



University  
of Basel

International Office



Years

International  
Office



## International Quarterly #8, March 2024

\*\*\* See English Version below \*\*\*

Liebe Mitarbeitende der Universität

Im Herbstsemester 2014 hiess es «Welcome im International Office»: Mit der Gründung eines Welcome Center rundete die dritte und letzte Untereinheit damals das neue International Office ab. Zusammen mit Student Exchange (seit 1990 mit variablen Bezeichnungen) sowie Global Affairs (seit 2007) waren dies die Bereiche, die fortan zentrale Teile der Internationalisierung an der Universität bündeln sollten. Dies ganz im Trend der entstandenen Bedürfnisse und Entwicklungen an Universitäten weltweit.

Dieses Jahr begehen wir nun ein kleines Jubiläum, um einerseits zurückzuschauen auf Erreichtes – in diesem Newsletter finden Sie daher die neuen Rubriken «Was macht eigentlich....» und «Stimmen zum International Office». Andererseits möchten wir für Themen und Herausforderungen sensibilisieren, die sich aktuell als so spannend wie komplex präsentieren.

Die Universität arbeitet dieses Jahr an einer Internationalisierungsstrategie – auch hierzu werden unsere kommenden Newsletter informieren. Ausserdem werden unsere Veranstaltungen und weiterer Neuigkeiten aus unserer Einheit das wichtige Querschnittsthema «Internationalität» thematisieren. Das kleine 10 Jahre IO-Logo werden Sie dieses Jahr immer wieder entdecken – bleiben Sie uns verbunden.

Anregende Lektüre und schöne Grüsse,  
Tanja Popović

**Leitung International Office**

[www.unibas.ch/intoffice](http://www.unibas.ch/intoffice)

Dieser Newsletter richtet sich an alle Unimitarbeitenden; um möglichst alle zu erreichen, halten wir ihn weitgehend auf Englisch.

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Dear Employees of the University,

In the fall semester of 2014, our slogan was “Welcome to the International Office”: The establishment of the Welcome Center, our third and final subunit, rounded off the new International Office. Together with Student Exchange (which has existed under various names since 1990) and Global Affairs (since 2007), these were the units that were to bundle central aspects of internationalization at our university from then on. This was entirely in line with emerging needs and developments at universities worldwide.

This year we are celebrating a small anniversary and looking back on what we have achieved. In this newsletter you will therefore find the new sections “What is up with ...” and “Speaking of ... the international Office”. But we would also like to raise awareness about current topics and challenges that are as exciting as they are complex.

This year the university is working on an internationalization strategy; our upcoming newsletters will also provide information on this. In addition, our events and other news from our unit will focus on the important overarching topic of internationality. You will discover the small ten-years-of-IO logo again and again this year—stay tuned.

Enjoy reading and best wishes,

Tanja Popović

**Head of International Office**

[www.unibas.ch/intoffice](http://www.unibas.ch/intoffice)

This newsletter is aimed at all university members; in order to reach as many as possible, we publish it largely in English.

## EVENTS

International Office / Language Center

### **Café international: The last half millennium of life sciences in Basel: From Paracelsus to the European Silicon Valley of life sciences**

