kieler anker

kiel is a »campus international«
arabian perspectives in kiel
bi-national doctoral studies
a closer examination of our own past
Welcome to the latest edition of the Kieler Anker.

Once more we have assembled a colorful mixture of goings-on at the University, dealing with new courses of study, new research findings, and personal stories of international students and visiting scientists.

We introduce to you Arina Hasson and her newly founded student organization Arab Perspectives, while Benedikt Miklos tells how exciting it was to complete bi-national doctoral studies. The International Center now has an additional guest house, and we also report on the project »Campus international«, the main theme of the Summer Semester 2009.

Once again, there is much to report on in the research area, as Kiel scientists have achieved some advances, particularly in the fields of Marine Science, Genetics, and Nanotech.

In addition, there is no lack of sports or history: the Kieler Anker visited the newly-formed group of Freestylers and was instructed in tips and tricks, and we would also like to relate to you how openly the Uni Kiel is confronting its own Nazi past.

We wish you much enjoyment reading this edition.

Your Kieler Anker editors
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Scientists find link between genetic defect on chromosome 15 and epilepsy.

Researchers have identified a genetic defect for common epilepsies on chromosome 15. A subset of the patients with epilepsy lacked a certain part of this chromosome. Further studies on patients from the USA confirmed this finding. The loss of small chromosomal segments, called microdeletions by geneticists, has previously not been connected with common disorders that also include many types of common epilepsies.

Dr. Ingo Helbig, University of Kiel and Department of Neuropediatrics at the University Medical Center Schleswig Holstein, Germany, is first author on a research study, published in the advanced online publication of the scientific magazine Nature Genetics: "So far, we didn't know that microdeletions, loss of entire chromosomal segments including several genes, can also be a cause for common diseases. This finding will help understand why people suffer from common disorders including epilepsies." Up to three percent of the population experience epileptic seizures and one percent suffers from epilepsy, which is characterised by recurrent seizures. The researchers hope that understanding how this genetic defect leads to epilepsy will help develop new drugs against seizures. So far, most genes for epilepsy were only found in rare form of epilepsies. However, hereditary factors are long known to play a much larger role, contributing to many common forms of seizure disorders. Hence, the discovery of the 15q13.3 microdeletions in common epilepsies is an important milestone.

44 coauthors contributed to the recent study, which was coordinated by Dr. Thomas Sander from the Cologne Center of Genomic at the University of Cologne, Germany. On a European level, this project included German groups from Berlin, Bonn, Marburg, Ulm as well as groups from Vienna, Copenhagen, Utrecht (NL), Geneva, Troina (Italy), Marseille and Nice. The research study was performed in collaboration with the group of Dr. Evan Eichler at the Department of Genome Sciences and Howard Hughes Medical Institute at the University of Washington, Seattle. Dr. Eichler is one of the pioneers of research on microdeletions in human disease.

Many authors on this research papers are part of the European EPICURE project of the European Union, a large consortium dedicated to the research of epilepsies.

In the picture down you can see how EEGs help in the diagnosis of epilepsies. Prof. Ulrich Stephani at the University Medical Center Schleswig-Holstein, Germany is taking the medical history from a young patient with epilepsy from Kiel. Using EEG monitoring, brain waves are constantly monitored in order to detect epileptic seizures. Using this information, physicians can find regions in the brain, which cause epileptic seizures. In many cases, however, seizures affect both sides of the brain and are called "generalized" epilepsies.

Particularly in generalized epilepsies genetic factors such as the recently identified 15q13.3 microdeletion are found to play an important role.
brought together by freestyle sports

University Athletics at Kiel has been enriched by a new athletic activity – FAM stands for »Free Arts of Movement« and has already gained the interest of numerous people from many different countries.

FAM has made it its goal to support a set new trends in sports such as parkour, freerunning, trikking, freestyle waterjumping, freestyle trampoline, slacklining, breakdancing or capoeira, which all share certain similarities, and to help introduce, establish and develop them further. All of these athletic trends are free movement disciplines, and they have many aspects in common. The movements involved do not follow specific existing norms nor do they require any special equipment, and you can practice them anywhere.

