselves to do so, others because they have the time and inclination.

For instance, Chiara Möser is one of five tutors and organizes child minding. When she moved in, she undertook to do 20 hours of coordination work per month. For this she receives a small volunteer’s payment from Student Services. She says she was active in helping refugees even before she came to Freiburg. So was Jana Zickler. While she was still in Bonn, looking for a place to live in Freiburg, she found Längenloh by chance on the internet.

Her first thought was “That’s what I want.” So she applied to live there. Of the 25 students who went through a special selection process to be volunteers. Gernot Kist, of Student Services, says the organization received more than 400 applications. Students were chosen who had experience in aid to refugees or in other voluntary work. “We also considered students who had very good reasons for wanting to live in Längenloh,” Kist adds.

It ends in summer

The tutors coordinate the student volunteers’ work. They also have to meet with Student Services, the volunteers’ association, and with the Cantias social service on location. But there are more students who have been helping out in Längenloh even though they don’t have to. Like Jessi Nicholson. Her place in the student accommodation is not linked to volunteer work. But she assists with German lessons for mothers and children or with the mobile games bus which comes to the project every second Wednesday. There is no longer any great difference between official and unofficial volunteer students, Möser confirms. “We’re all working side by side.”

One wonders what will happen when the students have to move out after summer semester 2017. Möser doesn’t think she would come to Längenloh often then – purely because of the distance; after all, this is the very edge of town. But that doesn’t mean it was all for nothing. All the volunteers have a guaranteed place in student accommodation after the Längenloh project ends. That is part of their contract. And the city of Freiburg is considering the inclusion of student apartments in its plans for a new refugee housing complex. Because of Längenloh.
Paths to academia
The University of Freiburg works out a personnel development plan for various career models

by Nicolas Schergen

Making it easier to plan a career, improving the prospects apart from professorship - these are two of the central goals of the academic personnel development plan the University of Freiburg is currently working on. “We want to encourage our young men and women in research to embark on academic careers; to show them the risks and opportunities that entail, and to accompany them on that journey,” says Rector Professor Hans-Jochen Schiewer. A keen focus is placed on the postdoc phase. After establishing the International Graduate Academy and many Graduate Schools as part of a comprehensive infrastructure for doctoral candidates, the university now aims to increase its measures supporting the personnel following doctoral studies (see interview).

Tenure track is one of the key building blocks; aimed at postdocs, it provides for a direct transition into a full professorship following a successful probationary phase. The personnel development plan is part of the application the university will make to the German government program to promote junior researchers in June 2017. The program is set to finance 1000 new tenure track professorships across Germany. Freiburg has had tenure track professorships for eight years. “The clear advantage is that early in their careers, we can offer promising talents a path to full professorship, with their help and depending on their performance,” says Schiewer. There are currently ten tenure-track professors at the University of Freiburg; five more have already transitioned into full professorships (see portrait). The university now plans to establish the “Freiburg model,” which links heading a junior research group with a tenure track professorship - something which until now was only possible within the German Research Foundation’s Emmy Noether Program.

The university is also planning to make it easier to create unlimited-term jobs which will be an attractive alternative to a professorship. “We aim to develop new staff categories which young researchers will not regard as a failure. In the attempt to become a professor, but will define as their career goal,” Schiewer explains. Possible models include that of lecturers, who will primarily teach; academic managers, who will take on leading functions in faculties, academic centers, and in other institutions; and Core faculty managers to oversee technology platforms and major instrumentation.

But the university is not thinking only about academic careers. At the start of 2017, the Rectorate launched a new staff development office to manage a comprehensive personnel development plan including the academic support staff.

Promoting women in research

Professor Gisela Riescher, Vice-President for Research Integrity, Gender and Diversity, describes Freiburg’s tenure-track pioneer - a unique opportunity for doctoral students as part of a comprehensive approach to research integrity.

 uni’leben: Professor Riescher, why is it important to provide special support to young women researchers?

Gisela Riescher: Some 25 years ago there were 3.7 percent women professors in Freiburg today, we work towards a great deal of work in equal opportunities and the promotion of women. It’s nearly 25 percent. But we can’t afford to wait another 25 years before it’s 50 percent. We must continue to invest every effort and every opportunity policy. We need to pay special attention to the postdoc phase following the PhD. That is the time when many women abandon their academic careers - for reasons including the uncertainty of career prospects and because they want a family.

How does the University of Freiburg help in that phase?

We have overhauled two formats in particular. We have raised the amount of our bridging scholarship “STAY” and we have expanded our target group to international women researchers and German women researchers who’ve worked abroad with “Come and STAY!” In parallel we offer a coaching program in which professional, specially selected coaches advise and support individual women researchers. In addition the university takes part in external formats such as the state of Baden-Württemberg’s Brigitte-Schilsen-Lange Program and the Margarete-von-Wrangel postdoc program.

Freiburg’s tenure-track pioneer

Six years of writing a postdoc habilitation thesis with no prospect of a professorship - that was not an option for Stefan Günther. Nevertheless, he decided to stick with academia and not to go into industry. And that is due to a new model for which he was the pioneer. In 2009 he was appointed to the University of Freiburg’s first tenure-track professorship. Günther now recommends this path to other young researchers. “If you turn in good work, you have long-term perspectives at your university,” says Günther. He has been Professor of Pharmaceutical Bioinformatics since 2015.

Those who start as tenure-track professors have their work cut out - research and publications, heading a working group, teaching classes, managing staff, applying for grants, and maintaining academic staff-management. Yet, he says, all those tasks are valuable: “It is very good preparation for what you will later face as a full professor.” But he says all the time he had to take for administration he would rather have spent on research; the services of a secretary which are valuable; “It is very good preparation for what you will later face as a full professor.” But he says all the time he had to take for administration he would rather have spent on research; the services of a secretary which are valuable; “It is very good preparation for what you will later face as a full professor.”

Do this model really offer more security - when you have to successfully get through two evaluations? Günther says yes - “It’s up to me whether my performance is up to scratch or not.” Yet when he started, it was not yet clear what the criteria for assessment would be. “The Rectorate set out guidelines, regulating the process before my interim evaluation.” In a classic road-to-professorship model, you can’t be appointed at the institution you studied at. “Even if you do everything right in your postdoc qualification, you could be certain you had no prospects at your own university.” That means that even outstanding researchers who are unable to get a professorship elsewhere - are forced to leave the academic path quite late in their careers. Günther says it’s better to set the course earlier - by competing for a tenure-track professorship.

Stefan Günther is grateful to his faculty colleagues, saying “I had the feeling from the start that I was accepted as a full member.” He advises researchers who take this path to take on the job with confidence, to represent the interests of tenure-track professors in the committees, and to develop their own research profile.

I would tell them they have made a good decision. Being a professor is one of the best careers. Where else can you choose so freely to work on issues which interest you and which are important to society? They should do everything they can to stick with it. Get advice from experienced colleagues of both sexes, and not be discouraged by setbacks; instead, they should be motivated by the many positive moments.

Contact STAY! and Coaching Program
Marina Vargas Ustares General and Diversity Officer Phone: 0761/203-9053 Email: marina.vargas-ustares@uni-freiburg.de
Obelix and the ethics of robots

A new building at the Faculty of Engineering is home to robotic research

by Sonja Seidel

A new research center started work at the Faculty of Engineering in February 2017 – the Integrated Robotics Center. Researchers from Microsystems Engineering, Medicine, Philosophy, Biology, Informatics, and Law will be working together there in the future. The focus is on technical development of robots - but also on the ethical and legal issues which arise when humans and machines come in contact.