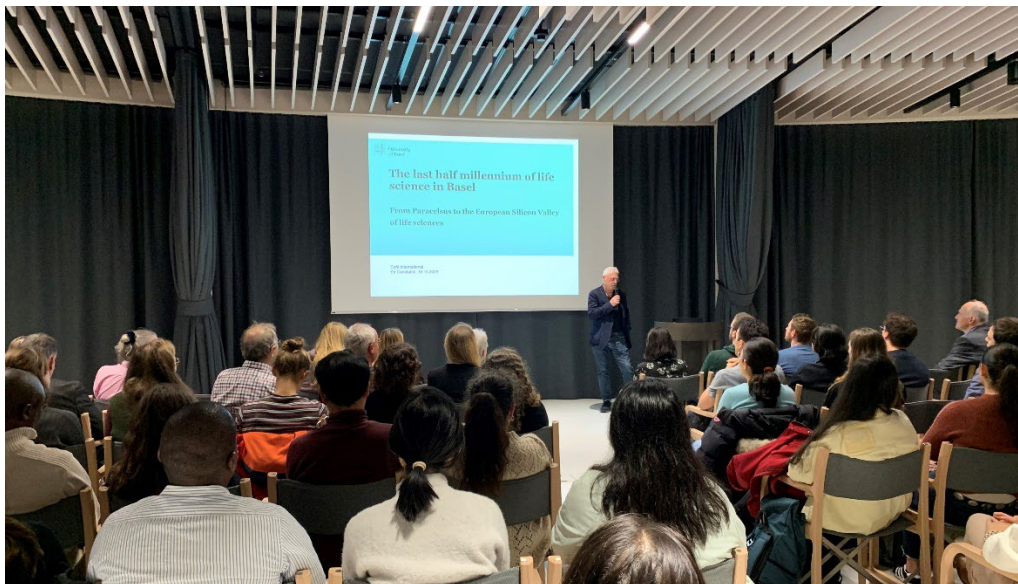


Photo: Tanja Popović

One hundred university staff and students attended our latest Café international on 16 November 2023 for a talk by Professor Emeritus Ed Constable, a former vice president of research and professor of chemistry at Basel, in the charming setting of the Novartis Pavillon, which opened in 2022. The talk was framed by a welcome from Professor Torsten Schwede, the current vice president for research and a professor of bioinformatics, and a lively Q & A. In the talk itself, Constable illuminated Basel’s impressive past in the life sciences, presenting its history from early modern scientists such as

Vesalius and Paracelsus through the establishment of the chemical and life-science industries in the city to their development into the pharma industry and a mushrooming start-up scene. All of this has made Basel a hub of scientific innovation for centuries. Before the talk, participants visited the interactive exhibit *Wonders of Medicine* in the upper floor. An *apéro riche* wrapped up the event in the appealing wooden exhibition space, which was created by the Italian designer and architect Michele De Lucchi.

Good to know: The Novartis Pavillon offers regular public events; in addition, visiting the *World of Wonders* exhibit (Tue–Sun) is free of charge for students.

**Contacts:** [Andrea.Delpho@unibas.ch](mailto:Andrea.Delpho@unibas.ch) and [Tanja.Popovic@unibas.ch](mailto:Tanja.Popovic@unibas.ch)

**Links:** <https://www.unibas.ch/de/Universitaet/Administration-Services/Vizerektorat-Forschung/Nationale-und-Internationale-Zusammenarbeit/Welcome-Center/Caf--international>  
<https://www.campus.novartis.com/de/novartis-pavillon>  
<https://www.campus.novartis.com/en/events>

## Welcome Center

It's a ... new colleague!



Photo: Thierry Spampinato

On 1 March, we welcomed Dr. Seraina Tarnutzer, who has assumed the role of head of the Welcome and Euraxess Center, succeeding Dr. Tanja Popović. After receiving her bachelor's and master's in media studies and art history from the University of Basel, Dr. Tarnutzer earned her doctorate in communication sciences at the Università della Svizzera italiana. We are delighted to welcome her back to her alma mater and hometown. She will oversee the welcoming and advising of international newcomers at the University of Basel and will be in charge of the ESKAS program. She also welcomes all interested university members to the Unisport course AcroYoga, which she is coteaching this semester.

[Program | University of Basel \(unibas.ch\)](#)

**Contact:** Seraina Tarnutzer [welcome@unibas.ch](mailto:welcome@unibas.ch)

**Link:** [Welcome & Euraxess Center | University of Basel \(unibas.ch\)](#)

## **Student Exchange: Announcements and activities**

### *Utrecht Network annual general meeting in Cyprus*

The Utrecht Network, our European network with a global outlook, brings together universities from across Europe to share best practices and enhance internationalization processes for both students and staff. With thirty members in twenty-six countries, the Utrecht Network is particularly committed to student and staff mobility, summer schools, the internationalization of curricula, joint curricula, and double or joint degrees.

The network also has well-established links with partner networks in the US (MAUI network) and Australia (AEN) and with the Brazilian REARI-RJ network in the state of Rio de Janeiro, proving that it is indeed a European network with a global outlook.

This year's annual meeting is taking place at the member university that most recently joined the network, the European University Cyprus in Nicosia.