They also share in being very international, i.e. they have roots all over the world. Parkour, a running sport in which people run on buildings and staircases and not just on the ground – originated in France and has mostly been developed there. Breakdancing has its origins in the United States, whereas capoeira is a Brazilian »fight dance« that was conceived in Brasil, but which is also very popular in Turkey. The problem that fans of these new sports trends have finding places to practice has led many to join classical gymnastics groups, says Phillip Preuss, director of the Kiel FAM-group. He started out cycling, but he quickly learned to do a backflip, because acrobatics he had always been interested in acrobatics.

»Then I found a capoeira club in Fürstenwalde where I was living, where I learned a lot of kicks, techniques and also acrobatics,« recounts the Sports student. At the same time he was training with the local breakdancers, and he met dancers and even his girlfriend. But that all was still not enough for him: »Meanwhile I had also gotten to know the sport called parkour via Youtube, and my best friend and I ran across town training.« His romance led him to move from Fürstenwalde near Berlin to Kiel to study Sports and Philosophy. At first he had intended to study Biology, but he is »glad that it ended up being Philosophy, it's a good counterbalance to all the athletic activity for me.« In Kiel he of course wanted to keep pursuing his athletics: »I was hoping that there would be people here who go off like I do, and after one or two months I found them. At the time there was a gymnastics class, in which everyone was unofficially doing freestyle acrobatics and tricking.«

In December 2008, the association FAM – Free Arts of Movement was founded. A friend of his, who actively pursues freestyle trampoline jumping, initiated the contact, and Phillip got involved. Not a moment too soon, he says, because »the situation with the freestylers in the gymnastics course was getting worse – apparently some gymnasts were complaining that we breakdancers and trickers needed so much space on the floor that it got in the way of their training. At the same time FAM was looking for ways to get something going in Kiel.« So he took it upon himself to offer a FAM course at the university, which was well received right away, especially among people who felt limited in their movement doing other kinds of sports, e.g. because they officially were not allowed to freestyle during gymnastics classes.

Phillip says he sees the advantage of FAM principally in the fact that no one need feel pressured to perform, because everything is open and there is no competition – everything is oriented toward the joy of practicing.
inside cau

of motion. Little successes are the goal, because »when you notice that it doesn't even take a half hour to learn how to do a forward flip, you're really fired up,« he says, giving one example.

»Now it's not just about being awed by other people, it's about doing it yourself. The principle of FAM is that everyone takes on the role of coach according to their specialty, and this finally makes clear to everyone what Youtube videos can't, that's how to practice a trick and how to improve it. Once you've developed a basic repertoire of moves, you can improvise freely and even get new ideas.«

Internationality is a big advantage in these sports, because a participant from another country can be active right away. For example, several students from Russia are taking advantage of the opportunity to improve their breakdancing moves on good flexible floors. Phillip Preiss, who works as a course instructor while he attends university, has noticed that he finds working with adults very rewarding and that his philosophy studies have had a noticeable impact, because he has now become very interested in religion.

Can that be combined with athletics? »Mostly I work with yoga, the practice, the meditation etc., but I also work with Hinduism, Buddhism and Indian teachings. I gather information about a lot of other movements, because I'm of the opinion that all religions are just branches of one big common tree.« Or: »there are many paths up the mountain, but the view at the top is the same.« That is why he could imagine himself opening a vitality center later in life with spa, fitness, nutrition and a trend sports area. He would already have found the right partner for it, he laughs, because »my girlfriend is studying Nutritional Science.« (ds)

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can genetic information be controlled by light?

DNA, the molecule that acts as the carrier of genetic information in all forms of life, is highly resistant against alteration by ultraviolet light, but understanding the mechanism for its photostability presents some puzzling problems. A key aspect is the interaction between the four chemical bases that make up the DNA molecule.