“The Integrated Robotics Center will be an exemplary project at the University of Freiburg,” says Professor Wolfram Burgard. His working group, Autonomous Intelligent Systems, is based at the Department of Computer Science and located in a new building under one roof with the excellence cluster BrainLinks-BrainTools, a new professorship of Neurorobotics, and the Graduate School of Robotics. Burgard’s team works on robots which perceive their environment and can move independently. Eleven doctoral candidates are now at the Graduate School and supporting Burgard’s research; seven of them are from technical and engineering subjects; four from medicine, philosophy, cognitions sciences, and law. Engineering, biology, computer science, and medical researchers in the excellence cluster have been investigating the man-machine interface since 2013. The results of their work may help patients who use prostheses. To this end, the researcher are developing techniques to enable artificial limbs to be steered by nerve cells in the brain. “This can only work if you cooperate closely across the different disciplines,” Burgard says, stressing the importance of communication between the Center’s institutions. "We plan workshops and lectures in which our researchers can present their work and maintain a continuous exchange.”

Help around the house

Forty staff are already at work in the 800 square meter building, which has space for 65. The university has invested some two million euros in the building, and the state of Baden-Württemberg topped that up with an additional half-million. The new tenants include the robots Obelix, Nao, and Marvin. Obelix became known across Germany when he drove himself from the Faculty of Engineering into the center of Freiburg in 2012. Nao is programmed to carry out small household tasks. So far, it can do things like opening a cupboard; Burgard’s team aims to develop the robot further so that it can help humans in their everyday lives.

Scenarios like that lead to frequent public debates over the ethical and moral repercussions. What if a self-driving car crashed into a group of people? If a machine had the choice of having to injure a child or an elderly person, what would it do? The researchers plan to address issues like this. “People mustn’t forget that so far, we are just playing around with ideas,” Burgard explains. “Today’s robotic systems don’t have the data and computing capacity to make such a moral decision. And certainly not in a split second. A human being driving a vehicle or flying a plane can respond by making more mistakes and may be a greater threat than a robot.”

Burgard says one of the trickiest issues is the legal situation when there is a human being behind the driver’s wheel.

Among the things at the heart of Burgard’s own research is “deep learning” – a technique in which large amounts of data are fed into a computer. The computer is then meant to recognize patterns, form categories, and in that way learn more about the world the way a human brain does. Burgard’s robots are to get smarter. Because Burgard is sure of one thing – that robots will be a fundamental part of our everyday lives in the future.

European Label

Special status for research and teaching projects within the European Campus

by Sarah Nieber

Whether it’s a joint seminar with the University of Basel, a research project with colleagues from the Université de Strasbourg or a colloquium for doctoral researchers from the Universities of Freiburg and Haute-Alsace... Eucor – The European Campus puts a common label on cross-border projects. The European Campus announces which project has received the label on its website or in its monthly newsletter. It also makes it easier to apply for subsidies toward travel expenses which arise when groups work collaboratively across the borders.

Bilateral and trilateral cooperation on the Upper Rhine didn’t just start a few months ago, neither in teaching nor in research. “The European Campus did not come from nowhere. The many different forms of collaboration between our universities has existed for several decades,” says Florence Dancoisines, coordinator of Eucor – The European Campus at the University of Freiburg. “But with our label, we aim to make visible the fact that various projects belong to the European Campus.” It’s hoped that this will help create an awareness at the universities that the European Campus is an active reality and not just an abstract idea.

Who gets a label?

The label may be given to educational and academic projects as well as for cultural and sporting ones. The chief requirement is that the project takes place at one of the universities in Eucor – The European Campus. On the German side, those institutions are the University of Freiburg and the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology; in France they are the universities of Haute-Alsace and Strasbourg, and the University of Basel in Switzerland. Depending on the type of project and depending on whether ECTS credits are given for it, at least two or three member institutions from two countries must be taking part. Other national or international partner institutions may also be involved.

How to apply

If you think your project qualifies for a label, send an application to the coordination office at the Université de Strasbourg. Include a description of the project, details of the people responsible at the Eucor member universities, and a budget outline.

What must project organizers do?

If your project receives the label, you are obliged to use the logo for that project. In addition the coordination office and the European Campus contact person at your location – in Freiburg it is Florence Dancoisines – should be informed about events and any changes to the project.

Applying for the label

Eucor – The European Campus coordination office
Université de Strasbourg
Maison Universitaire Internationale
11 presse l’Aile Andra Mahieu
67100 Strasbourg
France
Phone: +33 (0)3 88 83 92 95
E-Mail: info@eucor-univ.org
www.eucor-univ.org

Obelix is already a media star. Wolfram Burgard and his team have already developed the robot. PHOTO: PATRICK SEEGER

Deputy administration chief Walter Willaredt

The University of Freiburg has a new deputy head of administration. At the start of the year, Walter Willaredt, head of the Organizational Development department, succeeded Barbara Windscheid, who was head of Finance and Controlling until her appointment as Executive Vice-President at the University of Mannheim. Willaredt has worked at the University of Freiburg since 1982 in various administrative areas. He is responsible for a number of major areas including information management, administrative organization and room distribution, process development and quality management, as well as for controlling and statistics.
Using LED lighting as an example, a team seeks ways of encouraging consumers to make the right choices

by Verena Adt

The state of Baden-Württemberg is promoting the Sunlight project at the Sustainability Center. Taking part are the University of Freiburg’s Department of Economic Policy and the Department of Constitutional Economic Theory, headed by Professor Bernhard Neu- märker at the Economics Institute, the Department of Mechanical Engineering, and the Department of Public and Non-Profit Management – Sustainability. The project is being led by Professor Jörg Lindenmeier. Further partners are the Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Solid State Physics and the Hahn-Schickard Society.

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Incentives to do good

by Verena Adt

If people had been told it was cool to have LED lighting, they would not have put up such resistance to the abrupt ban on incandescent light bulb sales in 2009, says Bettina Kalmbach. "I think that nudging does not necessarily become paternalism and threatening punishment. Kalmbach is writing her doctoral thesis on it, a multidisciplinary research project which aims to move consumers to buy environmentally-friendly LED lighting bulbs - without patronizing them.

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Microglial cells are the brain’s jack of all trades - Researchers shed light on their role in keeping us healthy

by Jürgen Schickinger

Beware: Something is treading its way through your brain. It is the tentacles of microglial cells, which divide the brain up into territories. Each microglial cell guards its own little empire of neurons. With fine tentacles which stretch out and contract these guard cells are constantly pacing the ball of their neuro-networks. Are communications working right? Are the cells healthy? If an infection is spreading or something else goes wrong, the guard cells take action. “They are the brain’s immune system,” says Professor Marco Prinz, medical director of the Institute of Neuropathology at the Freiburg University Medical Center. Prinz is the spokesman of the new transregional collaborative research center (SFB) NeuroMac. Freiburg is coordinating this research effort to investigate the properties of microglial cells. They fulfill important tasks in almost all illnesses and disorders of the brain, as well as in its growth and maintenance. They are the brain’s building supervisors, police, nurses, paramedics, and garbage disposal.

Getting an appetite for Alzheimer’s

“In a healthy brain microglial cells even feed the cells,” Prinz says. Everything has to be shipshape in a microglial cell’s territory. Sometimes that means doing more than stretching out a tentacle. When things get rough, the entire cell moves to the troubles, perishes, or which form plaques similar to those of Alzheimer’s disease. Unfortunately, microglial cells can get enough. After a few weeks, they tire of eating Alzheimer’s plaques and other undesirable material. “The cells are exhausted and aged,” Prinz explains. He is testing ways of replacing the population, for instance by replac- ing the bone marrow where the microglial cells can grow. The 46-year-old believes that fresh microglial cells eat up far more Alzheimer plaques than older ones and could – maybe – heal sufferers. But he says it is too soon to get our hopes up: “That is still a far-off goal.”

