

# Minutes of the Board meeting of January 22, 2024

**Location:** Kollegienhaus (main building), meeting room 206

**Time:** 12:15 - 13:30

**Present:** Esther Maria Meyer, Anna Viola Bleichenbacher, Vera Nina Looser, Galya Iseli, Johanna Fröhlich, Boris Ševarika, Laura Rindlisbacher, Raul Hochuli, Elena Pauli, Antonia Vogler, Lars Fluri, Amancaya Formica, Patricia Eiche

**Absent:** Jannik Aurel Di Gallo, Ulrike Unterhofer, Fabio Carbone

**Total:** 13 present, of which entitled to vote: 11

**Minutes:** Patricia Eiche

## Agenda items:

1. **Approval of the board meeting's agenda of January 22, 2024**
2. **Election of minutes taker and election of vote counter**
3. **Approval of the minutes of September 6, 2023**
4. **Finances**
  - a) **Internal financial control 2024**
  - b) **Tax status**
5. **Current status of ongoing avuba projects**
  - a) **Working conditions**
  - b) **Participation**
  - c) **Long-term financial planning and independence of avuba**
  - d) **Surveys**
6. **Varia**
7. **Next avuba board meeting in April 2024**

### **Agenda item 1: Approval of the board meeting's agenda of January 22, 2024**

The agenda of the Board meeting is approved unanimously.

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

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

### **Agenda item 3: Approval of the minutes of September 6, 2023**

The minutes of the board meeting of September 6, 2023 were approved unanimously.

**Agenda item 4: Finances, a) Internal financial control 2024, b) Tax status**a) Internal financial control 2024

Esther Maria Meyer will monitor avuba's finances in the first and second quarters with Patricia Eiche to check that there are no budget exceedences, no imminent liquidity shortages, no imminent over-indebtedness and no other irregularities with financial implications to be expected for the year. Raul Hochuli will take over the internal financial control from Esther Maria Meyer for Q3 and Q4.

b) Tax status

In September 2022, avuba received notification from the University of Basel's legal department that the "Assistierendenvereinigung der Universität Basel (avuba)" meets the requirements for tax exemption. The tax administration regularly checks whether the requirements are still met. For this reason, avuba had to submit the 2021/2022 questionnaire and various documents retroactively in summer 2023. Without a counter-report within one year of submitting the questionnaire in due time - i.e. by the end of June 2024 - the tax exemption continues. The tax exemption would have to be revoked by means of a declaratory ruling by the tax administration. Normally, tax exemptions are not revoked retroactively. If the tax administration has any questions during the examination of the 2021/2022 questionnaire, avuba would be contacted. avuba has currently fulfilled its duty to cooperate, i.e. the association will receive another questionnaire for the years 2023/2024 in 2025.

**Agenda item 5: Current status of ongoing avuba projects a) Working conditions, b) Participation, c) Long-term financial planning and independence of avuba, d) Surveys**a) Working conditions

- Mid-level staff reform and measures to improve working conditions and terms of employment:

There are two reasons why the President's Office of the University of Basel cannot support the planned reform of the mid-level faculty within the Faculty of Humanities. On the one hand, the University of Basel currently has a structural deficit of CHF 54 millions and is therefore not currently equipped with sufficient financial resources. On the other hand, the University would like to treat doctoral researchers and postdoctoral researchers of all faculties equally. It was therefore decided to launch a university-wide project led by the Vice President's Office for People & Culture. A decision on the project organization and the timing of implementation can only be made after discussions with the supporting cantons. Only then can it be known whether or not there will be money available for a reform of the mid-level staff. avuba will be involved at an early stage of the process.

As it is not to be expected that the University will implement a reform of the mid-level staff in the next few years, avuba would like to put together cost-neutral measures and discuss them with the President's Office so that certain employment and working conditions can be improved, even without a reform. Initial ideas will be discussed in the upcoming avuba board meeting on April 25, 2024.