Researchers at Kiel University have succeeded in showing that DNA strands differ in their light sensitivity depending on their base sequences. It has been known for many years that the individual bases that code the genetic information contained in DNA show a high degree of photostability, as the energy that they take up from UV radiation is immediately released again. Surprisingly, however, it is found that in DNA, which consists of many bases, those mechanisms are ineffective or only partially effective. It seems that the deactivation of UV-excited DNA molecules must instead occur by some completely different mechanisms specific to DNA, which are not yet understood. Through measurements by a variety of methods on DNA molecules with different base sequences, the research group led by Professor Friedrich Temps at the Institute of Physical Chemistry of Kiel University has now been able to confirm and clarify that assumption.

According to Professor Temps, »DNA achieves its high degree of photostability through its complex double-helix structure. The interactions between bases that are stacked one above another within a DNA strand, and the hydrogen bonds between the base pairs of the two complementary single strands in the double-helix play key roles. Through the different interactions that we have observed the DNA acts to some extent as its own sun-protection«.

Nina Schwalb investigated many different base combinations in synthetically-produced DNA molecules. Using a femtosecond pulsed laser spectroscope, she measured the characteristic energy release for each combination. She was able to measure the time for which the molecules continued to fluoresce, and thus how long they stored the light energy. She found that for some base combinations these fluorescence ‘lifetimes’ were only about 100 femtoseconds, whereas for others they were up to a thousand times longer. A femtosecond is one millionth of a billionth of a second.

Commenting on the conclusions from her research, Nina Schwalb says: »We have investigated the photophysical properties and have found that different base combinations have widely different fluorescence lifetimes. This could lead to the development of a new diagnostic method whereby laser light could be used to directly recognise certain genetic sequences without, for example, having to mark the DNA with dyes as in the method used at present.«

One might also envisage linking the photophysical properties to genetic characteristics. When these mechanisms are better understood, it might in the long term become possible to repair gene mutations using laser radiation.

»In the field of nano-electronics it has already been shown that synthetically produced DNA can be used as ‘nano-wires’. On the basis of the different reaction times of the molecules it might one day become possible to use laser pulses to ‘switch’ specific molecules. It might even be possible under some circumstances to make transistors from DNA that would work through the hydrogen bonds,« explains Professor Temps.

The work of Nina Schwalb is being supported by the German Research Foundation (DFG) as part of the project »Ultrafast Photodynamics of DNA«.
more room for international guests

The University of Kiel hosts more than a hundred guest researchers in its guest houses every year. In order to meet the growing demand, a further guest residence was opened at the end of 2008.

International guests now have access to 18 additional single, double and triple apartments on the Hindenburgufer in Kiel, directly adjacent to an already-existing guest residence. "International cooperation at the university has increased in the past few years. In general and particularly in connection with the excellence initiative, we have had to provide our guests with optimal living and researching conditions," says Chancellor Dr. Oliver Herrmann. "As the intersection between the two existing guest residences, this third one was conceived as a center of social interaction. With the additional space, we can now also house even more scientists from abroad with their families. After all, we have an obligation as a family-oriented University," says the Chancellor.

The building is located directly on the fjord, so it provides residents with an unforgettable view of the water, and its proximity to the wooded neighborhood of Düsternbrook allows residents to stroll through wonderful surroundings.

But the architecture is something special. "The building is clearly designed to be a modest, measured structure, and it is positioned such that there are open views of the fjord on the right and left," says architect Edgar Schwinghammer. "The new building takes on some stylistic features of the neighboring buildings, but the choice of dark tones for stone and windows sets the guest house apart as a new structure." A transparent stairwell divides the building into two parts.

The northern part contains the single apartments, and the three-room apartments are in the southern half. The two-room apartments are separated from one another with double doors that allow for a flexible, adaptive living space: according to residents’ needs, they can be opened to create three- or four-room apartments. The single apartments are furnished with common kitchens to facilitate social contacts. A courtyard area was designed for the exterior space that provides a forum for communal activities to the residents.

All the apartments come furnished, and all the kitchens already have everything necessary for residents to cook and feel at home right away. (ds)

The international guest houses of the CAU are administered by the International Center. More information about this and all other residences can be found online at http://www.uni-kiel.de/international/gastwissenschaftler_e/gaestehaus00-e.shtml

The building offers furnishings in timeless form and color. Picture: Arne Biederbeck, Copyright: CAU
Since October 2008, there has been a new Arab organization at the Uni Kiel, the »Arab Perspectives«. The Kieler Anker spoke with one of the founders, Arina Hasson, about the group and about her life in Germany after her sudden flight from Iraq.