**Link:** <https://utrecht-network.org>

### *Young Researcher's Grant of the Utrecht Network*

Within the framework of the Young Researcher's Grant, the Utrecht Network offers up to twenty scholarships for short-term mobility. Priority is given to researchers at the PhD level, particularly those who may not be eligible for other scholarship programs such as ERASMUS+. The grant is intended for self-organized mobility at one of the Utrecht Network universities.

The selection of the scholarship holders takes place in mid-March. In the past, the University of Basel has both regularly sent and received scholarship holders.

**Link:** [Utrecht Network: Young Researcher's Grant \(utrecht-network.org\)](https://utrecht-network.org)

### *Student-exchange destinations*

Coordinators in the departments and the Student Exchange Office are currently allotting exchange spots for the autumn semester of the next academic year. Students can apply for a destination in several exchange programs (<https://www.unibas.ch/de/Studium/Mobilitaet.html>) within bilateral agreements of the Swiss European Mobility Program (SEMP; Erasmus for Switzerland), university agreements, and network agreements (<https://unibas.moveon4.de/publisher/1/deu>). Mobility within Switzerland and in the Upper Rhine region through EUCOR are also possible.

**Contact Student Exchange:** [mobility@unibas.ch](mailto:mobility@unibas.ch)

**Link:** <https://www.unibas.ch/de/Universitaet/Administration-Services/Vizerektorat-Forschung/Nationale-und-Internationale-Zusammenarbeit/Student-Exchange.html>

## **Speaking of ... the international Office**

*"My international PdD students always receive useful information and advice from the International Office.*

*Furthermore, some 50 PhD students and Post-docs from all over the world do their research at the University of Basel with a Swiss Federal Excellency Scholarship (FCS). They are welcomed and guided in often complicated every-day and administrative matters by the competent and friendly staff of the International Office. Their support makes a great difference."*

**Prof. Dr. Susanne Bickel, Egyptology, Department of Ancient Civilizations, and former representative of the University of Basel in the FCS Commission for Swiss Excellency Scholarships for Foreign Students**

**AIT Swiss-Africa Annual Conference on 28–29 February 2024 in Lagos (Nigeria)**



Photo: Commercium Africa (Photolight)

In the framework of a collaborative program between Region Africa and Switzerland, funded by the State Secretariat for Education, Research, and Innovation (SERI), the University of Lagos (UniLAG) hosted a two-day event on 28–29 February coorganized by the University of Basel International Office. Twenty start-up companies from Nigeria, South Africa, and Rwanda pitched their business ideas to a mixed Swiss and African jury. The twelve most promising businesses in the areas of biotech and edtech were selected and have been invited for a ten-day stay in Switzerland at the end of May 2024. All the companies are connected to research and are looking to internationalize their businesses.

Support for this conference came from the Center for Entrepreneurship at UniLAG, the Center for Entrepreneurship at the University of Ibadan, the South African Technology Innovation Agency (TIA), Innocircle, and the Consulate General of Switzerland in Lagos. In addition, Professor Simone Stürwald from FH OST together with her colleague Professor Kolawole Olonade from UniLAG gave a lecture about innovation in the field of civil engineering. Stephan Hofer, a partner of the law firm GHR in Bern, shared insights on stakeholder and investor agreements.

On the last day, the conference participants visited PULSE, a Swiss-led media, PR, and marketing company in Lagos. A member of the Ringier media network, this company's activities have reflected the Ringier's Africa strategy since 2012.

The Swiss team and all the participating companies were very warmly received by the University of Lagos. "Even thousands of kilometers away, you could feel the spirit of hospitality," said Melina Gotschan, a program assistant who logistically supported the conference from her desktop in Basel. The winners of the business pitch and further information about the conference can be found at

[www.sareco.org](http://www.sareco.org).

**Contact:** [Erich.Thaler@unibas.ch](mailto:Erich.Thaler@unibas.ch)

**Links:** <https://startupdays.ch>

[www.pulse.ng](http://www.pulse.ng)

## What's up with ... ?

### Cédric Scheidegger Lämmle, Professor of Latin



Photo: Perry Hastings  
Downing College, University of Cambridge

On 1 January 2024, Cédric Scheidegger Lämmle became the Professor of Latin at the University of Basel. While Scheidegger Lämmle was a doctoral student in Latin, he participated in 2011 in the Basel-US Global Perspectives Program, which at the time was being run by Erich Thaler for the Global Affairs Unit. Where has Scheidegger Lämmle's academic life taken him since then?

