Teachers: Lecturers Spice Up Their Courses with New Methods

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Unsere Kernkompetenz ist die Veränderung von Organisationen und die Schaffung von neuen Perspektiven – auch für Alumnae und Alumni.
Dear Alumni,

Shortly before the end of last year we received great news from the Ministry of Science, Research, and the Arts of Baden-Württemberg: The state has agreed to provide 3.8 million euros in funding for our international research institute, the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS), over the course of three years starting in October 2014. We are delighted at our success in winning over the ministry for our new concept and confident that we will also be able to convince the federal government to help out with the funding.

In the future, FRIAS will be open to researchers from all disciplines. The high quality standards will remain in place, as it is still our goal to give internal and external as well as established and aspiring scholars the freedom to conduct top-level research. The most important funding format at the institute is the research focus, in which up to eight fellows work on a common topic for a year. The two research foci for the academic year 2014/15 are social, political, and cultural transformation processes in Southeast Asia and quantum design principles for the development of new solar cells.

On the basis of the new concept, FRIAS will enhance the worldwide visibility of our university even in its reduced form. In addition, it will serve as a motor for new ideas in research and instruction at the faculties as well as in society at large. As alumni of the University of Freiburg you are cordially invited to attend our new series “Freiburg Horizons,” in which FRIAS fellows will explain the relevance of their research for society and discuss it with you in public lectures and debates.

I hope you enjoy reading the magazine – and stay in contact!

Sincerely,

Prof. Dr. Hans-Jochen Schiewer
Rector of the University of Freiburg
Take the orange clay and use it to make the medulla oblongata, the continuation of the spinal cord in the skull,” the biologist Dr. Janina Kirsch instructs her students. The tables in the seminar room are arranged to allow the students to work in groups of eight. Each group is given bars of red, blue, green, yellow, and orange modeling clay. A washable mat keeps the tables clean. Next to the clay lies a plastic model of the human brain, broken up into pieces. On the walls hang posters showing the brain in cross section. Kirsch goes to each group as they work to check whether they are molding the structure correctly or whether they need some tips.

Building a Model of the Human Brain

Kirsch is no fan of traditional chalk-and-talk teaching: At the beginning of each class session she holds a brief lecture on the part of the brain on the lesson plan for the day, and the rest of the session is reserved for interactive teaching methods. By creating three-dimensional clay models of various brain structures, the biology students improve their understanding of the makeup of the organ as a whole. In addition, they learn where the structures are located in relation to one another and how they are connected. “We take a look at the structures one by one,” explains Kirsch. This provides a basis upon which the students can learn more advanced neurological principles more easily. The hands-on exercise is supplemented by a lecture. If the participants have made clay models of the medulla oblongata and learned about its most important functions, for example, the topic of the lecture is sleep – because the system that regulates the sleep-wake cycle is located in this region of the brainstem.

Teachers at the University of Freiburg want to bring across the material on their lesson plans in a vivid and engaging manner, and the teaching methods they are developing to do so are pedagogically convincing. The “Arts and Crafts Course” on the human brain, as Kirsch calls her exercise course, speaks to several different senses at once: The participants see, hear, feel, and do something. This creates an optimal learning situation. “It happens so often that you hear something once and then forget it again,” emphasizes Kirsch. Her course allows the participants to learn without pressure. “You can’t force the brain to do something it doesn’t want to do.” By the time the course is over with they have created several objects they can take home with them. “In this way, the content doesn’t remain vague and abstract,” says the biologist. “I believe the students will still remember this course when they’re old and gray, simply because it’s so different.” Kirsch received the State Teaching Prize from the Ministry of Science, Research, and the Arts of Baden-Württemberg for the course in 2011.
Live Feedback on the Smartphone

Prof. Dr. Bernd Becker from the Laboratory for Computer Architecture at the Department of Computer Science also attaches great importance to making his courses interactive. He developed the project “SMILE – Smartphones in the Classroom.” Courses with a large number of participants typically employ lecture-style instruction. When participants have questions or do not understand something, they often lack the confidence to raise their hands in a full lecture hall. Becker’s program allows them to use their smartphones to ask questions or request for the teacher to speak more slowly without interrupting the lecture. As an alternative, the students can also load the app onto their laptop or tablet computer.

The students send their questions to the teacher using the function “Question & Answer” on the SMILE app. The teacher then decides whether to go into the questions immediately or take them up at a later point. Other students can rate the questions or comment on them. The “Live Feedback” function helps the teacher to gauge whether the listeners are still managing to keep up with the lecture: They drag a knob along a scale from “I’m lost!” to “Got it!” to signal to the teacher whether they are following him or not. The teacher can react directly to this feedback. Later on, when he is evaluating the entire class session, he can see whether he didn’t make himself clear enough at a particular point in the lecture. Finally, the “Quiz” function allows the teacher to ask multiple-choice questions to test the knowledge of his audience.

The SMILE app is being developed by students of computer science and embedded systems engineering. The team receives conceptual and organizational support from the Department of Computer Science as well as the Institute of Psychology and the Department of Educational Science. The project has already received the University Teaching Award, and the follow-up project, “SMILE+ – Technology-Based Optimization of Student Supervision and the Self-Learning Process in Large Courses,” has won a fellowship for innovations in higher education instruction from the Baden Württemberg Stiftung, the Joachim Herz Stiftung, and the Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft. The improved application SMILE+ includes diagnostic functions: “The app is designed to help students observe and evaluate their learning progress,” says Becker.

Geocaching on Field Trips

Compact and practical technical gadgets also feature in several courses taught by Prof. Dr. Michael Scherer-Lorenzen: On field trips he uses devices that can receive signals from Global Positioning System (GPS) satellites. The geobotanist from the Institute of Biology II and his team go on regular field trips to natural areas in order to study the terrain and the flora. When undergraduate students miss the required trips, they have to
make them up at a later point. Until recently, these students had to wait a semester or two for the field trip to be offered again, but thanks to a new instructional concept involving geocaching they can now take the trip on their own time, alone or in a small group.

Equipped with a GPS receiver and a guide listing the various stations and tasks included in the field trip, the students search for particular geographic coordinates. When they find a location, they might be asked to answer questions or describe the vegetation there. They document their results in a protocol. Scherer-Lorenzen and his team have prepared guides for four geocaching field trips so far. The excursions lead to the Freiburg neighborhood Landwasser, the Sternwald forest, Schlossberg, and Kaiserstuhl. The scientists are currently working on six more tours.

“The students love the idea,” reports Scherer-Lorenzen. “When they head off in a small group or on their own, they take a much closer look at things.” On the Kaiserstuhl field trip in late summer or fall, for example, they study what fruits plants bear and what strategies they use to spread their seeds.

Scherer-Lorenzen and his team don’t just use geocaching for field trips; they have also integrated the concept into other courses. For example, participants in a soil sampling lab course search for a geocache on Schönberg. They determine the soil type, measure properties like nutrient content and plant growth, and take samples back with them to the laboratory for analysis. There is no treasure hunt like in traditional geocaching. “The forest itself is our treasure,” says Scherer-Lorenzen.

Finding Craters with Google Earth

The participants in the course “Screening Earth – a Student (Re)Search Project,” designed and taught by Prof. Dr. Thomas Kenkmann from the Institute of Earth and Environmental Sciences, also study nature – only on a larger scale and in a virtual environment: They use the program Google Earth to search the Earth’s surface systematically for undiscovered impact craters caused by meteorites. They comb through forests and deserts and between mountains and rock formations in their quest for promising structures. “The students embark on a geological expedition,” says Kenkmann of the course.

There are around 185 known impact craters worldwide, but hundreds if not thousands are still waiting to be discovered. When the geology students find a possible crater site, they contact the specialist institutes and geological services responsible for the region to request further information. “It could also be a volcano or a rising salt dome,” says Kenkmann. “The participants have to learn how to interpret the surface structures and determine quickly whether they are on the wrong track.” If their suspicion is corroborated by the specialists, the students plan an expedition to study the structure on location. They book flights, map the surrounding area, and collect samples – only theoretically at first. They then present their results to the other participants.

In the last phase of the project, the students get the chance to put their plans into practice. The precondition is that the geological structures they have found merit further investigation from a scientific perspective. If this is found to be the case, the young researchers go on the planned research expedition for real. In this way, they receive the opportunity to conduct real geological research before even earning a graduate degree. The project won the Baden-Württemberg State Teaching Prize in 2012.
Collaborative Online Publications

Art history students also receive the opportunity to participate in the academic discourse of their field early on: The seminars held within the context of the project “Knowledge in Process: Collaborative Online Publications by Students at the Universities of Freiburg and Constance” give them the chance to publish their first citable publication. The students create several texts together, which are later published on the internet. Prof. Dr. Anna Schreurs-Morét and Prof. Dr. Hans Hubert from the Department of Art History at the University of Freiburg as well as Junior Professor Dr. Bent Gebert from the Department of Literary Studies at the University of Constance developed the project and tested it in several courses.

Students of Schreurs-Morét’s graduate seminar “Key Terms of Art Literature in the Wiki Glossary” wrote articles dealing with various terms from art history, such as “grace.” They provided textual examples for the terms, explained how various authors used them in the Early Modern Period, and also looked for paintings to illustrate them. The students discussed the texts and the artworks in class, giving each other tips on where something could be improved, what should be described in more detail, and whether there were more appropriate paintings to illustrate the term. “We had a continuous discussion between all of the participants in these courses about the topic of the seminar,” says Hubert. The students made their corrections and changes in groups. “Everyone was faced with a challenge; no one could hide behind someone else,” Schreurs-Morét adds.