Arina Hasson is majoring in Islamic Studies at the Uni Kiel and last year, together with her sister and two other friends, she co-founded the very active student group »Arab Perspectives« (Arabische Perspektiven), which contributed a great deal to the project »Campus International« (See p. 10).

But how did Arina and her sister end up in Germany? »We have been living here now for 11 years. The whole family had to flee Iraq at that time. My father is a doctor of Political Science, and he was no longer able to work there.« Since her father knew someone in Germany, they went to Lübeck and stayed at a home for people seeking political asylum. »We were ten and thirteen years old and could not speak German. At home, we had an enormous house and now all of us had to live in a small room,« she says, remembering her first days in Germany.

Fortunately they were able to learn the language quickly. »Even in the asylum residence, there was a small school to keep us busy, and we did not have to always just sit around in our room. There, we were taught at least the basics of the language.« Nonetheless, fleeing their home was a kind of shock, and Arina herself became quiet and introverted for quite a while. »All at once we were surrounded by lots of strangers using a foreign language. Our mother cried a lot, because our family was not able to take anything along and was not able to say good-bye to the rest of the family.«

Once they had found their own apartment with the help of a few dedicated private citizens in Lübeck, there was no question for their father that the children should return to school as soon as possible, and that they should not go to the Hauptschule or Realschule but to the Gymnasium, so that they could attend university one day. »We were placed in an afternoon program with other children so we could get out of the house once in a while, and luckily we were assisted by private citizens, for example in looking for an apartment, because the government agencies only provided us with little help. Germany is a little behind when it comes to integration,« says Arina of the support Germany gives to refugees, which in her opinion is very poor.

Because their father was so proactive, his wish that the children attend Gymnasium was fulfilled, despite their lacking skill in German. She explains: »Luckily I could already write the Latin alphabet, because I had been learning English in school at home. With the help and support of German friends, we were placed in a German school.« Bernd Januschke, director of the nearby Kathrineum, a school in Lübeck, let Arina and her sister enroll at his own risk, without documentation or grade reports. »We are still in touch with him and he is very proud of us for having achieved so much and because we are now all three attending university.«

Asked why she chose to study in Kiel, she answers immediately: »Because my parents are nearby. I really quite wanted to study French in Saarbrücken, because that is close to France, but my mother requested that we girls both stay in the area. That is why my sister is also studying here in Kiel.« Her sister is studying Art History, and Alina herself is studying for a Master’s degree in Islamic Studies and Polish alongside French.
Does she stay connected with her former home? »I do volunteer work for a website called Al-Jazeera-Talk and write reports from Germany for the Arab world. It is especially important for me to get the writing experience. There, I also have the opportunity to report on little things from Germany. For example people in Sudan think it is interesting how punctual the buses in Kiel run and how they stick to their schedule,« she grins.

She thought about founding an Arab student organization at the Uni Kiel herself, and she made inquiries at the International Center. »Mr. Bensien, the coordinator for international students, told me that there was only a Maghreb student organization at that time, so that there was no reason it wouldn’t be possible to found our group. Plus, he helped us fill out the forms,« says Arina Hasson happily of the productive cooperation with the International Center.

The group is intended to represent all the Arab states, so not only do students from Iraq congregate there, but so do students from Syria and Palestine who »display their culture« and who wish to use the opportunity to represent their countries. In a sort of policy meeting last October, the first four founding members passed their own by-laws and by December had already organized a film evening. By now the group has grown to twenty members. A lot of time was spent choosing a name. They talked themselves silly until they finally were able to bring all the Arab states they wanted to represent together under one umbrella with the name »Arab Perspective«.

The Arab student group contributed a few of their own activities to the project Campus International. In addition to a film evening, two Arab evenings took place, one themed »Muslim Life on Campus« and the other »The Middle East«, where alongside reports by Arab students and Arab foods and music, the primary focus was on conversing with visitors.