In adult brains microglial cells coordinate reconstruction, and in embryo brains they supervise development. They encourage young neurons to form functional networks. Faulty construction of the brain can lead to disorders such as autism and schizophrenia. Is it just a supervisor’s mistake? “We don’t know the cause,” Prinz says. Yet severe viral infections during pregnancy raise the risk of such developmental illnesses – and alter the shape and function of the microglial cells. For example, they are bigger and look deformed in mice with no intestinal flora. The animals sometimes behave oddly. Prinz believes that nutrition plays a role in the risk of developing autism or Alzheimer’s. Because food determines which bacteria flourish in the gut. “We replace certain bacterial strains and see what happens.” Prinz says. He aims to discover which types are good, which are bad, and what signals gut bacteria send to the brain. Researchers are testing various bacterial products to find out if they can be used as messenger molecules.

4.9 million for Freiburg

Many exciting findings and many unanswered questions. It’s hoped some of them will be answered by the SFB/Transregio 167: Development, function and potential of myeloid cells in the central nervous system (NeuroMac). Along with the experts from several University of Freiburg institutes and the Medical Center, researchers at Berlín’s Charité and Max Debrück Center for Molecular Medicine and scientists at Israel’s Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot are investigating what makes microglial cells tick. They will receive nearly 10.9 million euros from 2017 to 2020. Some 4.9 million of that will come to Freiburg. The long-term goal is the development of new treatments for conditions such as Alzheimer’s, strokes, depression, and multiple sclerosis. But Marco Prinz is careful to dampen expectations: “I will be happy if we come up with a definite new approach to treatment.”

Support for exciting habilitation projects

Biologist Dr. Julia Jellusova and chemistry Dr. Anayancy Osorio-Madrazo of the University of Freiburg are to receive support from the Margarete von Wrangel Habilitation Program for women. The two researchers will develop their own projects over the next five years and write their habilitation theses on their work. The state Ministry of Science, Research, and the Arts and the University of Freiburg are providing some 400,000 euros. Jellusova’s project examines how human immune cells and cancer cells survive under difficult conditions. Osorio-Madrazo will develop hydrogel biomaterials to promote regeneration of intervertebral disk tissue.

The search for dark matter

The European Research Council (ERC) has selected physicist Marc Schumann and his plan, ULTIMATE, for a Consolidator Grant of two million euros over the next five years. Marc Schumann, Professor of Experimental Astroparticle Physics at the University of Freiburg, is seeking to improve the search for dark matter and to conduct studies on a large, underground detector. The biggest challenge is to reduce the background “noise” caused by natural radioactivity. The ERC grant was decided while Schumann was at the University of Bern, Switzerland; ERC grants are among the most sought-after prizes for European researchers.

Research alliance launched

The Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Science, Research, and the Arts has approved an application for the Upper Rhine research alliance on the technical foundations of sustainabil- ity. “The University of Freiburg, the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, the Furtwangen, Karlsruhe and Offenburg Universities of Applied Sciences are working together on the three-year project. Among the researchers’ plans is to design stable constructions for vehicles using biological materials and to raise the effectiveness of solar cells. The ministry is investing 900,000 euros, a sum the alliance partners together will match. The project spokesman is Professor Leonhard Reindl of the Department of Micro- systems Engineering and one of the directors of the University of Freiburg’s Centre for Renewable Energy.”
Can do anything – but don’t have to

A cultural history of leisure explains why doing nothing is sometimes helpful

It’s not laziness, can’t be equated with free time, and it’s certainly not boredom. What, then, is “leisure”? At a Freiburg collaborative research center (SFB), academics from the fields of Philosophy, Literary Studies, Theology, Art History, Sociology, Psychology, and Cultural Anthropology worked on a cultural history of the phenomenon from 2013 to 2016. Rimma Genest and spoke with medievalist Rebekka Becker, English Studies specialist Pia Masurczak and psychologist Minh Tam Luong, all of whom completed their doctorates in this SFB.

How did monks and nuns experience leisure? Did peasants, who worked in the fields all day, also have leisure time? How do works of literature from the Middle Ages to the 20th century present leisure? And what role does it play to the 20th century present leisure? How did monks and nuns experience leisure? Did peasants, who worked in the fields all day, also have leisure time? How do works of literature from the Middle Ages to the 20th century present leisure? And what role does it play to the 20th century present leisure?

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The temptation of indolence

The north-south divide?

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Uniform standards

An internet platform and practical exercises help medical students learn the right ways to examine a patient

by Petra Völzing

It’s about finding answers

A Master’s program teaches students how to find engineering and scientific solutions

by Stephanie Heyl

by Petra Völzing

Today, Janine Traut and Jan-Luca Penner stand in the practical course, “Introduction to clinical medicine.” The two medical students are in their third semester and, in this practical phase of their studies, are taking five modules to learn the basic patient examination techniques - how to examine a patient’s head and neck, abdomen, spine, and joints. Today they’re learning to check neurostatus. At the direction of student tutors Kathrin Hanke and Philip Kaya, they are members of each group practice the techniques by examining one another.

That’s not easy without at least some basic knowledge. For students who’ve grown up in the digital age, since summer 2015 there has been an open-access online platform, www.ukurs.uni-freiburg.de, to accompany the lecture and the printed manual. These doctors of the future can use it to prepare for each module and to practice afterward. “It is a tight, compact summary of everything that may come up in the course,” says Penner. Traut worked through the module prior to the course, too. “They are particularly enthusiastic about the videos, which show the examination techniques in detail. Now they are zwinging the reflex hammer themselves.”

Doctors Marit Stenzel and Dr. Paul von Pöllnitz created the material in five months under the guidance of Dr. Ingred Streitlein-Böhme. They used the manual as their guide. Producing the videos was a great deal of work. “Moving pictures are necessary to understand the techniques better than if you’re looking at the photos in the manual,” says Streitlein-Böhme, specialist doctor and teaching specialist in General Medicine. After each section, students can solve a case-quiz to test what they have learned. But it is not just the lower semesters who use the site; more experienced students also refer to it when preparing for their state exam. Other programs such as Nursing Science also work with the platform.

Petra Jung is a regular user. The lecturer is supervising the eighth parallel examination technique course groups, along with the student tutors. “The examination technique courses aim to teach uniform standards so that all the students are at the same level when they finish,” she explains. Previously, lecturers had taught the techniques more or less as they saw fit, she says. The online course makes it easy to understand the standards. Lecturers and tutors can demonstrate the course requirements in an uncomplimentary way. “That is also important for examiners,” Jung adds.

Better results in the exams

The development of the preclinical phase of the online platform - has a long history. “The university made it a goal some years ago to link the preclinical and clinical phases of studies more closely,” Streitlein-Böhme says. So in 2012 the Faculty of Medicine overhauled the preclinical phase practical course “Introduction to clinical medicine” to create clinical modules that started 12 years ago. Until then, practical units did not start until the clinical phase of studies. The development of uniform standards for the basic patient examination was a long process, too. “In a working group we worked through which examinations need to be in there and which can be left out at this stage,” Streitlein-Böhme explains. Now students have a well-rounded program at their fingertips. And the first evaluations are already in. “We have found that the results of student exams in this area have improved by ten percent since we introduced the new course.” A pilot questionnaire of 50 students showed two-thirds were using the online platform. In 2018 the platform was even singled out for the Teaching Prize for outstanding teaching at the Faculty of Medicine.