By the end of the course, the students had written comprehensible and well-written articles. Future students can use the texts as an introduction to the topics. An article is not the work of an individual author but of a team. “This makes the text much more sophisticated and theoretically grounded,” stresses Schreurs-Morét. The way the texts are written is similar to the principle of the online platform Wikipedia, but unlike with the free encyclopedia the content created in the seminar is written exclusively by competent authors. “We have a protected domain in which only art history students contribute to the glossary,” explains the art historian. During the ongoing pilot phase of the project, Gebert, Schreurs-Morét, and Hubert are creating a tutorial: an instruction booklet showing teachers from other disciplines how to create their own online publication in their courses – in collaboration with their students.

Rethinking Regulatory Policy

“Economics Blog” is another seminar in which students write texts to be published on the internet: The blog “Think Ordo! Rethinking Regulatory Policy” allows them to write articles on current economic policy and put them up for discussion online. Prof. Dr. Tim Krieger, holder of the Wilfried Guth Endowed Chair for Constitutional Political Economy and Competition Policy, came up with the idea for the blog and also taught the accompanying seminar for students of the bachelor’s program in economics. “Blogging has become an important mode of communication in the economic discourse,” he says. The students of his course learn how to contribute to this discourse by writing their own entries for the blog.
First the participants discuss potential topics. "They are both the authors of the entries and the editors of the blog," explains Krieger. The scope of topics covered by the blog ranges from an appeal to reform the German health insurance system to an analysis of the recommendations for class action suits in the European Union. All of the texts have to meet journalistic standards, so the students always have to explain the specialist terms they use. With regard to the content of the texts, it's very important to Krieger that the students back up their positions with economic theories. He supports the bloggers by proofreading their texts and helping them improve the structure of their arguments.

The students initially discuss the finished articles offline in weekly editorial meetings and then again online in the comments section under the entries. They appreciate having the chance to voice their opinions and then respond to constructive criticism from their classmates. Several of the participants from his course last semester want to continue contributing to the blog in the future.

**Instructional Development Award**

Each year the University of Freiburg presents the Instructional Development Award (IDA) to teachers who have developed convincing teaching and learning concepts. The winners receive funding to realize their instructional development projects. The award is worth 70,000 euros. To date, 18 projects have received the IDA. Janina Kirsch received the award in 2012 together with Prof. Dr. Stefan Rotter, director of the Bernstein Center Freiburg, for the project “Interdisciplinary Training Path in the Neurosciences.” Bernd Becker received the award in the same year for his SMILE app. In 2013 the award went to Thomas Kenkmann as well as Anna Schreurs-Morét, Hans Hubert, and Bent Gebert, among others. In the future, the University of Freiburg plans to add further projects to this list in order to find and promote new and unconventional approaches to good teaching methodology.

*Katrin Albaum*
Inquiring minds know no bounds: When they start asking questions, they never know where their quest for an answer is going to take them. That was the case for Dr. Nicolas Eschenbruch, director of education of the University College Freiburg (UCF) since August 2011. On his way through the university, Eschenbruch, today 41, changed his major again and again – in search of answers elsewhere.

Raised in the village of Wittnau just to the south of Freiburg, he begins studying history and Islamic studies at the University of Freiburg. Later he goes to Oxford and Istanbul. Eschenbruch writes his dissertation at the Humboldt University of Berlin on care for the dying at hospices. He chooses to specialize in the ethnology and history of medicine, complimenting it with a sociological perspective later on during his tenure as a research associate at the University of Augsburg. Eschenbruch also has a hunger for knowledge outside of the university. He earns qualification as a trainer and coach in order to work with groups in continuing education. “I’m not the kind of person who devotes all of his attention to a single academic discipline.” Rather, he is driven by questions. Even though Eschenbruch didn’t study with the goal of qualifying himself for his position at the UCF, it seems to have been made for him: The college is the University of Freiburg’s central institution for the promotion of interdisciplinary and international instruction. The position is thus a perfect fit for Eschenbruch, whose archaeological curiosity oftentimes motivates him to dig somewhere else.

A Concept Designed for Freiburg

Though the University of Freiburg has never hosted an institution of this kind before, the idea for the University College Freiburg, which opened its doors in September 2012, didn’t simply materialize out of thin air: The universities in the Dutch towns of Maastricht and Utrecht have had comparable institutions offering undergraduate, interdisciplinary, and English-taught degree programs for over a de-
cadec. “Nevertheless, we endeavored to develop our own concept in Freiburg,” says Eschenbruch. The plan was to integrate elements from similar colleges in the USA and England but suited to Freiburg and its academic climate. The result was the Bachelor of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS). The new four-year degree program is the centerpiece of the UCF. It is comprised of four components: core, major, language, and electives. The core is obligatory for all students and consists of training in basic academic skills—such as research methods, epistemology, and skills in presenting research findings.

Unlike comparable degree programs in other countries, Freiburg’s LAS model doesn’t just offer a general survey of a wide range of disciplines, but also goes into considerable depth. The students select one of four major field areas to specialize in: culture and history, life sciences, earth and environmental sciences, and governance. “This provides an intellectual challenge for our students on the one hand, while giving them the chance to continue straight on with a master’s program on the other,” explains Eschenbruch. Another important part of the program is languages: The program is taught primarily in English, sometimes also in German. The students are expected to have a good written and oral command of both languages at an academic level. The language courses also teach students how research papers read outside of Germany should be formatted, formulated, and structured—they thus go well beyond simple language instruction. The students are also encouraged to learn further languages at the UCF.

The electives provide students even more room to pursue individual academic interests—they can take courses in other fields of study, look for internships, or carry out academic projects related to their studies in Germany or abroad. As Eschenbruch remembers, the inter-faculty team charged with developing the program was guided by three central questions, namely “how much field-specific training is necessary, what the language of instruction is, and how much freedom the degree program should allow the students.” The UCF looks for young individuals who have a broad range of interests, who do not identify too strongly with a particular field of study like engineering or sociology, and who have enough initiative to find their own path. “We encourage our students to take part in designing their curriculum. This does lead to uncertainties, but learning how to manage them productively is a part of the concept.” This might sound a bit like an antidote to the Bologna reform and the increasing regimentation of higher education in Europe, but it isn’t. The degree programs offered by the UCF are more of a further development of the reform, “a sort of Bologna 2.0,” as Eschenbruch stresses.

Taking Time for Detours

The UCF also provides new opportunities for other students: In winter semester 2012/13 the university launched the Interdisciplinary Track, Indi-Track for short. This program enables students of bachelor’s programs to extend their studies by a year to gain additional qualifications in an area of their choice. The idea is to give students the chance to broaden their horizons and experience the new possibilities an interdisciplinary perspective can open up by taking courses and project seminars in other fields of study. At the beginning of the year 2013, the UCF also introduced the module “Fascination Science” with the help of funding from the State of Baden-Württemberg. The purpose of the program is to give undergraduate students the chance to design research projects in small groups with guidance from experienced researchers—beyond the bounds of their own fields of study. In an increasingly complex world, interdisciplinarity has become a factor for gaining a competitive edge. Whether in environmental protection or medicine, many problems today can no longer be tackled adequately from the perspective of a single discipline but rather require cooperation between a wide range of specialists—and semi-specialists who make headway although, or perhaps because, they are willing to take time for detours when the situation demands it.

Stephanie Streif

» www.ucf.uni-freiburg.de
Rye. Unground. Difficult to consume, but basically nourishing": This is how Prof. Dr. Götz Rehn describes the University of Freiburg. When he began studying economics here in the early 1970s, what he often encountered at the faculty was “the old world: The professors scribbled models on the chalkboard that had little to do with reality.” The organic foods trading firm and supermarket chain Alnatura, which Rehn founded 20 years ago, was intended as an alternative to these models: “Business depends on our idea of humankind,” says the 63-year-old. And he believes that we should have the freedom to act, do meaningful work, support the Earth.

Rehn laid the foundations for this worldview early on. In 1963 his family moved from Freiburg to Bochum, “from the sunny paradise, the blissful idyll, removed from reality,” to the coal mining town in the Ruhr region. It was a time when one mine after the other was being shut down. The streets were filthy, the people complained of unemployment. “Seeing what influence the economy can have on our lives made a strong impression on me.” After completing his schooling at a Waldorf school, Rehm was admitted to medical school. He wanted to become a doctor like his father, who helped to build up the Faculty of Medicine at the Ruhr University Bochum, and like his grandfather and many of his uncles. But then, while completing an internship at a metalworking firm in Würzburg at the age of 20, he had a sudden change of heart. He was accompanying a man who visited small companies, and this man didn’t just ask about productivity and sales figures, but also about the people: Did they enjoy their work? What ideas did they have, what chances did they see to bring themselves and the company forward? “Then it was clear to me that I wanted to be a doctor for business. I wanted to create conditions that serve the people.”

First the Model, Then the Product

The businessman has devoted his entire life to this task. In his dissertation in business administration, which he wrote at the University of Freiburg, he presented “models for organizational development” based on the anthroposophical teachings of Rudolf Steiner, the founder of the Waldorf schools. What he experienced after graduating at his job at Nestlé was the direct opposite of his vision: He worked at the multinational corporation seven years long, developing products like Yes chocolate bars. Twice he came close to handing in his resignation and starting a new business with a couple of colleagues – and twice these colleagues backed out of the project. “Then it was clear to me that I wanted to be a doctor for business. I wanted to create conditions that serve the people.”

