

## Minutes Network meeting SABE (12.11.2021)

### At HS Koblenz

#### Participants

Name	Institution	Online Partizipation	Institution
Prof. Dr. Maram Tawil	Dean SABE, GJU	Prof. Dr. Rawan Majzoub	GJU
Prof. Dr. Markus Kaiser	FHWS Würzburg-Schweinfurt	Prof. Dr. Peter Franck	HS Oldenburg
Prof. Dr. Frank Eckardt	Uni Weimar	Prof. Dr. Claudia Aymar	HS Rein-Main
Prof. Dr. Christine Bernhard	HS RheinMain Wiesbaden	Prof. Dr. Eckhard Möller	HS Karlsruhe
Prof. Dr. Dagmar Eisermann	HS Koblenz	Prof. Dr. Tatjana Vautz	HS Frankfurt
Prof. Dr. Amani Malhas	GJU	Prof. Dr. Selket Gupta	HS Rhein-Main
Prof. Dr. Jürgen Köberlein	FHWS	Hartmut Jahn	HS Mainz
Prof. Dr. Ahmet Golbol	HS Trier	Prof. Dr. Scott Pallock	HS Oldenburg
Prof. Dr. Fabio Bayrokaiser	RWTH Aachen	Prof. Dr. Nicole Wichmann Sperl	Uni Weimar
Lubna Sukni	GJU Alumni	Prof. Dr. Laura Padgett	Hochschule RheinMain Wiesbaden
Iris Wildfeuer	GJU, IO	Murad Abi Eisheh	GJU Alumni

The German network speaker for architecture, Dr. Dagmar Eiserman welcomed the members of the network at Koblenz. The participants, including the ones joining online, introduced themselves, of course also present was Dr. Christine Bernhard, the network speaker from the German side for the design department.

The first point on the agenda was a joint session with the SEEIT network who was holding a meeting at the same time at TH Brandenburg. GJU's vice president, Dr. Prof. Ralf Roskopf spoke online to the participants of both networks, informing them of some general GJU updates.

## **Joined online session with members of the SEEIT (School of Electrical Engineering and IT) network meeting at TH Brandenburg**

### **Updates GJU by Prof. Dr. Ralf Rosskopf, Vice President for International affairs at GJU**

He has been the vice president since 2019, and since time is of the essence he decided not to speak much about GJU itself since the network members know the university since many years. He briefly mentioned German Chancellor Angela Merkel's visit to Jordan and her comment about GJU. Then he moved on to the biggest changes at GJU which firstly is the new presidency, Prof. Dr. Ala'aldeen Al-Halhoul took over the post of GJU president summer 2021. The new president supports the German dimension strongly.

Dr. Rosskopf then presented some GJU figures, currently 4700 students are enrolled at the university. Every student still spends at least one year in Germany so the number of outgoing students per year high, which continued even throughout the pandemic. This was possible only due to the help of the German partners. 2021/22 he expects 840 students going to Germany, since some postponed their GY last year. Currently there are 54 incoming students in this semester but achieving higher numbers still is the goal. Things are recovering slowly after the pandemic, teaching takes place on campus again and there was a return to the mobility programs between Jordan and Germany, Study Groups and Flying Faculty. Erasmus funding is increasing for both student and staff mobility. Train the trainer will start again in 2022. The mobilities create visibility of the German dimension on campus and allows for students to connect to Germany. Part of this was also the Arabic language and culture summer course organized by the IO.

The vice president then encouraged the networks to meet in smaller meetings throughout the year, not just once a year to keep vivid exchange. The idea is that at the end of meetings specific agendas for the rest of the year should be developed.

He moved on to some information about the German language Center at GJU, which is one of the biggest centers in the world, with around 2000 students in language courses daily. There were some changes at the GLC in response to the prevailing issue of language level. AB2 track was established and should become the standard level goal in the future. For now B1 is the criteria for students to leave on their German year. German 1 to 6 courses were restructured, the official B1 exam is taken in German 5, and German six is now application and cultural training. Furthermore the possibility to take German language course outside of GJU was eliminated and a successful B1 certificate became a requirement for graduation from the university.