The group Arab Perspectives is especially proud of having organized a piano concert with Bshara Harouni, a member of Western-Eastern Diwan Orchestra under Daniel Barenboim. »Otherwise he performs in big concert halls in New York or London,« says Arina Hasson excitedly of the event. »But when we said we wanted this event to celebrate UNESCO’s choice of Jerusalem to be the Arab Cultural Capital of 2009, he agreed right away.«

In a general sense, this event is a feather in the group’s cap. »Jerusalem is the city of three religions, and it is very important for the whole Arab cultural region. We will certainly be organizing a few more events on this topic this coming semester,« promises Arina, speaking on behalf of Arab Perspectives. (ds)
The 2009 summer semester at the CAU Kiel witnessed the project »campus international«. With lectures, contests, seminars and other enticing events, the university showed itself from its international side.

There are special advantages in scientific cooperation between researchers in and outside of Germany and in educating students from other countries, but often there is no awareness of these benefits or they are simply taken for granted. »campus international« was able to demonstrate the fruits of international cooperation convincingly through numerous events of all kinds.

What does internationality mean for the CAU? How many international students are enrolled here? Where does integration take place at the university?

With answers to these and many other questions, campus international showed, over the course of the semester, what goes on at the university in international contexts, how internationality influences research and teaching, what contexts involve international aspects, and what it all means for the institution and its people.

It was not just about the diversity of cultures, but about the question of how this diversity registers in people’s consciousness and of how people deal with it.

The Origins of the Project

The idea of »campus international« came about during a meeting of the »round tables«, which seeks to improve the situation of foreign students in Kiel and which has been meeting regularly for years. Ideas for sensitizing people to the topics of interculturality and internationality were gathered, and out of this grew the concept of putting together this summer semester during which the whole university would examine its own international aspects and the integration of them into the university, and during which these aspects would also be publicly highlighted.

Several Event Programming

The project opened with a performance by the Kiel improvisational theater group »Tante Salzmann«, and during intermission the crowd was able to sample delicacies from a well-stocked international buffet. There followed a loose sequence of introductions to international sports varieties, symposia on international topics and international film evenings, and even the cafeterias offered typical dishes from different regions of the world with the help of international students and staff.

The »blitz language courses« on Tuesdays, in which anyone interested could dabble in foreign
languages for 90 minutes, were highly popular. The languages offered ranged from Chinese, Persian and Öömrang (Amrum Frisian) to Russian or even International Sign Language, just to name a few.

A mainstay was a lecture series that extended over the course of the semester and examined the topic of diversity and cohesion. In addition to Kiel professors of the most diverse subject areas, there were external speakers like former German Parliament President Dr. Rita Süssmuth or the new Mayor of the city of Kiel, Thorsten Albig, who all spoke about ways to support diversity and cohesion.

Anyone could participate

Without its students and staff from outside Germany, the CAU Kiel would be more monotonous and less diverse, and for this reason all members of the university community were called upon to get involved in campus international with their own projects over the course of the semester, and they added all kinds of events. There was, for example, a cooking class held by Indians living in Kiel, and there was a piano concert by Bshara Harouni, a member of the Western-Eastern Orchestra of Daniel Barenboim, that was organized by the club Arab Perspectives.

Participants actively engaged even in minor aspects. The project’s website provided an ever-growing calendar of events that kept all those interested informed about the latest additions, and because people submitted so many valuable written contributions, the website was able regularly to provide an article of the day on a topic related to internationality. It also presented a video-interview of the week with foreign students and staff online.

The Grand Finale at Semester’s End

On July 24th, the whole university held a big closing celebration called the CAUntdown 2009 – Der Uni Feiertag (university holiday), which had been organized by students, and with that the project »campus international« celebrated its conclusion as well. There were numerous participatory events over the course of the day, and there was a big concert stage where big names on the German music scene such as »Clueso« and »Fettes Brot« appeared one after the other, putting on crowd-pleasing performances. The proceeds of this event were donated to the project Viva con Agua in Kenya. (ds)

More information about the project can be found online at http://www.uni-kiel.de/campus-international
inside cau

a closer examination of our own past

Under the Nazi regime, the CAU had close ties National Socialist thought. Examining one's history also means liberating oneself from it, and as such there is now a steadily growing internet platform where many interesting articles and tributes to formerly persecuted scientists can be found.