The University is cooperating closely with the five Fraunhofer Institutes at the University of Freiburg. Lecturers from all those institutes are active at the SSE, a total of 14 professors are taking part, and expertise is transferred into the lecture halls and laboratories. Professor Stefan Glunz of INATECH and section head at the Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems says the idea is good. “The contributions the parties make in the field of sustainability complement one another. The university is much stronger in basic research, and the Fraunhofer Institutes are very good in applied research.” Glunz himself lectures on Solar Energy and has been in the program since the get-go. This cooperation has another advantage: students can get student assistants’ jobs both at the university and at the Fraunhofer Institutes, allowing them to get the feel of work in the laboratory.

What are the students’ expectations? “Firstly - classic, solid, basic training in the engineering sciences,” Glunz explains. That means a lot of materials science - from electrotechnology, information technology, physics, and chemistry. “It’s not a lightweight program,” he says.

Safe cars, stable power grids

“We don’t just skim the surface of the problems - we go into the technical details.”

Sustainability Center

The Institute of Sustainable Technical Systems (INATECH) at the University of Freiburg is the third and newest core of the Sustainability Center founded by the University of Freiburg and the five Fraunhofer Institutes in March 2013. The head of INATECH and co-director of the Center is Professor Stefan Glunz.

It’s about finding answers. How can you build a car to be light and also safe? How can functional products be made cheaply and sustainably? How can electricity produced by renewables be sensibly fed into the power grid and stored? Resilience is a bit topic. “Put simply, it is the ability of a system to return to its ground level state despite a massive disturbance - after a natural disaster, for example,” Glunz explains. How can we reduce the physics of failures as far as possible? How can we construct a power grid to prevent a blackout? To answer such questions, the students also learn to examine the socio-economic, legal, and psychological aspects. “We have to understand how society responds to challenges, what the effects will be on the economy and the law,” he adds.

Not a sea - an ocean

The program has proven popular. There were 280 applications for the first round; more than 40 students were chosen - “the pioneers,” Glunz calls them. A Bachelor’s program is being considered for winter semester 2018-19; it would be German as well as English. Most of the students came to Germany especially to take the Master’s program. For some, it is their first time abroad. Puneeth Jakkula, an engineering student from India, is proud to be in the program. “I have learned more in these courses than ever before,” is his comment. But he wishes there were more lively discussions.

Graduates have a broad choice of potential professions. Yupak Satirakul completed a Bachelor in electrotechnology, has worked for some years in rail transport in her home country, Thailand, and wants to do a Master’s in the area of sustainable design and resilience development. Nisarth Kumaman from India went looking for a Master’s program in Europe so as to explore sustainable energies. “Before I came, I thought the subject was a sea. In fact, it’s an ocean.”
Hochschuldidaktik + breakfast = Hochschuldidaktik-breakfast. The sum works out. But if you think this is all about food, you’re wrong. Input in the new short format is largely focused on subject material and method. Silke Weiss launched the new format. She is director of the lecturer-training Hochschuldidaktik section at the University of Freiburg. The idea is simple: Regular university-teacher training courses and workshops usually run for one or two days. They take up a lot of time. That’s time which teachers at the university and at universities of applied science rarely have. The breakfast format is a little pitstop - for those in a hurry who hunger for knowledge. It’s been on offer once a month since winter semester 2016-17 and is to continue this summer semester 2017.

On this Friday morning, the initiators have decorated the room in Bismarkallee 22 with a bunch of pink and cream-colored flowers and have put up words of welcome on the flipchart. Some 15 lecturers and tutors have come - both from the humanities and social sciences and from the scientific subjects. Today’s topic is the “harm and nonsense of discussions,” an issue lifted from everyday experience in classes.

But before taking in knowledge, the participants can take in some nutrients; they rush to the buffet, where bread rolls, pretzels, butter and jam await, and apples, mandarins, bananas and grapes add dashes of color, along with yoghurt, various teas, coffee pots, water, and orange juice. With a mug of coffee and a bite to eat, participants return to their seats. For teacher it’s an odd situation - themselves being taught.

Discussion in teams of two

The teachers’ partner is PD Dr. Ulrike Hanke, herself a graduate of the University of Freiburg, neat-casually dressed in jeans, pale blue blouse, timeless spectacles. Her motto for the morning - “I want you to have a good breakfast without me spoiling your appetite,” she jokes. Then she asks - “What do you use discussions for when you’re teaching?” The participants have seven minutes to discuss the question in teams of two. They put down answers on reference cards.

The spectrum of about 20 concepts runs from “opening gambit” to “prohibiting a virtual reflation.” Hanke pins the orange cards onto the corkboard in a kind of word cloud and summarizes the results. But then she spins the thread further, distinguishing between learning discourses aimed at repetition from problem-solving discussions, in which further development and transfer are paramount. She also adds a third form - the “let’s dance” discussion aimed at training the ability to give and take criticism. “So I urge you to think more carefully in the future about where you are and where you want to go,” Hanke says.

In 45 minutes the teacher has given the participants a lot to think about, and at the end of it, appropriately, there is a lively discussion. The tutors and lecturers exchange their own observations and experiences, on methods like fishbowl or reframing, or simply the banal recognition by one of the teachers that “students just have a very great need to talk things over!” Relieved laughter all round. Not a bad start for a Friday morning. And if that wasn’t enough, you could still grab a croissant on the way out.

For those in a hurry who hunger for knowledge

If you want new ideas for teaching, drop by the Hochschuldidaktik breakfast!

by Alexander Ochs

University of Freiburg provides training unique in Germany

by Eva Opitz

We are in an exciting phase of transformation,” says Angelika Zinamaier from the Museum communications section. A museum is no longer purely a temple to the Muse, but a place for learning, she says. Exhibits are still important, but in the foreground there should be events which invite visitors to join in, Zinamaier says. Lecturer Sabine Jank from the szenum Berlin agency supports this user-oriented approach. Museum planners should integrate action and dialogue into an exhibition from the start, she says.

Johannes Sturm of the Zentrum für Kunst und Medien in Karlsruhe says in these courses he learns a lot which goes above and beyond his own professional remit. He also appreciates the opportunity to talk with other colleagues. Petra Schwarz, head of the Loki Schmidt Haus - a botanical museum at Universität Hamburg – works in a small team and is “the curator and press officer rolled into one.” She says that it has its pros and cons. She would like to start trying some of the approach for participation in her small museum. “I’m getting enough ideas here for several years,” she says happily.

More space, less text

Some of the ideas are illustrated in the practical part of the course. The students stroll through the “Freiburg in National Socialism” exhibition, which opened late last year at the Augustinemuseum, and put themselves into the role of a school student, immigrant, or sponsor. “As a school student, I might not know much about religions,” says Sibylle Kubus, sculptor at the Deutsches Museum in Munich. “There is not much space, and there is an awful lot of text.”

The participants unanimously criticized the many exhibits in Stuttgarter script, saying hardly anyone can read it these days; they also said there should be more translations into English and French. They felt that the personal accounts could have been told in shorter, easier language, which would have placed the focus more clearly on the complex personalities. The debate after the visit showed that participation in advance could make a big difference.

What would a school student, an immigrant, or a sponsor think of an exhibition at the Augustinemuseum? The students used role plays to discover why it’s important to get the participation of the visitor from the start. PHOTO: MUSEUM

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**Awoooooooooooooooooo!**

“Wolf tracks” game lets players hunt and howl in a pack

by Rimma Gerenstein

In the “Abgezockt!” series, members of the uni’s editorial board meet with University of Freiburg researchers to play a game. The aim is to shed light on board games from an academic perspective. Or something like that.

