



## EDITORIAL

Dear Alumni of the University of Bremen,



it has been ten years since a loose network for alumni of the University of Bremen has become an independent association. We achieved a lot, yet much more lies still ahead. In this issue of our newsletter, we look back onto the eventful past of our association as well as ahead into a successful future.

With this in mind, I want to especially point out our second summer fête on May 27, 2016, where we would like to celebrate the association's anniversary with you!

I hope you enjoy the read and hope to meet you in person at our summer fête or one of our other events.

With best wishes from campus,

*D. Schönfeld*

Derk H. Schönfeld

## Alumni Association of the University of Bremen Turns 10

A University of Bremen alumni Association is actually quite bizarre and does not seem to match up with the founding generation of our young university. Flashback to the simmering highly politicized 1970s: Had students suggested founding an alumni association, they would probably have simply been laughed at. That would have been all the attention that such an idea would have received; a suggestion like that would not have even been discussed. Establishing an institution with a name deriving from Latin and with its first associations founded in the United States, of all places, was unthinkable! Developing relations to the alumni of a university, to the established – did that not hint at old boy networks, political connections, dueling fraternities, or other fraternities that typically lean towards right-wing politics and which were leading a shadowy existence at most in the surroundings of the leftist University of Bremen?

Without question: While plans for alumni networks at newly founded universities and study programs nowadays exist even for the first cohort of graduates, the foundation of an alumni association was simply unimaginable for the first twenty years of Bremen University. However, to say it in Latin: *Tempora mutantur*.

In order for that to happen, a misunderstanding had to be resolved at first. An alumni association is no elitist clique meant to execute a talent management system to maintain power structures in public institutions and private businesses that are most often based on people's social status or political beliefs. The alumni network works differently. Obviously, the family principle does exist, in which one strengthens and gives back to the institution that has nourished oneself (from Latin: *alere*). This agreement, however, is based on equality, openness, and transparency.

The impulse for the foundation of

the alumni network in Bremen approximately ten years ago was given by the university rector then, Professor Wilfried Müller, today our honorary chairman. As a social scientist he was able to gain his own genuine impressions of the alumni culture in the United States while in long-term research and teaching positions there. These insights were of great help in the foundation of the alumni network in Bremen. From the very beginning, the principle of autonomy played a decisive role. Alumni management was not meant to be an administrative office of the university but a separate association with an independent structure. This has proven successful at the University of Bremen, particularly in the highly constructive and trusting collaboration between the university management and the association. The association promotes the university through various activities, which are reported in this bimonthly newsletter. The university supports the association materially by providing staff and facilities.

Nevertheless, the association stands on its own feet financially. In the beginning, this was thanks to several Bremen-based businesses who acted as generous sponsors. However, today, the association finances itself almost fully from the contributions made by its members and sponsoring members. Therefore, the association has reached a completely different power to act. The number of members is increasing constantly and rather quickly, so that the alumni are on their way of becoming one of the biggest associations in the city, and thereby further strengthen Bremen as a scientific location and its University of Excellence.

After ten years, these present excellent reasons to join us in celebration at the summer fête on May 27!

Christoph Sodemann  
2. vice chairman  
Alumni der Universität Bremen e.V.



Welcome party 2009



Sightseeing trip to the German Bundestag 2015



Alumni dinner 2010



Visiting the weserstadion 2016



Alumni summer fête 2015



Alumni dinner 2009

# 6 QUESTIONS FOR...

In every newsletter, we ask a member six questions about his or her time in Bremen. For this issue, we interviewed Anne-Kathrin Laufmann. If you would also like to appear in this section, please contact Jacqueline Sprindt at the office at [alumni@uni-bremen.de](mailto:alumni@uni-bremen.de).

**A**nne-Kathrin Laufmann graduated in Cultural Studies and Sport Science from the University of Bremen. In 2006, she did an internship at the SV Werder Bremen and has been the director of CSR and fan and member support since 2012. Anne-Kathrin Laufmann played and continues to play a significant role in the development and advancement of Werder's Corporate Social Responsibility brand 'WERDER BEWEGT – LEBENSLANG' (roughly: Werder moves – for life).



