



Pioneers: University College

Freiburg Sends Off First Graduating

Class | Manager: Ralf Dieter Runs a

Global Company | UNESCO Director:

Mechtild Rössler Protects Our Cultural

Heritage | Computer Scientist: Wolfram

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2017

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Ralf Dieter: Chief Executive of Dürr AG



Mechtild Rössler: Earth scientist with an international mission

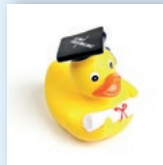


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Dear Alumni,

Team spirit, visionary networks, and a culture of cooperation are among the University of Freiburg's special strengths, both within the university and together with our partner institutions on the Upper Rhine. These qualities enable us to find scientific solutions for the challenges of the present and the future beyond the bounds of individual disciplines – with research and teaching as the driving forces. It is therefore my firm conviction that the successful trinational partnership we are building up as one of the world's leading research universities will be the key to our success in the upcoming Excellence competition.

We have made a lot of progress toward realizing this goal in the past months. The partner universities from Freiburg, Basel, Mulhouse, Strasbourg, and Karlsruhe opened the European Campus in May 2016. We now form a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation, which considerably enhances our international visibility and attractiveness. The "Sustainability Center Freiburg," initiated jointly in 2015 by the University of Freiburg and Freiburg's five Fraunhofer institutes, is developing new technologies and solutions with industry partners. Furthermore, we are also closely involved in a number of groundbreaking joint projects with our seven neighboring higher education institutions in South Baden.

Other important milestones along our path into the future are the strategic realignment of the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS) to serve as a platform for developing new research fields and the University College Freiburg (UCF), which offers Germany's only bachelor's program in liberal arts and sciences and focuses on research-oriented teaching. I invite you to learn more about the UCF, our university's teaching and learning lab, in the cover story of this issue.

Enjoy reading the magazine – and stay in contact!

Sincerely,

Prof. Dr. Hans-Jochen Schiewer
Rector of the University of Freiburg

CONTENTS

Cover Story



Ursula Glunk
and Paul Sterzel

First Graduates at University College Freiburg	4
Survey: Study Different	7
Hans-Joachim Gehrke Maintains International Relations	8

Alumni Network



Caroll H. Neubauer

The UCF's North America Campaign	10
Caroll H. Neubauer Supports an Innovative Path	11
Daniel Dahna: Studying as a Refugee	12
More Influence for Alumni Clubs	13
Alumni Freiburg Now for Students Too	13
Mechtild Rössler Protects the World Heritage	14
Tales from the Cafeteria: Dirk Schumacher	15
Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard Supports Female Scientists	16
Between the Lines: Farina de Waard	17
Historical Greats: Gregor Reisch	17
Alumni Answer: Full of Suspense	18
Ralf Dieter Runs a Global Company	20
My Course Certificate: Bärbel Schäfer	21

University News



Ursula Wittwer-Backofen

Wolfram Burgard Makes Robots Cleverer	22
My Tweet: Daniel Leese	23
Continuing Education: Business Ethics	23
Mike Schwörer Attracts Students to Freiburg	24
Sabine Wieland-Poscher: Planning Buildings	25
Ursula Wittwer-Backofen: Promoting Health	26
My Start-Up: Geospin	27
A Look Back: Collegiate Building III	27
Campus Bulletin	28

City Life



Yvonne Faller

Yvonne Faller Maintains the Freiburg Minster	30
New City Hall in Stühlinger	31
Freiburg Gets a New Center	31
Pictures: University Objects in a New Context	32



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE FREIBURG

A Bright Future

An innovative bachelor's program at the University of Freiburg has sent off its first graduating class.

The sky over Freiburg is a radiant blue on this beautiful Saturday in October. Standing at the fence around the building site in front of Collegiate Building I (KG I), one hears the sound of stamping feet, cheering, and repeated rounds of sustained applause issuing from lecture hall 1010. The people inside are in good spirits, and with good reason: The University College Freiburg (UCF) is sending off the very first 50 graduates of its innovative bachelor's program Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) into a bright future.

It was a day marked by joy and relief – not just for the graduates beaming at the camera with their diplomas for the photographer, but also for the educators at the UCF who designed the degree program. They no longer need to worry about whether it will qualify graduates for master's programs. The students who left the UCF in fall 2016 with the degree in their pocket hardly had any problems at all getting accepted into the graduate program of their choice. The universities they will be studying at include first-class institutions like

the University of Oxford in Great Britain, Pennsylvania State University in the USA, and the Humboldt University of Berlin.

A New Educational Model

In her office with a view of a peaceful courtyard on the first floor of the Old University, the academic director of the UCF, Dr. Ursula Glunk, continues the list of prestigious universities her former students will be studying at and also names the various academic fields they will be engaged in. The social scientist joined the UCF at the end of 2015 and is in charge of operations at the college together with the managing director, Paul Sterzel, who has been involved in the project since its inception. The relief is written all over Sterzel's face too: "We didn't know until now how our graduates would be received by other institutions," he says.

The doubts were justified, because the UCF has sent an entirely new kind of graduate into the world. The first 50 students to earn a degree from the



The first 50 graduates of the University College Freiburg's Bachelor of Liberal Arts and Sciences degree program show off their diplomas. Photo: Jörg Blum

UCF were testing out an educational model that had not yet been offered in this form in Germany. Ursula Glunk names the main points that set the new course of study apart from traditional bachelor's programs: It is designed to be completed in four rather than three years – “but the students also have to earn 240 rather than 180 ECTS credits. That's 1800 more hours of work than are required for a three-year program.” The UCF offers four major fields. All of them are interdisciplinary and require that the students treat their topics from the perspective of several disciplines. The main difference, however, is that “questions or problems serve as the starting point for learning,” stresses Glunk. “This means that the students need to acquire their knowledge on their own. It is not simply provided to them. Finally, what is also important is the international dimension, which we emphasize by making English the language of instruction.”

“Core Knowledge” in the First Year

The tripartite curriculum begins with a structured first year of study focusing primarily on the philosophy of science and scientific methods. In addition, the students have to learn to write academic texts in an English that meets the standards of the Anglo-Saxon world. This “core knowledge” is required of all students enrolled in the program. Non-German-speakers – around one-third of the LAS students – also have to take German lessons to achieve a level of proficiency that is sufficient for

communicating in typical everyday situations. This ensures that the college is not cut off from its German-speaking surroundings.

“The first year involves a great adjustment for many of the students,” Sterzel admits. This is also the phase in which the dropout rate is highest. However, only around 20 percent of the students have dropped out of the program so far, most of them before the second year. Thus, the 80 percent of students per class who succeed in completing the first year go on to select one of the broad interdisciplinary major fields. There are four majors to choose from: two with a natural sciences focus, one with a social sciences and economics focus, and one with a humanities focus (see info box on page 9). Students also take electives as a complement to the required courses in their major. They may be chosen from the other majors or from the broad course offerings of the university.

The breadth of the curriculum provides the students with an overview of many different fields of knowledge, something a course of study in a specific field cannot hope to match. The freedom the students enjoy under this model to put together their own bachelor's program ensures that “no two paths to the degree are the same,” says Ursula Glunk. This is precisely what the LAS students appreciate about the program. Some of them find “their” major only after taking a detour. For example, Veronika Vazhnik first chose earth and envi-



Veronika Vazhnik is going on to earn her PhD in the USA.

Photo: private



Vahid Asimi is studying molecular medicine at Charité – University Medicine Berlin.

Photo: Patrick Seeger



Academic Director Ursula Glunk and Managing Director Paul Sterzel are in charge of running the University College Freiburg. Photo: Klaus Polkowski

ronmental sciences as her major, before switching to life sciences, only to return to her original choice a month later. Today she says: "Earth and environmental sciences have been a part of me ever since." The young Belarusian is now working toward a PhD in biorenewable systems at Pennsylvania State University, USA.

Direct Qualification for PhD Programs

Vahid Asimi from Bosnia and Herzegovina, by contrast, knew he wanted to major in life sciences from the start, yet he still considers the interdisciplinary course offerings to be one of the most fascinating things about the UCF model: "You can learn something about social psychology and linguistics and then something about biotechnology, international law, or ecology, all in the same year. Of course we can't delve as deeply into biology as a biology student can, but we receive a much more comprehensive picture of society and the problems confronting us." Asimi was one of only 20 applicants out of 600 to be accepted to a master's program in molecular medicine at Charité – University Medicine Berlin last fall. He is only half joking when he refers to the degree program he completed in Freiburg as "an excellent education for future politicians and decision-makers."

The future looks bright for the first 50 LAS graduates: Around one-half of them were accepted into master's programs. Two even qualified directly for

PhD programs, which is very difficult to do in Germany. Not too difficult for Julia Wertheim, who changed her major twice before deciding on life sciences and has now begun a PhD program in cognitive neurosciences in Freiburg.

Other students from the first graduating class opted to discover the world of work at companies, organizations, or think tanks. Lea Nienhoff, who had spent two semesters in Berlin studying theater studies and cultural anthropology before completing the LAS program with a major in culture and history, was hired by Theater Freiburg as an assistant producer directly after earning her bachelor's degree. Now she aims to gain work experience before pursuing a master's in dramaturgy.

Emphasis on Student Initiatives

The organizers of the LAS program place great emphasis on student initiatives and projects, whether as part of the program or as an extracurricular activity, because they contribute to personality development. Clara Gerstner, who decided to complete the LAS program as a life sciences major in order to combine psychology with biology, developed a model for measuring the social and analytical competence of children and youths in the second year of the degree program. The 22-year-old is now teaching biology and physics at an American high school and working toward her master's at John Hopkins University. Her long-term goal is to "do my part to improve our school system and develop a creative and effective learning environment for young people." Her classmate Matthias Haslberger, a governance major, got involved in the Global Order Project, a joint student initiative with the University College Maastricht (UCM) in the Netherlands, and also co-organized a two-day international expert conference on migration and identity parallel to writing his final degree thesis.

All the English heard in the halls of the Old University provides for an international atmosphere at the UCF. International students make up around 30 percent of enrollments, well above the 16-percent average at the University of Freiburg as a whole. The Germans, who take it upon themselves to study in a foreign language in their own country, come from all regions of Germany.

The model for Freiburg's LAS bachelor's program is not so much the liberal arts and sciences programs common in the USA, which are intended primarily as a "testing ground" for students who have not yet decided on a major. Rather, it is based more on Dutch LAS programs, for instance that at the University College Maastricht, which

SURVEY

Study Different

It took pioneering spirit to enroll in the new Bachelor of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) degree program in the first year of its existence. Verena Adt asked several members of the first graduating class what is so special about the program.



Photo: private

Clara Gerstner, LAS major in life sciences, is now working toward a master's in education at John Hopkins University in Baltimore, USA, and teaching biology and physics at a high school: "The program's problem-based learning approach is unique in Germany, as far as I am aware. The 15 to 20 students in each seminar are fully responsible for determining the content of the course, and it's the teacher's job to support them. We all learned very quickly that not much would happen in our seminars if we didn't come to class prepared and motivated. I think the main thing that is different from traditional degree programs is that LAS students have to take full responsibility for their own studies from the start. We have the freedom and the obligation to select our own courses, our major, the topics we want to study in more depth, the languages we learn, and much more. That takes a lot of discipline, a talent for organization, and passion, and these are things I learned in Freiburg that will definitely come in handy in the future."