Professor Thomas Bauer, formerly rector of the CAU, sees a special obligation on the part of the University of Kiel, which was one of the leading universities of the Nazi period: »We at the rectorate are going to be paying more attention to this topic going forward. There have already been many individual studies, but there has not yet been any collection that presents the various aspects in a comprehensive way.«

The result: the CAU has now set up an internet platform about its Nazi past. Across about 100 pages, the university is presenting itself as it was during the National Socialist years, and it is paying tribute to the scientists who were driven out of Kiel. Because the University of Kiel was so closely tied to Nazism, Professor Thomas Bauer views the examination of this past as a special obligation: »National Socialism deeply affected the German universities, their structure, their self-image, their personnel and their ability to fulfill their mission. There have already been a lot of individual case studies on the topic, and now we have collected them and made them available as a whole. I think the especially important thing is honoring the university's scientists who were persecuted.«

In the future, the findings of research projects, biographies of the persecuted individuals and reports of contemporary witnesses will be collected and published online. In this way, the platform provides an informational basis that makes it possible to deal with this period in history openly.

Openness as Opportunity

Under the Nazi regime, scientific activity in Germany for the most part came to a standstill, because many academics were not able to continue researching and teaching – they were stripped of their academic degrees for on flimsy grounds. The individual biographies of persecuted scientists are the centerpiece of the website. »We have to confront these injustices. Examining the past is our democratic obligation, and it can only be accomplished by universities that perceive a political mandate for their mission in society that is as confident as it is responsible,« says Professor Gerhard Fouquet, President of the CAU and social historian.

Researchers in all fields will be updating the internet platform with new findings regularly. They will be serving one main idea. The platform, called »Die Universität Kiel und der Nationalsozialismus« (Kiel University and National Socialism), is divided into six subtopics:

1. The Takeover at the Kiel University
2. The consolidation of teacher training at Kiel's pedagogical schools
3. Scientists and other people persecuted at the Kiel University
4. Dealing with the aftermath of the Nazi period at the Kiel University
5. Other works by Kiel academics about National Socialism
6. Further reading and references

All other information can be found at http://www.uni-kiel.de/ns-zeit (ds)
As part of the project Campus international, the International Center and the Studentenwerk SH had announced a photography competition calling both for pictures of students' own experiences abroad and for ones showing the internationality of the CAU. There were more than 100 submissions, so the jury had a wide variety to choose from in selecting the best photograph in each category. In addition, a prize was awarded to the viewing audience's favorite.

1. Prize: Hanna Elbnik: »picture, picture!!«
Taken in Mwanga, a village in the Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania, during a work camp of the Service Civil International (SCI).

2. Prize: Alexander Orth: Abgehangen
Bergen, Norway, at the »Ulriken«
8. August 2006 to
Erasmus-Studys

3. Prize: Karen Szemacha: Breakfast Shopping
Ungarn, Szeged

1. Prize in Competition B:
Stephan Göbel: »Schwarzes Brett international«

2. Prize in Competition B:
Ewa Milanowska: Mensa 1 (Stairs)

Audience award: Skanderbeg Schmusch: Here I come
inside cau

bi-national doctoral studies – a career advantage or a risky adventure?

For several years now the Philosophical Faculty of the CAU has been offering its students the opportunity to take advantage of individual contacts with researchers at institutions outside Germany to gain a doctoral degree under the framework of a »bi-national doctoral program« – Benedikt Miklos reports on his experience.

»On May 14th 2009, my Dispuatio was held, the final examination for doctoral students. Oh god, I thought, hopefully nothing will go wrong! It wasn’t just because I had to deal with the usual stress symptoms, it was also because the success of my undertaking was technology-dependent, since two of my examiners were being beamed in via video-conference from Montreal, Canada. Who knows what can go wrong! My fear of technology leaving me in the lurch turned out to be prophetic. But we still got everything to work in the end, and then I made it after all!