Uni Bremen Alumna Anne-Kathrin Laufmann. © Sabrina Jenne

## 1. When did you study/work at the University of Bremen and what were your reasons to study here?

In 2001, I began a Magister degree (a former degree that combined undergraduate and graduate studies) in Cultural Studies and Sport

Science in Bremen. The decision to study in Bremen followed very practical reasons, mainly financial ones. That way, I was able to live at home and continue working on the side.

## 2. What is your most important memory of the University of Bremen?

Friendships! I met a lot of great people and spent a wonderful time at the university. Studying was one of the best parts of my life, which I wouldn't want to miss.

## 3. Who or what has influenced your career the most?

That is difficult to say. Primarily, my parents of course. Yet, another influence was Ms. Gorges-Dey from the 'Praxisbüro', who called my attention to the internship at Werder Bremen. During my internship, it was Klaus-Dieter Fischer, former president and director of Werder Bremen, who opened many doors for me.

## 4. What advice would you like to give the students of the University of Bremen?

I had positive experiences when taking advantage of existing opportunities, regardless of how big the challenge may have seemed. It is important to be open to the unknown and to change, like it is important to leave your comfort zone from time to time, as those are the experiences that make you grow and develop.

## 5. What do you associate with the University of Bremen? Please complete the following sentence: "The University of Bremen is..."

... a place to which I love to return.

„Studying was one of the best parts of my life.“

## 6. What does Alumni of the University of Bremen e.V. stand for in your eyes? Please complete the following sentence: „In my eyes, Alumni of the University of Bremen e.V. is...“

...a possibility of indulging in memories and being able to give something back – a great network. /YA

## University of Bremen and Santander Extend Cooperation

The University of Bremen and the Santander Consumer Bank have extended their cooperation agreement from 2013 for another three years. The contract has recently been signed in Bremen by university rector Bernd Scholz-Reiter and Ulrich Leuschner, chairman of Santander Consumer Bank. As a result, three projects receive support: the 'Welcome Centre', the 'Bremen International Scholarship Program', and financial and non-material support in form of the 'Deutschlandstipendium'. The Welcome Centre, for example, is now also open



Ulrich Leuschner (l.) and Bernd Scholz-Reiter have extended the cooperation agreement for another three years.

to external research institutions of the 'U Bremen Research Alliance' and others. Under the name 'Santander Universities', the bank will invest several 100 million euros into university projects worldwide. /YA

## 'U Bremen Research Alliance' Develops and Makes Visible Scientific Strengths

Cooperation between the university and its associated partner research institutes is highly successful.

This success is meant to be continued and developed. Therefore, a multilateral agreement under the name of 'U Bremen Research Alliance' has been signed. Its goal is to implement coordinated research strategies, to jointly develop scientific resources and infrastructures as well as surmounting the obstacles of sharing them, and to align the scientific marketing in order to jointly increase visibility and its overall attractiveness internationally.

In addition to the University of Bremen, several Bremen-based institutes of the Max Planck Society, the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, the Leibniz Association, and the Helmholtz Association are involved as well as the German Research Center for Artificial Intelligence (DFKI) and the German Aerospace Center (DLR). /YA

## BIGSSS Celebrates Its Graduates

We would like to congratulate the twenty new alumni of the Bremen International Graduate School of Social Sciences (BIGSSS) on their successful PhDs!

In mid-April, the graduates from seven countries celebrated the completion of their dissertations in the 'Golden Hall' of the Böttcherstraße in Bremen.

BIGSSS is supported within the framework of the German Universities Excellence Initiative and jointly accounted for by the University of Bremen and the Jacobs University. Founded in 2008, the graduate school can proudly look back onto a graduation rate of more than ninety percent and a list of 128 alumni, who bring honor to its name in Germany and abroad. /YA

## „Networking from, for and with Alumni“ Upcoming Events

### Alumni Summer Fête

In the evening of May 27, Alumni of the University of Bremen will host its second summer fête. Like last year, we want to get together on campus in a relaxed summer atmosphere and engage in casual conversations while enjoying grilled delicacies and good music. Registration for the summer fête is now open on our website.