Yared Abdeta Debal, LAS major in governance, is now a trainee at a social organization in North Rhine-Westphalia and aims to work toward a PhD in social sciences at the Humboldt University of Berlin: "I'm from Ethiopia, and I studied political science there for three semesters before coming to Germany in 2009. I had already been accepted to another university when I heard about the brand new program that was supposed to start in Freiburg in 2012. So I decided to study at the UCF, and I don't regret it. What sets the LAS program apart is especially the interdisciplinarity and the practical relevance. The program assumes that the complex problems we are confronted with today cannot really be solved if we consider only one perspective or dimension. Climate change is one such issue whose complexity cannot be treated adequately by any single discipline. Besides environmental aspects, it is also necessary to take account of political, economic, and social perspectives."

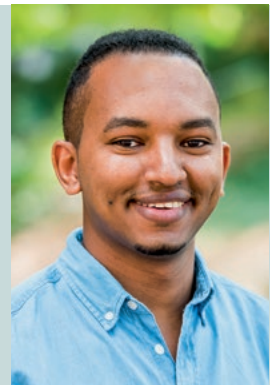


Photo: Klaus Polkowski



Photo: private

Lea Nienhoff, LAS major in culture and history, is now a production assistant at Theater Freiburg and aims to go on to earn a master's in dramaturgy: "The fact that LAS courses are structured as compact courses makes them very different from courses in other degree programs. Having a course almost every day for just a few weeks means that you can really grapple with the subject matter. But it's also a big challenge, because the students have to be capable of writing a research paper in a discipline they were often previously unfamiliar with after just a few weeks. The fact that the program was in English wasn't a deciding factor for me; sometimes it was even annoying later on, especially when we read German philosophers in English. On the other hand, I'm very glad to have made friends from places like Columbia and Nepal here. Their way of looking at Germany and their perspective on world events taught me a lot about myself and the world."

Matthias Haslberger, LAS major in governance, is now working toward a master's in comparative social policy in Oxford, England: "One special thing about the LAS program is the many student initiatives. What I have in mind in particular is a moot court on a human rights issue held in the 2015/16 winter semester as part of the Global Order Project. We participated with a four-person team and managed to make it to the quarterfinals in Strasbourg, even though it was a legal topic and we were not law students. While I was working on my bachelor's thesis, I helped organize a two-day conference on mobility and identity with experts and students from all around Germany as well as from the Netherlands and Switzerland. That was a swig from the bottle of real life. It was a challenge even just finding the necessary space for the conference at the university, but it was fun."

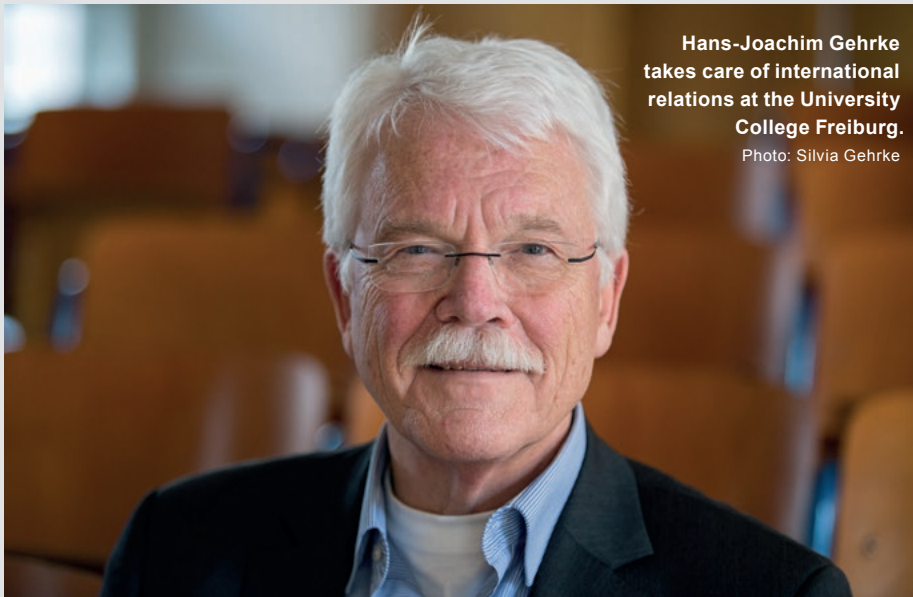


Photo: Klaus Polkowski

INTERVIEW

“We Are Seen as a Model”

Prof. Dr. Hans-Joachim Gehrke is in charge of international relations for the Bachelor of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) degree program at University College Freiburg (UCF). Verena Alt spoke about the new degree program with the ancient history professor, who describes himself as “a kind of foreign minister” for the UCF.



Hans-Joachim Gehrke takes care of international relations at the University College Freiburg.
Photo: Silvia Gehrke

uni*alumni: Prof. Gehrke, even after your retirement as one of the most distinguished classical scholars in Germany, you are still very active in your field and have a very busy schedule. What made you want to support a new bachelor’s program?

Hans-Joachim Gehrke: I found the concept interesting. The basic idea is that we are not educating students in a field or for a profession but rather are teaching them how to acquire and use knowledge. The field of Assyriology of course needs people who can read cuneiform writing, but we also need to know why it is important to fund archaeological excavations in Babylon.

Is the LAS bachelor’s program an orientation course for beginning students who do not yet know what they want to do, as is often said of the American model?

No. For one thing, we take great care to ensure that our students are employ-

able. For another thing, our program is focused much more on research than many LAS curricula or even those in the Netherlands. It begins with curiosity about research questions and a look at the philosophy of science. Our students experience this above all in the core program in their first year. We show them what science has to offer them in its essence, namely the skills one needs to possess if one wants to solve a problem or answer a question.

The LAS program is held entirely in English. Isn’t that quite one-sided?

English is the modern language of scholarship. Scholarship has always been international. Even the ancient Greeks crossed the sea to exchange ideas with other scholars, and the medieval scholars also communicated with each other – back then the language of scholarship was Latin. There’s no point in complaining that English is the language that fulfills this function today. However, we deliberately insist that our international students

acquire good German skills in addition to English so that they are not socially isolated during their time in Freiburg. In addition, we urge all of our students to learn additional languages besides English and German. Every new language allows one to experience the world in a different way. Our goal is intelligent multilingualism.

How international is the UCF student body?

The proportion of international students is rising continuously. Twenty-five percent of the students in the new class, which started the program in the 2016/17 winter semester, are from outside the EU – from Japan, China, and North and South America. In recent years we have observed a heightened interest in Great Britain and the USA. In the latter case, this development may be put down to our increased presence there since the university opened a liaison office in New York.

Is the LAS program the ideal course of study?

Our degree program should remain an option. An 18-year-old who knows he wants to study physics should do so, but our LAS bachelor’s program is attractive for those who do not want to specialize from the beginning but would rather start by learning about different fields and academic perspectives. It also reflects the university’s strengths. People from all of the university’s faculties were and are still very actively involved in designing our interdisciplinary majors. We have built up a degree program that is seen as a model and that is also being intelligently refined.



The first graduating class poses for a farewell photo. Photo: Jörg Blum

was founded in 2002 and is more scientifically oriented than many American LAS programs. The “big sister,” as Glunk refers to the Dutch model institution, provided advice on building up the Freiburg LAS program from the start. It is only logical that the two colleges also created a dual degree. Two graduates – one each from Freiburg and Maastricht – also received this diploma at the UCF graduation ceremony.

A Place Where You're Not Alone

All members of the first graduating class praise the direct personal contact with their professors in small learning groups and the sense of togetherness among the students. “There are hardly ever more than 20 people in a course,” says Matthias Haslberger. Altogether, the UCF has around 500 students, teachers, and employees. It's small enough that everyone gets to know everyone else.

What makes the sense of togetherness all the more important is the fact that the students take different paths through the program, says Vice Dean of University College Maastricht Teun Dekker, who represented his institution at the graduation ceremony in Freiburg: “Everyone does their own thing in an LAS program. It can make you feel quite alone sometimes. That's why it's important that everyone is part of the college. That's a place where you're not alone.”

Building up an UCF alumni network is therefore at the top of Paul Sterzel's list of priorities. A lot of progress was made between summer 2012, when

the UCF was anxious whether there would be any students at all in the fall, and summer 2016, when the first class took its final exams. A new UCF class – already the fifth – met for “welcome week” at the same time the first class was celebrating graduation and organized its own kick-off party in the Peterhof Cellar. The UCF will hold more graduation ceremonies in the future, but the first one of all, the one with the pioneers, is now over.

Verena Adt

» www.ucf.uni-freiburg.de



Julia Wertheim is working toward a doctorate in neurosciences. Photo: Patrick Seeger

FOUR MAJORS

Earth and Environmental Sciences: This major has to do with the planet Earth. It focuses on the interaction between human beings and the environment, covering classical theories and methods of ecology and geology as well as current topics at the interface between environmental science, political science, and law.

Life Sciences: This is a research-oriented major involving the structures and functions of the human body, including the brain, and how they interact with the environment. Relevant disciplines include biology, neurosciences, biotechnology, and behavioral and cognitive science.

Governance: This major concentrates on the analysis of social systems, especially communities, nations, and markets. The analyses are supported by methods and theories from the social sciences, political science, and law.

Culture and History: Students of this major take an interdisciplinary look at cultural and historical topics from around the world. They apply methods and theories from history, ethnography, philosophy, art history, and literary studies.



The University of Freiburg's first North America campaign is being coordinated at the new liaison office in New York.

Photo: Frank Peters/Fotolia

LIAISON OFFICE

Attracting Sponsors and Students

The University of Freiburg has opened a liaison office in North America – and is using it to promote the University College

We are at the corner of East 49th Street and 1st Avenue in New York City, USA, looking out at the East River and the headquarters of the United Nations. This is the location of the German House, home of the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations and a German Consulate-General, as well as branch offices of research organizations like the German Research Foundation and offices of German universities. The University of Freiburg and its partners in the Eucor – The European Campus alliance, including the Universities of Basel, Strasbourg, and Mulhouse and the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, are now also represented here: The "Liaison Office North America" opened officially in April 2016. The liaison officer is Dr. Markus Lemmens, an experienced science management expert.

Two Leaders at the Helm

The purpose of the liaison office is to raise the profile of the University of Freiburg and the European Campus in North America. What this involves above all is establishing contacts with key people from the scientific, industrial, and political sectors, as well as with Freiburg alumni and media representa-

tives. The goals include attracting investors and thus fostering technology transfer, supporting efforts to recruit students and scholars, and establishing and strengthening partnerships with North American institutions and companies. The office also coordinates the University of Freiburg's growing Alumni Club North America, which now includes groups in San Francisco, Washington, D.C., and Montreal, Canada, in addition to the head office in New York. More are

in planning – in cities like Los Angeles, Denver, Boston, Seattle, and New Haven.

The stage is thus set for the University of Freiburg's first large-scale publicity campaign in North America: The goal is to attract sponsors and students for the University College Freiburg (UCF) and its English-taught bachelor's program Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS). The initiative was launched by the American steel entrepreneur Jeffrey Himmel, founder and president of the Artco Group. He is president of the Freiburg Alumni Club North America, which is currently preparing the campaign together with a fundraising agency with experience in the field of higher education. Himmel has also won over a further prominent University of Freiburg alumnus for the campaign: Caroll H. Neubauer, member of the board of directors of B. Braun Melsungen AG and president of the German American Chamber of Commerce in New York, will join Himmel in spearheading the campaign.

