

Minutes of the Executive Board Meeting held on September 12, 2018

Location: Petersgraben 45, basement meeting room

Time: 12:15 pm – 1:40 pm

Present: David Atwood, Philippe Hofstetter, Christopher Klenk, Patricia Hertel, Anja Roth, Nathalie Schick Tanz

Absent: Sandro Sieber

Minutes: Patricia Eiche

Agenda:

- 1. Approval of the minutes of the executive board meeting held on April 12, 2018**
- 2. University cost-saving measures**
- 3. avuba PhD & Postdoc Survey**
- 4. skuba-clinic – free legal advice**
- 5. avuba Happy Hours**
- 6. Lunchtime meeting with politicians**
- 7. actionuni position paper**
- 8. Feedback from Group III on university processes**
- 9. Next avuba executive board meeting**

Item 1: Approval of the minutes of the executive board meeting held on April 12, 2018

The minutes of the executive board meeting held on April 12, 2018, are approved and thanks are expressed.

Item 2: University cost-saving measures

Based on the 2018–2021 performance mandate and global budget of the supporting cantons of the University of Basel, around CHF 80 million must be saved across the entire performance period. Most savings will be made via central measures, in particular real estate and drawing on reserves. The faculties are required to save CHF 7 million in total; this will be shared across the seven faculties, largely in proportion to their budgets. The University Council has also decided, as a one-off measure, not to grant pay level increases in 2019. Doctoral students and postdocs employed by the University of Basel are remunerated in accordance with the tariffs introduced on February 1, 2017, and are not affected by this measure.

Faculties will make savings using a range of measures for which they themselves are responsible. The faculties have specified their individual savings for the 2018–2021 performance period in their development and structure plans. The faculties are responsible for communicating these measures to their members in an appropriate manner.

Assistants who would like to know more about specific cost-saving measures at their faculty can contact their respective director: Faculty of Theology: Sabine Müller-Schneider; Faculty of Law: Daniel Hofer; Faculty of Medicine: Kaspar Traub; Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: Roberto Lazzari; Faculty of Science: Ruedi Singer; Faculty of Business and Economics: Sibylle Bösch; Faculty of Psychology: Jean-Jacques Jobin.

Item 3: avuba PhD & Postdoc Survey

At the meeting of the executive board on April 12, 2018, the avuba management decided to conduct a survey of teaching and research staff this year on behalf of avuba. The survey should meet all the scientific criteria required for quantitative research. The aim of this survey is to determine the level of satisfaction with their working conditions among doctoral researchers and postdocs at the University of Basel in order to propose suggestions for improvements if necessary.

A variety of methods were tested and in May 2018 the avuba management decided by circular resolution to adopt the following approach: A questionnaire would be compiled and subsequently implemented by Nathalie Schick Tanz (postdoc at the Faculty of Psychology) using the software SoSciSurvey under the direction of Patricia Eiche, head of avuba administration. The data would then be evaluated exclusively by avuba and a repeat survey (e.g. a year or so later) made possible with very little effort required.

The “avuba survey of teaching and research staff” project was submitted to the ethics committee at the Faculty of Psychology at the end of July 2018. By the end of August 2018, the ethics committee had approved the application to conduct the “avuba survey of teaching and research staff” subject to certain conditions being fulfilled. The main point of criticism was that the survey would have to be completely anonymous, i.e. it must not be possible to connect the survey responses at any time to specific individuals. Since avuba wanted to ensure that each assistant could complete the survey once only, a new solution needed to be found for the issue of “coded links”.

This new solution along with other changes to fulfill the conditions specified were submitted to the ethics committee at the beginning of September 2018 for approval.

As soon as the ethics committee has approved the proposed changes and confirmed that survey respondents would be guaranteed anonymity at all times, then the survey can be distributed. This is most likely to take place by the end of September 2018.

All individuals who were registered as members of avuba by the middle of April 2018 according to data supplied either by Student Services (immatriculated doctoral students) or Human Resources (postdocs in employment), will be sent a personal link to the survey that can only be used once. Assistants who were matriculated or employed at a later date will not be eligible to participate in the “avuba PhD & Postdoc Survey 2018”. Data from the survey will be summarized in a report to be published on the avuba website, most likely in January 2019. All avuba members will be sent a link to this report.

Item 4: skuba clinic – free legal advice

The avuba executive board decides to extend the collaboration with the skuba clinic legal service at the Faculty of Law for another year, i.e. until September 2019. The cost for this service is CHF 1,000 per semester. During this period, avuba members are entitled to seek free legal advice through this service. From the fall semester of 2019, avuba can renew its participation in the skuba clinic per mutual agreement. Approximately 15 avuba cases can be handled per semester on a “first come, first served” basis, ensuring that assistants and students enjoy the same priority in accessing the service. Legal advice services can also be rendered in English.

Item 5: avuba Happy Hours

The avuba executive board decides to reduce the half-yearly contributions for academic and non-academic projects from CHF 5,000 to CHF 3,000 in 2019 in order to co-finance the avuba Happy Hours with a contribution of CHF 4,000.

Item 6: Lunchtime meeting with politicians

At its meeting on January 9, 2018, the avuba executive board agreed the following: “In 2018, avuba plans to invite key representatives in charge of current finance policy and university developments to an event for a briefing on medium-term financial and political trends at the University of Basel.”

Since resources available until the end of 2018 will be used for the avuba survey of teaching and research staff, the event is postponed until next year (2019).

Item 7: actionuni position paper

actionuni, the association for teaching and research assistants at Swiss universities, of which avuba has been a member since 2013, has approved a position paper by majority vote at a meeting of delegates in Bern on June 7, 2018.

This position paper to “promote young academics at Swiss universities” contains demands on the following topics: diversification of career paths within the university and alternative careers, professional personnel management, a dual competency profile research/practice, transparency and career counselling, stronger departments, a research time minimum, family-compatible careers, and participation rights.

Some of these items only affect assistants at universities of applied science; various other demands have already been met at the University of Basel.

avuba will address items that are relevant for assistants at the University of Basel directly at its bilateral talks with the President’s Office.

The final version of the position paper will soon be available at [actionuni](#) in German, French, and English.

Item 8: Feedback from Group III on university processes

In the context of the accreditation process for the University of Basel in 2020/2021, avuba was asked to obtain feedback from Group III on selected central strategic processes. This included, for instance, procedures for evaluation and promotion, or the development and evaluation of examinations and teaching. In June 2018, avuba collected the assistants’ critical input both per email and at an avuba lunchtime meeting. Input from Group III representatives on university committees was added and the list was consolidated. Sophie Hersberger, representative of Group III on the Quality Committee, discussed this summary at a session with Oliver Binet, Director of Quality Development. In addition, avuba was able to personally deliver the paper to the President on September 10, 2018. Mrs. Schenker-Wicki thanks us for our input and will ensure that the concerns of Group III will be heard and addressed as required.

Item 9: Next avuba executive board meeting

The next meeting is expected to take place in January 2019.

Basel, September 19, 2018

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Christopher Klenk'.

Christopher Klenk

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P. Hofstetter'.

Philippe Hofstetter