**The game**

Raising cubs, hunting, fighting – players slice their way through the five phases of a Canis lupus. But the cliché of the lone wolf doesn’t escape them a few scratches. The game requires all parties to cooperate, for example to hunt down a bison or a moose. And howling together is more fun, anyway. But you can’t always avoid problems in the pack: there are fights to see who’s top dog. This puts social behavior to the test.

**The players**

Professor Gernot Segelbacher, Wildlife Ecology and Management; Felix Böcker, Forest Research Institute

Sonja Seidel, Press and Public Relations Office

**How to play**

“We are all multiple personalities,” says Gernot Segelbacher. Each player has three wolves. A roll of the dice determines who is a leader and who a follower. Felix Böcker is on top – he has the alpha card. “The alpha wolf has the alpha vixen. ‘Ah, these are clearly North American timber wolves,’ says the expert as he looks at his cards. They show two big animals with shiny brownish-black coats. “At last – a game in which I can impress you with my boundless knowledge,” he jokes. Segelbacher follows with another pair and becomes the beta male, the pack’s deputy leader. It’s not Sonja Seidel’s lucky day; she has omega, the pack’s runt. The expert as he looks at his cards.

The game begins with a correction, “We don’t call them alpha and beta males any more,” Böcker explains. Those terms arose in the mid-20th century, when researchers observed wolves in artificial enclosures. “They show two big animals with shiny brownish-black coats. ‘At last – a game in which I can impress you with my boundless knowledge,’ he jokes. Segelbacher follows with another pair and becomes the beta male, the pack’s deputy leader. It’s not Sonja Seidel’s lucky day; she has omega, the pack’s runt. The expert as he looks at his cards.

Players can make decisions about the phases of a wolf’s life by playing their action chips and strength tokens. PHOTO: MAX ORLICH

The next step is – looking for food. A wolf can catch small prey, such as rabbits and voles, by itself. For bigger game, like caribou or elk, wolves need to work together. Böcker goes hunting. A limming bites the dust. “For a wolf that’s barely an entrée, a snack at most,” says Segelbacher. Great. Now everyone’s a little bit hungry. Make way for the hunting pack! The players lay down their action chips, face down. They determine how active the animals will be during the hunt. Böcker is thinking “My alpha vixen needs enough strength to raise her cubs. The whole group benefits from that. So I won’t exhaust myself hunting.” On the menu – a white-tailed deer which will cost the pack 24 points, and a caribou for a full 40 points. “The wolves wouldn’t attack the strongest male; they’d look for a weaker animal which can’t defend itself so well,” is Segelbacher’s comment. The pack plays it safe. “The small deer is enough.” The animal is brought down. The card says it yields nine servings. The wolves eat according to their pecking order. Alpha starts first, then it’s Beta’s turn, and Omega is unlucky again – he goes hungry and loses points on strength. That job done, it’s time for the next phase... Awoawowoowo! That gives you recognition points. Howling is more than just team building, the two researchers explain. For instance, if a wolf loses track of its family while hunting, it can find them again using this acoustic signal. Wolves also use the howl to tell neighboring packs – “We’re here, there are a lot of us, stay away!”

The next phase includes hierarchical battles – a chance to move up the packing order. The experts have some correction here too. “Of course wolves fight among themselves, but not within their own families. That is very rare.” The players draw battle cards with the numbers one to ten, which they use against one another. A higher number beats a lower one. All this baring of teeth, growling, and snapping shifts the ranking. Segelbacher’s beta wolves put their tails between their legs, while Seidel’s runts move up. Böcker’s alpha wolves remain unchallenged but lose vitality points. However, nature compensates for the losses. After more than an hour, their cubs strengthen the pack. But the end of the game is nowhere in sight.

The analysis

The game would be helpful in giving players an insight into the world of wolves – however it is not up to date, the two wildlife ecologists agree (regarding hierarchy battles and alpha males). "You could certainly use it to make students find out where the differences from the current research are,” says Böcker. “For instance, they could think about setting up different phases so that they were more like the real life cycle of a wolf.” Segelbacher suggests.

Segelbacher and Böcker would find it interesting to add the aspect of wildlife management to the game. “It would be fascinating if the players had to solve problems – for example, if the wolves started killing sheep.” It would also be possible to include the relationship with farmers and hunters in the game, says Segelbacher. "We work according to the motto ‘We don’t manage animals but people.’ It would be possible to integrate research findings – such as the question of when it’s worth putting up fences, or when the state should compensate farmers for stock killed by wolves.”

The game’s overall focus is on North American animal life, Böcker says. “Not until the last decade was the influence of research there on the European image of the wolf pushed aside by our own experience. The scientific community here has caught up, and there would be plenty of material for a game to suit the European experience. But the principle is very much in line with the matter close to our hearts, which is to tell the public about wolves in a neutral and factual way, and to dispel their fears.” The big bad wolf only exists in fairytales.
Philipp Weigel and Philip Kapitzke walk to North Cape. They set off at Epiphany – in Ulm

by Martin Jost

The two men aim to finish the journey every day

The route they’ve planned is 4,700 kilometers long. They are not just walking sluggishly north; they are taking some detours to interesting places. They want to see the countryside and people outside the home range and the sky. What was the best thing they have experienced on their hike so far? “In Gunzenhausen I tried my first Bayrische Krapfen [jam doughnut] – what they call a Berliner in Freiburg,” says Weigel. “I ate six all together that day.”

4,700 kilometer to the finish line

Kapitzke, 24, and Weigel, 23 were born just a few kilometers away from each other. They have known each other since they were in kindergarten and have often gone on long walking tours together. Over the eleven days they spent rounding the Mont Blanc massif, Kapitzke worked most recently as a building finance advisor and after his walk to North Cape, he plans to complete a Master’s degree in Economics and Philosophy to get with his Bachelor’s degree in Business and Economics. Weigel is pursuing Mathemtics and Sport at the University of Freiburg. Mathematics and Sport; later he is going to teach. He is taking a semester off for the walk to North Cape. The two men aim to finish the journey in a little over six months.

The route they’ve planned is 4,700 kilometers long. They are not just walking, they are also cycling.

Packing their bags: Philipp Weigel (left) and Philip Kapitzke have to carry everything they need for the tour.

Win two gift certificates, each for 25 euros at the uni’shop.


Thuringian Forest – fairytale winter

Weigel and Kapitzke aim to finish the journey within six months.

Walking into loneliness

Later, when they are in Norway, there will be a roughly 14-hour march in which they will pass no human habitation. “By then we might have bought ourselves a solar panel,” says Weigel. “The sun will be shining at night – is a step ahead of the rest of the world.” Kapitzke explains. “Then the sun will be shining at night and we will be able to recharge our powerbanks.”

Kapitzke and Weigel set off in the middle of January. It was snowing.”

On a typical day they get up over the tip of my nose.”

In the mornings it’s not easy to crawl out of the sleeping-bag and put on cold clothes. On a typical day they get up over the tip of my nose.”

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Win a gift certificate

Office supplies, baby bibs, rubber ducks: The University of Freiburg uni’shop offers much more than things for everyday campus life; it’s got something for people of all ages. In this series, uni’leben presents some of the products and raffles off gift certificates.

Heirlooms for vegetarians

At the uni’shop you will find nylon-lined, truck-tarpaulin shoulder bags in white and bright blue. They can hold your laptop, lunch, and your reading for the day. The material is reliably water-repellent, shock-resistant, stain-resistant, and hard-wearing. Of course it proudly bears the University of Freiburg logo. The solid dispatch case of yore is the truck-tarpaulin shoulder bag of today. Maybe the next generation will find it in their parents’ attic – nicely aged, timeless and hard-wearing.