**ET:** *Cédric, the first time we met was in 2011 in the framework of the Global Perspectives Program, a program that brought together doctoral researchers from both the US and the University of Basel for an exchange of views on higher education. On the occasion of a joint meeting with our partner university Virginia Tech at the Swiss Embassy in Washington, DC, a US participant asked you if PhD students and postdoctoral researchers in Basel were happy, adding that "in the US, they are not." On January 1 of this year, you took up the position of Professor of Latin at the University of Basel. How would you summarize the years in between and what kind of insights could you share with doctoral researchers today with regard to international academia and exposure to learning, teaching, and research contexts abroad? And has doctoral researchers' happiness improved?*

**CSL:** *Well, Erich, it's lovely to catch up after all this time! Has it really been that long? Back then I was just getting started on my PhD in Latin literature, and the Global Perspectives Program was exciting for me. I've always been interested in seeing how people work in other places, and perhaps this already had an influence on my choice of subject for my undergraduate degree. Many think of Latin as an inherently conservative if not backward-looking subject, but that's very far from the truth. Greek and Latin are studied across the globe, and while there are quite different scholarly traditions in different countries, there is a lot of exchange between them. I am happy that Basel plays a very active role internationally: thanks to the generosity of the **PLuS Foundation**, we were able to establish the Basel Fellowships in Latin Literature, which now regularly bring international scholars to Basel. At some point, my wife, Rebecca (another classicist, but interested more in Greek than Latin), and I decided to go in the opposite direction, and we moved our family to Cambridge, where a lot of exciting research in our fields was happening. At the time, we thought we'd be there for two years—now it's been almost ten! In the meantime, my wife became a professor in Cambridge, and I am now a long-distance commuter. Ever since I started, we're running our own global perspectives program—"comparative views on higher education"—at the kitchen table! But on a more serious note: while there are obvious challenges to traveling every week, I really appreciate the fact that I still have a foothold in UK academia. It is true that higher education is under a lot of pressure in Britain, but there are still very many exciting initiatives, for example, in public engagement, outreach, expanding*

*participation, and many other fields that we have long neglected in Switzerland. There's a lot to learn, and yes, some of it directly impacts happiness!*

**ET:** *You said you decided to move your family to Cambridge. Why Cambridge and not Harvard or another high-profile destination for studying Latin?*

**CSL:** *There are several reasons. On the one hand, the Faculty of Classics was a particularly good fit for the quite different research interests that Rebecca and I were pursuing at the time. On the other, we moved with our three kids, who were then between three and eleven years old; while we were keen for them to immerse themselves in the new language and culture, we also wanted them to keep close ties with family in Switzerland. The UK seemed to be a good compromise: far enough from Switzerland, both culturally and geographically, to make our stay worthwhile, but still close enough that we could go back fairly regularly or have visitors. A longer stay in the US would have made this much more difficult, and we also knew that Cambridge was a very lively hub that attracts other visiting scholars from the world over, including many from the other institutions we had considered.*

**ET:** *Coming back to the concrete step of packing up your household and moving: How did Cambridge support you with logistics and settling in? And in your opinion, what should early career researchers consider before leaving for another destination?*

**CSL:** *In many ways we were quite fortunate. Before we moved Rebecca had secured research funding from the SNSF for two years. This included generous support for childcare and family costs. And then I also applied for a postdoc fellowship, which I received half a year later. Of course, this made the move much easier and allowed us to find a good solution for childcare etc. In our case, of course, these were the dominant concerns: we needed to coordinate two academic careers and family life with three kids, so much of our planning went into this. But still the most important consideration should be to find a host institution that you genuinely feel excited about! It is a leap of faith, true, but we have certainly never had regrets. And I have a great number of experiences to draw on in my new role back in Basel!*

**ET:** *Dear Cédric, it was lovely to talk to you. With a willingness to take some risks but also some good fortune and support from the Swiss National Science Foundation and from your host, the University of Cambridge, you were able to establish your professional and family lives abroad as you had hoped—and in the end, you found your way back to Basel!  
The International Office wishes you much success in your work in Basel and Cambridge and in all aspects of your life!*

Interview with Professor Scheidegger-Lämmle by Erich Thaler

Link: <https://daw.philhist.unibas.ch/de/latinistik>