Rehm’s new business model was fully developed long before he had the opportunity to give it concrete form. Initially he played with the idea of producing children’s clothing; then he planned a buffet-style vegetarian restaurant: “This would have been perfect for the spirit of our times.” In the early 1980s he finally settled on organic foods. What began as a small range of products on the shelves of the drugstore chain dm-drogerie markt is now a corporation with more than 1000 products and 83 organic supermarkets across Germany, as well as several in Switzerland – with new stores opening all the time.

Busy Schedule, No Stress

Now Rehm is passing on his ideas and experience to the next generation: As cofounder of the Institute for Organic Social Studies and the business administration degree program at the private Alanus University of Arts and Social Sciences, he teaches students his ideas on rethinking business and shows them that career and private life don’t necessarily have to diverge from one another: “For me there’s no difference between occupation and vocation, and that means I don’t have any problems achieving a work-life balance.” He has a busy schedule, but he still finds time to take walks, ride his bicycle, sail, and read Schiller, Goethe, Novalis, and texts by Rudolf Steiner – “all without stress.”
Every student knows what lecture halls, cafeterias, and libraries look like, but there are countless other places at the university that most students never get the chance to see. This little selection provides an impression of how diverse Freiburg’s campus is.

The Botanical Garden isn't the only place at the university with plants under glass. The University Medical Center also has a greenhouse – as part of its plant nursery. Photo: Freiburg University Medical Center

Employees of the Environmental Conservation Office dispose of hazardous waste – for instance from the natural sciences faculties, the University Medical Center, and the Faculty of Medicine – in a room equipped with top-grade safety equipment. Photo: Thomas Kunz

The vaulted brick cellar of the Peterhof next to Collegiate Building II was built between 1585 and 1771. Today it is equipped with a mobile stage and is used for theater, cabaret, and musical events with audiences of up to 300 people. Photo: Peter Mesenholl

Playing, laughing, being happy together: The university’s new day care center Murmelgarten opened for business in October 2013. Photo: Patrick Seeger

Unusual Perspectives

Every student knows what lecture halls, cafeterias, and libraries look like, but there are countless other places at the university that most students never get the chance to see. This little selection provides an impression of how diverse Freiburg’s campus is.
The university opened a new fitness and health center in summer semester 2013. Head trainer Matthias Kist (left) shows beginners the right way to use the exercise equipment. Photo: Thomas Kunz

Three million volumes are kept in a space as large as two football fields on the two underground floors of the University Library. Photo: Sandra Meyndt

Jesus on the cross – 565 centimeters large, chiseled from the trunk of an oak tree, hanging from a 16-meter-high steel girder: The sculpture hanging in the University Chapel was donated by the artist Franz Gutmann. Photo: Peter Mesenholl

Red-hot: Tim Lecke works on an Erlenmeyer flask in the glass blowing workshop of the Chemistry Laboratory. Several faculties have their own workshops. Photo: Thomas Kunz

Verdant vineyards: The tradition of winemaking at the university was renewed in 1984. The vineyards are located in Freiburg-Munzingen and in Pfaffenweiler. Photo: Brigitte Sasse

The automatic transport system at the University Medical Center carries food, laundry, or medicine through a network of underground tunnels to the station where it is needed. Photo: Freiburg University Medical Center

The university opened a new fitness and health center in summer semester 2013. Head trainer Matthias Kist (left) shows beginners the right way to use the exercise equipment. Photo: Thomas Kunz
At the University of Freiburg, the Deutschlandstipendium (Germany Scholarship) is funded by private donors, foundations, and companies. They support excellent students that are socially disadvantaged or show above average dedication to their studies. “I was able to devote my full attention to my studies and didn’t have to work alongside them,” says former scholarship recipient Susanne Eichel. Only half of the 300 euros scholarship holders receive each month comes from the donors. The other half is provided by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. “There’s no way to make more out of small donations,” says alumnus Hans Stalf, full of praise for the program. Stalf, who studied economics at the University of Freiburg from 1964 to 1970, is on the executive board of the Alumni Club Rhineland. The board had the idea of supporting the Deutschlandstipendium in Freiburg before a meeting with the Rector: “We thought it would be great to be able to promise him at least one scholarship.” The club set up a box at the club meeting for anonymous donations. The members found it easy to donate: The club contributed 1800 euros, enough for one scholarship, in the first round of the program. They hope to at least match this sum in future rounds.

Advertising at Companies and Associations

Dr. Ekkehart Meroth, president of the Alumni Club Freiburg, is also convinced of the value of the Deutschlandstipendium: “Since the donations are tax-deductible, it’s like making three euros out of one.” He spoke to the director of the Heart Center Freiburg-Bad Krozingen about the program. The reward: ten scholarships for Freiburg students. “The response was positive from the start,” says Meroth, who studied law in Freiburg starting in 1977. He feels obligated to support the university – also because the region has so few large and powerful companies that could afford to fund a lot of scholarships. Trade associations like chambers of commerce or handicrafts are also promising partners for scholarship programs, “but alumni in areas with a lot of industry can doubtlessly achieve a lot by winning over alumni in management positions at large corporations for the cause.”

All students who are currently enrolled at the University of Freiburg or soon will be can apply for the Deutschlandstipendium. Applicants are required to have a grade point average of at least 1.3 on their most recent transcripts. Other selection criteria include community service or political involvement, professional or practical experience, and biographical circumstances like child-raising responsibilities or dis-
The University of Freiburg has created a new place for PhD students to meet. Alumnae and alumni donated around 24,000 euros for the doctoral candidate lounge. Denise Engeser asked project supervisor Dr. Carolin Schuchert as well as Erika Schmidt, doctoral candidate in psychology, and Judith Praßer, PhD student in German studies, what they think of the new meeting space.

uni’alumni: What does the lounge offer doctoral candidates?

Carolin Schuchert: The doctoral candidate lounge provides materials on doctoral studies and further career opportunities as well as the chance to meet other young researchers. Next door is an office with a representative from the doctoral student initiative Prodoc as well as the administration of the junior researchers’ network SciNet. These services are complemented by the advising services of the International Graduate Academy, or IGA for short, which are located in the same building. In addition, doctoral candidates can hold networking meetings or small-scale workshops in the lounge or put their own artworks or photographs on display.

Why was it important to set up such a room?

Erika Schmidt: The lounge is a place where we can meet other doctoral candidates to socialize and exchange ideas on our research. Both are important when writing a dissertation, because one conducts research for an extended period of time alone. Establishing a sense of community with other PhD students is an empowering thing. Now we need to let all of the doctoral candidates know about the room so that we see, hear, and feel this sense of community in the lounge.

What message do you think the university is sending to young researchers by providing the lounge?

Judith Praßer: Not only do they benefit from the lounge itself but also from the message the Rectorate is sending them by providing it: It makes doctoral candidates as a group feel like they are being treated with consideration and respect and acknowledges them for the contribution they make to research, the academic environment, and the reputation of the University of Freiburg.

HOW TO DONATE

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He is one of the few top managers who are also researchers: Prof. Dr. Andreas Barner, managing director of the largest German pharmaceutical company Boehringer Ingelheim and, since June 2013, president of the research promotion organization Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft. Nicolas Scherger asked him about the values and goals his support for science and research is founded on.

uni’alumni: Mr. Barner, how do you perceive the University of Freiburg as an alumnus, director of a company, and president of the Stifterverband?

Andreas Barner: I have positive memories of my time as a student, no question about it. But I’m not just a former student: Later on I was also a member of the strategic commission appointed by the German Science Council for the Excellence Initiative. In this capacity I saw how the university as a whole is building up a profile and setting priorities, what great momentum the university has at the moment. In many respects it’s hard to recognize.

What medicine would you prescribe for the German higher education system?

We don’t need any therapies; the system is quite healthy. But it would be nice if we could maintain the wave of optimism brought on by the Excellence Initiative, not with medicine but with muesli and fresh fruit. Universities need enough financial resources but also enough room for autonomous development.

Why do you support science and research?

Germany will only remain a good location for businesses if research institutions at and outside of the university invest in strong fundamental research. When the funds from the Excellence Initiative run out and the constitutional balanced-budget provision kicks in, we need to ensure that the universities continue to receive enough support. This is a matter of personal concern for me, because having good universities is not only good for industry in a country but also for the climate of society as a whole.

In the pharmaceutical industry it can easily take 25 years to develop a drug to the point where it achieves success on the market. Why are the funding periods for research projects usually so much shorter?

The conflict of aims stems from the fact that researchers who have not yet received funding want to have the chance to get into a funding program. That’s what makes time limits a good idea. At the same time we need to be patient. For a collaborative research center, for instance, twelve years is a good funding period – and afterwards there can be follow-up projects.

You have been at Boehringer Ingelheim for over 20 years. Why is the company such a good fit for you?
The goal of running a family business is to pass it on from one generation to the next in a good, economically healthy state. This view leads to a culture in which values and long-term thinking are important. And the values of the company and the family that owns it are largely consistent with mine. It’s an ideal situation, so that makes it fun.

You are a member of the board of directors of the German Evangelical Church Assembly. What role does your faith play in your identity as a manager and researcher?