Nicolas Scherger

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PORTRAIT

“It Will Be a Surefire Success”

Caroll H. Neubauer is campaigning for the University College Freiburg in North America

He is a member of the board of directors of B. Braun Melsungen AG, president of the German American Chamber of Commerce in New York – and a devoted University of Freiburg alumnus: Caroll H. Neubauer is spearheading the campaign for the benefit of the University College Freiburg (UCF) together with the steel entrepreneur Jeffrey Himmel. Nicolas Scherger spoke with the jurist and manager about the UCF, the University of Freiburg’s learning lab.

uni’alumni: Mr. Neubauer, what fascinates you about the UCF and its flagship degree program, the Bachelor of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS)?

Caroll H. Neubauer: The novelty. The students don’t have to decide right off the bat that they want to become a jurist, doctor, engineer, or teacher but first receive a broad education that can serve as a basis for later specialization and development. I consider the model better than the classical German education I received. I find it great that the University of Freiburg, an institution with so much history and culture, is taking this innovative path.

You began your studies by enrolling in a law program in Freiburg in the 1970s, so you chose to major in a specific field. Would you do things differently today in view of the UCF/LAS option?

My degree program provided me an outstanding education. I love being a jurist, and I’m proud to call myself a Freiburg jurist. The legal thinking I was taught here is still an essential part of my strategy for success today. But if I had the chance to start all over again, I could see myself acquiring a broad general education at the UCF first and then going on to study law. If I had done that, it would have made a lot of things easier for me in my later work as a manager in the industrial sector. If public



Acquire a broad education first, then choose a specialization: Caroll H. Neubauer considers the University College Freiburg’s approach better than a classical academic education.

Photo: Baschi Bender

finance had been a required subject in my degree program, for instance, I would have had a lot less trouble figuring out how to deal with operating figures or read a balance sheet when I first became a manager.

How do you aim to convince potential students and sponsors in North American of the UCF?

I don’t think we’ll need to do anything special to advertise the UCF at all. It’ll be enough to just make it known. The students receive outstanding training in English, learn German, get to know European culture on the cross-border European Campus with the partner universities on the Upper Rhine – and all that in Freiburg, a town with a quality of life only few cities in the world can match. That’s why I’m sure it will be a surefire success. I also hope we’ll find more people to support us in our effort

to create a UCF campus in the Old University and its courtyard. The UCF has an incredibly attractive opportunity to make itself a home for the future here.

What prospects do you see for graduates?

I find it outstanding that the students are taught in English, the world language. A lot of people speak English, but only few really speak it fluently. The language skills are therefore a great advantage for the LAS graduates. But it will be a challenge to get them into jobs directly after they finish their bachelor’s degree, so that they can first achieve a certain level of professional maturity and then, equipped with a wealth of experience, earn their master’s degree. The university and alumni like me will work to support them in this endeavor.



INTERVIEW

Pursuing His Dream

Danial Danha is studying medicine in Freiburg after fleeing from Iraq.

Danial Danha completed the pre-course for refugees and has now been accepted to a degree program in medicine. Photo: Thomas Kunz

If the world were a more peaceful place, Danial Danha would not be sitting on the second floor of the Freiburg University Library studying German grammar. That is his new life. He left his old one in Iraq two years ago when he was forced to flee from the city of Mossul, which was occupied by the terrorist organization ISIS. It is an experience he would rather not talk about. He would prefer to leave the dread behind him in Iraq. What the 22-year-old did bring with him is his dream of becoming a doctor. He knew even as a youth that he wanted to help other people. "I believe I can make it happen; it's what I want to do."

Displaced Twice

Danha's family, which now lives in the town of Umkirch near Freiburg, has already been displaced once before. The first part of their flight, in 2010, led from Erbil, the capital of the Kurdistan Autonomous Region, to Mossul. Danha's father, an engineer who had done a lot of work for the US military during its occupation of Iraq, feared for his life after the troops withdrew. But life in Mossul was not easy for Danha's family. After completing his schooling in 2014, Danha began to study medicine. "It would have been very dangerous to admit to being Catholic at the university," he remembers. He says he

was always a good student. His officially authenticated school-leaving certificate, which qualifies him for higher education entrance in Germany, shows that he received almost perfect grades in school.

Learning German from Day One

After his arrival in Germany, Danha had to start all over again. He says that he bought a book to help him learn German at a bookstore in Karlsruhe on the day he arrived at the state refugee reception center.

"I didn't want to lose any time," he says. He spends a lot of time studying at home, takes language courses, and eventually, in April 2016, enrolls in a pre-course for refugees funded in part by the booster association Alumni Freiburg.

Danha knows that he can only matriculate at the university if he passes a German language test at the very advanced proficiency level of C1. It takes him three tries to pass. In September he also passes the German language examination for higher education entrance. Then he applies for admission to a degree program in medicine in Freiburg.

But Danha has been doing more than just learning German these past months. He has also completed a lot of intern-

ships – at the University Heart Center Freiburg–Bad Krozingen, for instance, and at the Department of General and Visceral Surgery at the Freiburg University Medical Center. Anything to learn and pursue his dream of becoming a doctor. If the world were more peaceful, the young Iraqi would be sitting at the university in his native town of Erbil right now and would perhaps be learning how to treat coronary heart disease. "I could have become a doctor in three years there," he says, pauses for a moment, and then adds: "and here I'm starting all over again."

But Danha does not want to dream himself back to his old hometown. "I want to work as a doctor here at the Heart Center one day." That is his goal, and he has now come one important step closer to achieving it: When the telephone rings shortly before the beginning of the winter semester, Danha can hardly believe what the person on the other end of the line has to say to him: He has been accepted and can start his course of study right away. Now Danial Danha has really arrived.

Stephanie Streif

» www.uni-freiburg.de/universitaet/refugees-welcome/initiativen/vorkurs

BOOSTER ASSOCIATION

More Influence for Alumni Clubs

Alumni Freiburg e.V. elected an Extended Board of Directors in 2016 as a result of a 2014 amendment to its articles of association. The goal was to give the national and international alumni clubs more influence in the booster association, because the wide range of club events is what convinces many former students to support their university and become members of the association. The following six alumni club representatives were elected to the Extended Board of Directors: Marie-Claudine Zangna, Cameroon; Jeffrey A. Himmel, North America; Prof. Dr. Masahisa Deguchi, Japan; Dr. Ekkehart Meroth, South Baden; Hans-Joachim Staff, Rhineland; Dr. Wolfgang Thost, Bavaria.

As a means of intensifying the contact between alumni and the university's leadership team, the Board of Directors now also includes further members of the Rectorate: Head of Administration Dr. Matthias Schenek, Vice President for Academic Affairs Prof. Dr. Juliane



Representatives from the alumni clubs were elected to the board of directors of the booster association Alumni Freiburg. Photo: Thomas Kunz

Besters-Dilger, and Vice President for Research Prof. Dr. Gunther Neuhaus.

Since Alumni Freiburg e.V. makes funding available to all faculties, the articles association were also amended to allow for increased faculty involvement. Prof. Dr. Uwe Edward Schmidt from the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources was elected to the Extended Board of Directors to speak on behalf of the faculty alumni representatives.

Adnan Zogaj will represent Freiburger Wirtschaftswissenschaftler e.V., a registered society of Freiburg economists, in the Extended Board of Directors. Alumni Freiburg's new articles of association give institutionalized alumni organizations the opportunity to become members at

the faculty level. The Freiburg economists are the first organization to take advantage of this possibility to help shape alumni work in Freiburg.

The Executive Board of Directors, made up of Rector Prof. Dr. Hans-Jochen Schiewer, Secretary General of the German Academic Exchange Service Dr. Dorothea Rüländ, and Director of the University of Freiburg Office of Public Relations Rudolf-Werner Dreier, will continue to hold responsibility for convening General Assembly meetings, bookkeeping, reporting to the General Assembly, and making decisions on the allocation of funds.

Cornelia Staeves

» www.alumni.uni-freiburg.de

MEMBERSHIP

Alumni Freiburg – Now for Students Too

Alumni Freiburg has been offering former University of Freiburg students interesting programs in various German cities and abroad for many years via its alumni club network. Now Alumni Freiburg is also making it possible for current students to take part in the club program.

Most students are familiar with Alumni Freiburg because the booster association supports student projects and awards



Membership at a discount: Students can join Alumni Freiburg for next to nothing. Photo: Sandra Meyndt

prizes for student involvement and achievements – with funds donated by alumni. Alumni Freiburg has succeeded in improving the conditions for studying at all University of Freiburg faculties, providing travel grants for academic excursions, and supporting institutions that benefit students in the past years thanks to the support of former students.

Now Alumni Freiburg Chair Rector Prof. Dr. Hans-Jochen Schiewer has advanced the idea of allowing students to become members of the booster association. Student memberships are discounted to accommodate tight student budgets: All it takes to join is a one-time fee of 10 euros, and students are exempted from regular membership dues for up to five years after they complete their degree. Student members can use the alumni network, participate in club events, establish professional contacts with alumni, subscribe to the alumni newsletter, and learn about alumni funding projects. But the most important thing is that the students strengthen the bond between the university and its alumni – until they graduate and become alumni themselves.

Cornelia Staeves



INTERVIEW



She always enjoys coming back to Freiburg: The earth scientist Mechthild Rössler.

Photo: UNESCO

A Constant Battle against Destruction

Mechthild Rössler works to protect the world cultural and natural heritage at UNESCO.

She travels to disputed territories and negotiates with leaders around the world: Mechthild Rössler campaigns to protect extraordinary natural and cultural sites. She has worked for the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), based in Paris, France, since 1991. In September 2015 the cultural and natural heritage expert with a PhD in earth sciences assumed the post of Director of the Division for Heritage and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. Yvonne Troll spoke with her about her job and her time as a Freiburg student

Ms. Rössler, are you still passionate about your work?

Very passionate, in fact! The work is incredibly exciting. It is also difficult, however, and it has become dangerous at times, since the deliberate destruction of cultural treasures has become more common in recent years. I have had to travel in armored vehicles to regions the public has no access to. In spring 2016 I was in Syria to appraise the situation in Palmyra, where the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) had blown up parts of the ancient temple

site a year previously. I was less than 30 kilometers from the front line. I could hear the explosions, and ropes that had been used to hang people were still dangling from the pillars of the amphitheater.

What motivates you to get yourself into such dangerous situations?

My motivation is to protect these exceptional sites – not for our own benefit but for that of future generations. The idea of the convention adopted in 1972, that all countries are responsible for protecting the world's unique heritage together for all people, is still wonderful in my mind.

What are you impressed by most in your work?

The people at the sites trying to save what can be saved, for instance the head of the department of antiquities in Palmyra who tried to get the last statues out of danger with his team before ISIS arrived. Two members of his team were shot at.

Has it become more difficult to protect the world heritage?

The armed conflicts aren't the only thing making our work more difficult. What has worsened more than anything else in the past five years is our financial situation. In 2011 the General Assembly resolved in a democratic vote to admit Palestine into UNESCO. That led the USA to cut off funding for the organization. We have had to lay off many employees and protect more and more world heritage sites with less and less money. There are now more than 1000 of them.

Is a lack of funding the biggest challenge?