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Dirt you ever ask yourself why you carry your belongings around with you in a shoulder bag – a bag originally designed for bicycle couriers? Martin Reichert puts that question in his book “Wenn ich mal gross bin.” (When I grow up). “Are you a bicycle courier? Do you even have a bike? I don’t,” writes Reichert. “I’m speaking for the accessories of truck tarpaulin bags made of truck tarpaulin are out of place in Freiburg. Where (it feels like) 80 percent of the population rides a bike, people understand the advantages of this kind of material. It’s waterproof and doesn’t tear even if you overload it all the time with heavy books.

And above, truck tarpaulin only looks more stylish as ages. When the load stretches it or when the corners are battered, it gets a bit rough. In

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Send an email to uni@leben@uni-freiburg.de for 25 euros at the uni’shop.

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On the northernmost point of the European continent. They have been going since 6 January 2017. Swabian Jura, Franconian Switzerland, Thuringian Forest – fairytale winter landscapes, outdoors 24 hours a day, with nothing between them and the horizon but the earth and sky. What was the best thing they have experienced on their hike so far? “In Gunzenhausen I tried my first Bayrische Krapfen [jam doughnut] – what they call a Berliner in Freiburg,” says Weigel. “I ate six all together that day.”

The route they’ve planned is 4,700 kilometers long. They are not just walking, they are also cycling.

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And above, truck tarpaulin only looks more stylish as ages. When the load stretches it or when the corners are battered, it gets a bit rough. In
More than 30 terabyte of data, some 500,000 calculations – this example from the working group of Professor Lutz Hein and Dr. Ralf Gilsbach demonstrates how the life sciences could become data sciences. The team from Pharmacology is working within the University of Freiburg collaborative research center (SFB) Medical Epigenetics and has decoded the entire epigenome of heart muscle cells. The epigenome is the entirety of epigenetic mechanisms, which determine which genes are active in a cell and which aren’t, whereby changing environmental factors, such as nutrition, stress, or medication can create patterns. The group was able to use infrastructure which also arose with the SFB: Galaxy – an open-source community project, initiated at Penn State University in the US. It is a simple-to-use online platform via which the researchers can use high-performance computers for their data analysis. “Galaxy enables us to carry out this kind of research quickly and efficiently,” Gilsbach says.

The pharmacologist took part in one of the first Galaxy workshops which was organized by Freiburg Bioinformatics in 2013. Since then, the group, headed by Professor Rolf Backofen and Dr. Björn Grüning has continually expanded the infrastructure and the service. The team has been coordinating a performance center for Bioinformatics since 2015. It is sponsored by the German Ministry of Education and Research to the tune of some 5.8 million euros; it now makes its services available across Europe. “The interests and requirements of the users is paramount for us,” says Backofen. Working with the university Computer Center’s high performance computing team, the group is able to access mainframes and additionally offers graphic interface in the browser. “The researchers upload their data and can then apply and combine various analytical tools, alter the parameters, translate the data into a relevant format, and much more – all on one platform,” Backofen explains. Already, more than 800 such analytical tools are available. “The right one is not there, the Bioinformatics team will help in programming a solution.”

The possibilities of big data are fundamentally changing many research processes in the life sciences. Instead of a clearly-viewed experimental setup, analyses are now often conducted which are the equivalent of hundreds of thousands of single experiments. To be on the global forefront of your research, you need statistical method, high-quality data analysis, and a lot of computing power,” says Grüning. Around 400 researchers from some 40 working groups in the university, the Medical Center, and the Max Planck Institute of Immunobiology and Epigenetics use Galaxy for their work; and in subjects such as Pharmacy and Biology, the platform is also used in teaching. If you would like to use the service, contact the team by email. Easy access is provided with the help of the workshops and interactive online training materials, some of which take the user step by step through a simple data analysis.

But that’s just the start. “Galaxy is like Excel; you can soon use plus and minus, but it really only gets interesting when you are doing more complex calculations,” says Gilsbach. Today all members of the Pharmacology working group use the platform and combine various data formats in ambitious analyses. The team reported their decoding of the heart muscle cell epigenome in the specialist journal Nature Communications. “That kind of publication,” says Gilsbach, “would not have been possible without Galaxy.”
Silver in the slalom

Psychology student Anna-Lena Forster is winning a load of medals in Alpine Paraskiing

by Anita Rißer

Of course she still lives in Freiburg. But in winter, “the Freiburg psychology student Anna-Lena Forster admits, “I’m not here that often.” When it’s winter season, alpine ski sports- women have just too much to do. Forster has just come back from the world championships in Italy, where she captured the bronze in the slalom. She was just half a second from the silver in the slalom but topped the podium three days later to win the championship. “Sport is my passion. I like to try new things,” she says. She was just half a second from the silver in the slalom but topped the podium three days later to win the championship. “Sport is my passion. I like to try new things.”

Wheelchair basketball and trampolining

Her latest new things are wheelchair basketball and trampolining at the University Sports Center. She does them sitting down, where others use their legs. She tests things out and does whatever is possible. Her brother, who is three years older, is partly responsible, because she always wanted to do what he did. Her parents did their bit: “I was allowed to try everything.” When the whole family enjoyed skiing, there was no thought of leaving Anna-Lena out. Her parents registered her for skiing lessons. Nowadays, she is better than all of them and is booking up one success after another in many alpine paraskiing disciplines. She sits in a perfectly-fitted seat with a frame underneath on which the normal ski is mounted. She has two supporting skins to manage the steepest slopes. Forster loves it when her parents come with her to competitions. But she can manage without them. “I’m completely independent and drive myself to training.”

And because her sport is a seasonal business, she has to study something, too. That mostly happens in summer. She was interested in psychology even at school. Her internship back then reinforces her choice of studies, and the presence of a sports psychologist on the team was decisive. Forster is now in her fifth semester, “but academically only in my third.” She says the university gives her good support. For example, she can extend her studies over eleven semesters. She also finds the close cooperation with the Institute of Psychology and the academic staff to decide what would be the best solution for the times Forster is away.

Sometimes she has to do the supplementary exams. And because attendance is compulsory in classes, she is given extra work to do when she misses class. Sometimes she has to do it in between competitions. It’s only in everyday life that she sometimes has problems - for instance, when she has trouble rolling into the tram at the newly-refurbished Bertoldsbrunnen. Forster gets support from sports associations - for example, she has a scholarship from the Deutsche Sporthilfe. It won’t make her rich, says Anna-Lena Forster. “There’s a different profit for me - independence and self-assurance.” And once more she is on her way to training. The world cup competition kicks off 1 March in Japan and South Korea.

Seasonal studies - in winter Anna-Lena Forster is usually competing; she goes to classes and lectures in the summer semester. PHOTO: PATRICK SEEGER

Conductor, organist, and tenor Eduard Wagner is the new director of the Uni choir

by Alexander Ochs

In winter semester 2016-17 Eduard Wagner took on an “honorable” role - directing the Freiburg University Choir. The multi-talented Wagner is not yet 30 - and was not pushing for the job. How did he get to be the person requested that I apply, says Wagner diplomatically: “And I thought - if you get the position with such a big choir, then take a good look at it.”