Faith is essential for me. It provides me with a clear set of values for my professional and volunteer work – even though it is not always possible to live up to these ideals in every respect. It is important for me to have a good foundation for making decisions. I would never take advantage of my faith and say:
In her first novel, Der Geschmack von Apfelkernen (now available in English as The Taste of Apple Seeds), Dr. Katharina Hagena tells a story about memory and forgetting in the context of a family. The young Iris travels to the village Bootshaven in the north of Germany to attend her grandmother Bertha’s funeral. When she arrives, she finds out that she will inherit the house. The old and labyrinthine dwelling and the adjacent garden were the setting of stories that Iris now calls to mind: This is where Iris played a game called “eat or die” with her cousin as a child. And then the cousin got into an accident no one speaks about, while Bertha’s memory slowly deteriorated due to Alzheimer’s disease. 

The Taste of Apple Seeds was Katharina Hagena’s first novel, and it stormed the best-seller lists. The book was translated into 25 languages and was made into a movie that debuted at German theaters in September 2013.

Her second novel is reminiscent of the work she wrote her doctoral dissertation on: While the plot of James Joyce’s Ulysses takes place in a single day, Hagena’s book Vom Schlafen und Verschwinden (“Of Sleeping and Disappearing”) takes place in the space of a single night. The sleep researcher Ellen Feld can’t sleep. She thinks about her dying mother, about the bullfrogs at the pond, about the boy she only kissed once, and about the boy who made her pregnant. All of this happened in Grund, the village in Baden where Ellen grew up. Later she returned there for a short time and joined a small choir whose singers were all bound by a secret.

The protagonist of her second novel lives in Hamburg and thinks back on the meadows along the Rhine in the village where she was raised in Baden. The other, Iris, actually lives in Freiburg and works at the University Library, where her favorite activity is to leaf through forgotten books. Like her two protagonists, Katharina Hagena grew at one end end of Germany and moved to the other end: The author studied English and German literature at the University of Freiburg and completed her PhD in 1995, and today she lives as a freelance writer with her family in Hamburg.
Studying doesn’t just mean getting an education and acquiring knowledge. It also means meeting interesting people, sharing experiences with them, and feeling a sense of community. Some of these encounters develop into friendships that endure long after graduation. Christina Nickweiler collected several such stories from alumnae and alumni of the University of Freiburg.

Photos in portraits: all private

Katrin Pfannmüller-Maurer
Discovering Life Together

“We first became aware of each other in 1973 in an orientation course for future sports science students. Eva impressed me immediately by telling me she was thinking about choosing physics as her second major. We were taken aback by a certain similarity in our appearance: long, dark hair, blue eyes, and somehow the same constitution. A flash!

It was the beginning of an intensive time together that has endured until this day. Sports courses at the university, holidays, living together, the same favorite bar – the “Caveau” on Oberlinden was our living room until the early hours of the morning. We even spent our first years as teachers in the 1980s at the same school. We discovered life together, learning how to stand on our own two feet, the ups and downs that make it so exciting, beautiful, and strenuous. Our relationship is walled in fast within the earth, like Schiller’s famous bell – which became particularly apparent when I was suffering from a long and life-threatening illness a few years ago. The candles Eva lit in the Freiburg Cathedral and the fact that she was ‘there for me’ were and still are signs of a very close bond. We visit each other and talk on the phone regularly to this day.”

Dr. Mathias Clodius
Friendship as Strong as a Tree Trunk

“I met my friend Clemens when we were studying medicine at the beginning of the 1990s. After passing the preliminary medical examination we had the option of taking a weekend course at the county hospital in Müllheim. I spoke to him at the train station in Müllheim because I didn’t know the way and he seemed to be looking for the same place. We discovered that we were working on our doctorate at the same institute but had never seen each other before. After completing our studies we never lost track of each other again, even though our career paths diverged: Clemens established a practice in Strasbourg, I became a school doctor.

Several years later our friendship got a new boost. Since I acquired a sizable piece of forested land in 2003, Clemens helped me in summer 2006 with the forestry work. It inspired him so much that he bought several hectares of woods in France over the years. We discovered our love of the forest as a new hobby and have visited continuing education courses for owners of private woodland for many years. We have a lot of fun together doing the regular forestry maintenance: Chopping down trees, cutting wood and piling it up, discussing our future plans for our woods – that brings us together.”

Mathias Clodius
Clemens Ortmbauer
**Daniela Rumpf**

**Tattoo as a Symbol of Friendship**

“Caro and I met during orientation week, on a pub crawl organized by the Economics Student Committee. In the preparatory math course she asked me if she could sit next to me. That was the icebreaker. I can’t remember a lecture course we didn’t attend together. Then we often cooked together in the evening.

Our friendship is characterized above all by a lot of fun and deep trust. I can tell her everything, and she always gives me the right advice. We know what makes each other tick. We can laugh and cry together. There have been many special moments at which I was happy to have Caro as a friend by my side. We always stick together in hard times. She is a part of my family and I of hers. We even got tattoos of a friendship symbol.

Lots of our classmates used to make fun of us for talking with each other on the telephone every day when we were students. Now we keep each other up to date once or twice a week on the phone. Since we can’t see each other very often – she lives in Stuttgart, I in Düsseldorf – that is important to us.”

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**Dr. Michael Johner**

**As if Time Hadn’t Passed at All**

“I met my friend Ulli when I was studying pharmacy from 1983 to 1988. We had to conduct analyses in the lab almost every day and wait for the results in the evening. While waiting we struck up a conversation, because everyone hoped his or her analyses would be correct.

Since we were attracted to each other, we became a couple and were together for a long time. We earned our sailing license together on Schluchsee, practiced karate together in the Recreational Sports Program, and learned Italian together along with a couple of other friends. Although we separated, we remained friends, had respect for each other, and treated each other with consideration. This mutual esteem is still alive today and is what’s so special about our friendship.

We each have our own family today, but we still take an interest in each other’s lives from afar as friends. When we meet from time to time for coffee, it’s like time hasn’t passed at all despite all the years we have spent apart. We’re still on the same wavelength.”

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**Dr. Renate Schulz-Weiling**

**Playing the Role of Sister**

“In 1976, when I was studying psychology, I prepared a presentation with a classmate. She invited me to her birthday – a great party, where I met her roommate Gudrun. After that, Gudrun and I started seeing a lot of each other. We studied psychology together, went out a lot in Freiburg, often went out together with our boyfriends, and talked about our studies, men, and other things. Gudrun has a twin sister, and I – without a sister – was lucky enough to be able to assume her role a bit. We were a great team. At the psychotherapy conference in Lindau, for example, we always had nice therapists from various schools around us who wondered why they could suddenly sit together at a table and talk. That wasn’t common yet back then.

Then Gudrun met her future husband, and I became the godmother of her oldest son. Before I had kids of my own, I spent a lot of time taking care of my godson. Then I married too, and Gudrun became the godmother of our third son. The visits have become rarer, but we’ve celebrated several birthdays and New Year’s Eve along with the six children we now have between us – including the turn of the year 2014.”

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**Renate Schulz-Weiling**

**Gudrun Winkelmüller**

**Daniela Rumpf**

**Caro Meisenbacher**

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**Ulli Sohst**

**Michael Johner**
Mortgages and real estate contracts, right of way and land charges, pre-deportation detention and preventive custody: The topics Dr. Bettina Brückner grapples with every day are diverse as well as special. The jurist is one of 27 presiding judges at the Federal Court of Justice in Karlsruhe – the total amount of judges who work there is 129. The rulings Brückner and her colleagues make are often of a fundamental nature and are in the public eye. But she doesn’t let herself be influenced by this pressure: “It is a great task to make it clear when communicating our decisions that we have taken a long, hard look at the problem, asked ourselves what the lawmaker intended, and weighed the arguments of each party carefully.

Taking Walks during Study Breaks

A native of Solingen, Brückner studied law in Göttingen and Geneva before coming to Freiburg, where she studied from 1988 to 1991, took the state examination in law, and met her future husband at the university cinema. The first adjective that comes to her mind when she thinks back on her time as a student is – cold. That’s how she describes her tiny attic apartment on Klarastraße in the Stühlinger neighborhood, which was only equipped with a tiled stove. Studying took top priority for Brückner in those years; in the summer she met with friends in the Kastaniengarten during study breaks or took walks to St. Valentin. “Back then I often thought: How stupid to have come here right before my final examination of all times. I can’t even properly enjoy what Freiburg has to offer,” she remembers. What remains from this time are many good friends whom she still has contact with today. She celebrated New Year’s 2013/14 with former Freiburg classmates in Berlin.

After Brückner completed her examination, she and her husband moved to Hamburg. There she worked initially at the Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Private Law and wrote her dissertation. After completing her legal clerkship, she became a judge at the regional court of Hamburg. The couple lived in Hamburg for almost ten years. These were also the years in which their two children were born. During the next stage of her life, a good ten years in Osnabrück, Brückner worked as a public prosecutor and as a judge at the district and regional court. She then took a position as a judge at the regional court of appeals in Oldenburg. In 2010, the State of Lower Saxony placed her on its list of candidates for the election of federal judges – and she was chosen. “At first I hesitated, but the Federal Court of Justice interested me because you have the final say on exciting decisions. So I said yes to my candidature and was happy when they chose me.”

