

Minutes of the Board Meeting of 6 September 2023

Location: Kollegienhaus, meeting room 206

Time: 12:15 - 13:30

Present: Anna Viola Bleichenbacher, Galya Iseli, Johanna Fröhlich, Boris Ševarika, Laura Rindlisbacher, Ali Darudi, Elena Pauli, Fabio Carbone, Sven Kraus, Antonia Vogler, Amancaya Formica, Patricia Eiche

Absent: Vera Nina Looser, Séveric Yersin, Ulrike Unterhofer

Total: 12 present, thereof entitled to vote: 8

Minutes: Patricia Eiche

Agenda:

1. **Approval of the agenda of the board meeting of 6 September 2023**
2. **Election of the minutes taker and election of the vote counter**
3. **Approval of the minutes of 27 April 2023**
4. **Personnel**
 - a) **General Managers**
 - b) **Co-Presidium 2024**
5. **Finances**
 - a) **Internal financial control Q3**
 - b) **Budget proposals 2024**
 - c) **Tax status**
6. **avuba projects**
 - a) **List of completed projects**
 - b) **Current status of projects in progress**
 - c) **List of pending projects**
7. **Varia**
8. **avuba general meeting**
9. **Next avuba board meeting**

Agenda item 1: Approval of the agenda of the board meeting of 6 September 2023

The board meeting's agenda has been approved unanimously.

Agenda item 2: Election of the minutes taker and election of the vote counter

Patricia Eiche was unanimously elected as minutes taker. Amancaya Formica was unanimously elected as vote counter.

Agenda item 3: Approval of the minutes of 27 April 2023

The minutes of the board meeting of 27 April 2023 were approved unanimously.

Agenda item 4: a) General Managers, b) Co-Presidium 2024

a) General Managers

The avuba office was closed in July so that the General Managers could reduce their overtime. Amancaya Formica currently has no more overtime and is entitled to 9 days of holidays until the end of the year. Patricia Eiche was able to reduce her overtime by 30% and take two weeks of holidays. She is currently entitled to 3 weeks holidays and 4 weeks overtime compensation - converted to her contractual working (16.5/week), which corresponds to the 40% workload of her employment contract.

The Co-Presidium and General Managers will meet in mid-October to evaluate and plan current and future tasks as well as the prioritisation and distribution of work.

b) Co-Presidium

Sven Kraus will not stand for re-election at the election of the new Co-Presidium at the general meeting the year. Antonia Vogler will stand for election for a further year in office. The advertisement for the vacancy will be sent out by e-mail as part of the invitation to the ordinary avuba general meeting at the end of October.

Agenda item 5: Finances: a) Internal financial control Q3, b) Budget proposals 2024, c) Tax status

a) Internal financial control Q3

Esther Maria Meyer and Patricia Eiche checked avuba's finances on 21 August 2023 and found no budget exceedance, no imminent liquidity shortage, no imminent risk of excessive indebtedness and no other unplanned events with financial implications. Patricia Eiche's projection currently shows an expected income surplus of 10,000 Swiss francs - together with the profit carried forward from 2022, an annual profit of 25,000 Swiss francs is expected to result by the end of 2023.

b) Budget proposals 2024

The Co-Presidium together with the General Managers will draw up budget proposals for 2024 in mid-October. The proposals will (after the avuba board's approval) be published on the avuba website and sent to avuba members by e-mail at least 30 days before the general meeting, together with the invitation and definitive agenda.

c) Tax status

avuba submitted the questionnaire with all the relevant documents to the Basel-Stadt tax administration on time before the end of June 2023, so that the administration can check whether avuba is tax-exempt. avuba is still waiting for the decision from the tax administration.

Agenda item 6: avuba projects: a) List of completed projects, b) Current status of projects in progress, c) List of pending projects

a) List of completed projects

The following tasks have already been completed:

- The interfaces between avuba and HR have been clarified.