Not just that. Everything has become much more political. Nowadays every mayor wants to get his or her city on the list of world heritage sites, because it gives them prestige and money and causes the tourist figures to skyrocket

TALES FROM THE CAFETERIA:
DIRK SCHUMACHER

Watch Out for Low-Flying Food

– whether it is really a site of outstanding universal value or not. But what makes my day-to-day work difficult is intervening when the people on location fail to take responsibility for protecting the site. An example is the construction of Waldschlößchen Bridge in Dresden, which led to the loss of the Dresden Elbe Valley's status as a World Heritage Site.

You have visited many world heritage sites. Is there one you are particularly fond of?

I was deeply impressed by the Banaue Rice Terraces in the Philippines. It's not for nothing that they're called the "steps to heaven." It was also moving to fly over the Victoria Falls between Zimbabwe and Zambia in a small airplane and see this gigantic water vapor rising up to 300 meters above the ground. The locals call it "Mosi-oo-Tunya," the thundering smoke. I'm from Speyer, though, and I have to say that I've always been impressed by the Speyer Cathedral.

Speaking of Germany, you studied geography and German studies at the University of Freiburg. Do you still visit Freiburg from time to time?

Oh yes. After all, I married a Freiburger. We met as students. I come to Freiburg again and again and do things there that aren't possible in Paris, for instance eating a sausage on Münsterplatz or drinking wine from the barrel on Schönberg.

What is important to you besides your job?

I have a project that's very important to me: Each year I organize an exhibition with local artists in South France and invite the entire village to it. My family is also very important to me. And my hobbies: I do yoga, I enjoy being in nature, and I hike. I have to keep myself fit even just for my job, because it can happen from one day to the next that I have to go on a business trip that takes me to 4500 meters altitude.

Field of study:

Law

Period of study:

Winter semester 1982 to summer semester 1989

Current position:

Director of the Freiburg-Stadt Tax Office

My favorite meal at the cafeteria:

Milk rice (honestly!), with a lot of stewed plums. It's also something I regularly ate too much of, which was bad for my concentration in the afternoon and led to my having to read some chapters twice.

A meal I liked less:

There were surely also less successful compositions, but as a young man of little financial means and with a big appetite, I always found something and regularly ate it up.

Strangest experience at the cafeteria:

There must have been a well-known public figure during my time, possibly a member of the city council, who was not matriculated at the university but had obtained the right to eat lunch in the



Dirk Schumacher appreciated the cafeteria as a place to meet up with classmates.

Photo: private

cafeteria through some devious means or other. I can't remember the details anymore, but that was of course a topic of conversation.

Personal notes:

All in all, my memories of the cafeteria are positive. Not just because I always got enough to eat but also because I met and socialized with classmates there – a welcome change from the quiet work in the Law Library. But visiting the cafeteria could be risky: Even if you made it past Rempartstraße without being run over, there was always the risk of being hit by low-flying food due to the cramped seating and the difficult balancing act of carrying a full tray.



Too much milk rice with stewed fruit can make you sleepy. Photo: Thomas Kunz



ALUMNI FREIBURG

PORTRAIT



Freedom to Do Research

Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard supports young female scientists in their research activities

Engaged in research: The developmental biologist and Nobel laureate Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard.

Photo: monumentum-photo.com/Max-Planck-Institut für Entwicklungsbiologie Tübingen

How do genes control the development of an animal's shape and form? This is the question the biologist Prof. Dr. Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard focuses on in her research. The 74-year-old has an eventful research career behind her and is still scientifically active today. From 1985 to 2014 she served as director of the Max Planck Institute for Developmental Biology in Tübingen. Today she heads an emeritus research group there. In addition, she works to ensure that young scientists with children do not need to put their career at risk or give it up on account of domestic responsibilities with her own foundation, the Christiane-Nüsslein-Volhard-Stiftung, founded in 2004.

Studying an Ideal Model Organism

She herself continues to conduct research in a research group on color pattern formation. "Our goal is to find genes in the zebra fish that control the development of its typical color pattern," explains Nüsslein-Volhard. In 1995 she won the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine together with Edward B. Lewis and Eric Wieschaus. The three scientists had gained fundamental knowledge on the question of how genes control embryonic development in experiments on mutant fruit flies from the *Drosophila* genus.

The fruit fly is an ideal model organism that Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard has been studying for many years. Her research on the topic began when she received a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Basel. Then she spent almost a year studying under the insect embryologist Klaus Sander at the University of Freiburg's Institute of Zoology. "He gave me a workspace in a small lab where I could continue my experiments on *Drosophila* mutants," she says. Together with Margit Schardin, then a PhD student at the Institute of Zoology, she created a fate map of the segment pattern of *Drosophila* larvae. A year later Nüsslein-Volhard accepted a position as research group leader at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) in Heidelberg.

A Lack of Respect

"It wasn't clear until a bit later that I had made important findings in Freiburg," she remembers. Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard has very good memories of her time in Freiburg. "I lived on Kreuzstraße in Stühlinger and only had to go through the little tunnel under the railroad tracks to get to my lab." She regularly went to the farmers' market on Saturdays. Things she still has pleasant memories of today are the splendor of the Freiburg Cathedral, the "Bächle" meandering through the medieval streets, the cobblestones –

and Günther Osche's lecture course on invertebrates. "It met every day, and it improved my knowledge of zoology, a field I wasn't very familiar with yet at the time," admits the Nobel laureate.

Something she has less pleasant memories about is the fact that women were still the exception in the research community back then. "I often experienced a lack of respect from my male colleagues," she says, and it was also commonly assumed that she would fail. Today the successful scientist works to enable more women to launch a successful career in research, but she does not think much of a quota for women: "I find that beneath a woman's dignity," she says. However, working half days is not enough if one wants to pursue a scientific career. Her foundation therefore awards promising young female natural scientists and medical researchers with children grants to pay for household help in order to give them the necessary freedom for a scientific career. In this way, it aims to save outstanding talents from being lost to science.

Petra Völzing

BETWEEN THE LINES: FARINA DE WAARD

Between the University and a Fantasy World

Farina de Waard dreamed of a mysterious fantasy world from the time she was 14 years old. That's when she started writing the series *Das Vermächtnis der Wölfe* ("The Legacy of the Wolves"). She has completed three volumes so far and plans to write two more. The hero of the series is called upon to liberate her people from oppression.

Farina de Waard tries to draw parallels to real-life power structures in her books. She wants to entertain her readers but also encourage them to reflect on the world and their lives.

Her books are self-published through her own publishing company, which she founded while working on a bachelor's degree in environmental sciences. For her first novel, *Zähmung* ("Taming"), she

received the 2015 Indie Author Prize at the Leipzig Book Fair. Writing "independently and constantly" is something that comes naturally to Farina de Waard.

She would like to devote her career to environmental journalism, which would allow her to combine her passion for writing with her interest in the natural sciences. As an author, however, she wants to continue treating the philosophical issue of the nature of evil.

Her next book, a medical thriller, will be set in the real world. The young author aims to try out various genres in the future, without abandoning her work on the fantasy world she has created.

Felicitas Kahles



Farina de Waard studied environmental natural sciences in Freiburg from 2008 to 2013. She is currently working toward a degree in biodiversity and ecology in Greifswald with the aim of becoming an environmental journalist.

Photo: private

HISTORICAL GREATS: GREGOR REISCH

Father of the First Printed Encyclopedia

The *Encyclopedia Britannica* once encompassed 32 printed volumes. Now available only in a digital version, the voluminous reference work contains a lengthy entry on the history of encyclopedias. The author of the entry praises Gregor Reisch's *Margarita philosophica* as "one of the most delightful of all encyclopedias."

The *Margarita philosophica* was published in Freiburg im Breisgau in the year 1503. It remained a widely read textbook at universities for more than a century. It is regarded as the first printed encyclopedia, and its Latin was praised for its conciseness and style. Its author Gregor Reisch, born in Balingen, studied at the University of Freiburg starting in 1487.

Reisch completed a baccalaureate degree in 1488 and his magister one year later. He then began a career as a university lecturer. One of his students was Martin Waldseemüller – the cartographer who later called a newly dis-

covered continent "America" on his world map. Reisch worked on his opus alongside his teaching duties. The



A standard reference work at universities for a century: Gregor Reisch's *Margarita philosophica*. Photo: Sandra Meyndt

twelve-volume *Margarita* discusses the seven liberal arts as well as other knowledge domains, such as anatomy and ethics. In the Renaissance, the encyclopedia could lay claim to providing an overview of the full range of knowledge available at the time.

Gregor Reisch completed his manuscript in 1496 and bequeathed it to the university faculty as a kind of parting gift. He entered the Carthusian Order and became a prior in 1501 but continued to make improvements to the *Margarita philosophica* for subsequent editions.

He traveled to the Netherlands, where he met with the humanist Erasmus of Rotterdam. As a theologian, Reisch was a fervent opponent of the teachings of Martin Luther and the Reformation. Gregor Reisch died in Freiburg on 9 May 1525.

Martin Jost



ALUMNI ANSWER

A surprisingly large number of former University of Freiburg students are authors of crime novels. Some of them are full-time writers, while others can only indulge in their criminological fantasies in their free time. Verena Adt asked several of them why studying in Freiburg evidently inspires people to dream up imaginary crimes and craft them into literature.

Strangely Suspenseful

Tilman Spreckelsen

Fields of study: **German, History, PhD in German Studies**

Years: **1988–1998**



Photo: Birgit Meixner

“The fact that I’ve written two crime novels about the investigator Theodor Strom in Husum might seem at first glance to have nothing to do with my studies in Freiburg – and yet there are many parallels. Even though Freiburg contributed nothing to the atmosphere of the novels and only little to their content (I never took a seminar on the author Theodor Storm), I enjoyed working on the Biedermeier period during my studies and ended up writing a dissertation about Karl Immermann under Prof. Dr. Günter Schnitzler, to be precise about androids in Immermann’s work. I had to acquire a whole lot of background knowledge on the topic, and I still draw on that knowledge today. And so it is no accident that Theodor Storm is confronted with a number of wax dolls, automatons, and moving pictures in my *Nordseegrab* (‘North Sea Grave’).”

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Latest crime novel:

Der Nordseespuk (“The North Sea Ghost”), S. Fischer, 2016

Astrid Fritz

Fields of study: **Modern German Literature, Romance Studies**

Years: **1981–1986**

“When I think back on my time as a student, what spontaneously enters my head is associations involving confrontations with various strange folk on dark streets on my way home at night, the dignified old walls of the Old University and the Peterhof, where students racked their brains or smashed them against each other even centuries ago, and other lasting impressions of this medieval town. On top of that, if you were like me and didn’t have any knowledge of Latin at all and then had to learn it from scratch in the space of a single beautiful summer, you began to have a dark thought or two about classmates who were lying on a sunny beach or traveling through Europe...”



Photo: Andrea Diefenbach

Latest crime novel:

Das Siechenhaus (“The Sick House”), Rowohlt, 2016

But seriously: Thanks to the open-mindedness of the Faculty of Humanities, I was actually allowed to write my degree thesis on the “new German crime novel” – so that was an initial step in the right direction.”



Photo: Klaus Polkowski

Sascha Berst-Frediani

Fields of study: **German Studies, Law**

Years: **1986–1991**

“It must have been the darkness that took possession of me when I was forced, in this beautiful and sunny town of all places, to prepare for the First State Examination in the dusty and always gloomy Law Library. I spent so much time there that I actually began to feel at home between these walls, in these halls, which I can explain today only as a gradual slipping-off into darkness, a darkness that still accompanies me and my texts today. Only recently, a visitor at a ‘crime slam’ I participated in confessed to me that she found the text I read so dark that she hardly dared to clap when I finished speaking.