Reviewing Decisions Clause by Clause

The position as a federal judge is a lifetime appointment. On Mondays Brückner works at home in Freiburg; from Tuesday to Friday she lives in Karlsruhe. In addition to many other decisions, each year she writes roughly 15 to 20 so-called revision decisions, large and extensive decisions. Each decision is reviewed clause by clause in her senate – meaning with four other colleagues. As her husband Jens-Peter Schneider was offered a position as professor of public law at the University of Freiburg at the same time as she received her appointment in Karlsruhe, the family moved back to Freiburg three years ago. “I never thought we would come back – and now I don’t want to leave again.”

Claudia Füßler
"I studied in Freiburg in the late 1970s and never lived in an apartment-sharing community – how did I manage this? Miraculously, I landed a three-room apartment on Gerberau, top location, on a tip from some classmates. It didn’t have a bathroom, a shower, or heating, but I could afford the 175 or 185 marks in rent. I had a part-time job as a local reporter for the *Badische Zeitung*, which brought in between 400 and 800 marks per month. My father gave me 500 marks, later 600. I was a wealthy student, compared to others, but I was also very busy.

When I moved to Stuttgart after graduation, I wanted to share the apartment in Freiburg with a student and commute back on the weekends. That would have been my apartment-sharing community! But then, when I came for the weekend, my roommate always had extremely loud sex with his girlfriend, or sometimes alone. When this guy became sexual, in whatever shape or form, it wasn’t just a little bit loud: It was an erupting volcano with an earthquake plus a tornado. That wasn’t a good feeling for me when I sat alone in my room. So it didn’t take long before I handed over the entire apartment to him. After all, I couldn’t forbid him to have sex. I guess I’m just a victim of the sexual revolution, which Freiburg was a part of in those years, not least thanks to the ‘Marxist-Reichist Initiative.’"

The journalist Harald Martenstein studied at the University of Freiburg and worked part time as a local reporter.

Photo: Bertelsmann

**HISTORICAL GREATS: ALFRED DÖBLIN**

**Paper Eater and Ink Swallower**

Artistic sophisticate and researcher, screenwriter for Hollywood, novelist, psychiatrist and Parkinson’s patient, Jew, Catholic, and sometimes atheist, family man and adulterer, pacifist and cultural officer in a French military uniform, great author, long neglected by literary scholarship: It is the contradictions that distinguish the work of Alfred Döblin (1878–1957). Living between countries, wavering between convictions, falling between two stools: This was a passion for him and only seldom a cause of grief. He loved the experiment, not the ready-made solution.

**Uterus for Stories**

Döblin was one of the founders of expressionism and ranks among the most productive authors of the first half of the 20th century. He characterized himself as an “eater of kilometers of paper, a swallower of liters of ink.” This industrial-scale consumption of resources spawned a body of work encompassing novels, short stories, programmatic treatises, philosophical digressions, and political satire. He once claimed that his texts simply slid out of him in the dark – that he was only the uterus for his stories and thoughts. While studying medicine in Freiburg he gave life to two novels and a novella, and while taking a walk on Schlossberg in 1904 or 1905 he begot the idea for his most famous story, “The Murder of a Buttercup.”

Döblin was one of the first exiled authors to return to Germany after the Second World War. Freiburg and the surrounding area remained important to him up until his death: Shortly after the University of Freiburg reopened he gave a lecture at his alma mater. He spent the last years of his life as a Parkinson’s patient at hospitals and sanitoriums. At the end of his life he could look back on a great body of work, but he also had to endure the painful return to a country that had become foreign to him: “And when I came again – I didn’t come again.”

Alfred Döblin wrote satires and glosses criticizing the politics of the Weimar Republic under the pseudonym “Linke Poot.”

Photo: Deutsches Literaturarchiv
Claudia Michel wrote her dissertation on the Greek poet Homer and tragedy. The classical philologist’s next research project is on the comedies of Aristophanes, which serve as a kind of “knowledge repository”: The Greek poet hid references to other texts in his plays and parodied politicians, dialects, and the works of other authors. “These are exciting texts; humorous but also ingenious,” says Michel with great enthusiasm.

She almost couldn’t muster up the confidence to take on the topic, because it was a relatively unfamiliar area for her. “Comedy texts are chaotic. The action is much more turbulent than in tragedies.” Thanks to a STAY Scholarship funded by the booster association Alumni Freiburg e.V., she now has six to twelve months time to work her way into the topic and write a project proposal for applications. “The scholarship is a great help, and it will make me much better qualified for postdoc positions.” Her goal is to write a habilitation thesis.

She is also happy to be able to stay in Freiburg for the time being. Michel was born in Freiburg, grew up in Offenburg, and returned to her hometown to study classical philology and ancient Near Eastern philology. After graduation she completed a postgraduate program at the Center for French Studies of the University of Freiburg and an internship at a publishing house in Paris. As a means of taking a break from the verbal blows exchanged in the plays she is studying, the philologist exchanges blows a few times a week herself – by going to boxing practice at a local club.
What comes to her mind first when she thinks about Freiburg? “The ‘Bächle’ and the cheerful atmosphere in the city,” answers Marie Claudine Zangna with a smile. The pharmacist has run the pharmacy “La Balance” in Jaunde, the capital of Cameroon and her city of birth, for 20 years – and she is the president of the Cameroon chapter of the Freiburg Alumni Club. One hears it in the tone of her voice and sees it in her eyes when she talks about her years as a student: Despite her return to the country on the west coast of Central Africa, there’s still a place in her heart for Freiburg.

Good Organization, Good Results

Zangna came to Germany as a teenager with her sister and her single mother, who worked as a secretary at the Cameroonian Embassy in Bonn. After completing her schooling, the “friends I had there, the beautiful landscape, and the reputation of the university, which was good even back then,” were the key factors in her decision to study in Freiburg. Back in Jaunde, Zangna took inspiration from other alumni organizations and built up a network to pool the know-how of graduates from various faculties. The idea was to make a difference together.

An important part of the club’s activities is a project for the hygienic and environmentally friendly disposal of hospital waste. The president and other members have given training courses to hospital staff for years. “Waste disposal isn’t sufficiently well organized in Cameroon,” explains Zangna. The problem is that there are too few government guidelines. In 2008 the Freiburg Alumni Office held a live online alumni seminar in Jaunde, a continuing education course on environmental management funded by the German Academic Exchange Service. “The project has become especially important for us since then,” says Zangna. She has invested a lot of time in the project and wants to continue cooperating with the University of Freiburg. The establishment of a waste disposal plant in Jaunde and campaigns for raising awareness at hospitals are only the beginning: The club plans to expand the project to include hospitals throughout the country. The pharmacist is certain the concept “will convince everyone with good organization and good results.” Those who know her can attest to the great determination with which she is following this plan.

In winter semester 2013/14 her son enrolled at the University of Freiburg. When asked whether she played a part in his choice, Zangna answers with a laugh: “He applied to several universities in Germany, but we’re happy he ended up in Freiburg” – presumably not least because she now has one reason more to visit her old home.

Stefan Müller
A Look Back

Successful and Passionate about Music

The Academic Orchestra Freiburg celebrates its 50th anniversary

The Academic Orchestra and street music? That has actually happened in the course of the orchestra’s 50-year history, though it was unplanned and a one-off event. The musicians had finished their first rehearsal weekend in 1963. On the return trip over the Col de la Schlucht in the Vosges Mountains, their rented bus gave up the ghost. They took it to an Alsatian garage to have it fixed. “To kill time while we were waiting we played a Mozart symphony,” remembers founding conductor Volkmar Fritsche. The scene says a lot about the music-loving “wild bunch” of around 25 students who had gotten together in response to an advertisement hung up by a medical student. “Almost only violinists and cellists, one violist, no double bass – but they wanted to play symphonies by composers like Brahms and Bruckner.”

The troop initially assembled for the purpose of reestablishing the medical student orchestra, which had dissolved several years previously. The orchestra was able to hold its first concert in the assembly hall of the university with the help of stand-ins from the School of Music as well as funding and organizational support from Prof. Dr. Ludwig Heilmeyer, the then director of the University Medical Center. Fritsche, composer and master class student at the School of Music, was one of the driving forces of the new ensemble. The rehearsals were held at the Institute of Zoology — surrounded by various species of stuffed animals. “Notes of the same name were not always emitted with the same frequency, and not every individual rhythm corresponded to that specified by the baton,” noted Dr. Harald Issel, the first director of the orchestra, in his records.

Convincing from the First Concert On

This wasn’t the case for long. The Badische Zeitung raved about the achievement of the “orchestra educator” Fritsche after the first concert. The performance was so convincing that the entire wind section of the competition soon defected to the new orchestra: The Studium Generale Orchestra was actually the acknowledged classical music ensemble of the university and received financial support from the General Student Committee. Its demise heralded the birth of the orchestra that is now celebrating its 50th anniversary: The Academic Orchestra Freiburg was established on 27 April 1964 at Volkmar Fritsche’s house, with an initial 30 members.

The orchestra already had contact with France and Switzerland from the very beginning. The musicians had set off in the middle of the night in five private automobiles for a concert in...
"Since we didn’t have a timpanist, I had to play timpani myself," says Fritsche. Listening to him talk about a concert in Basel in February 1964 almost gives one goose pimples today: Paul Hindemith’s Trauermusik was on the program. The composer had announced that he would be attending but passed away shortly beforehand. There was suddenly a real reason to play his “funeral music.”