A new deanship, the deanship of Innovation and Technology Transfer was established. It is a first of its kind in Jordan. The OIL (Office for industrial links) will be moved to operate under this new deanship, which allows an academic approach to the OIL and will help to increase industry contacts and achieve the long term goal of establishing Dual Study tracks for all programs at GJU. The concept of Dual studies is new in Jordan and GJU pioneered it with currently 4 tracks running. For the German accreditation that the faculties at GJU are undergoing the Dual Study program will be a challenge, as the concept is undergoing changes in Germany. The German accreditation is progressing, it was a challenge since GJU is the first university to undergo the process outside of Germany. The same

criteria is applied and after all faculties have been assessed GJU will receive a “certificate of equivalency” which will state equal level with the German universities. This will make exchange between the countries much easier. 4 schools are involved already, SATS (school of applied technical science) and SAMS (school of applied medical science) received reports from the agency, the others had their visit. The remaining 4 schools will start accreditation at the end of this year.

There is a new innovation space established at GJU for innovation, workshops and conferences. Online teaching improved though covid and moved from initial emergency response to qualitative teaching. 15 smart classrooms were secured which will be inaugurated the week after the SABE network meeting, during the German week at GJU. The smart classrooms open more opportunities in joint teaching as well.

Along with the classrooms, the research clusters will also be announced during the German week. These clusters will receive funds from the deanship of scientific research. The requirements for forming a cluster are participants from at least 3 faculties from a German university to make it international. The clusters should also be interdisciplinary as well- Students and PHD candidates should be included. In general GJU is starting a PHD cycle, piloting this in collaboration with the “Pedagogische University of Freiburg”, due to the Jordanian Ministry of Higher Educations requirement of PHD programs being joint international programs in order to guarantee employability of the PHD candidates later.

Prof. Julia Schnitzer, host at TH Brandenburg for the SEEIT network, thanked the VP for his time and presentation. He stated in his closing words that he would have loved to join the networks in person and hopes to do so again for the next network meetings.

## **GJU Department presentation**

Introduction to SABE – Dr. Maram Tawil

As the next agenda point the dean of the School of Architecture and Built Environment, Dr. Maram Tawil, gave a presentation including statistics and numbers on the school, faculty information and a general overview of programs run and envisioned at SABE. She also listed the partner universities the faculty has and mentioned the importance of expanding the number of partners in order to increase seats at the universities for the GJU German Year students.

Following the deans presentation the exchange coordinators, Dr. Amani Malhas for the department of architecture and Dr. Rawan Mazjoub for the department of design, who joined the meeting online, presented updates, numbers and general information about their departments (all presentations attached). An important new development at the design department is the new film mayor. Design already has the highest numbers of applications of the school and the new track will attract more students still, so the department will need more staff and more seats at the German universities for their students.

After the brief presentation of the school and its two departments the network moved on to some open discussions. The first point raised by Dr. Eisermann was regarding graduation projects, a

student who was interested from their university to do a project at GJU. This would generally be possible, however it would need to be decided who would supervise the project.

Dr. Amani Malhas, the exchange coordinator for architecture, mentioned about the general lack of seats and need for expansion of the network. This was seconded by Dr. Rawan Majzoub, the coordinator of the design department. In the case of design the issue is even more urgent since they inaugurated the new film track which is increasingly in popularity.

Dr. Eiserman asked what happens if there are not enough seats to accommodate the students. Dr. Tawil responded that the idea is to use the network to increase the numbers. The network finds itself at a turning point after the pandemic where more interlinking needs to be done. She is looking to collaborate on many levels with a deeper connection and also try and get academics from other countries and German instructors to GJU. The network head for design, Christine Bernhardt, found this idea could maybe interest young academics who want to start teaching in Germany and who could maybe teach at GJU for a year before since they are always asked for experience

#### **Presentation by German partner of design network (online)**

##### **- Project International Virtual Academic Collaboration, Prof. Claudia Aymar, HS RheinMain**

The project is sponsored by the DAAD with its core idea being to strengthen selective partnerships and create more mobility. A Network meeting took place which increased partnerships with the USA, Thailand and Norway. Language and intercultural training are pushed and training also for employees and staff is also offered.