- For the first time, new avuba members were welcomed by avuba via e-mail in June. In the future, this informative e-mail will be sent to new members twice a year.
- The avuba website has been redesigned and is now more user-friendly and informative.
- Social media channels (Twitter & LinkedIn): Thanks to a social media plan, avuba now posts regularly. In addition, the number of followers on Twitter has tripled due to targeted friend requests.
- In September, avuba's newsletter will be sent out for the first time featuring a new, abbreviated and more professional look and, for resource reasons, exclusively in English.

b) Current status of projects in progress

- Participation: Olivier Binet, Head of Quality Development at the University of Basel, contacted avuba in June 2023 in the context of recommendations from the successfully completed institutional accreditation of the university. Currently, the involvement of all groups in the university committees, the knowledge transfer and the handling of confidential information by group representatives in the committees are figured out. Following the discussions, proposals will be drawn up and discussed in the Quality Commission and in the Rectorate. avuba currently drafts a paper on the "status quo", which will also contain optimisation potentials and improvement measures.
- Panel discussion: Assistants from the VPOD Mittelbau work group are organising an event on the topic of "The future of mid-level academia"? The event will take place on 19 September 2023 in lecture hall 116 at Kollegienhaus. Laura Rindlisbacher, doctoral student at the University of Basel as well as avuba board and VPOD member, will be part of the panel.
- Statement on the abolition of Doc.CH: At the last board meeting, the avuba board wanted avuba to complain in a letter to the editor that both Doc.CH (for the humanities and social sciences) and individual funds for other research areas (MD-PhD, Doc.MINT, Practice-to-Science and R'Equip) were abolished without any alternative and without prior consultation with stakeholders. The aim is to keep the discourse alive, since the corresponding funds are valuable for independent research and society. The letter to the editor was written in June and sent to Matthias Geering, Head of Communications at the University of Basel. He advised avuba to send the text directly to newspaper editors, as the University of Basel only has contacts to science editors; however, guest articles are handled by other departments. He also informed avuba that it could be that no newspaper would agree to publish the text, since its topic is only interesting for a small part of the population. avuba sent the text to both Basler Zeitung and Tagesanzeiger and has received no response.
- Guidelines: The avuba board agrees with the current status, i.e. the following avuba guidelines. These may be amended by the avuba board at any time.
 - As part of its representation of interests, avuba would like to advocate at the University of Basel that
 - the contractual workloads and the protected research time are adhered to;
 - the dependency on superiors is reduced by unbundling the personnel union "recruitment, supervision, evaluation";
 - assistants are prepared equally for an academic and non-academic career;

- permanent academic positions are established below the professorship level;
 - the academic career is compatible with family commitments;
 - high-quality research is promoted and assistants receive sufficient support in applying for funding;
 - good, fair and healthy working conditions prevail;
 - personal integrity is protected;
 - the co-determination of the assistants is guaranteed;
 - and assistants from abroad are integrated.
- Cost-neutral measures to improve the working conditions of assistants: At the next meeting with the Rectorate, avuba will discuss measures to ensure that the assistants' Protected Research Time (PRT) of 60% (see [Regulation for academic personnel](#) §24 paragraph 3 "At least 60% of the employment level must be available for their own research work throughout the entire period of employment") can be adhered to.
- Post-/Doctoral Forum: The second meeting took place on 7 June 2023. The following two topics have been presented and discussed:
 - Scientific integrity with a focus on co-authorship: It is important for assistants to know that the University of Basel has an [Regulation relating to academic integrity](#). In case of publications in which several people are involved, it is recommended to document at an early stage who contributed what and when to the publication. In case of problems or questions regarding authorship or other questions of scientific integrity, the responsible [contact persons](#) can be contacted.
 - Postdoctoral focus on third space:
 - The GRACE team has presented the status quo at the University of Basel. The term "third space" is defined both in academia and at the University of Basel as follows: "New professionals who situate themselves to be on a continuum between administrative and more academic positions, without their positions being able to be assigned to the traditional profiles of administrative and academic activities". Such positions exist, for example, in database development, quality management, the management and coordination of doctoral programmes or in university didactics. At University of Basel, the legal structures for permanent positions in research and teaching that are not qualification positions are already in place: See the [Regulation for academic personnel](#) §26 ff "University Lecturers" and [Regulation for academic personnel](#) §31 ff "Research Staff".
 - Assistants present the Mittelbaureform at the University of Basel and the University of Zurich as well as the situation in the UK and Germany.
 - It is noted that the term "third space" is used by definition for bodies that do not (no longer) conduct research.
 - The topic will be discussed further at the next Forum meeting. There will also be a report on the current status of the mid-level reform at the Faculty of Humanities and GRACE will provide figures on the age structure of professors by then.
 - The following topics for future meetings within the framework of the "Forum Post/Doctorate" remain noted:
 - Separation of the personnel union of supervision/employment for doctoral students
 - Transparency regarding funding pots and salary levels of the assistants