But let’s rewind to the beginning: how did you end up in this situation?

After my first state’s examination in the subjects History and Romance Studies, I realized that I wanted more: I already had a potential doctoral advisor at the CAU, whose idea this was, and a possible dissertation topic. I was able to develop the topic because of a contact I had made during a semester abroad supported by the International Center with a professor at the Université du Québec à Montréal who was very familiar with the subject matter.

He also offered me his support. So it became clear to me pretty quickly that I would take advantage of the possibility of earning a Doctorate through the bi-national doctoral process mentioned in the Promotionsordnung of the Philosophische Fakultät, especially since I knew that I wouldn’t just be putting an extra line on my CV but that it could improve the quality of my dissertation.

But watch out: such an undertaking also has drawbacks.

For example, »bi-national doctoral studies« does not mean that you get two titles for one dissertation. This admittedly somewhat misleading wording simply refers to the opportunity to have advisors in two countries who are equally entitled to evaluate the dissertation. The Doctorate itself is granted either by the CAU or by the partner university, and one is only required to meet the demands of one of the two universities. Nonetheless, there is a risk of being at the mercy of two advisors who do not always have the same demands. It is a good idea to discuss expectations and the division of labor with both advisors ahead of time.

The thesis has to be written in a language that both advisors are proficient in. In my case, I wrote the thesis in French. This cost me a lot of time, as did the complicated drawing-up of a contract between the two partner universities (which is not always necessary). In addition, my writing a dissertation in a foreign language was rewarded with my having to write a German-language summary that had to be a whopping 10% as long as the original in terms of pages. This was necessary because, in the interest of assuring academic standards, professors from outside the field had to be able to submit a veto at the Dean’s office during the three-week display period, if in their opinion the thesis had been to well or too poorly evaluated.
Why might such an adventure be worthwhile, even when so many risks and additional effort are involved?

First, the nature of this kind of doctoral program is explicitly mentioned in the transcript. Every potential employer later on can see that you have accomplished more than others. Besides, the chances of landing a fellowship are substantially higher, considering the potential for innovation you have demonstrated through this process, and you can of course apply with sponsors in other countries. Even the requirement of the Promotionsordnung that you spend a total of one year at the partner university does not exactly seem like a burden if you want to gain international experience and if you are interested in the internationalization of the academic business. After all, you are not just working with your advisor there, you are also getting to know students and experts who can give you substantial assistance – not to mention having contact with the other culture. This broadens your horizons and allows you to make up for time lost elsewhere. If your work deals with the dominant culture or history of that place, you can engage more intensively and more vivaciously with the subject matter than you ever could sitting at your desk in Kiel.

After submitting my thesis called »La chanson politique au Québec (1760-1840): Champ littéraire, littérarité et utopie« in February of this year, there was only my oral examination remaining. In order to save money, my advisors and I had the idea of holding the disputatio by video-conference – this was an all-time first in the Philosophische Fakultät!

Those present included, as can be seen on the left side of the picture, Robert Dion, a professor at the Département d'études littéraires at the Université du Québec à Montréal, UQAM, Bernard Andrès, my second advisor and likewise professor at the Département d'études littéraires at the Université du Québec à Montréal, UQAM, Dr. Dorothea Scholl, apl. professor at the Romanisches Seminar of the CAU and acting professor of Romance Literature (French and Italian) at the Institut für Romanistik at the Uni Rostock, Dr. Konrad Groß, professor emeritus of the Englisches Seminar at the CAU and Dr. Volker Kapp, professor emeritus of the Romanisches Seminar at the CAU.

One nice thing was that I was not only able to see my second advisor, but also got to see my Canadian friends, because the examination was opened to the public. So I was able to look forward to it a bit, and it was definitely worthwhile for me.

Contact:

Further information can be found in the promotion regulations of the Philosophical Faculty at http://www.uni-kiel.de/fakultas/philosophie/ (german only)

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