Rehearse in the flow

Every semester the choir practises one work, switching between secular and religious music programs. From October 2016 to January this year, Wagner and his 200 singers rehearsed Carmina Burana by Carl Orff. They performed it in late January: “This work is made for a ‘mass choir’. It has to be loud, it has to be wild,” says Wagner. Four drummers and two grand pianos, various soloists, and a children’s choir are all required in the reduced version of Orff. But how does a conductor with so many participants manage to ensure that no-one gets lost in the crowd?

“To respond to the individual is the hardest thing for instrumentalists, but I think the most important. For really to reach everyone, knowledge of the subject, the music, is everything. It is also important to him to communicate images for the music and to maintain the excitement from the first rehearsals through to the concert. Those are the real challenges, he says. When things go well, successful moments are added. “The rehearsal weekend was one big flow,” he reminisces. In the best case, the conductor releases the singers’ energy. “If the choir is working well, that gives the soloists an additional lift - and vice versa.”

The conductor with the high forehead and powerful arms knows what he is talking about: after all, he is on stage himself often enough. Wagner has performed in Robert Schumann’s Der Rosenkavalier, Felix Mendelssohn’s oratorios Paulus and Elias, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s Mass in C-Minor, and Johann Sebastian Bach’s Magnificat. Two years ago he debuted in the Mozart opera La finta giardiniera as Podestà, in a production of the Hochschule für Musik Freiburg. In Francis Poulenc’s opera buffa Les Mamelles de Tériel in 2016, Wagner took on the main role of Le Maire.

Concert in summer semester

“Singing is the most intimate thing there is,” Eduard Wagner says. At his debut as choir director in January 2017 he conducted some 200 singers. PHOTO: THOMAS KLAD

While in his final year of school, Wagner completed the church’s musical lift training at the archdiocese of Freiburg and finished a degree in church music at the Musikhochschule Freiburg. Later did a Bachelor’s degree in singing and added a Master’s degree in concert and opera singing. For the summer semester, the conductor is planning a major ecclesiastical piece, given that the choir - founded in 2007 as the University of Freiburg turned 550 - will be celebrating its tenth birthday.

And what does Wagner listen to when he is not at work? “I love classical music,” he says, “but I love high-quality pop as well.” I think Adele, Queen, Michael Jackson, and Roy Orbison are great. But sometimes I listen to AC/DC and Metallica.”

Unichor

Students and employees of the University of Freiburg sing in the Uni choir. Rehearsals during semester are Tuesdays from 6:10pm to around 8:15pm in the Seminarea of the Rectorate on Fahnenbergplatz. Male and female singers of all types are very welcome.

www.unichor-freiburg.de

www.facebook.com/FreiburgUniChor
Achievements

Physicist Professor Peter Jenni was selected by the American Physical Society (APS) for its Panofsky Prize. He receives the 10,000-dollar award jointly with Michel Dellà Negra and Tejinder Virdee of Imperial College London. The APS honors the physicists leading role in the conception, design and construction of the ATLAS experiment. It is located at the Large Hadron Collider of the European Organization for Nuclear Research CERN in Geneva, Switzerland.

PD Dr. Dimitra Kiritis of the Dermatology and Venerology hospital at the Freiburg Medical Center receives the 10,000-euro award from the Baden-Württemberg Foundation. The Fellowship is intended for researchers with genetically-determined skin diseases. Her work enables a new form of cell therapy in patients with genetically-determined skin diseases.

The Sonja-Bernadotte-Medaille for garden culture goes to Vivien von Köcker from the University of Freiburg. For her Master’s thesis at the Chair of Nature Conservation and Landscape Ecology at the University of Freiburg, the Lennart-Bernadotte-Stiftung has been making the 1,000-euro award since 2004 to writings on above-average Bachelor’s and Master’s theses in the field of horticulture. von Köcker’s work showed that home-made insect hotels contribute considerably more to the protection of bees than the commercially-sold types.

Molecular biologist Dr. Jia Li of Imperial College, UK, receives a Humboldt Research Fellowship for postdoctoral researchers from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. With this fellowship, the Foundation supports highly qualified researchers from abroad at the start of their careers. At the University of Freiburg Li will investigate new methods allowing the simultaneous identification of several DNA signatures in bacteria at the single-cell level. This is intended to improve diagnosis of hospital infections in the future. The host is Dr. Felix von Stetten of the Department of Microsystems Engineering.

Chemist Lijil Liu of University of Wollongong, Australia, receives a Humboldt Research Fellowship for postdoctoral researchers from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. The Fellowship supports highly qualified researchers from abroad at the start of their careers. At the University of Freiburg Liu will investigate new methods allowing the simultaneous identification of several DNA signatures in bacteria at the single-cell level. This is intended to improve diagnosis of hospital infections in the future. The host is Dr. Simon Thiele of the Department of Microsystems Engineering.

Dr. Susana Minguet Garcia of the BIOSS Centre for Biological Signalling Studies excellence cluster receives funding for her research project of 95,000 euros from the Baden-Württemberg Foundation over the next three years. The Deutsches Seminar is to top up Pfeiffer’s research project with an additional 21,000 euros. Pfeiffer will investigate excitatory constructions and conduct the first research into the ways in which adults and children make the same expressions of surprise in dialogue. The Foundation’s elite program for postdocs supports junior researchers on their way to a professorship.

The Rector has appointed Dr. Tanja Schilling, University of Luxembourg, as a Professor of Nursing Science as of 1 November 2016.

The Rector has appointed Professor Ursula Schafer, professor at the Technische Universität Dresden until becoming an emeritus in 2015 and since then an assistant lecturer at the University of Freiburg, to an adjunct professor.

The Rector has appointed Dr. Martin Pfeiffer of the Deutsches Seminar receives funding of 95,000 euros from the Baden-Württemberg Foundation over the next three years. The Deutsches Seminar is to top up Pfeiffer’s research project with an additional 21,000 euros. Pfeiffer will investigate excitatory constructions and conduct the first research into the ways in which adults and children make the same expressions of surprise in dialogue. The Foundation’s elite program for postdocs supports junior researchers on their way to a professorship.

The Rector has appointed Professor Andreas Ura Sommer, of the Forschungsstätte Niztzecke-Kommentar at the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, a Professor of Philosophy focusing on cultural philosophy, effective 14 November 2016.

Appointments

Faculty of Law

The Rector has appointed Dr. Rüdiger Engel, Director of the Freiburg planning office and assistant lecturer at the University of Freiburg since 2004 as an adjunct professor.

Faculty of Medicine

Professor Tobias Huber has accepted an appointment to the Universitätsklinikum Hamburg-Eppendorf. He vacates the Heisenberg Chair of Chronic Kidney Disease and Gerontology at the Freiburg Medical Center.

The Rector has appointed Professor Peter Jenni vom Institute of Biology III to the Academic Council for three years from 1 January 2017.

The Rector has appointed Dr. Pedro Rico-Munoz vom BIOSS Centre for Biological Signalling Studies to the Academic Council for three years from 1 December 2016.

Faculty of Environmental and Natural Sciences

Professor Dirk Jaeger has been appointed to a professorship at Götingen University. He leaves the presidency of Forest Operations at the Institute of Forest Sciences.

The Rector has named Professor Peter Poschen-Eiche, Director of the Brazilian Office of the International Labor Organization and assistant lecturer at the University of Freiburg, as an adjunct professor.