The main goal of the project is to push teaching, push the exchange and double degree programs. Also to Run more courses where more universities can participate. To this end a common platform for members will be organized, travelling classrooms are used where professors from other countries gave classes. All the travelling classrooms have pre- and post-courses.

Dr. Maram Tawil stated that At GJU they were thinking of something similar to this for the program media and design management and she would love to hear more about the experience that Rhein-Main had with this. The possibility of a sub-meeting on this topic was discussed.

#### **Presentations by German partners of architecture network (online)**

##### **- Prof. Dr.-Ing. Eberhard Möller, Hochschule Karlsruhe (architectural design, structural design, structural engineering)**

Dr. Eberhard Möller (HS Karlsruhe) gave a brief presentation of the exchange programs that his university offers. He was asked by Ms. Eisermann if at his university they offered an interdisciplinary project, since he is both an architect and an engineer, what is his view on this? Dr. Möller responded that in some years they had such a program but that it was not easy to organize and the outcome depended in large parts on the motivation of the people involved.

- Prof. Tatjana Vautz, Dipl.-Ing. Architect; Frankfurt UAS

Dr. Vautz took up the topic of interdisciplinary programs raised during the presentation of Mr. Möller. At UAS Frankfurt their projects integrated with civil engineering are very successful. She then introduced the structure of program for architecture and urban planning. They offer Bachelor and Master degrees, some of which are in held in English. She also explained which projects she is in charge of, which is a specialization project for which she has students all over the world. She showed the network different hands-on projects that were made working with timber.

Dr. Eisermann asked her about the selection process for the international students and how many seats they allocated to them. Dr. Vautz replied there were 20 seats with applications happening at the time of the network meeting.

-Prof. Peter Franck (HS Oldenburg)

First gave an overview of their programs and mentioned which partnerships exist with Jordan being one of them. He also invited his colleague Scott Pallock who takes care of the international contacts at Oldenburg. They have projects all over the world for example a master with Milwaukee that has been running now for 7 years. Since 6 years they focus on projects with Erfurt for which they meet in network meetings all over Germany to take on particular topics to do with the topic of construction. In this they also include other themes, such as light installations, not just built environment. He explained that they have many international students at HS Oldenburg and they enjoy their participation especially now that classes are in person again.

Prof. Eisermann opened the discussion round with all participants after the presentations. The dean of SABE stated her interest in all that was spoken and looks at interesting new ways of collaboration though the examples that were presented. She is particularly interested in the Integrated approach between different disciplines. She sees this as an investment in the future.

Dr. Tatjana Vautz explained that when she studied in Stuttgart there were joined projects between engineering students and architecture students and it was inspiring in her opinion. The engineers she met back then are now the ones they can communicate well with architects efficiently from the early stages of a project, since they are on the same page though their joint training and look into the other discipline. She is highly in convinced of this approach. Dr. Tawil briefly mentioned the joint degree, interdisciplinary master program, that will be discussed in more detail on the second day of network meeting.

Prof. Aymar explained their joint degree program. It includes an 8 month period in Thailand where students take 8 courses there and 4 courses that they still need they get acknowledged in Germany. They receive two degrees in the end, one from Thailand and one from Germany. She clarified, after a question from Dr. Tawil, that although the study plan is not the same this program really helps to expand students horizons and the marketing focused approach of the Thai partner creates a wider field of knowledge for their students.

Dr. Aymar also stated that it takes a long time combine both curricula side by side, a challenge they have experienced before. Dr. Eisermann inquired how the program benefit the students? What is the advantage for the field?

Dr. Aymar replied that she sees the outcome for the young people, students who come back after completing their time abroad. They get excellent feedback and its good for students careers.

After a short break the network re-convened. Starting the discussion the German network heads praised the general exchange with GJU and stated that it on many levels a positive experience. Dr. Maram seconded this and stated that she would like regulate the educational process more and focus more on joint degrees for more teaching exchange. She explained the different possibilities for it, for example blended learning or mixed universities. GJU is a passion project and we need to create more of a system. The contributions of the individuals need to be rewarded and accredited otherwise the ideas will die with the passionate and involved member of the network leaving/ retiring.

