

Minutes of the Executive Board meeting on 18 September 2025

Location: Kollegienhaus, meeting room 206
Time: 12:15 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.

Present: Kathrin Knapp, Anna Sophia Roth, Felix André Erb, Micha Bigler, Nadia Bellardi, Raul Hochuli, Carlo Tschopp, Alexander Wiese, Tomás Sousa, Amancaya Formica, Patricia Eiche

Absent: Anita Dirnberger, Anna Viola Bleichenbacher, Sepideh Alassi, Boris Ševarika, Sergej Maul, Fabio Carbone, Antonia Vogler

Total: 11 present, of whom 8 were eligible to vote

Minutes: Patricia Eiche

Agenda items:

1. Approval of the agenda for the board meeting on 18 September 2025
2. Election of the minute-taker and election of the vote counter
3. Approval of the minutes of the last board meeting on 2 June 2025
4. Personnel
5. Finances
 - a) Budget and projections for 2025
 - b) Budget proposals for 2026 for the attention of the general meeting
 - c) Free legal advice SKUBA Clinic
6. Current status of ongoing avuba activities
 - a) Reform of employment and working conditions for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers
 - b) Abuse of power / sexual harassment
 - c) Anti-austerity measures
 - d) Swiss-wide mental health survey
 - e) Participation in University's self-governance
7. Miscellaneous
8. Next avuba board meeting

Agenda item 1: Approval of the agenda for the board meeting on 18 September 2025

The agenda for the board meeting is unanimously approved.

Agenda item 2: Election of the minute-taker and vote counter

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

Agenda item 3: Approval of the minutes of the last board meeting on 2 June 2025

The minutes of the board meeting held on 2 June 2025 are unanimously approved.

Agenda item 4: Personnel

The avuba general managers were able to reduce their overtime over the summer and both currently still have 15 days of holiday credit remaining until the end of 2025. After the summer, Patricia Eiche's involvement in projects such as the publication of nationwide results on mental health, which will be released this autumn, has again led to the accumulation of some overtime hours. As experience shows, more work arises during the lecture period, which makes it difficult to take all holiday and overtime credits by the end of 2025. These will, however, be compensated at the beginning of 2026 at the latest without any cost to avuba.

Agenda item 5: Finances, a) Budget and projection for 2025, b) Budget proposals for 2026 for the attention of the general meeting, c) Free legal advice from SKUBA Clinic

a) Budget and projection for 2025

- The avuba General Meeting on 2 December 2024 approved a budget that includes, among other things, two items of CHF 10,000, each for potential expenses. This authorised the avuba board to approve expenditure in 2025 for fees, i.e. for persons supporting ongoing operational activities of the avuba co-presidium and the avuba management on an hourly wage basis, as well as for projects to support assistants who are victims of abuse of power. However, the approval of these items for 2025 does not mean that the corresponding funds will necessarily be used; the Executive Board will decide on their actual use by majority vote in each case. The purpose of this open budget option was to be able to make any necessary expenditures without the need of an extraordinary general meeting in 2025.
- Neither of the two budget items have been used to date and are not expected to be used by the end of 2025. This amounts to a total of CHF 20,000 in costs that will most likely not be spent in 2025.
- Non-utilisation of funds for "honoraria": The operational team, consisting of the avuba Co-Presidium and the avuba Co-General Managers, was able to complete the tasks, so no additional staff had to be hired for projects. Although some projects involved substantial work, hiring someone was neither an efficient nor a realistic option, as these projects had already been ongoing for many months and required extensive background knowledge that could not be quickly transferred through short-term training.
- Non-use of funds for "supporting assistants affected by abuse of power": Tomás Sousa explains that this year, avuba has focused on initiating possible structural improvements or central services to be financed by the university. He also emphasized that avuba considers it more valuable to invest in fundamental structural changes rather than spending funds on workshops and events. The university had already initiated an initial measure in the summer (see also agenda item 6b). avuba expects further initiatives to follow shortly. The avuba board therefore wants to wait and see the impact of these measures before deciding which gaps should specifically be addressed by avuba projects.
- avuba has also clarified the following: Anyone could pay individually for a legal expenses insurance. This is offered by various insurance companies in Switzerland and usually covers areas of law such as private law, labour law and traffic law. The cost for an individual is

between approximately CHF 140 to CHF 200 per year, depending on the scope of cover and the provider. Such insurance covers legal and court costs, providing financial security in the event of legal disputes. Due to the high costs, it is therefore not feasible for avuba to cover them for its approximately 3'200 members.