Since that time, the orchestra has performed in many large concert halls throughout the world. Under the conductor Jonathan Seers it won first prize for university orchestras at the International Youth Music Festival in 1983. Many of the musicians took up exalted positions in academia, such as Prof. Dr. Uwe Blaurock, the first concertmaster and later dean of the Faculty of Law. Many of the conductors also went on to have illustrious careers. Like his predecessors, the current conductor Hannes Reich is confronted with the task of building up a new ensemble every few years due to the fluctuation inherent to a student orchestra. The orchestra currently has 80 members. Reich raves about the “unbelievable level” of his ensemble: “The standards are high at auditions.”

The orchestra is organized as a registered society, with a managing committee and a music program committee. The conductor sees himself as a pure music director and is no longer a volunteer as during Fritsche’s tenure. The enthusiasm for making music together is unbroken, says Reich: “They might have stood in the lab or studied for an exam since 7:30 in the morning – but the members do their utmost to make it to the weekly rehearsals.”

Anita Rüffer

ALUMNI WANTED

To celebrate the anniversary of the orchestra, an alumni concert is being planned as part of the Alumni Meeting on 5 July 2014. The orchestra is still looking for former members interested in participating in this special event. The current orchestra will hold an anniversary concert one day earlier, on 4 July 2014. All alumni are welcome to attend.

Contact: organization@akademisches-orchestra-freiburg.de

More information on the anniversary is available on the homepage of the Academic Orchestra in the section “50 Jahre Aka” (in German):

» www.akademisches-orchestra-freiburg.de

What do Joan of Arc, Achilles, and Charles the Bold have in common? They’re all featured in the lecture series “War and Heroism,” held by the University of Freiburg’s collaborative research center (SFB) “Heroes – Heroizations – Heroisms” in winter semester 2013/14. The SFB is studying what impact heroes have on societies and their social orders. The historian Prof. Dr. Birgit Studt came up with the topic for the series, which has a bearing on a historical event whose 100th anniversary will be marked in 2014: the beginning of the First World War. “Talking about war provides us with insight into the reinterpretation, reinvention, and ideologization of heroic images,” says Studt. “There is no such thing as a hero per se; people make them – by talking about them, recounting their heroic deeds, judging them, and remembering them.”

In order to make the overview of the topic provided in the lecture series as comprehensive as possible, she organized a program with speakers from various disciplines who analyze heroic images and heroizations within the context of wars in various epochs. As a means of giving those interested in the topic a chance to take in the lectures without having to be at a certain place at a certain time, Studt is cooperating with the university’s IT Services Department to record hour-long podcasts of the lectures and make them available on the internet – together with podcasts from the lecture series “Heroes: Forms and Functions of the Heroic,” which the SFB held in winter semester 2011/12. Isabell Wiedle

MY PODCAST: BIRGIT STUDT

How Heroes Are Made

» www.podcasts.uni-freiburg.de
» www.sfb948.uni-freiburg.de

The historian Birgit Studt has organized a lecture series that examines the impact Joan of Arc (above) and other heroic figures had on wars. Photos: private, Aubrée Belin/Fotolia
Thanks to the advances made by modern medicine, people now live much longer, and even the terminally ill live longer. In order to ensure that they do not spend the last stage of their lives in agony, doctors trained in palliative medicine provide them care, ease their pain, and give them emotional support and guidance. The Freiburg University Medical Center established a palliative care station with a consultation service for all departments with beds in 2006 and Baden-Württemberg’s first chair in palliative medicine in 2012. The concept for the station was developed by Prof. Dr. Gerhild Becker, holder of the chair and medical director of the Division of Palliative Medicine. “From the outset, my goal was to combine medicine with the humanities and build bridges between the disciplines,” says the specialist for internal medicine.

Theology with Medicine – and Vice Versa

Even just a glance at her biography leaves the impression that she was made for this job: Born in a small village near the Danish border in 1962, Becker completed her schooling in Flensburg, went to the Evangelical College in Bielefeld-Bethel and the University of Tübingen, and took the ecclesiastical examination in Kiel and the state theological examination in Hamburg. “I was really taken with theology. I wanted to know where we come from and where we are going.” But becoming a minister wasn’t enough for her. She began studying medicine and completed her medical degree in Freiburg, only to turn yet again to theology, this time Catholic welfare studies. “I wanted to know how theology works in concrete terms.” As if that hadn’t been enough for a remarkable career as a student, she then completed a master of palliative care at King’s College London in England. For good measure, she also spent time studying abroad in the USA – at the Harvard Medical School and the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York. Ambitious would probably be an inadequate way to characterize the palliative care doctor, but she finally came to rest thanks to her talent for allowing the active and the contemplative to coexist in her life: “I can renew my strength, listen, and soak everything up while I’m working, without simply taking action for the sake of doing something.”

Palliative Medicine Is Teamwork

She is proud of the online degree program “Palliative Care” she developed, in which participants can earn an internationally recognized master’s degree. The program is targeted at established doctors, social workers, psychologists, hospital chaplains, and highly trained nurses and can be completed alongside a full-time job. “Palliative medicine is always a team effort,” says Becker. “I also enjoy being a university teacher and take this role very seriously.” It makes her happy to search for truths with students, to call things into question, and to blaze new trails. It is thus only fitting that Baden-Württemberg’s new Competence Center for Palliative Care – the only such institution in Germany – is located at the Freiburg University Medical Center. Its director is Prof. Dr. med. Gerhild Becker, theologian and expert in Catholic welfare studies.

Eva Opitz
We make use of them every day without thinking about it: Embedded systems are not just in smartphones, washing machines, and cars. They handle complex controlling, monitoring, and operating tasks. In cars, for example, they are responsible for the antilock brake system. When engineers and IT specialists develop software for embedded systems, they face challenges they have never had to deal with in classical systems. In order to provide experts with a need-based continuing education program to help them overcome these challenges, the University of Freiburg and the Fraunhofer Gesellschaft developed the degree program "Project Management in Software Engineering for Embedded Systems" within the context of the project "Windows for Continuing Education."

Research and Practice Oriented

The pilot phase of the project began in winter semester 2013/14. It is the result of close cooperation between a team led by Prof. Dr. Bernd Becker from the continuing education program "Intelligent Embedded Systems" at the Department of Computer Science of the University of Freiburg and Prof. Dr. Eckhart Hanser and Prof. Dr. Reiner Göppert from the Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University in Lörrach. "We have developed a concept that is research and practice oriented and offers an interdisciplinary approach to the topic," says Becker.

In order to ensure that each participant receives individual supervision, enrollment in the program is limited to twelve students. The program is designed for working professionals. The 180 hours of required coursework consists of three on-campus courses held in Freiburg, an online meeting with the lecturers, a team project, and the completion of online assignments. The expertise and professional experience of the participants enter into the learning process. Upon completing the program, participants receive a diploma from the University of Freiburg.

Isabell Wiedle

www.masteronline-iams.de/go/pmse

"FREIRÄUME FÜR WISSENSCHAFTLICHE WEITERBILDUNG – WINDOWS FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION"

The main goal of the cooperation between the University of Freiburg, the Fraunhofer Fraunhofer Institutes, and the Fraunhofer Academy is to develop a range of research-based continuing education programs and build up the Freiburg Academy of Science and Technology (FAST). The Freiburg Academy for Continuing Education coordinates the project, which receives funding from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research within the context of the program "Advancement through Education: Open Higher Education Institutions."
The collaborative research center (SFB) “Leisure: Concepts, Spaces Figures” was launched a year ago at the University of Freiburg. It brings together scholars from the fields of philosophy, theology, sociology, ethnology, psychology, art history, medicine, and literature. The philosopher Prof. Dr. Günter Figal is deputy director of the center. Nicolas Scherger spoke with him about the project.

uni’alumni: Prof. Figal, when did you last experience leisure?
Günter Figal: Yesterday. I had a day without appointments and was able to spend time at my desk without time constraints – the best situation for creative work.

What does the term mean?
Leisure is a fundamental possibility of life. We ask on an elementary level how one can understand human life other than as intended by a time-structured, industrial society shaped by the media. We always live under the dictates of time: appointment book, clock, telephone. That awakens the desire in us to finally have the chance to reflect on something in peace – at our own leisure.

Your SFB project is called “Leisure as Spatial Freedom.” What do you mean by that?
In a situation without time pressure, it’s not about the succession of various activities but the coexistence of possibilities. Besides, leisure is always bound to special spaces – from churches, libraries, and theaters to hotels and thermal baths. These spaces invite us to stop taking time so seriously. The better we can do this, the more we are at leisure.

How does leisure differ from freedom?
Freedom is time in which we don’t work but instead rest, for instance by hiking or going to museums. It can be leisure but is not necessarily equivalent to leisure, because we can also be at leisure when we are working.

Isn’t the concept ultimately about the desire to improve productive work?
Yes it is, but in a paradoxical way – namely in such a way that one doesn’t think about this improvement. When our thinking is oriented toward goals and success, we are already under pressure, and this restricts the development of creative possibilities. I work best when it makes no difference whether my work leads to a certain result by the end of the day or not. Then one gets ideas, one sees connections.

Then it would be in the best interest of businesses to allow for such spaces.
Not just to allow for them, but to provide them explicitly. In areas where creative potential is called for, it is downright economically efficient to promote leisurely modes of working.