What would I have ended up doing if Collegiate Building II had better lighting? I’d love to know the answer to that myself.”

Latest crime novel:

Fehlurteil (“Wrong Judgment”) Gmeiner, 2014



Anne Grießer

Fields of study: **European Ethnology, Modern German Literature, Ethnology**

Years: **1990–1997**

“My two minors, and even more my major in European Ethnology, were a perfect way to prepare for life as an author of historical crime novels: I was forced to eat 100-year-old cheese on a field trip in Switzerland (good practice for working in a profession with no money in it), one of my classmates enjoyed talking about his hobby (digging up war graves), and a former student cursed the departmental library where I worked at the desk, much to the amusement of the other patrons.

How could I have become a sober scholar under circumstances like these?

Incidentally, I also encountered the topic of my latest novel, the pilgrimage to the holy blood of Walldürn, while studying in Freiburg – but the literary version was clearly the more pleasurable!”

Latest crime novel:

Das Heilige Blut – Der Roman der Walldürner Wallfahrt (“The Holy Blood – The Novel about the Walldürn Pilgrimage”), Sutton, 2016 (2nd edition)



Photo: private

Oliver Becker

Fields of study: **German Studies, Political Science**

Years: **1994–1999**



Photo: private

“Crime novels set in Hamburg? Check. In Berlin? Ditto. In Frankfurt’s red light district? But of course. And when do you find time to read them? For example when you’re a student in Freiburg and you skip class more often than you should. That’s how it was with me. And while reading I thought: ‘Too bad there aren’t any Freiburg crime novels. After all, the town does have something gloomy about it despite its beauty.’

You don’t believe it? Go to the Old Cemetery at dusk. That’s good location for a thriller. Or what about the grotto at St. Ottilia’s Chapel? Or even a homicide in the cathedral? You see what I mean: Even beautiful towns can be good places for murder. At least in literature.

So I just ‘had’ to write a Freiburg crime novel: In *Schmetterlingstod* (“Death of a Butterfly”), even private detective John Dietz has to learn how surprisingly dangerous Freiburg can be.”

Latest crime novel:

Das Raunen der Toten (“The Murmuring of the Dead”), ars vivendi, 2015



Photo: private

Petra Busch

Fields of study: **Mathematics, Computer Science, Modern German Literature, Musicology, German Medieval Studies**

Years: **1987–1996**

“There’s evil everywhere all the time – even in Freiburg. I know there is evil hidden behind the sunny idyll of the town from being mugged there, from my 26-year friendship with Detective Superintendent Karl-Heinz Schmid, and from being present at numerous postmortems. Experiencing the grind of bone saws, the clink of scalpels, the gurgle of blood, and the smell of disinfectants, metal, and decay in a white-tiled hall – no, this is not a cliché – inspires you to plumb the depths of human nature. This is what good crime novels and thrillers do. I of course want my novels to be suspenseful and entertaining, but I also look for answers in them. What makes us humans torment, kill, and betray each other? Transcend boundaries set by morals, laws, religion, or our own fears? Can anyone be turned into a murderer? Yes, of course. Any time. Even in Freiburg.”

Latest crime novel:

Das Lachen des Bösen (“The Smile of Evil”), Droemer Knaur, 2015



Giving something back: Ralf Dieter, chief executive of Dürr AG, has been supporting the University of Freiburg for years. He studied there himself.

Photo: Klaus Polkowski

INTERVIEW

The Courage to Make Difficult Decisions

Ralf Dieter is one of Germany's most successful managers – his credo is “leading by example”

In the middle of the financial crisis of 2009, when company after company was closing its doors, Ralf Dieter decided to hire new employees for his firm in China – and wait for business to pick up again. Today he admits that his decision to go on the offensive could have also backfired, but the company's subsequent market success proved him right. He has served for more than ten years as chief executive of the global mechanical and plant engineering firm Dürr AG. Rimma Gerenstein asked him what principle he is guided by in managing more than 15,000 employees, why he doesn't want to be a “helicopter manager,” and why he donates to his alma mater.

uni'alumni: Mr. Dieter, you studied business administration in Freiburg in the 1980s. What were your ideas of business back then?

Ralf Dieter: My ideas were limited to what I saw at my father's engineering firm and in the media. I didn't really have a conception of how a large company functions. What I do remember very well, however, is a lecture by Prof. Dr. Ralf-Bodo Schmidt on decision-making models. It explored the question of what drives and motivates people and how to bring it into line with company goals. I found it rather dry at the time, but in the course of my professional life I came to understand that the ability to put myself in other people's shoes is one of the most important requirements for my work.

So empathy is what makes a good manager?

Empathy is an important element, but you also have to know yourself. I think I'm capable of making a realistic assessment of my own strengths and weaknesses. That keeps me from drawing false conclusions. In addition, a manager needs to make difficult decisions, also in times of uncertainty. You can't always be ready for every eventuality. In my time in the army I learned the principle of “leading by example.”

That is the approach I take to this day. I only demand of my employees what I myself am ready to give. I flew economy too during the financial crisis. There were no extras for me.

You have had to make some uncomfortable decisions in the course of your career. When you started at the Schenck Group, you had to implement a corporate restructuring plan.

That is correct. I had to lay off several hundred employees. A few years later I made the decision to lay off 800 people at Dürr. I had no choice; the company was in a difficult situation. But I consider it part of my job in such situations to not just hide in my office but to face the people at the employee meeting. When the first people start crying, it's not a good feeling.

Dürr's annual turnover fell to 1.1 billion euros during the financial crisis – now it's back at almost four billion. How did you manage that?

I stood up at the employee meeting and said: "We need to get the word 'crisis' out of our heads. This is no crisis; it's a downturn." This time was an opportunity for us to prepare for the next upturn. And it was sure to come, unless you believed it was the end of the world. So we went to China, which was hit less strongly by the crisis, and expanded our operations in the development of paint systems for the automobile industry there. I hired people there without having enough orders. We worked at full capacity even before the demand picked up again. I thought to myself: If this plan works, we'll notch up a success. If not, I'll resign and someone else will take over my job. It worked: In 2010 we increased our market share in China to 80 percent in this segment.

You once said: "I'm not a manager who drinks coffee and looks at the numbers." What do you do instead?

In principle, I could do my job any place where I have internet access and a telephone, but that's not what I want. I'm also not the type of manager to engage in "helicopter management": flying somewhere to look at a company for two hours and getting an unrealistic picture because everything was brought into order beforehand. I consider it important to be close to the employees, because the only way to find out about morale and trends is by being around in person. For all the benefits the digital revolution has brought us, nothing can replace a face-to-face discussion. When a company buys a paint system that costs between 50 and 150 million euros from us, I want to be there at the negotiations.

How often does that happen?

Every time I go on vacation. I don't get much free time. Most of my weekends get interrupted by work. A place I can relax well is on nighttime flights: No one can call me, no one can write me emails, and I finally have time to reflect.

You've been supporting the University of Freiburg for years by funding a scholarship for the Deutschlandstipendium program. Why is it important for you to support your alma mater?

I earned my degree at public expense. I want to give something back, and I find that perfectly normal. What confirmed me in my decision later on was a letter I received from a student. She thanked me for the freedom the scholarship gave her. When I was a student, I had to pay for everything myself – I spent every free minute driving a truck. My father passed away a year before my graduation, so I spent my days liquidating his firm and earning money and my nights studying for exams. I feel good knowing that a young person today has less stress than I did back then.

MY COURSE CERTIFICATE:
BÄRBEL SCHÄFER

"Do Something Else with Your Time"

"I'll never forget the beginning of my studies at the University of Freiburg in the 1978 summer semester. I wanted to begin my law studies with a course on criminal law. The rector welcomed us newly arrived students but added that the alma mater was not ready for us because the Central Office for Admissions, which was responsible for granting admission to German law programs back then, had sent out the letters of acceptance without first consulting the University of Freiburg. And this was his pragmatic advice: 'We unfortunately cannot allow you to start taking courses immediately. Do something else with your time. Use it to settle in and get to know Freiburg.'

I didn't wait to be told twice. We quickly found a large enough group of classmates to set off in two fully packed cars for a holiday in the South of France. But don't get me wrong: I still ended up working hard during my first semester. I earned a course certificate to fulfill the economics requirement for law students."



Bärbel Schäfer has served as chief administrative officer of the Freiburg Administrative District since 2012. She studied law at the University of Freiburg from 1978 to 1982 and passed the Second State Examination to complete her legal training in 1985. Photo: Freiburg Regional Council

Wolfram Burgard with his mobile robot "Obelix," which can navigate through a cityscape full of traffic autonomously and without getting into accidents.

Photo: Patrick Seeger

PORTRAIT

Making Robots Cleverer

The computer scientist Wolfram Burgard wants to improve the performance of autonomous intelligent systems

Will people one day no longer be allowed to steer cars? Prof. Dr. Wolfram Burgard wouldn't rule out the possibility. The director of the research lab for autonomous intelligent systems at the Faculty of Engineering studies artificial intelligence and builds mobile robots. His "Obelix" has already succeeded in finding its way from the Freiburg Air Field to the city center on its own initiative and its own wheels. The machine navigates itself without any external aid – like the autopilot mode built into Tesla's electric cars. "You have to watch out like a hawk," warns the computer science professor, the reason being that these systems are not yet one hundred percent reliable. Burgard's big dream as a researcher is to change that: "If someone were to give me a large research grant, I'd like to make robots even cleverer by means of neural networks."

A Love of Tinkering

And yet there were times in which the computer scientist doubted whether he wanted to go on conducting research at all: "I was on the verge of throwing in the towel." He completed a PhD in logical programming at the University of Bonn in 1991. "I wasn't particularly satisfied with it," he admits. He wasn't interested in pure theory. Burgard asked himself whether he wouldn't be happier in indus-

try, but then he chanced upon a lab in Bonn where some of his computer science colleagues were programming the mobile robot "Rhino." "There you could really see what programs do," he says. His love of tinkering returned. He joined the "Rhino" project and took a chance on performing a balancing act between computer science and robotics: "There was a risk involved, but it was a lot of fun." It was worth it: In 1999 he was appointed as a professor at the University of Freiburg's Department of Computer Science. He has since received numerous national and international awards for his work, in 2009, for instance, the prestigious Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize, Germany's most important research award.

Robots that Can Learn

Burgard made important contributions to the development of robots that can calculate to the centimeter where they are located and are capable of reading maps. "That is the foundation for a lot of important innovations, such as autonomous driving," says the 55-year-old. "The algorithms BMW and Daimler use are basically the ones we came up with." However, mobile robots encounter enormous difficulties identifying objects: What is a street, what a sidewalk, what another vehicle, an obstacle, or a pedestrian? "They need a lot of time to make these calculations and still make mis-

takes," says Burgard. That is why people still need to steer their cars themselves. Currently, robots use algorithms to calculate their next steps. The data is supplied by sensors, which serve as artificial sensory organs. "Neural networks transmit sensor data directly into action," explains Burgard. "This would allow us to tackle much more difficult problems." In addition, the networks are capable of learning. This means that, in statistical terms, robot chauffeurs could one day get into less accidents than humans. Would it then be right to continue allowing humans behind the wheel?

