

Minutes of the Executive Board Meeting held on 1 September 2020

Location: Virtual meeting via Zoom

Time: 12:15 – 1:30 pm

Present: Tizian Troxler, Patricia Hertel, Butrint Aliu, Ulrike Unterhofer, Nathalie Schicktanz, Ann-Kathrin Hess, Camila Plaza

Absent: Nesina Grütter, Eva Schnider

Minutes: Patricia Eiche

Agenda:

1. **Approval of the minutes of the executive board meeting held on 19 May 2020**
2. **avuba postdoc survey 2020**
3. **skuba clinic — free legal advice**
4. **avuba Happy Hours at Verso**
5. **Academic and non-academic projects during Covid-19**
6. **avuba film evening 2020**
7. **Remuneration of avuba general manager**
8. **Impact of Covid-19**
9. **Request for avuba to “support the petition to the Federal Assembly to establish a substantial number of stable positions for postdoctoral students”**
10. **Next avuba executive board meeting**

Item 1: Approval of the minutes of the executive board meeting held on 19 May 2020

The minutes of the executive board meeting held on 19 May 2020 are approved and thanks are expressed.

Item 2: avuba postdoc survey 2020

Good working and research conditions are important to us all at avuba! Since doctoral students — unlike postdocs — are to receive regular surveys from the university's Quality Development unit in the future, avuba is conducting its own survey of postdocs in 2020. The results will be used to highlight potential areas where action is needed as well as possible improvement measures. The questionnaire is expected to be sent out in November 2020. The results will be discussed with the President's Office and are expected to be published on the avuba website in March 2021.

Item 3: skuba clinic — free legal advice

Since fall semester 2016, avuba has made a financial contribution of CHF 1,000 per semester to the legal advice service (skuba clinic) of the Faculty of Law. This service allows assistants to obtain free advice on legal matters via <https://www.skuba.ch/rechtsberatung>. Last year, the skuba clinic received 25 requests from doctoral students and postdocs. Applicants seeking legal advice are referred to other suitable bodies outside of lecture periods or if their case is too complex or too urgent or cannot be dealt with due to capacity problems.

The avuba executive board decides to extend its collaboration with the skuba clinic for another year until September 2021. This will cost CHF 1,000 per semester. During this period, avuba members will be entitled to take advantage of this free legal advice service. avuba can extend its involvement in the skuba clinic again from fall semester 2021 by mutual agreement.

Item 4: Happy Hours at Verso

In accordance with the *Merkblatt zur Buchung von Lehrräumen der Universität Basel Herbstsemester 2020 Stand 5.8.2020* which provides information on the booking of rooms at the University of Basel for fall semester 2020, as updated on 5 August 2020, it is recommended that events be canceled in order to relieve pressure on internal operational resources and to protect staff in the various buildings. In addition, the room list showing the current number of seats per room (with reductions due to the pandemic) indicates “0” seats for Verso, and there is a ban on drinks receptions. As things currently stand, these guidelines apply until the end of the fall semester, or rather until 31 January 2021. As soon as it is possible to hold Happy Hours at Verso again, the avuba executive board will vote on whether avuba should potentially contribute to funding these events in the future.

Item 5: Academic and non-academic projects during Covid-19

In light of developments relating to Covid-19, the existing criteria for the co-financing of academic and non-academic projects by avuba have been supplemented with the following points as of 1 September 2020:

The applicant(s) is/are required:

- a) to comply fully with all applicable legal provisions aimed at tackling the spread of Covid-19, and in particular the guidelines of the Federal Council, the Federal Office of Public Health, the respective canton and the University of Basel, when it comes to planning, preparing for and carrying out the academic or non-academic project;
- b) to obtain any necessary approval from the relevant agency/authority in order to carry out the academic or non-academic project.

In project applications, applicant(s) shall warrant that requirements (a) and (b) will be complied with at all times and shall commit to indemnifying avuba or the University of Basel in full in the event of a failure to comply with these requirements.

Item 6: avuba film evening

The avuba executive board gives its approval for the holding of a film evening, taking into account the current measures to protect against Covid-19, at the Pathé Kino Basel in November or December 2020. Once a date is set, an invitation will be sent out to all avuba members.

Item 7: Remuneration of avuba general manager

So that the avuba executive board can make decisions regarding the remuneration of the avuba's general manager, an amendment will be required to the sentence in the bylaws that currently reads: "The Co-Presidium appoints members to the Administration and decides on the workload in consultation with the Board." A vote will be held on this change to the bylaws at the avuba General Meeting on 27 November 2020.

Item 8: Impact of Covid-19

Whereas the contract extensions for contracts that expire at the end of 2020 have served to cushion the short-term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is not yet possible to estimate its impact in the long term. avuba will continue to monitor developments and raise the issue, or rather raise awareness of the issue, in discussions with the university administration and the President's Office. This topic will be a standing agenda item for upcoming executive board meetings until further notice. Further steps will be taken as required.

Item 9: Request for avuba to "support the petition to the Federal Assembly to establish a substantial number of stable positions for postdoctoral students"

avuba has received a three-page petition from five postdocs at the University of Neuchâtel along with a request for feedback.

Although avuba advocates greater security and prospects for teaching and research assistants, the avuba executive board cannot lend its support to the document in its current form. The text appears to be poorly thought out and contains controversial formulations and insufficiently verifiable statements. The executive board takes the view that the petition could do more harm than good in the present form, and recommends that the approach and form of the petition be reconsidered.

Item 10: Next avuba executive board meeting

The next meeting is expected to be held in January 2021.

Basel, 4 September 2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Hess'.

Ann-Kathrin Hess

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Camila Plaza'.

Camila Plaza