**Location:** University of Bremen (Café Unique, Enrique-Schmidt-Str. 7, 28359 Bremen)

**Time:** 6 to 10 p.m.

**Cost:** 15 euros per person, which includes drinks and a barbecue buffet (also vegetarian!)

**Participants:** Alumni, members of the university, and friends

Please register yourself and your plus-one via [our website](#).

### Visiting the Bundestag

Our visit to Berlin last year has been a great success. This is why we again want to go to Berlin to-



A great success last year: The Alumni in Berlin  
© Alumni der Universität Bremen e.V.

gether this year as part of the series 'Networking of, for and with alumni'. Our association will visit the German Bundestag at the invitation of Marieluise Beck, member of the Alliance '90/The Greens.

We will be taking the train to Berlin in the morning. Once there, we will be expected for lunch at the Paul-Löbe-Haus in the government district, after which we have the opportunity to attend a plenary session of the Bundes-

tag. At 2 p.m., Marieluise Beck will be available to us at the Reichstag Building for a conversation. Following that, we will again be able to visit the famous dome of the Reichstag. Weather permitting, we plan to round off the event at the Spree river before returning to Bremen together.

Since participation is limited to 25 people, we would like to ask you to [register via our online form](#). As the trip is subsidized by the German Bundestag, we can go to Berlin together for only 20 euros per person (for travel and food).

**Date:** Friday, June 10, 2016

**Time:** approximately 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.

**Place:** Berlin

## International Day of the University of Bremen

Also on May 27, the International Day of the University of Bremen will take place from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Fifteen international student communities from the University of Bremen will present themselves in the Glass Hall on campus and offer information, culture-specific snacks, calligraphy, and henna tattoos; the motto: 'Go Global!'. The versatile stage program will create a festive atmosphere: music, dance, and the 'Future Fusion Fashion', where students from all over the world will present traditional fashion as well as modern fashion experiments. Our member Dr. Annette Lang, director of the International Office at the University of Bremen, invites all alumni to explore the International Day together from 4 p.m. onwards. Registration [here](#).

## Marine Physicist from Bremen Receives Albert Defant Medal

For her research on the regularities of Atlantic water circulation and her leading role in authoring the Ocean Chapter of the World Climate Research Report of the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), Monika Rhein, Marine Physicist from Bremen, was awarded the Albert Defant Medal 2016. Every three years, the medal is awarded to someone who has made outstanding contributions to the field of Physical Oceanography. Monika Rhein, professor at Bremen University's Institute for Environmental Physics (IUP) and the Centre for Marine Environmental Research (MARUM), shares the research prize with Hamburg-based oceanographer Professor Jürgen Sündermann. /YA

## Department of Production Engineering Presents Special 'World Rescuer' Award

Jannis Brüns is 15 years old and attends the 10th grade at the Gymnasium an der Hamburger Straße. He has been working on a garbage robot for two years in order to make people aware of environmental issues. "My garbage robot is meant to motivate people to dispose of their trash correctly instead of leaving it lying around. So I came up with the idea to have it approach people actively and let it communicate with them." At the regional section of the federal competition for youth researchers 'Jugend forscht Bremen' 2016, he was presented with the special 'world rescuer' award of the Department of Production Engineering of the University of Bremen additionally to taking third place in the subject group 'technology'. For nine years, the initiative 'Become a World Rescuer' has been the platform for the Department of Production Engineering to support young engineers, in order to promote young researchers, who concentrate on sustainable ideas for the future. More information [here](#). /YA

## Environmental Physicist from Bremen Awarded Alfred Wegener Medal

John P. Burrows is internationally recognized as the 'father' of the first European satellite sensors, has been a driving force in the foundation of the Institute of Environmental Physics at the University of Bremen, and is a regular visiting scientist at NASA. He is a professor at the Institutes of Environmental Physics and Remote Sensing (IUP and IFE) at the University of Bremen and has now been awarded the Alfred Wegener Medal for his accomplishments by the European Geosciences Union (EGU). Upon receiving the medal, the honoree is also granted lifelong honorary membership of the EGU. The award honors scientists who stand out by their exceptional accomplishments in atmospheric, hydrological or ocean sciences. Professor Burrows has been a researcher and lecturer at the University of Bremen since 1992 and is the director of the research area Physics and Chemistry of the Atmosphere in the Department of Physics and Electrical Engineering. /YA