"In any case, artificial intelligence is breaking into more and more areas of life," says Burgard. In cycling it has previously only appeared in the form of navigational devices. Burgard loves cycling and has taken a bike trip over the Alps. He also loves playing squash: He is president of the Freiburg Squash Club and plays in its backup team. Wolfram Burgard says Freiburg is a perfect place for his sports, his family, and his research. He praises his colleagues at the Faculty of Engineering and the university's Rectorate: "They are really great people." So it was definitely worth it to remain in research.

Jürgen Schickinger

» <http://ais.informatik.uni-freiburg.de>



MY TWEET: DANIEL LEESE

Mao in 140 Characters

Mao Zedong had a lasting impact. The Chinese dictator's more than 30-year reign brought unspeakable suffering to the Chinese people and cost millions of lives. Mao's Communist Party of China (CPC) is still in power today. It has yet to allow any critical public discussion of its former chairman's era and its consequences. Prof. Dr. Daniel Leese aims to change that – and he's tweeting about it. His channel "Maoist Legacy" provides information on findings from the research project of the same name that have been published on the project website. The Sinologist and his team are using court case files to determine how the CPC has dealt with crimes committed against the people under the Maoist regime. The researchers are receiving a Starting Grant worth 1.44 million euros from the European Research Council to conduct this pioneering work.

Leese's colleagues Dr. Amanda Shuman and Puck Engman, who are conducting research within the context of the project, also post tweets on the channel. Their posts also refer to current information, talks, and other events on related topics and provide academically informed commentary on current events in Chinese politics. "This draws attention to our project, as may be seen in the amount of visitors to our homepage, requests for interviews, and people contacting us with other requests," reports Leese. Starting in 2017, visitors to their site will also be able to register for access to an online portal containing historical sources like court files, texts, and pictures. This resource will provide a further boost to Maoism research and pave the way for future projects.

Yvonne Troll

» <https://twitter.com/maoistlegacy>

CONTINUING EDUCATION: THALES ACADEMY FOR ECONOMICS AND PHILOSOPHY

Business Ethics without Moralizing Undertones

Finding the right line of action in a globalized world is no easy task for businesses. Terms like responsibility, transparency, and trust are becoming increasingly important. But how can these values be implemented at the company level? Corporate social responsibility is a popular catchword in this context, but companies often lack basic orientation in the jungle of accreditations and certifications.

"We see ourselves as playing an intermediary role between researchers and businesses," says Dr. Philippe Merz, managing director of the nonprofit Thales Academy, which offers lectures, in-house seminars, and – in cooperation with the University of Freiburg – an in-service continuing education program in philosophy of economics and business ethics. The program familiarizes current and future managers with recent findings from philosophy, psychology, and behavioral economics, knowledge that is becoming more and more important for success in business management.

Corporate Ethics Pay Off

"Many studies indicate that cooperative behavior is more successful than competitive behavior in rigidly hierarchical structures. Corporate ethics are

therefore important even just in and of themselves – but they also pay off," says Merz. This may be seen among other things in human resources management: Today's employees are interested in more than just earning money; they also want to believe that their work serves a purpose. Companies need to react to this trend if they want to keep their employees. "Corporations like VW or Deutsche Bank would not be fighting for their survival today due to a loss in confidence if they had given serious thought to questions of business ethics," says Merz.

Philippe Merz founded the academy in 2013 together with the philosophy scholar and Black Forest family-business owner Dr. Frank Obergfell. The academic director of the continuing education program is Prof. Dr. Hans-Helmuth Gander, dean of the University of Freiburg's Faculty of Humanities. Students of the program complete online modules and on-campus seminars over a ten-month period to earn the internationally recognized CAS Certificate. "The lifeblood of the program is a respectful exchange of experience across generations, lines of business, and hierarchies," summarizes Merz, and that is an important factor in broadening one's horizons.

Petra Völzing

» www.thales-akademie.de



Philippe Merz (left), managing director of the Thales Academy, and Hans-Helmuth Gander, academic director of the continuing education program.

Photo: Sandra Meyndt

INTERVIEW

Attracting the Right Students to Freiburg

Mike Schwörer is responsible for higher education marketing at the University of Freiburg



Focusing on the quality of teaching and research.

Photo: Klaus Polkowski

The Student Service Center created a position for a higher education marketing officer in November 2015 to make the University of Freiburg known to prospective students. Sarah Schwarzkopf spoke with Mike Schwörer about his duties and plans.

uni'alumni: Mr. Schwörer, why does the university need to actively market itself to students?

Mike Schwörer: I try to attract good students to the University of Freiburg. We are especially interested in recruiting more international students and more females in the natural sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics and in ensuring full enrollment in our degree

programs. On the one hand, we provide information on the fields of study we offer to help prospective students make a good choice. On the other hand, we address the relevant target groups directly. The goal is therefore less to attract more applications than to attract the right ones: from prospective students who are capable of outstanding achievements and are ideally suited for the field of study in question.

How do you reach these target groups?

It depends on the field. Some departments are looking for students with perfect grades on their school-leaving certificate – a much sought-after group that can be addressed via foundations. Others are interested in artistic types, people with a wide range of interests, or people with a talent for languages. I look for these students at organizations that offer school students additional qualifications. There are also departments that are interested in international diversity and want to attract students from abroad.

How do students decide to study in Freiburg rather than elsewhere?

Say you have good grades on your school-leaving certificate and want to study somewhere but aren't sure exactly what. There are hundreds of fields of study and universities to choose from. The key thing when you first start looking is what you stumble upon. Here I work with classical advertising. Then, to help prospective students narrow down their choice, I put together material that allows them to compare us with other universities. What counts here is above all the high quality of our teaching and infrastructure, as well as our excellent reputation as a research university. Once they have narrowed down their choice to just a few universities, the important thing is to be likeable. We're at an advantage

here in Freiburg in this regard: with our small city, with the nearby Black Forest and Alsace, with the good Baden cuisine. Also important at this stage is to meet with the prospective students in person.

How do you support the individual academic departments?

I help the administrators to find efficient ways to make their course offerings known. In 2017 I'll be offering workshops to develop individual strategies with them. I also work together closely with students. For example, their contributions to social media provide an authentic look at what it's like to be a student.

Why don't you advertise the university as a whole rather than individual fields of study?

I do that too, but in Germany it really only makes sense to advertise the university as a whole in places like Berlin or Heidelberg. In Freiburg we need to focus on the departments and the quality of teaching and research. That's where the university's main strengths are. As a rule, students do not decide to study in Freiburg but to study medicine or history. That's why the decentralized approach makes sense. The point is to convince students that the degree program – and thus Freiburg – is the right choice.

You studied political science. What brought you to higher education marketing?

I was already involved in marketing at the Alumni Department. My background in the humanities helps me to combine a focus on target groups with the academic cultures of the departments. A course of study is not a product – so you wouldn't get very far with a classical business approach.

» www.studierendenmarketing.uni-freiburg.de

Strategic planning and media management are Sabine Wieland-Poscher's areas of specialization – and both are important parts of the work at her office. Photo: Thomas Kunz

PORTRAIT

Always Two Steps Ahead

The architect Sabine Wieland-Poscher is head of the new Office for Construction and Developmental Planning

Bauhaus, functionalism, modernism: This is the professional tradition Sabine Wieland-Poscher sees herself as representing. “A building should meet the demands that arise from its use,” says the architect. That also goes for the more than 160 buildings at the University of Freiburg. A variety of construction projects are on the agenda in the coming years: Examples include the refurbishment of the collegiate buildings (KG) and their offices, lecture halls, seminar rooms, and libraries, the problem of creating alternative space while this construction work is being done, for instance by building a new KG V, and the construction of new laboratory buildings on the Faculty of Engineering campus. The University of Freiburg created the Office for Construction and Developmental Planning at the start of 2016 to prepare the ground for all of these projects – with Sabine Wieland-Poscher at the helm.

The new office provides services to the faculties and functions as a connecting link to the university's building authority: “We are responsible for developing construction strategies and working out concrete solutions to ensure that the faculties receive appropriate infrastructure for their further development in research and teaching,” explains the architect. But construction planning is a time-consuming process. The challenge thus lies in

identifying now what the faculties will need in the coming years: “We always need to be two steps ahead.” What makes this even more difficult is that the university is not concentrated on a campus but has evolved with the city throughout the course of a long history. “It is therefore closely intertwined with the city. Although there are positive aspects to this, it can also appear as a kind of hodgepodge.” The Faculty of Law, for example, is spread over eleven locations, while the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources even uses 23 buildings. “The upcoming projects now present the university with an opportunity to reorganize everything and bring it all together” – with the help of the master plan for construction development her office is currently preparing.

Suited Perfectly for the Task

Wieland-Poscher is suited perfectly for this task. Born in northern Hesse, she first completed an apprenticeship as an interior decorator after completing her schooling. “I wanted to create, to translate ideas into action, and the technical aspect also appealed to me, but in the long term I missed an intellectual quality,” she says in retrospect. So she studied architecture in Kassel and Berlin, gained experience working at architectural firms, and finally launched her own business in Berlin in the early 1990s. Her company offered project

development, urban planning, and feasibility studies – everything that happens before the actual construction starts and is therefore termed “phase 0” in the industry. “That was always my hobbyhorse.” Alongside her work, she also completed a master's degree in architectural media management. Helping the public to better understand construction projects, winning people over for them, making them curious about new things – “this is a task I consider very important.” Now she is able to combine her two areas of specialization in her work at the new office. “That is a nice twist of fate for me.”

Sabine Wieland-Poscher has already been at the University of Freiburg since 2009, as has her husband Ralf Poscher, professor at the Faculty of Law and managing director of the Centre for Security and Society. Her first position at the university was at the Construction Planning Department, from which the new office was formed. She has sung soprano for several years in the University Choir, which includes students and employees from many university faculties and departments. She has also found her favorite building here: KG II. “Representative rooms in the lower floors and functional ones in the upper floors, plus a large transparent hall that creates a high-quality public space – that makes this modernist building into a wonderfully structured place for teaching.”

INTERVIEW

More Health in Megacities

Ursula Wittwer-Backofen explains the Master of Science in Global Urban Health

The anthropologist Prof. Dr. Ursula Wittwer-Backofen is a founding committee member and spokesperson of the board of directors of the Center for Medicine and Society (ZMG), which was established at the University of Freiburg in 2014. Eva Opitz spoke with her about the Master of Science in Global Urban Health, an in-service continuing education program the ZMG launched in September 2016.

uni'alumni: Prof. Dr. Wittwer-Backofen, you are well known for your expert opinions on modern skull and skeleton research. What does that have to do with global health research in developing and newly industrialized countries?

Ursula Wittwer-Backofen: The center is dedicated to studying the health care needs of a predominantly urban populace of developing and newly industrialized countries, and in doing so to identify new paths in research, practice, and teaching. Anthropology is an important discipline for this endeavor, because it covers a broad field focusing on humans in their relation to the environment. How do people succeed in adapting to changes in the environment at a biological and behavioral level? This human–environment interaction is what we're interested in. We ask what resources are available and useful for improving public health.

What research institutions are involved in the ZMG?

We've brought together all of the most important disciplines at the university for this research. In addition to purely medical disciplines, this also includes the social and historical sciences as well as urban planning and health economics. The rapidly developing megacities of the newly industrialized world exhibit an entire bundle of risks we are examining with a broad interdisciplinary approach. In addition, we are working with international partners in the USA, South Africa, the Netherlands, India, China, and Brazil. We also received support from the World Health Organization. Since Freiburg has earned the WHO label of "Green City," we can refer to it as a model city that forms a contrast to the megacities.