25th ANNIVERSARIES

Helga Heidrich, Central Administration

Rüdiger Küchler, University Library

Professor Konrad Küster, Music Institute

Professor Ferdinand R. Prostmeier, Institute of Biblical and Historical Theology

Silke Schilling, Central Administration

Professor Thomas Stieglitz, Department of Microsystems Engineering

Petra Weber, Central Administration

Alexandra Weber-Flamm, Central Administration

40TH ANNIVERSARIES

Werner Pfaffkorn, Central Administration

VENIA LEGENDI FOR

Dr. Kerstin Dittrich, Psychology

Dr. Gisbert Kaufmann, German Linguistics

Professor Wilfried Weber, Central Administration

Professor Martin Pfeiffer of the Deutsches Seminar receives funding of 95,000 euros from the Baden-Württemberg Foundation over the next three years. The Deutsches Seminar is to top up Pfeiffer’s research project with an additional 21,000 euros. Pfeiffer will investigate excitatory constructions and conduct the first research into the ways in which adults and children make the same expressions of surprise in dialogue. The Foundation’s elite program for postdocs supports junior researchers on their way to a professorship.

Faculty of Humanities

Dr. Katharina Kraus of the Philosophical Seminars, University College Freiburg has accepted an appointment to the University of Notre Dame, USA.

The Rector has appointed Professor Andreas Ura Sommer, of the Forschungsstätte Niztzecke-Kommentar at the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, a Professor of Philosophy focusing on cultural philosophy, effective 14 November 2016.

The Rector has appointed Dr. Onur Nishmiah, of the Stiftung Zoologisches Forschungsmuseum A. Koenig, to be Professor of Ecology, Evolutionary Biology and Biodiversity at the Institute of Biology III as of 1 January 2017.

Professor Edward Pearce, deputising professor at the University of Freiburg, has accepted an appointment as Professor of Immunobiology with the focus on the immune innervation system at the Institute of Biology III.

The Rector has appointed Werner Pfefferkorn as an adjunct professor.

The Rector has appointed Dr. Lili Liu vom BIOSS Centre for Biological Signalling Studies, as of 1 December 2016.

The Rector has appointed Dr. Edward Pearce, of the Stiftung Zoologisches Forschungsmuseum A. Koenig, to be Professor of Ecology, Evolutionary Biology and Biodiversity at the Institute of Biology III as of 1 January 2017.

Professor Edward Pearce, deputising professor at the University of Freiburg, has accepted an appointment as Professor of Immunobiology with the focus on the immune innervation system at the Institute of Biology III.
Ask an Alumni: Mechtild Rössler

Where were your favorite places in Freiburg to study, dance, and eat? We liked studying at home best, in my shared apartment in Haslach and in study groups; we danced at wonderful, jointly-organized parties, and we cooked at home. Our potato caserole made to the recipe of gastronomy critic Wolffin Siebeck was legendary.

Which insight from your years of study has had a lasting impact on your life? That it is very important to engage in politics. My involvement in the Geography student council made a big difference to me, as did my work representing all Germany’s Geography students. We had an international working group on the subject of academic criticism - I’m still in touch with former members today. At our last meeting of 30 people, we asked ourselves: “Where were we back then, what were our professional dreams and goals, and where are we now? What would we do differently today? It is wonderful to have this chance for a comparison! Another advantage to political activity - if you get up in a lecture hall and speak to a thousand people when you’re 20, you won’t have any trouble intervening in your later career.

What advice would you give to students? Enjoy the endless opportunities, the all-night discussions, and the doors which are open to you...

What do you miss about student life? I miss the endless opportunities, the all-night discussions, and the doors which are open to you...

A “typical student” thing in my day was... going to Valentin for a glass of wine from the barrel, up the Schönberg, or watching the sunset from the meadow on the Kaiserstuhl.

Dr. Mechtild Rössler took her final exams in Geography and German Studies at the University of Freiburg in 1984. She completed her doctorate in 1988 at the University of Hamburg’s Geoscience Faculty. In 1989 she started work at the research center Cité des Sciences in Paris, where Rössler was a visiting scholar at the University of California at Berkeley. In 1991 she started working at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris in the Division of Ecological Sciences and transferred in 1992 to the newly created UNESCO World Heritage Center. In 2015 Rössler became director of the World Heritage Center and of the Division for Heritage.

Studies at the University of Freiburg Center. In 2015 Rössler became an UNESCO World Heritage Center.

Lying media! Supposing you could guide the fate of this university – what would you do? I have a colossal vision, the best vision! First, we get rid of all the subjects that give people stupid ideas – Islamic Studies, Gender Studies, Cultural Anthropology. Then we get the old student prison up and running again and expand it to take up the whole of Kollegiengebäude I. And the most important thing – we cut all connections with France and Switzerland. No more European Campus! Instead, we’re gonna build a yuge wall around the university, and make the foreign students pay for it.

I don’t think you can. You’re not even on display – you’re stuck in a storeroom. It’s not exactly the Oval Office.

Geometric shapes are fake news. My basement is an alternative ov!

Pronounced

Animal Turn

Whether as beasts of burden, as transportation, or steak – all too often, humans reduce animals to nothing more than a useful commodity; that was certainly so in the past. That is now at an end – historians at another university in southern Germany are calling for an “animal turn.” The discipline is to regard animals as subjects who help to shape history; their perspective is to be considered.

That’s where the problems start. Certainly there are plenty of sources providing information about animals. But how do we use them to draw conclusions on animals’ perspectives, actions, or intentions? It’s very annoying that the creatures are so taciturn and have very rarely left us any written records. Because they’d have a lot to say. What were the thoughts of an elephant crossing the Alps with Hannibal to stomp on Roman soldiers? Have whales read “Moby Dick”? What a storm of protest must have gone through the moth world when Thomas Edison patented the light bulb!

Bubonic plague – A successful venture

And the anniversary of the opening of the first slaughterhouse in Chicago is a memorial day for US pigs. The bubonic plague in the Middle Ages, however, was surely a spectacular success from the flea perspective. Not to mention the arrogance of holy cats in Ancient Egypt.

Yet when all’s said and done, even this view is still too humanocentric. If we take this approach to its logical end, we arrive at the conclusion that historical events which are important to humans tend to leave most species cold. Other things are important to them. But what? Perhaps participation in politics activity would help. It is a proven scientific method. Historians will need to spend a few decades among orangutans. Or swap their living rooms for a birdcage and eat delicious birdseed for a while.

Picked-up

Red rules, OK?

A stroll through the University of Freibourg’s Zoological Collection offers valuable insights into the animal kingdom. A fox in the Collection has difficulties in distinguishing between dreams and reality. Rimma Gerenstein allowed him to shout at her.

un’leben: Hello, fox. Are you tweeting there?

Fox: That’s “Mr. President” to you! I tell you, you can’t trust the media. They can’t even get your title right. Get out, before I throw my phone at you!

What? Do you think you are the president of the Zoological Collection?

I’m the president of this university! Don’t you see the similarity to Donald Trump?

Because my delightful daughter – if she weren’t my daughter, I’d probably be dating her – has been living on top of Trump’s head since he’s been in office. She’s the best hairdo he’s ever had. A terrific hairstyle. Believe me. It’s the dawn of a new age. Red rules, OK?

You want to bring back communism?

Lying media!

This doesn’t get us anywhere. Besides, the University of Freiburg doesn’t have a president. Well, America didn’t have freedom until 1776, and look at it now. They’re winners, all winners. It’s true. And we could be, too. So I say – Freiburg first!

Supposing you could guide the fate of this university – what would you do? I have a colossal vision, the best vision! First, we get rid of all the subjects that give people stupid ideas – Islamic Studies, Gender Studies, Cultural Anthropology. Then we get the old student prison up and running again and expand it to take up the whole of Kollegiengebäude I. And the most important thing – we cut all connections with France and Switzerland. No more European Campus! Instead, we’re gonna build a yuge wall around the university, and make the foreign students pay for it.

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