## Sociologist from Bremen Receives Award for Young Researchers

Awards were given to the 10th best young researchers from Germany in Berlin, among them the sociologist Céline Teney, who is a professor in the Department of Sociology at Bremen University. She was awarded the Heinz Maier-Leibnitz Prize, which is the most important award for young researchers in Germany and is said to be the third most important German award for researchers in general, after the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize and the 'Deutscher Zukunftspreis' awarded by the Federal President. The award is presented by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBWF) and is worth 20,000 euros. This year, 134 researchers from all fields of German universities had been nominated for the prize. /YA

## Kickoff for Robot Soccer

**B**-Human is one of the best teams in the RoboCup Standard Platform League. So far, the team from Bremen has won the world cup four times and has secured seven consecutive victories at the RoboCup German Open. As a joint project of the University of Bremen and the research area Cyber-Physical Systems of the German Research Center for Artificial Intelligence (DFKI), B-Human will again participate in the world cup this year, which will be held in Leipzig. We were able to catch a glimpse of the robot-soccer training at the beginning of their preparations for the competition. During our visit at the team quarters, five members of B-Human and director Tim Laue granted us insight into the internal goings-on of the team that is the current European champion.

**The B-Human team has been competing in the RoboCup since 2009. How did the idea of participating at robot-soccer tournaments come up?**

The University of Bremen had started the project already in 2000. The amount of new robot technology that was developing then generated a boom in the field – everyone wanted to be a part of it! That set off the development of today's team 'B-Human'.

**How many team members does your team have? Is there a core team?**

At the moment, B-Human has 27 members who meet on a weekly basis to code together and collectively participate in competitions. Most of the team members are computer science students; yet, some members are university staff members or alumni. The true 'core team', however, are the robots: They often last for several years – longer than a usual bachelor's degree. Some students, nonetheless, are committed to the team even after they graduated.

**What are the prerequisites for joining the team?**

A foundation of programming skills and an interest in software development are the basis. As we buy the robot hardware and simply do the programming, that should be the main interest. However, in general, anyone can join! Most of the time it's learning by doing, where experienced team members help the new ones. One could describe each member as a piece

of a large mosaic, since everyone on the team brings in their own individual ideas and skills.

**How did you hear about robot soccer?**

The bachelor and master programs in the Department of Computer Science offer many practice-oriented projects. One of them is B-Human, which to us sounded like the most interesting. In addition to that, we had already heard of the success of the university's team. Soccer-playing robots are a fascinating topic for the public. That is why participating in B-Human is so enticing!

**What makes the project so interesting to you?**

Hardly anyone of us is an actual soccer fan. The focus lies on the combination of a team sport with the programming of robots. Everyone works towards a common goal – the championship – and, by doing so, participates in a practical project amidst the otherwise rather theoretical courses. It's fun, and our victories are visible successes of the months of hard work.

**How much time should each member spend on the project?**

One should spend between four and fourteen hours per week in the team quarters in order to fine-tune one's technologies. However, it obviously also depends if it is exam period or if we are on semester break. In general, though, it is a very time-consuming project that one should be passionate about.

**What does the typical preparation for competitions look like? Does some form of training exist as in typical soccer?**

The time before the competitions is often complete chaos! So many things are usually on our to-do list. For example, we have to perform error analyses of past tournaments and constantly adapt to changes to the game, such as a new ball for example. We mentally switch to some sort of competition mode and carry out as many test games as possible. It's impossible to make technological changes during the game, which is why all functions have to interact smoothly.

Substitute players are allowed, though.

**What are the challenges in robot soccer?**

It's frequently the case that the hardware is not particularly robust, so one has to exercise extreme caution in order to not break them. Substituting them takes up far too much time. Additionally, we are confronted with efficiency differences to humans: image recognition and localization processes are much slower in robots. They also move more slowly.