The need for spaces of leisure is evidently great at the moment. Why?
My guess is that we are in a new phase of the modern age that is no longer determined by the idea of progress that rose to prominence in the 19th century. The great utopias, which are inextricably bound to the catastrophes of the 20th century, no longer interest us. The topic of leisure, that is to say the question of how a life without time pressure is possible, is part of the process of taking leave of the paradigm of progress, much in the same way as we think differently today about things like sustainability in the use of natural resources.

What does leisure mean for academic research?
Research has always enjoyed free spaces – when you give excellent researchers time and freedom, the chances are good that it will lead to something.

How do students experience leisure?
Back when I studied, we adhered to the principle advocated by Wilhelm von Humboldt, the founder of the modern university: Between school and career it must be possible to spend several years researching freely and reflecting at one’s leisure. In view of the highly structured curricula we have today, this has become harder to do. The challenge is to search for the best opportunities for leisure even under these conditions.
My Volunteer Work

Katrin Albaum and Nicolas Scherger asked people at the university what causes they support in their free time.

Mario Ortlieb, on-site technician in the administrative building, takes care of homeless cats with his partner:

“We run a cat care facility for the association 'Noah’s Ark of Greater Freiburg.' We get most of the animals when they are very small – we have fed several of them from a bottle. At the moment we have six cats with us in our apartment, but we’ve had as many as 14. We look for new families for them. All cats we give away again are vaccinated and neutered. People who are interested in receiving a cat visit us first so we can see whether the chemistry is right. We recently found a home for an Angora cat that had lived in the wild previously, had spent almost a year with us, and is very shy. After just a few hours with the child she will now live with she let herself be stroked on the belly. It makes us very happy to see things work out so well.”

The author Dr. Gabriele Michel studied German and Romance studies at the University of Freiburg and is chair of the association “Amica”:

“Our organization Amica e.V. helps out in areas of conflict according to the principle of helping people to help themselves: We want to protect women and children from sexual violence and see to it that the people who commit such acts are made accountable for them. We support the women with help from partner organizations in the countries in question by providing social, psychological, legal, and vocational advising and try to ensure that women have an equal say in peace processes and in building up a post-war society. We currently have projects in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Chechnya, Libya, the occupied areas of Palestine, and Kosovo. With my commitment, I want to help improve people’s lives in other, less privileged countries.”

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Hochbruck from the Department of English of the University of Freiburg is a volunteer firefighter:

“I have served as a volunteer firefighter for twelve years, currently in Denzlingen and Waldkirch. I go out with everyone else when there’s a fire alarm. It is of course stressful, but only seldom dangerous, and anyway, somebody’s got to do it. My specialty is fire safety education at schools and preschools, where I teach children what to do in emergencies. My eleven-year-old son is also already a member of the Youth Firefighters in Waldkirch. The volunteer work has even reached into my career: One of my research projects is on the cultural factors that influence the behavior of rescue workers in operations.”

Laura Gorriahn studies political science, history, and German studies and is active at the association “Initiative Schlüsselmensch,” which won the Alumni Prize for Social Involvement in 2013:

“In 2011 I helped found ‘Initiative Schlüsselmensch.’ We find youths to be sponsors for children from St. Christoph refugee home in Freiburg. I gave private lessons there a few years ago and saw how difficult the situation is for the people. The children are traumatized from their experience as refugees and usually can’t speak good German. We want to give them the chance to integrate. They should have opportunities that are taken for granted by other children in Freiburg. The sponsors do homework with the girls and boys, play soccer with them, or go on day trips. Both sides profit from this exchange.”
Saving Money, Protecting the Environment

The team at the Technical Building Management Department has replaced all outdoor lights at the University of Freiburg with new energy-efficient lamps. Just as bright, lower energy consumption, longer life: With an investment of only 6768 euros, the university expects to save over 59,000 euros per year in electricity and maintenance costs and a good 311,000 kilowatt hours (kWh) of energy. Inside buildings the university is installing more and more LED lamps – for instance instead of florescent lamps in the two gymnasiums of the Institute of Sports Science and Physical Education. Here the investment was roughly 80,000 euros, and the university hopes to save around 37,000 euros in electricity and maintenance costs and 191,000 kWh of energy.

Model Ecosystems at the Airfield

University of Freiburg scientists have acquired just under seven hectares of land for experiments on ecology and sustainable land use on the campus of the Faculty of Engineering. Among other things, they plan to study what impact the diversity of meadow plants and the population of pollinating insects have on each other and how to improve the design of cultivation systems for bioenergy plants. For their first experiment they are studying tree species diversity as part of an international research project.

Spinoff Wins Environmental Technology Prize

A wireless system for improving the performance and safety of photovoltaic modules that is a breeze to install and easy to maintain: The start-up SmartExergy WMS has received Baden-Württemberg’s Environmental Technology Prize in the category “Instrumentation and Control Engineering.” The company is a spinoff of the Laboratory for Electrical Instrumentation at the Department of Microsystems Engineering of the University of Freiburg. Dr. Tolgay Ungan, former PhD student of laboratory head Prof. Dr. Leo Reindl, and the businessman Patrick Steindl founded the company with support from the Entrepreneurial Office of the University of Freiburg and an EXIST entrepreneurial grant from the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology.

Most Points Ever in Baden-Württemberg

In early 2013, at the age of 21, Stefan Thönissen reached the highest score ever on the law examination in Baden-Württemberg: He scored 15.66 out of a maximum of 18 points – more than anyone has ever achieved, as the state law examination office confirms. In addition, four of the other 138 law students from Freiburg who took the examination received a grade of “outstanding,” which only one in 2700 students receives on average. Overall, the results from Freiburg were again well above those from faculties of law at other universities in the state.
Legal Basis for Student Government

The student government now has more scope for action: After more than 30 years, the University of Freiburg again has a legally constituted student government, on the basis of a resolution by the Baden-Württemberg State Parliament from July 2012. The new student government can take a stance on higher education policy issues, collect money, sign agreements, and hire personnel. In May 2013 students voted on a model for articles of organization, and two months later the first student council elections were held. The other central organs were constituted in November, so the student government can now begin its work.

» www.u-asta.uni-freiburg.de

Pooling Expertise on Asian Studies

The University of Freiburg has established the Center for Transcultural Asian Studies. It aims to conduct cross-border cultural and social analyses on the Asian continent from an interdisciplinary perspective, with special emphasis on the social sciences. The approach recognizes the special significance of China but also takes into account Asia’s cultural diversity. The main areas of emphasis are Southeast Asia as well as Western and Central Asia. Topics of research will include democratization, the role of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, strategies for dealing with natural risks, intercultural communication, comparative law, urbanization, health, and gender.

» www.pr.uni-freiburg.de/go/cetras

New Endowment Promotes Old Music

Prof. Dr. Hermann Frommhold, former medical director of the Division of Radiation Therapy and longtime executive medical director of the University Medical Center, and his wife Ingrid Frommhold have established a foundation trust with a total of 100,000 euros in cash assets. The trust is being managed by the Freiburg New University Endowment. The goal is to promote training on historical keyboard instruments from the 16th to the 19th century. In addition, the trust will provide funding for research into the history of these instruments and the works of composers from the periods in which they were in use.

» www.neue-universitaetsstiftung.de

Freiburger among Best Young Scientists

Wilfried Weber is a member of the Young Scientists Class of 2013.

The biotechnologist Prof. Dr. Wilfried Weber is among the world’s 40 best and most promising young researchers in the natural sciences. Each year the World Economic Forum selects researchers under 40 years of age who have distinguished themselves through creativity, leadership qualities, and great potential for the Young Scientists Class. Weber serves as professor of synthetic biology at the Faculty of Biology and at the Cluster of Excellence BIOSS Centre for Biological Signalling Studies of the University of Freiburg. The aim of his research is to develop materials for biomedical applications.

» www.biooss.uni-freiburg.de/cms/syntheticbiology.html

Unishop Expands Product Range

New products like thermal mugs, bicycle bells, gloves, and rubber ducks, mainstays like t-shirts, pens, cups, and USB sticks: The Freiburg Unishop has expanded its range of products – and lowered prices. The new operator of the shop since 1 October 2013 is Uni Merch GmbH, a member of the Hagemann group. The articles are available at the online shop and in the Freiburg bookstores Walthari and Rombach during regular opening hours.

» www.shop.uni-freiburg.de

The articles can be ordered at the click of a button at the online shop. Photos: Uni Merch GmbH

Hermann Frommhold is sponsoring the restoration of this harpsichord from the Neumeyer-Junghanns-Tracey Collection. Photo: Stiftung “Historische Tasteninstrumente” der Sammlung Neumeyer-Junghanns-Tracey
Dorothea Bergmann and Dr. Thomas Maier head the Entrepreneurial Office of the University of Freiburg and prepared the proposal "Windows for Entrepreneurship" for a competition held by the German Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology. The proposal was selected for funding, and the university is now receiving a total of 1.6 million euros for the next three years to promote entrepreneurial culture. Dorothea explains the strategy in an interview with Dr. Anja Biehler.

uni’alumni: Frau Bergmann, how does the university intend to establish an entrepreneurial culture? Dorothea Bergmann: Entrepreneurial culture cannot be considered in isolation. It matters to everyone at the university – from students, researchers, and lecturers to administrative employees and alumni. We thus developed a strategy that reaches into all areas of the university: the "Freiburg Entrepreneurial ABC.”