Dr. Christine Bernhardt shared with the network that Rhein-Main just had a meeting for a national wide process concerning internationalization. They had the closing workshop this week. Challenges are- activities are very professor- based, how can we established unified procedures? How to deal with teaching hours? Finding the right technical flatforms are a problem and so is data security. She outlined the importance of exchange being on a professional level as much as the cultural level of course is beneficial for the student.

Dr. Wichmann-Sper explained the outcomes in the collaboration between architects and engineering at the university of Weimar, their program is structured in a way that after the students have done the mandatory credit hours for architecture then they are free and flexible to choose the electives at their wish.

Dr. Maram Tawil really would like to have student exchange in the theoretical courses like history of architecture and other core courses.

Fabio Bayrokaiser (RHTW Aachen) mentioned that they have been working on having electives to join at different universities. Dr. Eisermann explained this further, called the “European student ID” a European funded project and students from the universities that join the project built their own curriculum between the different countries. Dr. Kaiser (FHS Würzburg-Schweinfurt) added that at his university other schools have already built alliances with this European University but as of yet not his school.

The next topic of discussion was the members of the GJU team asking for advice from the partners on when the best point in was in their opinion for the students to define their specialty. The partner universities handling of this was varied, with Dr. Bernhard advising to give flexibility to the student in order to support their flexibility. Of course this depends on the regulations of the program, as Dr. Eisermann explained, for example some courses are mandatory in Germany for s student to take if the later want to register at the chamber of architecture.

The next point raised what that an interactive platform for the network would be a good addition for collaboration. It would help the academic to exchange information and discuss topics, also to seek advice from each other and share research interests. Expansion of the network and acquisition of

new partners could also be done using this platform. Since other networks at GJU would also benefit from this idea it was decided that the network coordinator would follow up on this idea.

### **12.11.2021 Media Informatics Bachelor of science – SABE Design Department and SEEIT network**

(Participants from both network meetings see start of report of SABE and SEEIT network meetings)

Dr. Dhiah Abu Thair from SEEIT took the word .He explained that he witnessed that programs in Media Informatics appeared in Germany during his study time there in the two thousands. Benefiting from the experience of the German partners, especially the ones with experience in media informatic and design such as Dr. Julia Schnitzer and Dr. Paul Grimm, they now want to create such a program also at GJU.

Maram Tawil, the dean of Sabe introduced the people from SABE present in the meeting. Dr. Maram thanked everyone for being there, both networks for contributing in this interdisciplinary new program.

She introduced Christine Bernhard, who has a long history with GJU as the head of design. Dr. Bernhard had asked also Sebastian Petersen (HSRM) to join the session, since they at Rhein-Main have a study program called “Media Informatics” for which he is a professor. Dr. Ahmet Golbol is a professor for film, former professor at GJU. They also have media informatics program there at Biel university where he teaches now.

Rainer Herpers, network head for SEEIT, introduced himself also(HS Bonn-Reihn-Sieg) as well as Paul Grimm, a computer scientists from Darmstadt HS. Both have similar programs at their universities and hope to lend their expertise to the creation of the new program at GJU.

Lutz Köhler from Cologne took the word, yes they also have media informatics. Julia Schnitzer introduced what programs they have at TH Brandenburg. She is the coordinator of the master “digital media” and they do a lot of intersection with the informatics master.

Dr. Dhiah took the word and introduced vice dean of SEEIT, Osamah Badarneh, who thanked both the partners and colleagues at GJU praised the collaboration on this program since it is unique in Jordan.

Since the program is new as a first step the two schools decided to create a survey to asses market needs. They targeted companies to find out from the industry side if there was a gap that showed clearly that such a program would be useful in Jordan. They assessed employability and yes it seemed the companies are interested. Companies highlighted that they need people who are creative but have technological analytical skills. The new program at GJU can offer them graduates with both sets of skills. Dr. Christina Class asked if they also did a survey into student interest of the program – Hazar affirmed they are planning on that, one for students and one for instructors. But they already know from past graduation projects that a skillset from both disciplines would be an advantage to the students.

