

Minutes of the Executive Board Meeting held on 14 September 2021

Location: Virtual meeting via Zoom

Time: 12:15 – 1:30 pm

Present: Esther Maria Meyer, Tizian Troxler, Eva Schnider, Séveric Yersin, Butrint Aliu, Ulrike Unterhofer, Nathalie Schicktanz, Ali Darudi, Camila Plaza

Absent: Nesina Grütter

Minutes: Patricia Eiche

Agenda:

1. Approval of the minutes of the executive board meeting held on 28 May 2021
2. avuba social media channels
3. Working and research conditions during Covid-19
4. "Petition Academia": Survey results and next steps
5. SKUBA-Clinic — free legal advice
6. Gender-inclusive language
7. Next avuba executive board meeting

Item 1: Approval of the minutes of the executive board meeting held on 28 May 2021

The minutes of the executive board meeting held on 28 May 2021 are approved and thanks are expressed.

Item 2: avuba social media channels

A working group of the avuba executive board put together an internal social media concept, which was discussed by the whole executive board in August. Camila Plaza will launch avuba's Twitter and LinkedIn accounts in September 2021. The aim is to: a) increase the visibility of avuba's activities, b) allow us to share the latest information with assistants outside the quarterly avuba Newsletter, c) increase opportunities for assistants to network with one another, and if necessary also with alumni, d) expand and improve the exchange of information and opinions between avuba and its members.

Item 3: Working and research conditions during Covid-19

Not much has changed in the laboratories since the last Board Meeting, as the assistants who need to carry out laboratory work have been able to do so throughout the summer. The Social Sciences and Humanities departmental and faculty buildings are gradually filling up with people again thanks to restrictions being lifted and students no longer having to work from home, something many

assistants are very happy about. The avuba Board welcomes the introduction of mandatory Covid-19 certificates for all indoor areas, as this enables us to conduct more in-person classes again. Hybrid classes mean that students who are not vaccinated, have not been tested or want to save the travel time can also participate. That said, hybrid lessons are not necessarily the best option for formats requiring a lot of discussion. In cases of hardship, the university should suggest an appropriate solution in consultation with the individual student.

Item 4: “Petition Academia” – Survey results and next steps

On 26 August 2021, avuba emailed all 3,200 of its members the link to the “Petition Academia” survey. The survey was closed on 12 September 2021.

A total of 230 assistants, i.e. 7% of the 3,200, participated in the survey. 168 selected the response: “Yes, avuba should sign the petition”. This corresponds to 5.3% of all avuba members.

The avuba executive board has therefore decided the following:

- Due to the low response rate, the conclusions drawn from the survey cannot be applied to avuba’s entire membership.
- Due to the low absolute number of members in favour of the petition, avuba cannot sign as an association. Of course anyone is free to sign the [petition](#) as an individual.
- avuba will put a proposal to the President’s Board that additional posts be created between a postdoctoral research positions and professorships in order to relieve professors and assistants of some of their workload and, at the same time, to introduce a permanent job category for highly qualified research associates.
- avuba would like to strengthen dialogue with its members via social media channels.
- avuba will also once again bring to the attention of the President’s Board the fact that after completing their doctorates or postdoctoral research, the majority of assistants switch to a function outside academia. It would therefore seem appropriate for the university not only to train and support its assistants with a view to them pursuing an academic career, but also to prepare them for alternative career paths and support them in the transition to another area.

Item 5: SKUBA-Clinic — free legal advice

Since fall semester 2016, avuba has made a financial contribution to the legal advice service (SKUBA-Clinic). This service allows assistants to obtain free advice on legal matters via <https://www.skuba.ch/rechtsberatung>. Last year, the SKUBA-Clinic received 23 requests from doctoral students and postdocs. In the previous year, the clinic received 25 requests from Group III. 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.

Benjamin Sommerhalder, the member of teaching staff currently responsible for the SKUBA-Clinic, has informed us that advice is of course also available in English.

The avuba executive board decides to extend its collaboration with the SKUBA-Clinic for another year until September 2022. 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 2022 by mutual agreement.

Item 6: Gender-inclusive language

In the course of drawing up the avuba social media concept, the question arose as to the type of gender-inclusive language avuba should be using. In line with the recommendation by the Office for Diversity at the University of Basel to use gender-inclusive, nondiscriminatory and gender-neutral language, the avuba board proposes that in future all avuba texts in German use an asterisk to include all genders (e.g. *Professor*innen*), provided that the given term does not already exist in a gender-neutral form, as with *Doktorierende*, for instance.

Item 7: Next avuba executive board meeting

The next meeting is expected to be held in January 2022.

Basel, 27 September 2021



Tizian Troxler
avuba co-president



Camila Plaza
avuba co-president