**What are some memories you have with the team?**

The highlights are of course the competitions! They motivate us enormously. And by working together for weeks and traveling to tournaments together, you also establish close connections to the other team members. The preparation



The successful roboter soccer team B-Human.

periods strengthen the team tremendously and turn it into a close-knit community. At the competitions, there are separate team areas, and we wear our B-Human jerseys. That way, we identify even more with the team.

**What will the next year bring? What are your hopes for the team?**

The next thing on our agenda is the world championship in Leipzig this summer. Next year, it will even be held in Japan! For the team, we all want to optimize our respective software thus far that it can be used permanently. We also want to receive many new stars, which are placed on our banners and jerseys for each victory. But most of all, we hope that B-Human continues to exist for a long time and reaches the goal of competing against a human team in 2050. /WB

## Nomination of Second “Research Ambassador”

At the end of March, the second Research Ambassador certificate was handed out within the framework of the Café International organized by the Welcome Centre of the University of Bremen.

Yasemin Karakaşoğlu, Bremen University's Vice Rector for International Relations and Diversity, presented the certificate to Alejandra Castro-Carranza from the Pátzcuaro Institute of Technology (ITSPA) in Mexico, who is a post-doc in the Department of Physics

and Electrical Engineering at the University of Bremen.

Research Ambassadors are international visiting scientists who have either already returned or will soon return to their home institution or a partner university of the University of Bremen. The ambassadors' tasks are manifold and focus mainly on establishing new international research contacts and increasing visibility of the University of Bremen internationally. Hence, they inform students and young researchers at their home

universities about a stay at Bremen University.

In 2015, six international scientists from China, Cameroon, Mexico, and the United States, who have close ties to the University of Bremen, were nominated as Research Ambassadors. Next to fulfilling the tasks of an ambassador, such as establishing alumni networks and organizing information sessions, they are given the opportunity to return to the University of Bremen as a visiting researcher or send young scientists there. You can find further information on the Research Ambassador program as well as the appointed ambassadors here: [www.uni-bremen.de/alumni\\_welcome](http://www.uni-bremen.de/alumni_welcome).

Dr. Castro-Carranza accepted the certificate with enthusiasm and is already developing joint projects with the Department of Physics and Electrical Engineering. In collaboration with the Pacific Research Summer Program (DELFIN), Dr. Castro-Carranza invited two students of the ITSPA for a seven-week-long research stay to the University of Bremen via the

Research Ambassador program in the summer of 2015.

The students were selected to each work on a current research question in the Semiconductor Optics Group at the Institute of Solid State Physics, which is directed by Prof. Jürgen Gutowski. Their stay laid the foundation for further short-term stays of excellent students from Mexico.

There are current plans for a joint master's degree of both universities on the topics of Photovoltaic Devices and Bio-interfaces. The plan is to offer the degree program at ITSPA, which will be based on and compatible with the courses offered in the Department of Physics and Electrical Engineering. However, the focus lies not just on the promotion of student mobility of the University of Bremen.

Both sides are also interested in jointly supervising outstanding doctoral students and thus establish an exchange on a higher academic level. Future plans include extending the partnership to other departments as well.

/IO



Yasemin Karakaşoğlu, Bremen University's Vice Rector for International Relations and Diversity, presented the certificate to Alejandra Castro-Carranza at the Café International. © International Office

## University Preparation Program for Refugees

In the summer semester 2016, the first cohort of the new University Preparation Program, which is specifically directed to refugees, began their studies.

Sixty future students are now completing an intensive language course for up to three semesters that is accompanied by preparatory university courses, cultural events, and inten-

sive support.

Once they pass a German exam, they can pursue a degree at the University of Bremen, the Universities of Applied Sciences in Bremen or Bremerhaven, or

at the University of the Arts Bremen. Many of the participants attended university in their home country but were forced to interrupt their studies due to war and flight.

Now, they are highly motivated to be accepted at one of the universities in Bremen as soon as possible in order to be able to complete their studies.

/IO

### Shorthand symbol:

YA:  
Yvonne Asendorf  
WB:  
Wiebke Bolle  
IO:  
International Office

All of the used pictures in the Newsletter are taken from the University of Bremen's press office, if not marked differently.

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