Dr. Dhiah thanked the department head Dr. Marji for the preparation and execution of the survey. He then moved the network on to the curricula of the program. The first question was should it be a 4 or a 5 year program – in his opinion 5 years is too long. Dr. Rawan Mazjoub, exchange coordinator at GJU for the design department, mentioned however that with the German maybe they do need

more time. Dr Class added that maybe it could be considered that students should spend 1,5 years in Germany, maybe visit two partners one for media one for design. Dr. Dhiah added that maybe it could be financed through scholarships so 3 semesters in Germany would be an option. He asked himself the question of the duration for the time being and think first about the content. The program would have 155 credit hours between 250 and 300 ECTS total, there are school and university requirements (for example English, Arabic classes) to consider. But the program requirements should maybe be the ones to focus on in this context. First and foremost the program should be from the start compatible with the German system since the later want to receive the German accreditation. Also both schools have different requirements, something that needs to be carefully discussed internally. The question is who will be the hosting entity, or would it be a new school with new requirements.

Hazar Marji, head of the department of design and visual communication, shared the course list of the design department and their use for the program was discussed. Dr. Julia Schnitzer warned to not create students who fall between the cracks by not knowing either field sufficiently. She thinks subjects like topography should be specialized and not too widely taught.

Dr. Paul Grimm asked in the chat if the idea was that the students would learn how to program. Julia Schnitzer says she still has a lot of questions and details still need to be decided.

Dr. Pedersen took the word, he works in media computer science and teaches design classes. The question is for him what is the expected outcome? Is it more design or more programming? In Wiesbaden they have different courses, for example in his course the design classes are not meant to create fully formed designers but they get an insight so that their future collaboration with designers will be easier. In turn no one would expect a design student who has taken some computer science classes to know how to program, but he would have built a certain sensitivity towards the work of a programmer.

Dr. Majzoub added another possible approach- what if they established two specialization tracks, one for programming and one for design. They could structure the first two years as general, then the students specialize into the two possible tracks.

Dr. Christina Class, thinks the idea is great but a lot of discussion is needed. She thinks the aim should be discussed now and a sub-group should be formed later to continue the discussion. Decisions can then be passed to the larger group. Dr. Dhiah explained that they mean to start the program in the fall next year so the structure needs to be finished by February. Dr. Class asked if maybe the program could start a year later. Dhiah thinks this is a good idea and he will take this to the management at GJU. Having sub- groups working on the curricula will be effective.

Dr. Majzoub asked if it would be possible to receive the study plans from the German colleagues who offer similar programs. Dr. Rainer Herpers stated that the main question seems to be what kind of program it will be, with focus on computer science or design? Dr. Sebastian Pedersen explained that there is also a difference in the type of Bachelor that needs to be considered. One is a BA of arts and one is of science. He then spoke about the types of studies and the field involved usually in a media project- design, computer science, media economy/ law. Students in his program can decide how far they want to move into the intersection into design, only take the mandatory classes or add more. But all students need to learn to code and that is the main part of the studies. Julia Schnitzer finds it very interesting how the course is laid out. This needs to be handled with care in her opinion to not create generalists who know a little bit about everything but expert professionals who know specifics.



Christine Bernhard stated that as far as she understood from Mr. Pedersen- you cannot just take CS students and put them into the existing design classes since they would be lost, so they would need special classes. Peterson affirmed this, he himself being in charge of the design classes for CS students but having his own background in design. Yes it is a very tight program that shows students how to be sensitive towards what is needed to be a designer without expecting them to become one.

Dr. Class pointed out that its important to create courses that teach both, joint classes for both, integrated modules so that students do not put the knowledge into a box. Dr. Peterson added maybe working together in teams as in real life could be an option, classes taught by two professors one from each discipline. Its challenging for mandatory courses, but maybe electives could be combined in such a way.

Hazar asked him which kind of companies hire the graduated from his program. He answered that most companies are coding companies, development of software. Everyone is hired- which is a success, the employers appreciate the fact that the coders also have a design background because they can judge a progress better in an interdisciplinary team.

Dr. Dhaih summarized the session and laid out the following action plan

- 1.) Set up working groups, first interested members are: Julia Schnitzer, Sebastian Petersen, Ahmet Golbol, Rawan Majzoub, Paul Grimm. This group will discuss further on the structure and content of the program
- 2.) The whole output of the group will be shared with the whole network and shared in two months (beginning 2022)

He thanked all participants and ended the joint session.