How is the new one-year degree program organized?

From a purely formal standpoint, the program is organized by the Faculty of Humanities. It contributes the social component, such as an analysis of the social structures of the countries being studied. The students also receive their degree from this faculty. The twelve students are from Africa, Asia, South America, Germany, and Australia. This is an ideal intercultural composition



The Freiburg anthropologist Ursula Wittwer-Backofen works to improve interdisciplinary health care in the newly industrialized world. Photo: Klaus Polkowski

that reflects the different global human–environment relations and the differences in health care we are studying. The students who applied have work experience, and some of them are currently employed by municipal health care systems and ministries or at nongovernmental organizations. They were released from their duties for a year to complete the master's program. They are expected to use the year to develop their own projects and complete the program by writing a master's thesis.

What areas does the program focus on?

The topic of childhood illnesses, for example, is about growth and maturation and the detrimental effects of infections and illnesses caused by environmental factors. The idea is to strengthen the generation of children. The students learn how to access data, find relevant sources of information abroad, and compare health care systems. The guiding question is always how to identify and reduce risk factors.

What should the students be capable of at the end of the program?

Most importantly, they should be able to identify the best possible means of promoting health in the country they are studying and choose the right procedure for implementing relevant measures. They should learn to identify problems beyond the bounds of individual disciplines and know how to motivate the key actors to promote public health. We teach students the necessary sequence of steps for this in the degree program.

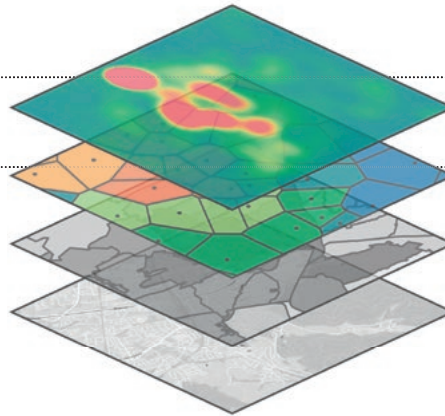
» www.zmg.uni-freiburg.de

MY START-UP: GEOSPIN

A Wealth of Data

We leave an enormous trail of data behind us every day – when we shop, tweet, ride the train, or purchase theater tickets. Companies collect this information, but they often do not make as much use of it as they could. “There is a great wealth of data here, but you can only tap into it if you know how to read it,” says Dr. Christoph Gebele, head of sales and marketing at the company Geospin. The spin-off was founded by five University of Freiburg business informatics researchers in March 2016.

What they do is analyze data collected by companies to determine where it would be worth it for them to open up new locations. If a gumball machine company wants to find the most profitable places to install its next machines, for example, the experts at Geospin take a look at how many gumballs have



Geospin uses algorithms that filter out relevant factors from various data sources and combine them to form an overall picture.

Illustration: Geospin

been sold from the company’s existing machines and combine this information with other factors. “In addition to the data provided by the company itself, we also use so-called open data, explains Dr. Tobias Brandt, expert data scientist at Geospin. This may include census, weather, or traffic data. The team might then come to the conclusion that gum-

ball machines are in particular demand in parts of town with a lot of movie theaters, or perhaps they will discover that more gumballs are sold from the already installed machines on hot days.

“We work with explanatory and predictive methods to help the companies derive maximum benefit from the data they collect,” says Gebele. The partners received funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy and the “University-Based Business Start-Ups” initiative for their idea, and it’s taking off: The demand for Geospin’s services is high.

Claudia Füßler

» www.geospin.de

A LOOK BACK

Odd and a Bit Inconspicuous

Lecture halls nicknamed “the aquarium” because you sit behind a big glass facade and feel like you’re on display, a stairwell in a hall with a wall that used to be part of an external facade, complete with oriels and windows, and steps that lead you up and down again because the floor height is not the same as that of the adjacent building: These are just a few of the curiosities of Collegiate Building (KG) III on the university’s main campus. It is home to a number of humanities departments and

libraries, accommodates seminar rooms, lecture halls, and language labs, and is built over a two-level underground garage.

Upon completion of reconstruction after the Second World War, the university had to start growing to keep up with the rising student enrollment. New buildings on the university’s main campus built by the end of the 1960s included the cafeteria on Rempartstraße, Collegiate Building II, and KG III,

which was completed in 1968. The task of KG III’s architect, Albrecht Haas, was to make the best possible use of the site. He had to take account of the historic Peterhof and Haus Zur Lieben Hand and create a link between the large architectural forms of KG I and II and the smaller buildings of the neighboring historic city center, as the project manager and later director of the university building authority Ortwin Müller writes.

The building cost a total of 19.2 million D-marks, including all necessary preparation work and the design of the surrounding space. Fifty years after the topping off ceremony in November 1966, KG III still fulfills its purpose – a bit odd and a bit conspicuous.

Martin Jost

Collegiate Building III and its historical neighbors.

Photo: Patrick Seeger



Campus Bulletin

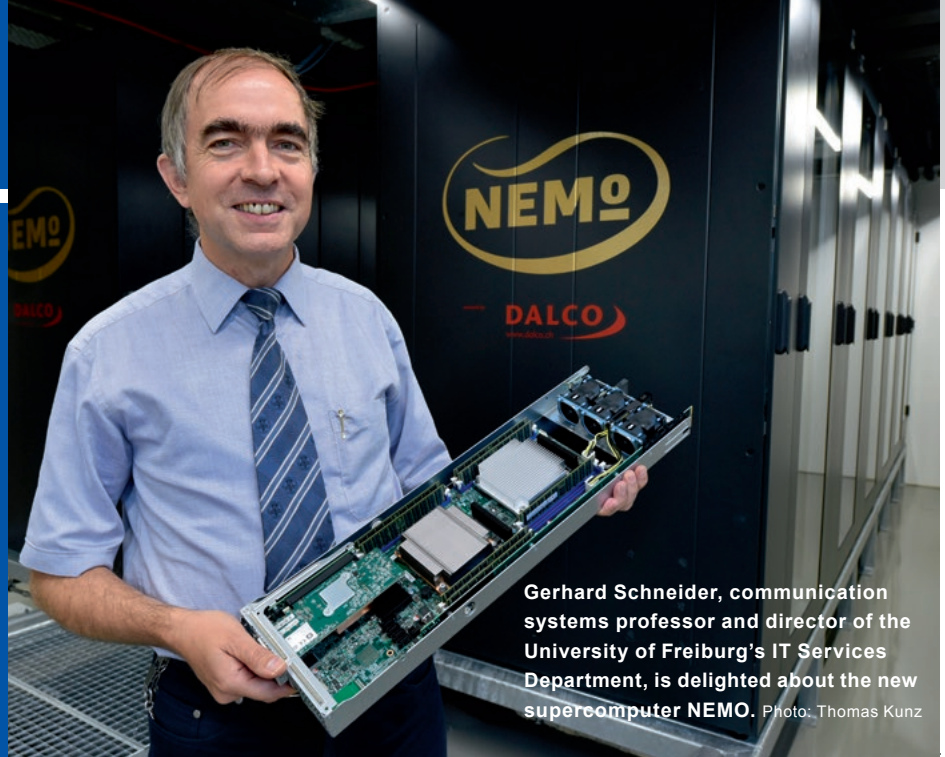
1098 Is Now the “Horst Weitzmann Lecture Hall”

■ The University of Freiburg has christened the well-known and often-used lecture hall 1098 in Collegiate Building I “Horst Weitzmann Lecture Hall.” It is the first time a university donor has been given such an honor. “Hardly any friend and benefactor has rendered greater services to the university since the 1990s than Horst Weitzmann,” says Rector Prof. Dr. Hans-Jochen Schiewer. Weitzmann served as chief executive and co-partner of Badische Stahlwerke in Kehl and later as chairman of the board at Südweststahl AG. His involvement on behalf of the university includes stints as University Council chair from 2003 to 2011 and as chair of the Freiburg New University Endowment, which he founded in 2007 with a personal donation of one million euros.



Horst Weitzmann at a colloquium held to mark his 75th birthday in lecture hall 1098.

Photo: Patrick Seeger



Gerhard Schneider, communication systems professor and director of the University of Freiburg's IT Services Department, is delighted about the new supercomputer NEMO. Photo: Thomas Kunz

High Performance Computing in Freiburg

■ It is one of the 500 most powerful computers in the world and is available for use by microsystems engineering, elementary particle physics, and neurosciences researchers from all of Baden-Württemberg's universities: the supercomputer NEMO, now in operation at the University of Freiburg. It is composed of 750 nodes, each with 20 computing units – so-called cores. This gives it a maximum processing power that is up to 15,000 times faster than that of commercially available computers. Supercomputers are becoming increasingly important for research: On the one hand they are capable of managing and analyzing big data, and on the other hand computer simulations can replace expensive experiments.

» www.hpc.uni-freiburg.de

The Freiburg Center for Interactive Materials and Bioinspired Technologies provides space for up to 140 scientists from a variety of disciplines to conduct their research.

Photo: Ingeborg Lehmann



New Research Center Opened

■ The University of Freiburg has opened the Freiburg Center for Interactive Materials and Bioinspired Technologies (FIT). The building on Georges-Köhler-Allee provides a modern research environment for up to 140 researchers from the fields of microsystems engineering, polymer science, chemistry, physics, biology, bionics, power engineering, and medicine. The center develops materials and systems based on natural models. These smart materials and intelligent systems are designed to make people's daily lives easier by improving their quality of life, safety, and health.

» www.fit.uni-freiburg.de

Strengthening Entrepreneurial Culture

■ The University of Freiburg has received two awards for concepts in support of entrepreneurial culture. The centerpiece of the strategic concept "Windows for Entrepreneurship," which was successful in the national "EXIST Entrepreneurial Culture – the Entrepreneurial University" competition, is the Freiburg ABCs of Entrepreneurship: The Academy for Entrepreneurship offers a broad continuing education program tailored to the needs of specific groups, networks organized by the Founders Office help to professionalize start-ups, and a transfer coaching service helps entrepreneurs explore utilization opportunities and prospects for their research findings early on. In addition, the State of Baden-Württemberg has approved funding for the program "ZuG: Zugänge zum Gründen," which is designed to get students interested in founding their own companies and teach them the necessary skills to do so.

» www.gruenden.uni-freiburg.de

Alternative City Tours

■ Geography students developed the smartphone app "Freiblick" in a seminar at the University of Freiburg. It currently includes three tours to places of interest in Freiburg that are not part of the program in classical sightseeing tours. The first gives users tips on where and how they can make their lives more environmentally friendly and sustainable, the second traces the development of the environmental movement in Freiburg from its origins to the present day, and the third explores places of protest and resistance from Freiburg's past. The app is available free of charge from the Google Play Store.



Photo: Sandra Meyndt

Texts, Pictures, and Videos from Campus

■ The University of Freiburg is active on all important social networks: On Facebook we keep you informed about learning, research, and life on campus with texts, pictures, and videos. Our Twitter channel provides compact information on research and teaching, announcements of events, and news. The engaging photographs we post on our Instagram account provide perspectives on daily life at the university and a look behind the scenes – helping people to identify with Freiburg as a place to study. In addition to photographs, moving pictures are also becoming increasingly popular on social networks. We have responded to this trend with a new YouTube channel that presents the university as an interesting place to research and teach and provides important practical tips on studying in Freiburg.