- The expected avuba annual result as of 31 December 2025 is therefore not likely to be a deficit of CHF 17,500, but rather a positive result of around CHF 3,000.

b) Budget proposals for 2026 for the attention of the general meeting

As every year, various budget proposals for the following year will be presented to the avuba general meeting on 24 November 2025, which the members present can then vote on. The proposals will be approved in advance by the avuba board.

c) Free legal advice from SKUBA Clinic

The budget for 2025 approved by the General Meeting on 2 December 2024 already included an amount to continue providing free legal advice for assistants through the SKUBA Clinic. The avuba board has therefore decided today to extend the formal expenditure of CHF 2,000 for another year until September 2026. This enables the assistants to make further use of the free legal advice for another year. The assistants currently responsible for the SKUBA Clinic at the Faculty of Law have noted that in recent years, there has been a decline not only in enquiries from assistants, but also from students. One of the reasons might be that people nowadays are increasingly turning to AI services such as ChatGPT or Perplexity for legal information. Additionally, many may not even be aware of the legal advice service, which limits its reach and use. Additionally, the avuba board also agrees that the current name is confusing, as it does not make clear that the service is also intended for avuba members. It was further noted that this free service needs to be better promoted among avuba members. avuba will contact francesco.borner@unibas.ch and update the relevant avuba website "[Free legal advice](#)" to include the following services, which are also free of charge for assistants:

- <https://opferhilfe-beiderbasel.ch/en/> Victims of violent crime are entitled to free advice, special rights in criminal proceedings and, under certain conditions, financial support.
- <https://www.bs.ch/gerichte-judikative/zivilgericht/rechtsauskunft> (website in German only) for people living in Basel-Stadt

Agenda item 6: Current status of ongoing avuba activities: a) Reform of employment and working conditions for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers, b) Abuse of power / sexual harassment, c) Anti-austerity measures, d) Swiss-wide Mental Health Survey, e) Participation in University's self-governance

a) Reform of employment and working conditions for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers

Patricia Zweifel, coordinator of this project, joins to discuss this agenda item. She explains what has been happening in the project over the last few months and what the next steps are. The project is still in its initial phase, during which possible measures that can be implemented within the existing budget are collected and evaluated. Between autumn 2024 and spring 2025, avuba has been able to provide Patricia Zweifel with input on possible measures to improve the employment and working conditions of employed assistants. Since spring 2025, the list of these proposed measures has been referred to as an overview with the German name "Auslegeordnung".

Since then, the overview (Auslegeordnung) has been discussed in various committees (in June in the President's Conference and in the Research Committee, and in September in the Doctoral Committee).

The paper will return to the Rectorate in October before being put out for public consultation in November. During this phase, which is expected to last until mid-January 2026, all stakeholders will have the opportunity to submit feedback on the overview via an online form during the autumn semester of 2025. Key stakeholders such as avuba, faculties and departments, as well as the social partners VPOD/BAV, will be actively invited to comment. However, individuals are also welcome to fill out the form and submit their comments. The feedback will be evaluated at the beginning of next year and, on this basis, a consolidated catalogue of measures will be submitted to the Rectorate for decision-making. The proposals which receive support, offer clear added value and are feasible will be retained. The plan is for the responsible bodies to implement the measures decided upon from spring 2026 onwards. Depending on the final decision of the parliaments in the course of autumn 2025, a second phase of the reform could be possible, in which measures with financial implications could also be discussed. The amount of any available funds is currently still unknown.