- Assistants' salaries at Swiss universities:

Boris Ševarika, doctoral student; PhD researcher at the Faculty of Science, has compared the salaries of doctoral researchers at various Swiss universities. They are very similar and amount to around CHF 49,000 in the first year. However, EPFL pays more than the other higher education institutions at the lowest doctorate rate (EPFL, 100% workload, Faculty of Science, doctorate 1st year = CHF 54,550). Furthermore, ETH has compensated for inflation

at 5.1% as of 1.1.2024, compared to 2% in Basel. Doctoral researchers with very low incomes are particularly disproportionately affected by an increase in fixed costs (rent, health insurance, etc.). Therefore, the topic of salaries will also be added to the list of "Measures to improve working and terms of employment".

- Two-page information paper per faculty for new assistants:  
avuba would like to provide new assistants with important information per faculty. These documents will be uploaded to the avuba website and updated once a year. References to these information sheets will be made in the monthly welcome e-mail for new avuba members. Lars Fluri has already prepared an information sheet for the Faculty of Business and Economics. avuba board members are asked to create a similar document for their respective faculties by mid-March.

b) Participation

- Various measures:  
Together with Olivier Binet, head of Quality Development, avuba has collected various measures to improve the participation of assistants within the University. The paper is currently being discussed in the President's Office. Afterwards, avuba will be able to provide information on the resolutions and measures to be implemented.
- Assistant representative on the library committee:  
The current assistant representative on this committee will be stepping down. The information about the vacancy has therefore been sent to all assistants. As more than one person has applied for this position, Lars Fluri will obtain further information from the applicants so that the avuba board can then vote somebody into office.
- Intensifying the exchange with [assistants' representatives in cross-faculty committees](#):  
The avuba co-presidium and the avuba general managers already meet regularly with the Senate's assistant representatives, as these people are ex-officio members of the avuba board. In addition, avuba would like to meet once a semester over lunch with the assistants' representatives on Senate and President's board committees to exchange ideas.
- Intensifying the exchange with assistants' representatives in the faculty boards and faculty assemblies:  
Once a year, avuba updates the names of the representatives on the [faculty boards](#) and [faculty assemblies](#). avuba would like to write to this group of people once a semester and ask if they have any input for avuba.

c) Long-term financial planning and independence of avuba

The avuba co-presidium, together with the avuba general managers, will compile the most important key points on this matter for the next avuba board meeting, in order for the board to decide on how to proceed.

d) Surveys

- Short doctoral researcher survey:  
The President's Office has asked avuba to conduct a short survey before the next bilateral meeting in May 2024 to find out whether the results of the past doctoral researchers surveys reflected reality. This survey will presumably be conducted in March.

- Switzerland-wide Mental Health Survey:  
The University of Zurich's ethics committee has approved the questionnaire. The survey is currently being implemented and will be distributed at the various Swiss higher education institutions in 2024. avuba expects to forward the link to the survey to the approximately 3,200 avuba members by June 2024.

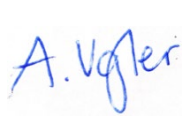
#### **Agenda item 6: Varia**

- Various assistants felt that the speech given by the Master of the Academic Guild at the Dies academicus on November 24, 2023 was discriminatory. As a result, avuba has sent an email to the President's Office and a letter to the Master of the Academic Guild asking them to deliver the [Code of Conduct](#) to the next speaker in advance in order to prevent a similar incident from happening again.
- Currently, all avuba board members are mandated to have read access to all electronic avuba documents stored on R:\. As avuba cannot assign these authorizations independently and most avuba board members only want access to selected documents, Antonia Vogler will clarify whether a shared space on SWITCH or on Biozentrum-Wiki would make more sense.

#### **Agenda item 7: Next avuba board meeting**

The next board meeting will take place on April 25, 2024.

Basel, January 29, 2024



Antonia Vogler  
avuba Co-President



Lars Fluri  
avuba co-president