What does this strategy entail? It is grounded on three pillars: “A” as in “Ausbildung” (training) at our Entrepreneurial Academy, “B” as in “Beratung” (advising) at the Entrepreneurial Office, and “C” as in “Coaching” at the Science Support Centre in order to explore the potential of research projects for commercial exploitation as early as possible.

What have you achieved since the funding began? We have attracted specialists from key areas of the university for our new “Entrepreneurial Culture” team. A coordinator for instructional development at the Freiburg Academy of Continuing Education sees to it that entrepreneurial skills find their way into instruction. A business developer at the Center for Technology Transfer works closely with experts on patent exploitation and evaluates the potential for making commercial use of existing research findings and patents at the university. A transfer coach at the Science Support Centre aids researchers in applying for funding to develop existing research projects further for commercial exploitation.

What do you find fascinating about your work? I’m fascinated by the enthusiasm entrepreneurs show for their project and how infectious it is for those around them. Recently an alumni entrepreneur gave a presentation in one of my seminars. He talked openly and honestly about his failures, difficult times in his business, and his low pay in comparison to salaried employees in industry. But nonetheless: in the end most of the participants found that the presentation had inspired them and were convinced that self-employment was an attractive prospect for them.

What can alumni do to promote entrepreneurial culture? Alumni entrepreneurs are important role models. They convey the mentality upon which entrepreneurship is grounded. But there are also ways for alumni to make a concrete contribution to entrepreneurial culture at their university: In the first pillar of our strategy, entrepreneurs could speak about their experiences or teach courses at the Entrepreneurial Academy. In the advising pillar, experts from the private sector could support current start-ups. At the Entrepreneurial Office we place aspiring entrepreneurs in contact with advisors from their field and are building up a business angels network for which we are looking for committed alumni. Finally, in the coaching pillar at the Science Support Centre we want to enhance the potential for innovation in research with industrial applications. Here, the innovation know-how of alumni from various industrial sectors would be valuable for spin-offs in high technology fields. Last but not least, donations help us to increase awareness for entrepreneurial culture at the university.
Taxi on Three Wheels

Matthias Reinbold is making the Green City even greener

When one of his pedicabs rolls across Cathedral Square, the tourists stop and look. Matthias Reinbold saw cycle taxis for the first time ten years ago at the State Horticultural Show in Kehl, and not even two weeks later he was riding his own through Freiburg: “A mode of transportation like this just belongs here,” he says. But that doesn’t mean he can make a profit with it: “I only manage to break even. The taxis are my hobby.” Today there are pedicabs in all major urban centers – Berlin, Barcelona, Paris. Reinbold was among the first to adapt the mobility concept for use in the city.

Red Wine for the President

Over the years he has assembled a collection of six pedicabs. They carry tourists through the city center, brides and grooms to the church, or guests to their restaurant – Reinhold offers culinary tours in cooperation with local dining establishments that begin, if so desired, with an aperitif in the cab. From time to time a celebrity hails one of his pedicabs, like the German wine queen or the television moderator Alfred Biolek during the shooting of a made-for-television film about his years as a student in Freiburg. Reinhold, who still rides himself, also plans promotional tours: Recently, when he was promoting the new red wine of an area winery, President of Germany Joachim Gauck happened to be in town, and Reinhold gave him a sample of the wine.

“The taxis are among the most frequently photographed objects in the city,” says Reinhold. “The only things there are more pictures of are the Cathedral and City Hall.” His pedicabs receive a lot of attention, and a lot of business too: Reinhold says that people sometimes stand in line waiting for an empty pedicab in front of City Hall. He occasionally receives calls from people abroad asking if they can reserve a taxi in advance. But despite this great interest, the pedicab service doesn’t bring in enough money. Reinhold believes this is due to the fact that Freiburg is so small. “In cities like Frankfurt or Munich there are a lot more corporate clients who have their advertising slogans printed on the bike taxis. That’s how they make their money.”

Even so, Reinhold carries on with his business, tries to attract potential advertising partners, and is constantly developing the concept further. His latest idea is to drive seniors through the city for shopping trips. Whether tourists or locals, his company could transport busloads of people if he had more cycles. But new pedicabs costs around 13,000 euros, because they have a roof, are equipped with an electric motor, and are made to carry up to half a ton of weight. Reinhold is busy enough keeping the taxis he already has in working order. “The cobblestones send constant vibrations through the cycles, so they need frequent repairs.”

Freiburg’s pedicabs haven’t been involved in an accident yet. Sometimes there’s a flat tire, sometimes a broken chain – that has been it so far. In any case, none of his taxis has ever fallen into a Bächle, says Reinhold. When they cruise down Konviktsstraße towards Martinstor and the driver rings the bell at one or the other passerby, no one gets angry. Sometimes his taxis also squeak. “This might cause someone to call ’You might want to try some oil’ while passing by,” but this sounds more like friendly advice than anger. The pedicabs are a part of Freiburg – like footbridges over the Dreisam and the sausage on Cathedral Square.

Stephanie Streif
Freiburg’s Problem Zone

Everyone knows Freiburg can do idyllic, but it can also do loud. Residents of the city center have complained for years about excessive noise, particularly on the weekend and in the summer, when Augustinerplatz and the so-called Bermuda Triangle between Universitäts-, Löwen-, and Niemensstraße are jam-packed with young partygoers. The municipal administration has spent a long time debating various options for reacting to the problem – such as earlier closing times for bars and clubs or night buses leaving the city center at shorter intervals.

Municipal Council Passes Resolution with 25 to 24 Votes

Since neither the noise nor the complaints have disappeared in this time, Freiburg’s municipal council resolved with a vote of 25 to 24 in November 2013 to introduce a special municipal security force to help make the nights more peaceful. CDU, SPD, FDP and the Free Voters voted for the resolution, while the Greens, the independent lists, the Green Alternative, and Mayor Dr. Dieter Salomon voted against it. The security force will cost an estimated 500,000 euros plus night shift supplements. The council won’t decide how large the force will be and what powers it will have until the spring of 2014.

Will the municipal security force succeed in bringing Freiburg’s problem zones under control? At any rate, the “Column of Tolerance” the city erected on Augustinerplatz more than four years ago hasn’t had the desired effect. As midnight nears, the three-meter-high, 17,000-euro obelisk gradually turns red as a friendly reminder to the revelers that others are now going to bed. The colorful column might be pretty – but it’s ineffective.

Stephanie Streif

CITY CENTER

Youths like to party on Augustinerplatz in Freiburg’s city center – the “Column of Tolerance” hasn’t changed anything about that. Photo: Thomas Kunz

WALDTRAUD

Tall Tree

Waldtraud vom Mühlwald, the tallest tree in Germany, became 100 years old in 2013: The Douglas fir stands in Freiburg’s municipal forest on the Illenberg above the neighborhood of Günterstal. It is more than 65 meters high and is still growing – both in height and in girth. Douglas firs are indigenous to the west coast of North America, where they can grow to over 100 meters tall. Waldtraud was planted as a seedling at the age of three in 1913, because foresters were then trying to increase the biodiversity of domestic forests. There are marked trails leading to the record-setting tree from the Waldhaus at Wonnhaldestraße 6 and from the Kyburg bus stop on line 21.

MARTINSTOR

White or Wall Painting

The Freiburg municipal council has appointed an art commission to discuss whether Martinstor, the larger of the town’s two remaining city gates, should receive a new wall painting. The last one depicting Martin of Tours, painted by Wilhelm Dürer in 1851, was removed in 1968 because the paint was peeling off and the plaster crumbling. Several subsequent attempts to settle on a new theme have failed after heated public debates. A widely discussed theme is a painting by Simon Göser from the 1790s. Göser also painted the merchant on Schwabentor, the town’s other gate. As an alternative, the commission is also considering something modern – or simply leaving it white.

PLANETARIUM

Cosmic Cinema

The Freiburg Planetarium has been transformed into a 360-degree cosmic cinema. The two modern video projectors cast high-definition images with over ten million pixels onto the 265-square meter full-dome screen, the largest in Southern Baden. Ten high-capacity computers storing current knowledge about the cosmos make it possible to stage multimedia voyages to every known celestial object in the universe. The system complements the existing star projector, which can simulate the apparent rotation of the sky as seen from Earth. In addition, the planetarium has also installed modern seats with adjustable backrests.
Masthead

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Calendar 2014

**Dies Universitatis**
Tuesday, 3 June 2014, 7:15 p.m.
Assembly Hall (Aula), Collegiate Building I,
Platz der Universität 3, 79098 Freiburg

**Alumni Meeting**
Friday, 4 July, to Sunday, 6 July 2014
University of Freiburg

**Beginning Student Day with “Market of Possibilities”**
Friday, 17 October 2014, 2 p.m.
Mage Solar Stadion
Schwarzwaldstraße 193, 79117 Freiburg

**Official Opening of the Academic Year**
Wednesday, 22 October 2014, 10:15 a.m.
Audimax, Collegiate Building II,
Platz der Alten Synagoge, 79098 Freiburg

Alumni Services

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

**Social Networks**
» www.alumni.uni-freiburg.de/service/socialnetworks

**Alumni Clubs**
Contact Addresses: » www.alumni.uni-freiburg.de/alumni_netzwerk
Calendar of Events: » www.alumni.uni-freiburg.de/neues_und_termine

**Continuing Education**
Freiburg Academy of Continuing Education:
» www.frauw.uni-freiburg.de
Studium Generale:
» www.studiumgenerale.uni-freiburg.de
Language Teaching Center:
» www.sli.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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