» www.pr.uni-freiburg.de/publikationen/soziale-medien

Quality Seal for Good Foundation Administration

■ Thirty-four foundation trusts, a total endowment of more than 17 million euros, and outstanding standards: A committee from the Association of German Foundations has awarded the University of Freiburg the "Quality Seal for Good Foundation Trust Administration." The university's foundations support students as well as young scholars with scholarships, grants for studies and research, and awards for outstanding achievements. The university's endowment includes real estate, plots of land for agricultural use, a fishery on the Feldberg, the Mathiswald forest tract in Hinterzarten, a historic Black Forest farm from the 17th century, and the vineyards used to produce the university wine.

» www.pr.uni-freiburg.de/go/stiftungen



Edith Wiesen-Emmerich (left) and Andreas Lang from the University of Freiburg accept the award from Birgit Radow from the Association of German Foundations.

Photo: Deutscher StiftungService/Christian Thomas

Karl V. Ullrich Named Honorary Senator



Rector Hans-Jochen Schiewer (right) thanks Karl V. Ullrich for his many years of involvement at the University of Freiburg.

Photo: Jörg Blum

■ The University of Freiburg has conferred the title of honorary senator on Dr. Karl V. Ullrich, who served from 2005 to 2016 as chair of the Friends of the University Association. This is the highest distinction the university can bestow. Ullrich enriched Freiburg's academic and cultural diversity in his more than 30 years of commitment to science and research at the University of Freiburg as well as to its students. He played an instrumental role in building up the Friends of the University Association, which now has 800 members and an endowment of 2.5 million euros and provides more than 100,000 euros in funding for students each year – for instance for conferences, excursions, internships, or study abroad.

PORTRAIT



The architect Yvonne Faller has a sense of being embedded in history in her job as head architect of the Freiburg Minster.

Photo: Thomas Kunz

Looking After the “World’s Most Beautiful Building”

Yvonne Faller is the first woman to serve as head architect of the Freiburg Minster

She sees herself as looking after the “world’s most beautiful building.” The building in question is very old. It goes back to the year 1200, to be exact. Yvonne Faller was named head architect of the Freiburg Minster in 2005. She is the first woman to serve in this position; her predecessors over the centuries were all men. One is reminded in this context of Ken Follett’s book *The Pillars of the Earth*, in which stonemasons are the driving force in cathedral building. That would not have been a job for Yvonne Faller. Like most of her predecessors, she is an architect. “I was very sensitive to dust as a child,” she says. Since her parents ran a bakery and one of her grandfathers was a sculptor with a stonemasonry workshop, however, she is familiar with skilled crafts – and can also speak the language of the stonemasons who work under her to ensure the upkeep of the Minster.

A Centuries-Long Restoration Backlog

What also unites all of them is their goal to preserve an edifice that plays a key role for the identity of the entire region. Her words resonate with reverence, and speaking with her about her job causes the ego to shrink. One feels irreverent uttering terms like “permanent building site” in relation to the restora-

tion work. She and her team are responsible for working off a centuries-long restoration backlog. The blonde 56-year-old can rattle off data and facts about the Minster’s history from memory – about the two world wars and the shifting responsibilities between the city and the ducal building authority. She spent two semesters studying history and art history before beginning her study of architecture in Stuttgart, she reveals.

Everything seems to come together for Yvonne Faller in her position as head architect of a medieval cathedral. Even the spiritual connection is there: “I have been suffused with Catholicism since I was a child. It’s part of my life.” Her relationship with Freiburg’s Gothic wonderwork comes from within – excellent conditions for a task with an almost missionary character: “We need to get Freiburg’s citizens excited about the church.” It is expensive to maintain: “Everyone needs to help, because otherwise we won’t be able to preserve it.” A diagram of the spire showing each stone and its sponsor is resting against the bright yellow wall of her office. She has personally colored in the stones that are already “taken.” All of the proceeds are paid to the account of the association for the preservation of the Freiburg Minster, which is also her employer. Strictly speaking, she actually has 5100 employ-

ers, because that is how many members the association has, and she is delighted every time a new member joins.

An Inspiring Building

It’s not as if Yvonne Faller didn’t understand anything about new buildings, and cathedrals aren’t the only thing that interests her. In fact, she has even built a house for her mother in Freiburg. And while she did gain a certain amount of notoriety for her modernization of the Vita Classica thermal bath in Bad Krozingen as a freelance architect, she is no longer interested in winning renown in this way. She sees herself as being in a very relaxed situation with her current position: “I don’t need to bend over backwards to get noticed by designing some spectacular building or other.” All she needs to do is take her place in the long line of architects who have had the task of looking after this inspiring building before her. She describes this sense of being embedded in history as a “nice feeling” and still remembers the many afternoons as a twelve-year-old school student in Freiburg when she climbed the Minster’s tower, watched and listened to the bells as they rang, and marveled at the ornamental stonework of this “most beautiful tower in all of Christendom.”

Anita Ruffer

THE NEW CITY HALL

More Services under a Single Roof

Freiburg's city government is growing and needs more space. Its administrative departments will soon be concentrated at a central location instead of being spread over 16 locations around town as previously. This will reduce the distances citizens need to travel to reach them. The new city hall on Fehrenbachallee in the Stühlinger neighborhood is currently being built in three phases: The first phase – a five-story oval-shaped building with space for 840 city employees – is scheduled for completion in March 2017, three months later than planned. The second and third phases, also consisting of oval-shaped buildings, are still awaiting approval by the city council. A decision on the second building is expected in mid 2018.



All in one place: Freiburg's new administrative center will provide services previously performed at 16 different locations around town. Photo: Thomas Kunz

The first building is a so-called net plus energy building, meaning that it produces more energy than it consumes. The roof and the 9000-square-meter facade are fitted with solar modules. The power for heating and cooling is generated with ground water by means of near-surface geothermal energy, and the building envelope is built to passive standards. This means that the building will be able to cover most of its heating needs through heat recovery. The Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems ISE is overseeing the construction and operation of the new city hall, and the project is receiving funding from the federal government's "Energy-Optimized Construction" program.

However, the city hall designed by the firm Ingenhoven Architects is not just innovative from an architectural standpoint: Newly designed offices, a new system for the record office, and new forms of cooperation between the departments in the new building will completely change the way the administration works. The goal was to design a more convenient city hall that offers more services under a single roof. The ground floor of the first building has a citizen service center with around 70 service spaces under two glass domes – the heart of the new administrative center.

Claudia Füßler

CITY CENTER

Freiburg's New Center

Freiburg's city center is getting a makeover, and it will change the look of the town more than almost any other municipal project completed in the past ten years. The second largest square in the city center – after Münsterplatz – is currently under construction between the theater and the collegiate buildings. The Platz der Alten Synagoge is being rebuilt and Rotteckring completely redesigned as part of an extended pedestrian zone reaching all the way to the main train station. "Freiburg's city center will become even more attractive for citizens in the coming years," promises Mayor Dr. Dieter Salomon. The big project on Rotteckring also includes 1.9 kilometers of new tram tracks. There will be five stops on the stretch from Kronenstraße over Rotteckring to Siegesdenkmal. Four tram lines will meet at a new barrier-free junction at the Stadttheater stop. Automobiles will no longer be able to use this stretch but will be rerouted to Bismarckallee alongside the main train station.



What is now a large construction site will soon be a new central square for Freiburg. Photo: Thomas Kunz

The 130-by-130-meter Platz der Alten Synagoge is being paved with large light-colored granite slabs surrounded by a darker border according to a design by the Freiburg architects Martin Schedlbauer and Volker Rosenstiel. Granite blocks will serve as benches, and trees and a large fountain will create a relaxed atmosphere in the middle of the city. The fountain will follow the ground plan of the Freiburg Jewish Congregation's former synagogue, which was built on this site in 1870 and destroyed on the morning of 10 November 1938 by National Socialist commandos. Remains of the foundation walls of the synagogue were found during the construction work. The city government aims to pull down the three rows of walls obstructing the building of a pool and integrate them into another memorial. The square is due to be completed and ready for use by Freiburg citizens by the end of 2017.

Claudia Füßler



Tradition and innovation: The farmers' market on Münsterplatz has attracted visitors from the city and the entire region for generations. In the future, maybe they will be joined by robots like Nao from the Faculty of Engineering.

MEET ME IN FREIBURG ...

Out of the University, into the City

The photographer Thomas Kunz took objects from the Archaeological Collection, the Central Administration's parking lot, the uni'shop, and other places on campus and established unusual new contexts for them by photographing them at various spots around town.



Heart of the city: An anatomical model symbolizes the popularity of Augustinerplatz among residents and tourists.



Skyline: Wine, champagne, and liquor from the university's vineyards – and between them the cathedral. The steeple, seen here from Kanonenplatz, blends in perfectly with this selection of fine wines and spirits.

Quack, quack: A rubber ducky from the uni'shop meets living water fowl at Seepark. Swans may have longer necks, but they don't have an academic cap or a diploma.



Ancient thinker, modern architecture: The Greek philosopher Plato, here as a plaster cast from the Archaeological Collection, would surely be happy to know his writings are in safe keeping at the new University Library.



Modern mobility in Freiburg's newest neighborhood: An electric car from the Central University Administration fits right in on the streets of environmentally friendly Rieselfeld.

Calendar 2017

■ Dies Universitatis

Tuesday, 30 May 2017, 7:15 p.m. (planned)
Assembly Hall (Aula), Collegiate Building I,
Platz der Universität 3, 79098 Freiburg

■ Freiburg Science Fair

Friday, 14 July, and Saturday, 15 July 2017, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Münsterplatz, 79098 Freiburg

■ Beginning Student Day with “Market of Possibilities”

Friday, 13 October 2017, 2 p.m.
Schwarzwald-Stadion
Schwarzwaldstraße 193, 79117 Freiburg

■ Official Opening of the Academic Year

Wednesday, 18 October 2017, 10:15 a.m.
Audimax, Collegiate Building II,
Platz der Alten Synagoge, 79098 Freiburg

Alumni Services

■ Newsletter

» www.alumni.uni-freiburg.de/service/newsletter

■ Blog

» <http://alumni-blog.uni-freiburg.de>

■ Social Networks

» www.alumni.uni-freiburg.de/service/socialnetworks



■ Alumni-Clubs

» www.alumni.uni-freiburg.de/alumni_netzwerk

■ Continuing Education

Freiburg Academy of Continuing Education:
» www.weiterbildung.uni-freiburg.de

Studium generale:

» www.studiumgenerale.uni-freiburg.de

Language Teaching Center:

» www.sli.uni-freiburg.de

Freiburg Academy of Science and Technology:

» www.fast.uni-freiburg.de

■ University Library

» www.ub.uni-freiburg.de

■ University House on Schauinsland

» www.pr.uni-freiburg.de/go/uni-haus

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And don't forget to visit us at our website: » www.alumni.uni-freiburg.de



Freiburg Science Fair

Fotos: Sandra Meyndt



Beginning Student Day in Schwarzwald-stadion

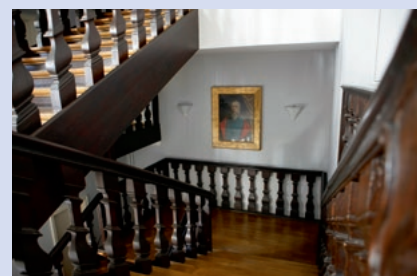


Alumni Pavilion at the University House on Schauinsland

Photo: Michael Spiegelhalter

Haus „Zur Lieben Hand“

Photo: Peter Mesenhöll



Masthead

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