

Minutes of the board meeting of April 25, 2024

Location: Kollegienhaus (main building), meeting room 206

Time: 12:15 - 13:45

Present: Esther Maria Meyer, Anna Viola Bleichenbacher, Meret Cajacob, Vera Nina Looser, Laura Rindlisbacher, Raul Hochuli, Fabio Carbone, Sophie Reckels, Lars Fluri, Amancaya Formica, Patricia Eiche

Absent: Galya Iseli, Johanna Fröhlich, Sepideh Alassi, Boris Ševarika, Ulrike Unterhofer, Antonia Vogler

Total: 11 present, of which entitled to vote: 9

Minutes: Patricia Eiche

Agenda items:

1. Approval of the board meeting's agenda on April 25, 2024
2. Election of minutes taker and vote counter
3. Approval of the minutes of January 22, 2024
4. Finances
 - a) Annual report 2023 and current situation
 - b) Long-term financial planning and independence of avuba
5. Current status of ongoing avuba activities
 - a) Working conditions
 - b) Participation
 - c) Swiss-wide Mental Health Survey 2024
6. Varia
7. Next avuba board meeting

Agenda item 1: Approval of the board meeting's agenda on April 25, 2024

The agenda of the Board meeting is approved unanimously.

Agenda item 2: Election of minutes taker and 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 January 22, 2024

The minutes of the board meeting of January 22, 2024 were approved unanimously.

Agenda item 4: Finances, a) Annual report 2023 and current situation, b) Long-term financial planning and independence of avuba

a) Annual report 2023 and current situation

On March 22, 2024, Esther Maria Meyer and Anna Viola Bleichenbacher, together with Patricia Eiche, carried out the internal avuba financial audit Q1. The two avuba board members were able to confirm that there were no signs of budget exceedences, imminent liquidity shortages, imminent over-indebtedness or other irregularities with financial implications for avuba.

According to the [2023 avuba annual report](#) and as of 1.1.2024, avuba's accumulated reserves amounted to CHF 49,376. According to the current performance agreement with the President's Office and the information provided by the Head of Controlling & Reporting, the University will reduce the financial contribution for 2025 if the reserves exceed CHF 50,000.

According to Patricia Eiche's current calculations, i.e. with expenditures in accordance with the budget approved by the avuba General Meeting on November 27, 2023, reserves of around CHF 60,000 could be expected as of December 31, 2024.

According to avuba's bylaws, the General Meeting is responsible for approving the budget. The avuba board has therefore decided that a virtual extraordinary General Meeting should be convened to decide on the use of the additional funds (CHF 12,000) to be spent in 2024. The avuba members will be able to propose ideas in advance.

b) Long-term financial planning and independence of avuba

In recent years, avuba has repeatedly been confronted with the dissatisfaction of some assistants. Namely about the fact that avuba - although it is an independent association – cannot take more drastic measures to improve terms of employment, due to its financial dependence on the University. It would theoretically be possible to change the financial and legal basis of avuba (bylaws and performance agreement with the President's Office) and completely realign avuba.

In contrast to the VPOD (Swiss Association of Public Service Employees, i.e. a union for public service employees), avuba cannot currently organize a strike or protest action, for example, without risking the University terminating the performance agreement and discontinuing their services for avuba.

The current structure has the following advantages:

- avuba receives the following financial benefits from the University:
 - Payment of an annual fixed amount of CHF 75,000
 - avuba office at Petersgraben 45
 - Bookkeeping and account management for avuba by the Department of Finances
 - Personnel administration incl. payroll accounting for avuba by Human Resources
 - Collection of avuba membership fees
 - Standard IT services
- Due to avuba's recognition as an official representative of assistants and young academics within the University and towards authorities and the public, avuba also receives the following non-material benefits from the University:
 - Regular exchange with the rectorate (currently at least two bilateral meetings per year)
 - Informing avuba about and involving avuba in university projects that affect group III (doctoral researchers and postdocs)
 - Support for avuba from internal university departments (e.g. GRACE)

If avuba were completely independent (such as VPOD for example), it would lose the advantages mentioned above.

As already explained under point 4.a), avuba currently has sufficient finances, i.e. it does not need to raise additional funds in order to continue the administration of the association and its existing services.

The avuba board believes that a university-recognized assistants' representative body can benefit from constructive collaboration with the rectorate. This intangible value is important to improve employment and working conditions of assistants. The avuba board is therefore unanimously in favor of leaving the current structure as it is and will propose to the next General Meeting that the avuba membership fee of CHF 20 per semester remains unchanged.

Agenda item 5: Current status of ongoing avuba activities a) Working conditions, b) Participation, c) Swiss-wide Mental Health Survey 2024

a) Working conditions

The avuba board is convinced that individual measures can improve the research and working conditions of (post-)doctoral researchers even without a major mid-level staff reform.

Therefore, the avuba board agrees on a list of proposed measures that will be discussed with the rectorate in the upcoming meeting. As cost-neutral measures have a greater chance of being implemented, the majority of the list contains proposals that will not lead to higher expenditures for the University. The list is divided into short-term, medium-term and long-term measures. avuba will provide information on the next steps.

b) Participation

- The rectorate has not yet been able to discuss the document on participation. avuba is expected to receive feedback on the proposed measures to improve the participation of (post-)doctoral researchers in May.
- Representation of assistants in the diversity committee:
The current assistant representative on this senate committee will be stepping down. The vacancy will therefore be advertised soon. If more than one person applies for this position, the avuba board will vote on who will fill in the position.

c) Swiss-wide Mental Health Survey 2024

The link to the "Swiss-wide Mental Health Survey among mid-level staff 2024" (SWiMS) by actionuni will be sent to all avuba members during the European Mental Health Awareness Week from May 13 - 19, 2024. The aim of the survey is to identify problems and opportunities for improvement in terms of working conditions and mental health locally and nationally. avuba is expected to receive a report with specific results for the University of Basel in early 2025 and will discuss them with the rectorate in 2025.

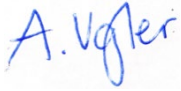
Agenda item 6: Varia

- Various assistants felt that the speech given by the Master of the Academic Guild at the Dies academicus on November 24, 2023 was discriminatory. The avuba co-presidium therefore met with Thomas Bachmann in person in March 2024 and requested that the next speaker receives the University of Basel's [Code of Conduct](#) in advance to prevent a similar incident from happening again.

Agenda item 7: Next avuba board meeting

The next board meeting will take place in August or September 2024.

Basel, May 6, 2024



Antonia Vogler
avuba co-president



Lars Fluri
avuba co-president