The next public [avuba lunchtime meeting on the "Reform of employment and working conditions of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers"](#) will take place on 10 November 2025. avuba members will receive the invitation by email.

b) Abuse of power / sexual harassment

Starting in autumn 2025, the University of Basel will introduce a mandatory online training, which will be available in German and English and has been adapted to the university learning and working environment by the Personal Integrity Office. Employees in groups I-IV must complete the course and answer 80% of the questions correctly. Students can participate voluntarily. The training covers how to deal with and prevent sexual harassment; it also raises awareness of abuse of power in this context. The introduction will take place after discussions with the Vice-Rector for People & Culture in the autumn semester of 2025 and is also in line with the wishes of avuba and skuba. Both group representatives were able to test the training in August 2025 and provide feedback on its content.

c) Anti-austerity measures

On 1 October, a day of action will be held against planned financial cuts of the Federal Council's of CHF 460 million to universities, universities of applied sciences, ETH and funding institutions (SNSF) from 2026 onwards. If Parliament approves of this, it would have the following consequences:

- 1,500 SNF-funded researchers and 500 projects will be lost
- More job insecurity for assistants and higher tuition fees for students
- A decline in quality of teaching, research and student support
- Loss of Switzerland's innovative strength and reputation

The following events will therefore take place on the day of action on 1 October 2025:

- In Basel, an [information event](#) organised by [avuba](#), [skuba](#) and [dozuba](#) will take place from 12:15 to 13:15 at the auditorium, followed by a pizza lunch.
- Also in Basel, the [VPOD rally](#) will gather at 12.30 p.m. at the main entrance of the Kollegienhaus under the slogan "Relief instead of austerity".
- In Bern, the [national demonstration](#) against these austerity measures will take place at 5 p.m. on the Bundesplatz.

You can take action today:

- Sign the petition at bezahlbar-studieren.ch
- Be part of the movement: Include information about the day of action on 1 October against the austerity measures in your lecture slides (perhaps as a final slide – here is a suggestion in [German and English](#))
- Stay informed: avuba on [LinkedIn](#), avuba on [X](#) or skuba on Instagram
- Spread the message: #SaveSwissResearch #SaveSwissTeaching ([flyer](#))

d) Swiss-wide Mental Health Survey

- The Swiss-wide Mental Health Survey (SWiMS) 2024 examines the mental health and well-being of doctoral researchers, postdocs and other mid-level academic staff in Switzerland. A total of 2,518 people from 13 universities in Switzerland took part in the survey, meaning that the results are not representative.
- [actionuni](#), which initiated and conducted the survey, is expected to publish the "National Report" in November and therefore asks the local mid-level staff organizations to also publish their "Institutional Reports" (such as the one from the University of Basel) only then.
- The avuba will receive the report with the Basel figures at the end of September and will write an executive summary in October.
- avuba members will receive a link to the results as soon as possible.
- As the survey team working on behalf of actionuni does not currently have the resources to prepare the data for open access, it is highly unlikely that the anonymised raw data will be published.
- Please send any questions regarding the survey to: survey@actionuni.ch

e) Participation in University's self-governance

- In order to improve the involvement of assistants' and students' participation in the University's self-governance, the General Secretariat was asked to hold discussions with these groups and compile proposals to strengthen participation, taking into account the existing [performance agreements of avuba](#) and skuba. The paper with the recommendations was discussed by the Quality Committee on 18 September 2025. avuba is awaiting further notification and will then implement those measures if this falls within its area of responsibility.
- The current assistant representative on the University of Basel's [Senate Committee](#), Anna Viola Bleichenbacher, will step down at the end of the year. The avuba Executive Board has nominated Micha Bigler, Senate member of Group III of the Faculty of Medicine, as her successor. Micha Bigler's election will take place at the Senate meeting on 18 December 2025.

Agenda item 7: Miscellaneous

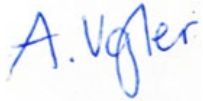
The two agenda items "Brands for Students" and "Price for courses at the University of Basel Language Centre for postdoctoral researchers" could not be dealt with due to time constraints and will therefore be postponed to the next board meeting.

Tomás Sousa asks all board members to attend the upcoming [avuba general meeting on 24 November 2025](#).

Agenda item 8: Next avuba board meeting

The next board meeting will be held with the newly elected avuba Co-Presidents for 2026 at the beginning of 2026.

Basel, 26 September 2025



Antonia Vogler
avuba Co-President



Tomás Sousa
avuba Co-President