### **Alumni report design-**

Murad Abi Eisheh

Finished his design studies in 2015. At Berlinale he met a friend who had gotten accepted at Film Akademie Baden Württemberg – film school near Stuttgart so he decided to also apply and got accepted. Right now he is doing his graduation project (Diplomprojekt). In his third year he did a film called “television” which did well at festivals and is now competing for the Oscars, in January he will know if they are shortlisted. He is also currently running a media campaign with a company in LA. He He also did a documentary film about a group travelling to the world football games named “spirit of the ball” which was bought by Netflix bought it. At the moment he is writing his first fiction feature film.

He especially stressed how much the German year helped him, he always mentions that he is a GJU graduate. Rawan Majzoub the exchange coordinator for design added that even though they weren't focused on film making at GJU many of their graduates still succeed in this area.

At the end of his presentation the idea of maybe organizing a screening of his film at GJU was proposed.

## 12.11. 2021 Separate session for the department of architecture

### Alumni report architecture

Lubna Sukhni

Graduated from GJU in 2019 and is currently working as “Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin” at the Bergische Universität Wuppertal. Aside from a brief overview on her transition from GJU student to working professional and her decision to continue her path in Germany, Lubna also gave a presentation about the Solar Decathlon project in the planning of which she is currently involved. The project will take place in 2022 and is an international architecture competition for sustainable buildings, for which 18 young, interdisciplinary teams from 11 countries will compete in designing, building and operating solar houses with neutral or even positive energy balance. The competition will attract many visitor from all over the world.

After the presentation of the Decathlon project the architecture department moved on to the agenda point of the joint Master program in architecture between GJU and HS Koblenz. The aim was to discuss financing and to acquire more German partners for the envisioned master.

Dr. Maram Tawil presented the program and opened the discussion what format the master should take and on how to collaborate in its creation. A joint master is envisioned but the study plan for this still needs to be created. Two general MSC programs in architecture already exist at GJU – for this new master now she hopes to integrate German partners as more joint programs are generally the goal of GJU. More synergy on the study plan is needed and the networks input in this is required. The main idea is an interdisciplinary approach for the master, combining both architecture and civil engineering. In Joran already civil engineering and architecture are combined, however in Germany these make up two different disciplines.

Dr. Jürgen Köberlein mentioned that at FHWS they included interdisciplinary modules but as elective modules. But they did realize that the students needed to know more technical issues which is more part of civil engineering. Generally the green building solution requires a very technical focus. Maybe a balance of both would be ideal? The question is not that a change is needed towards maybe including more technological aspects in architecture, but how much change and how much the industry will move in that direction. Any balance found would need to be sustainable. Architecture can be seen as a pillar that is surrounded by other disciplines that influence it.

Dr. Maram Tawil mentioned again that in her opinion the interdisciplinary approach will lead to a better outcome. Generally the network agreed that the master is a good idea and expressed interest in its development, however some argued that it should better remain in the hands of architecture and some of the partners were not convinced of the interdisciplinary new dimension proposed by the dean of SABE.

Partners for the joint master still need to be found and HS Koblenz and GJU will have another meeting in this regard.

## Wrap up

After the separate sessions both departments met again for the wrap- up of the 2021 network meeting. Dr. Eisermann first thanked everyone for their collaboration and spoke some closing words for the department of architecture from her part. The collaboration is being re-shaped at this moment to increased Erasmus funding. She also informed the network that on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 2022

Dr. Christine Bernhardt then took the word for the design department, she informed the network that the meeting with SEEIT had been fruitful. The results of the working group for the Media Informatics program will later be communicated to the network. She expressed further that in her opinion the network meetings should be more target focused. Issues like study plans can be discussed in smaller groups in sub-meetings and the physical network meeting could be used more to attract new partners. She especially proposed this in light of the new seats needed by the design department.

The idea also was mentioned that it would have a positive impact to create a collection of “alumni success stories” maybe included in the German lounge at GJU once it is opened.

Dr. Amani Malhas thanked the host at HS Koblenz. This was seconded by the dean of SABE who also expressed her gratitude and joy over the open minded discussions that were had during the course of the meeting.

- Envisioned date for the next network meeting -last week of April 2022
- Würzburg (design campus) or Mainz were proposed as possible hosts