- Personal Integrity and Mental Health

The next meeting will be held in November 2023 and the following topics will be discussed:

- Permanent positions in the mid-level faculty
- Job descriptions and protected time
- Proposal to the Rectorate for the creation of additional positions below the professorship or in the respective departments or faculties: The avuba board would like to wait for the next meeting of the Post/Doctoral Forum and then write a proposal to the Rectorate. The aim is to obtain a concrete statement from the Rectorate on its position in this matter. Among other things any conditions for work and residence permits should be taken into account so as not to disadvantage international researchers from the start.
- Swiss-wide survey of mid-level teaching organisations regarding salary levels and semester fees: In spring, avuba drew up an initial questionnaire to send to all actionuni members in order to create a nationwide overview. Since the employment conditions are different at practically every university, i.e. cannot be compared 1:1, avuba asked actionuni whether they could possibly form a project team to continue to deal with the topic. actionuni does not have the resources for this at the moment. Boris Ševarika, a doctoral student at the Faculty of Science and avuba board member, made himself available to have a look at the topic. Perhaps a less structured and detailed overview could be created without a questionnaire. Patricia Eiche will send him all the documents and e-mails available on this topic.
- Swiss-wide Mental Health Survey: Patricia Eiche handed over the project management for this actionuni project to an actionuni board member at the end of August. She remains part of the project team which works on finalising a first version of the questionnaire. This will be sent to all actionuni member organisations in autumn for feedback on the questionnaire. It is planned that the actionuni board will approve the final questionnaire by November. The survey will be conducted in winter 2024 and the results will be analysed in spring 2024. The publication of the results is expected to take place in summer 2024.
- Communication concept: The avuba board approves the internal communication concept dated 28 August 2023. This documents avuba attitudes and processes that are currently implemented and lived by the Co-Presidium and the General Managers. The concept should be discussed whenever new Co-Presidents are elected or new employees join the team.

c) List of pending projects

The following is a list of tasks that could not yet be started due to resource constraints:

- A job description for the position of avuba Co-President should be written before the vacancy for the Co-Presidium 2024 is advertised.
- Writing a job description of the avuba general management;
- Preparation of a dossier that provides information on how avuba could act as an employer, what the financial consequences of the scenarios would be and whether the employment contracts, the statutes and/or the financial regulations would need to be adapted;
- Preparation of a dossier providing information on the financial implications of parenthood for assistants (per type of funding);
- Discussion on how to ensure that measures are taken at faculty level to examine the status quo in each faculty and make proposals to improve working and research conditions;

- avuba Postdoc Survey 2020: List of measures that the university has implemented for postdocs since then;
- Consider the longer-term financial planning of avuba (taking into account the consequences if the tax exemption were to lapse as a result);
- Clarification of avuba's legal independence from the university;
- Intensification of the exchange with the representations of Gr. III in cross-faculty committees;
- Participation of assistants in the academic self-government: drafting of avuba election regulations including the election procedure by avuba;
- Preparation of a 2-page information paper per faculty with the most important information for assistants and filing on the avuba website;
- Evaluation of the results of the doctoral surveys per faculty in collaboration with GRACE (in 2024).

Agenda item 7: Varia

The next avuba meeting with the Rectorate will take place on 18 September 2023. As always, the avuba board will be informed by e-mail about the most important issues discussed.

Agenda item 8: avuba general meeting

The next avuba general meeting will be held on 27 November 2023 at 6 pm in Lecture Hall 116 at Kollegienhaus. An e-mail will be sent to avuba members by the end of September at the latest, informing them that they can submit agenda requests by mid-October.

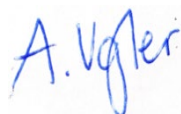
Agenda item 9: Next avuba board meeting

The next board meeting will take place in January 2024 with the new Co-Presidium. The dates for the second and third avuba board meetings should be fixed as soon as the two dates for the bilateral talks with the rectorate have been set. If possible, the board meetings should take place more than 10 days before these meetings, as the agenda must be sent to the Rectorate one week before the meeting takes place.

Basel, 12 September 2023



Sven Kraus
avuba Co-President



Antonia Vogler
avuba Co-President